



The Cultural Significance of the Cittern in Europe during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Esteban Mariño Garza



CONAHCYT
CONSEJO NACIONAL DE HUMANIDADES
CIENCIAS Y TECNOLOGÍAS



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COMPANY



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Abstract

The cultural history of the cittern is the story of the battle between tradition versus innovation in a cultural climate of major forces of change, notably the economic circumstances of the sixteenth century, the beginnings of the modern age and their effect on musical culture. The increase of wealth of not only nobles but merchants, bankers, government officials and other lesser or non-aristocrats, as well as the demand for music, instruments, and art in general as means of acquiring and displaying social status and consolidating power, represented groundbreaking shifts. Music was affected by the larger investment in and consumption of art, which brought transformations in business organisations and international commerce. Such changes established a market for new varieties of musical practices and instruments, which reflected a novel amalgam of ideologies, traditions, and innovations.

The cittern originated in an autochthonous instrument known in the Italian Peninsula as the *cetra*, which since the thirteenth century had been an iconological, Christianised version of the quintessential, mythological lyre of Classic antiquity. The cultural identity of the *cetra*, encompassing its humanist heritage and traditional manufacture, were dramatically transformed in response to the growing practice of polyphonic instrumental music and basso continuo. While in the Italian Peninsula, the instrument remained strongly bound to humanism, its transalpine counterpart underwent a greater commodification process. Within these transformations, the cittern acquired a range of contrasting social values and categorisations, helping shape social identities. This metamorphosis can be considered both as progress but also as a regression because in each important stage, the instrument lost as well as gained values. On the one hand, the cittern was stripped of its most important artistic value and cultural identity, its humanist heritage. On the other, through a mass globalisation this wire plucked stringed instrument became an intrinsic part of the social fabric and everyday music of early modern Europe and set the foundations for the majority of wire strung plucked instruments of the Western continent.

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Important Definitions and Conventions

Cittern: French derived English term, which refers to a relatively short necked wire plucked musical instrument with a ‘tear drop’ shape, shallow resonator, and a relative flat back. A traditional feature of cittern is that its neck is narrower than the fretboard. Citterns have metal frets, which are inlaid on the fingerboard and are kept in place by hard-wood wedges secured in a slot. The strings are fixed to a string holder and pass over a movable bridge located on the soundboard below the sound hole, usually ornamented with a rose. The wire courses are secured around the tuning pegs that are inserted in a peghead or pegbox, which can have a hook on its back. The cittern was specifically popular in the Italian Peninsula, the German speaking countries, France, the Low Countries and England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The oval shape, the occasional protruding string holder, the shoulder scrolls and the tapering body are the cittern’s main iconological features that are meant to represent an idealised shape of the Greek lyre of antiquity.

Cet(e)ra: Italian name rooted in Medieval Italian that refers to a form of pre-sixteenth century cittern specific to the Italian Peninsula. The pre-sixteenth century *cetra* or *cetera* is a short-necked wire plucked string instrument with an oval or spatulate resonator, a relatively flat back, projected string holder and a hook behind its peghead. This musical instrument is provided with wooden blocks placed on the fingerboard, which function as frets. As with the cittern, the strings are secured to the string holder and pass over a movable bridge placed on the soundboard below the sound hole, which is usually adorned with a rose. The wire courses are secured around the tuning pegs that are inserted in a peghead in a satellite fashion. The *cetra* was a symbolic musical instrument traditionally meant to represent the Greek lyre and it was used from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. This instrument only survives in iconographic sources, written evidence and in the features (oval shape, the occasional protruding string holder, the shoulder scrolls and the tapering body) that were passed on to the cittern. This term was also used for the sixteenth and seventeenth-century cittern of the Italian Peninsula.

Citole: English modern name with historical variants such as *sitola* and *citola*, which refers to a short necked plucked string instrument with a variety of resonator shapes such as holly leaf, hexagonal contour, guitar, or fiddle-like profiles. The citole could have had gut or wire strings, which were fastened in a protruding string holder, passed over a movable bridge placed on the soundboard. This musical instrument, which sometimes also presented shoulder extensions occasionally in the form of trefoil ornaments, was used in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and was particularly popular in northern France, the Iberian Kingdom of

Castile and Leon and England. The sole extant citole that survives in public collections dates from the early fourteenth century and is preserved in the British Museum in London. Most likely, the *cetra* predates the citole, which is why the latter could be considered as a regional variant of the Italian instrument.

This dissertation uses both the Helmholtz pitch system and the stave musical notation (Figure 1). Since citterns use re-entrant tuning, when the string arrangement and pitch of a particular instrument are described in the text, the first note, from left to right, would always represent the strings closest to the treble side, while the final one expresses the note that is closest to the bass side. Additionally, three letters would express a set of three strings, while two letters identify a set of two strings.

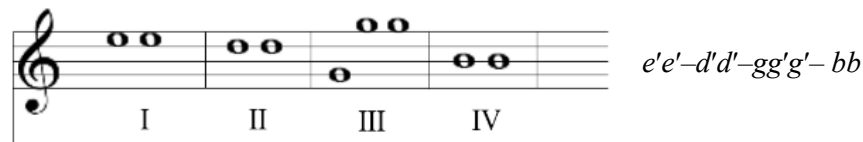


Figure 1. Cittern Musical Notation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims

The cittern's long and remarkable history provides many surprises. Instead of originating as an instrument in the hands of popular musicians, where it was found in the later stages of its history, the cittern seems to have been 'invented' in humanist and Neoplatonic court circles in early 15th century Italy as a reconstruction of the classical Greek kithara.¹

This passage by lutenist James Tyler is particularly appropriate to introduce the aim of this dissertation. The surprising history of the cultural meanings of the cittern is in fact the main focus of this work. Firstly, the thesis investigates how this wire-strung plucked stringed instrument moved through Europe's social strata; secondly, it seeks to understand the broad cultural factors that contributed to such a journey and why this process is significant. In the early sixteenth century, the cittern was born as an attempted re-creation of the ancient lyre and was part of an artistic sphere that saw music as an essential part of the humanist studies, which, besides informing other European institutions, permeated courtly culture.² The impact of humanism cannot be understood without considering the Renaissance,³ which was a cultural movement that brought a vast array of aesthetic attitudes that redefined the notions of selfhood, gender, sexuality and their role in nature, divinity and the cosmos.⁴ The cittern, however, was not reserved only for the higher, privileged social circles and instead, from its early beginnings, was part of all social layers.

The cittern's humanist context was entangled with a materialistic world spawned out of the enormous wealth of the various European courts, which lead to the trade of art and music to satisfy the ambitions of luxury and novelty. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the instrument became a widespread commodity in the upper-middle class sectors of France, Germany, the Low Countries and England. The cittern's humanist background, its traditional manufacture and tuning all changed to fit

¹ Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern," 25.

² Tomlinson, "Renaissance Humanism and Music," 2–4; Haar, "Humanism"; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 6–8.

³ For art history the Renaissance began in late fourteenth century and spread out over the sixteenth and beyond. For music history, the period lasted circa from the second half of the fifteenth century to the start of the seventeenth. These scopes serve the purpose of orientating the reader in a chronological fashion; however, they do not reflect the trajectory of the many variants of musical and artistic styles, intellectual states, attitudes, and practices that took place in these periods of time. Iain Fenlon, *The Renaissance: From the 1470s to the End of the 16th Century*, Man and Music (London: Macmillan, 1989); David Young Kim, 'Renaissance', in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online* (Oxford University Press, n.d.), accessed January 28, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.02014>.

⁴ Young Kim, "Renaissance"; Lockwood, "Renaissance."

the demands of domestic instrumental practice during the late sixteenth century. This transformation led not only to new musical functions but also to new social meanings. Although the cittern inside and outside the Italian Peninsula was played by both men and women, the visual arts and literature of its transalpine contexts usually depicted it in the hands of women and characters of little social standing.

Previous literature has provided fundamental research regarding the cittern's repertoire across the Alps,⁵ its Medieval and possible ancient origins,⁶ as well as its technical features.⁷ Moreover, there is a small community of enthusiasts, independent researchers and performers that have kept cittern studies alive over the decades.⁸ However, few studies have pondered on the transformation of the instrument and its meanings,⁹ and, thus, its broader cultural significance has gained little consideration by the general community of musicologists, organologists and historically-informed performers.

The cittern's cultural significance relates to the history of the transformation of its physicality as well as its associated meanings. On one hand, its iconological heritage, arising from being considered a successor of the lyre, assisted the need for a tangible connection between music and its ancient past.¹⁰ On the other, when the instrument entered the crossroads of the early and the modern world, it lost and gained values that enriched a cultural biography that reflects the decline of humanist thought in favour of music as an independent art form.

This thesis aims at a new interpretation of the role of the cittern during its historical trajectory, a deeper understanding of its cultural significance and a methodology that combines a diverse range of written sources, tablatures, iconography and extant musical instruments from the European regions

⁵ Ward, "Sprightly and Cheerful Musick," 1985; Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music"; Weigand, "The Cittern Repertoire"; Abbott and Segerman, "The Cittern in England before 1700"; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries."

⁶ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400"; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern"; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries"; Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern."

⁷ Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study"; Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry"; Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Núñez and Estevez, "Two Dutch Citterns from a 17th Century Shipwreck: Description of the Remains and of the Reconstruction"; Huber, "Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments"; Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern"; Forrester, "Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire."

⁸ Hartig, "The Renaissance Cittern Site"; Rossi, "The Cittern Society Facebook Page."

⁹ Coelho, *Music and Science in the Age of Galileo*; E. Maguire, "Cultural Control in the Shrew"; Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," 2004.

¹⁰ Haar, "Humanism."

where the cittern was mostly used.¹¹ The first chapter is the ‘Introduction’, while the second chapter, ‘The Re-birth: The Cittern’s Heritage’, discusses the past of the cittern and how it was transformed from its forerunner inside the Italian Peninsula. The third chapter, ‘The Transformation of the Cittern in the Italian Peninsula’, will explain how the instrument and its humanist significance were transformed due to the economic, social and musical circumstances of its Italian context. The fourth chapter, ‘The Transformation of the Transalpine Cittern’, deals with how the cittern, through a significant commercial context, became a highly exchangeable commodity and how this transformation affected its musical and social meanings outside the Italian Peninsula. Lastly, the fifth chapter and conclusion, ‘The Cultural Significance’, will reflect on the cultural transformation of the cittern and its values as cultural heritage based on its social trajectory.

The cittern is one of the last Renaissance musical examples of the unsatiable longing to connect and recover what is considered one of the most influential civilisations of the Western world: ancient Greece. The cittern was most likely considered as one of the remains of such heritage and in contrast to other plucked stringed instruments that were compared to the Greek lyre, the crafting of the cittern, including its tuning, the essence of its identity, was designed to unite the ancient and ‘modern’ worlds. The cittern is the only musical instrument with a Medieval past characterised for materialising, through five centuries of tradition, the *kithara* of the Greek world, and for humanists it was the closest link with their mythological obsession. And yet, the birth of the transalpine cittern was an abrupt change to such heritage, as the lyre-like features were reduced in size, so too its meaning and values. The now continental cittern was spread all over Western Europe becoming an important and accessible instrument for all social layers becoming a complex symbol of early modern hegemonic practices. The transalpine cittern was one of the first musical instruments to be extensively commercialised and globalised through a level of commodification not seen in other instruments. Coming from an autochthonous background, with a significant Medieval classical heritage, to be transformed into a copy of itself, the cittern echoes the transition between Medieval and capitalist Europe.

¹¹ Italian City States, the Low Countries, the German speaking countries, France and England.

This dissertation's main contribution to scholarship is its fresh approach to the history of the cittern. It concentrates and expands cittern scholarship and is the first work to propose a precise theory of the origins of this musical instrument and its journey of transformation between the Italian and transalpine traditions. Moreover, it is the first work in cittern studies to combine a wide range of literary, technical and musical sources to propose a new way of considering the cittern not only as a worthy musical instrument that has been widely taken for granted but as an important cultural object for the history of the revival of antiquity and a reflection of the transition between 'old' and 'modern' Europe.

1.2 What is a Cittern?

The cittern is a wire-strung plucked musical instrument with a 'tear drop' shape shallow resonator and a relative flat back. One particular characteristic is that the neck is narrower than the fretboard which leaves a thumb rest that eases the playing technique. Citterns have metal frets inserted on the fingerboard and are placed next to a hard-wooden wedge, which is fitted in a sawed slot. The strings are attached to a string holder and pass over a movable bridge located on the soundboard beneath the sound hole. The wire courses are secured around the tuning pegs that are inserted on a peghead or pegbox, which usually has a hook on its back.¹²

A remarkable characteristic of the cittern's sound is what is known as re-entrant tuning, which consists of a non-successive disposition of rising and falling intervals. This arrangement provides a bright chordal accompaniment while also enabling clarity in the melodic phrases.¹³ Another peculiar characteristic is that the third and fourth course can be triple and often strung in octaves, which increases the available voicings of the instrument without complicating the playing technique.¹⁴ Many citterns have what is known as a 'diatonic fretting', which means that some frets extend to the entire width of the fingerboard, some only serve certain courses, while some are completely absent.¹⁵ Although these

¹² A pegbox or peghead are wooden structures that hold the tuning pegs. However, the first has an open space in which the pegs are inserted on the sides. On the contrary, the peghead is a solid piece of wood with holes that receive the pegs. These wooden pins, in the peghead are inset in a frontal fashion.

¹³ Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?"; Wade, "Re-Entrant Tuning."

¹⁴ Hadaway, "The Cittern," 80; Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?"

¹⁵ Crawford Young gives us a useful definition: 'The term "chromatic frets" refers to a fret-layout on the fingerboard of consistent semitones, beginning at the nut and progressing up the neck, moving toward the bridge. "Diatonic frets" refers to a fret-layout which does not feature consecutive semitones, but rather mixes whole tones with semitones in various possible ways.' Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 575.

arrangements simply reflect the necessary notes that were commonly demanded by its repertoire and practice, the diatonic disposition also allowed the players to better orientate themselves as well as to play certain chords easily.¹⁶

Citterns are unique among Renaissance plucked stringed instruments for the symbolism of their decoration. One of the most distinctive ornaments of the cittern is that it presents ‘horns’, scrolls or ‘buckles’ on the shoulders, said to represent the arms of the ancient lyre.¹⁷ Together with these mythological ornaments, citterns distinguish themselves by their grotesques, which are more than just embellishments and function as rich iconographic narratives vividly expressed in carving. These decorations are usually carved at the treble end of the fingerboard; on the back of the instrument, where the neck meets the body, and especially on the peghead. Motifs span from growling mouths with fangs, to botanical squashed characters surrounded by leaves,¹⁸ screaming faces with their tongues sticking out,¹⁹ a transforming Aphrodite,²⁰ sirens being born out of a shell²¹ and, a female monster whose arms turn into leaves that extend all along the back of the instrument.²² One impressive example can be found on the peghead of a cittern by Girolamo Virchi (1523-1574) who has an enigmatic genderless creature with spiral ears, scroll horns, red jewel reptile eyes and a turquoise crown (Figure 1).²³ An important iconographic attribute of different historical citterns is that their entire resonator can be carved in the shape of a seashell, which was a symbol of Aphrodite the goddesses of love, who was born out of the foam of the sea (Figure 1).²⁴

¹⁶ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns”; Huber, “Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments”; Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry”; Hartig, “The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?”

¹⁷ Winternitz, “The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern,” 22,223.

¹⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 10, Table 1.](#)

¹⁹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, Table 1.](#)

²⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 3, Table 2.](#)

²¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 8, Table 1.](#)

²² [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 7, Table 1.](#)

²³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 2.](#)

²⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2, 3, 6, Table 2; Instrument 12, Table 1.](#)



Figure 1. A Cittern. Girolamo Virchi, Cittern, Brescia, Circa 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271). Source : Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.

1.3 Terminology

1.3.1 Cet(e)ra: Sixteenth Century Onwards

The names *cetra* and *cetera* have been used to refer to the cittern from the sixteenth century to present day Italy.²⁵ Nevertheless, confusion arises when this term is used as a synonym of the ancient lyre or generically a ‘musical instrument with strings.’²⁶ For example, Giovanni Maria Artusi (1540-1613) used the term *cetra* as a synonym of the mythological lyre.²⁷ Moreover, in Claudio Monteverdi’s (1567-1643) *L’Orfeo Favola in Musica* (1607), the same term is used to refer to either the cittern, the ancient lyre or the *chitarrone* [theorbo].²⁸

However, in *L’Orfeo* we also find *ceteroni* [large citterns], which are differentiated among the *Taccionoli Cornetti, Trombone and Regali, Viole da braccio, Organi, Clavecimbani, Contrabasso, Arpe* and *Chitaroni*.²⁹ Similarly, Vincenzo Galilei (1520-1591), used the name *cetera* to describe the cittern,³⁰ and in Agostino Agazzari’s (1582-1642) *Del Sonare sopra ’l basso*, published in Siena in 1607, the cittern is listed as *cetera* among the *Liuto, Thorba, Arpa, Lirone* [larger relative of the *lira da braccio*], *Spinetta, Chitarrina, Violino, Pandora*, ‘and the like.’³¹ Furthermore, when discussing cittern strings used in lutes [*liuti*] and *chitarroni*, both Artusi and Alessandro Piccinini (1566-1638) named the cittern as *cetra*.³²

²⁵ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” xii. For a use of a pre-sixteenth century use of the term *cet(e)ra*, see [chapter 2. ‘The Re-birth: The Cittern’s Heritage’](#).

²⁶ The dictionary gives historical examples of variations of the name *cetra*. These names are *cedera, cetera, citara, cyatare, cetere, cetre, cietera, cetera*. “TLIO - Il Dizionario Storico Della Lingua Italiana.”

²⁷ Artusi, *L’ Artusi overo delle imperfettione della moderna musica*, 13,14.

²⁸ Whenham, *Claudio Monteverdi*, 191.

²⁹ Monteverdi, *L’Orfeo Favola in Musica*, ACT IV, 88.

³⁰ Galilei, *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei ... della musica antica, et della moderna*, 147.

³¹ Arnold and Stevens, *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-Bass*, 68; Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra ’l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell’uso Loro Nel Concerto*, 3.

³² Artusi, *L’ Artusi overo delle imperfettione della moderna musica*, 6,7,8; Piccinini, *Intavolatura Di Liuto, et Di Chitarrone*, Libro Primo:5.

1.3.2 Cithara and other Relatives

The transalpine cittern was identified by different names, which were also related to the word *cithara*, a Latinisation of the term *kithara*. At the same time the term *cetra* [*cetera*] was blended into many of the terminological variants.³³ In some cases, the cittern is referred to as *citara* [*cithara*], which can be confusing because other plucked stringed instruments such as the *lira da braccio* could have the same name. Father Pablo Nasarre (1654-1730) stated that the citara was carved, had metal strings, a pyramidal contour with a circular shape in the bottom and frets. This description makes it possible to infer that he was referring to the cittern.³³ However, Sebastián de Covarrubias (1539-1613) explained that the technique to play the citara was based on bowing the strings to produce chords.³⁴ The latter explanation indicates that Covarrubias is referring to the *lira da braccio*.³⁴ Other authors, mainly Spanish, equated the name cittern with citole [*citola*],³⁵ which is the name of the Medieval plucked string used from the twelfth to the fifteenth century.³⁶

1.3.3 Cittern

The term ‘cittern’ with derivations such as *cithren*, *cittharn* and *citharen* is English in nature and it seems to be derived from the word *cistre*, which was the most common term for the cittern in sixteenth-century France.³⁵ An example of this is Adrian Le Roy’s (1520-1598) cittern book entitled *Second Livre de Cistre* and Guillaume Morlaye’s (1510-?) *Quatriesme livre contenant plusieurs fantasies, chansons, gaillardes, paduanes, bransles, reduictes en tabulature de guyterne. Et au jeu de la cistre*.³⁶ In contrast, tablatures from the Low Countries such as 1564 *Nova et elegantissima cithara ludenda carina tum etiam germanica* indicate names such as *cythara*, *cithara* and *cytharae*. Nevertheless, in seventeenth-century Amsterdam the term *citer* was also used, and a cittern builder was called a *citer maker*.³⁷ In the German speaking countries, the cittern was named as *cither*, *cythar*, *zister*, *zittern* and other variations involving the word *cythara*, such as Sixt Kargel’s (1540-1593) *Renovata Cythara* cittern book.³⁸

³³ Nasarre, *Escuela música según la practica moderna*, Book IV. 476.

³⁴ Orozco, *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana o Española*, 288.

³⁵ Page, *The Guitar in Tudor England*, 176; Tyler, “Cittern.”

³⁶ [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

³⁷ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,”

84.

³⁸ Tyler, “Cittern.”

1.3.4 Standardised Terminology

Although these many terms used for the cittern were probably perfectly clear to their users at the time, their variability can prove deceptive to the modern reader. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a standardised terminology has been adopted.³⁹ To make sure that only pertinent sources are considered for this study, this dissertation will only use written evidence with a direct visual or descriptive indication that can allow a clear identification. Firstly, sources including the vernacular name of the instrument [*cittern*, *citer*, *cistre*] are used. Secondly, sources mentioning other instruments and, therefore, allowing for a differentiation between them and the cittern are applied. For example, Agostino Agazzari's treatise and a particular section of *L'Orfeo* are cases in which it is possible to assign the term *cetra* [*cetera*] to the cittern. Thirdly, technical treatises represent a safe source for equating the different terminologies to the cittern because they offer descriptions of tuning and/or manufacture of the instrument. For instance, Vincenzo Galilei's *Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna* represents an ideal source for safely identifying the term *cetra* [*cetera*] with the cittern. Similarly, sources such as Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia Universalis*, which mentions the tuning of the cittern [*cythara*], together with an image of the instrument, represent the ideal type of sources that can allow a clear identification (Figure 2).⁴⁰

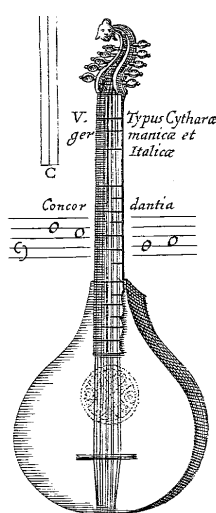


Figure 2. Kircher's Cittern. Athanasius Kircher (Cythara), print, *Musurgia universalis*, 1650, Rome.
Source: Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta* (Rome: Haeredum Pranscisci Corbelletti, 1650), Plate VII, 476. Public Domain.

³⁹ For further clarifications see '[Important Definitions and Conventions](#)'.

⁴⁰ Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, Plate VII, 476.

1.4 Types of Citterns

1.4.1 Italian Traditional Carved Cittern

This study focuses on the three most recurrent types of citterns in music history. The first group is distinguished for having the resonator, neck and peghead made out of a single piece of carved wood, which is a technique known as monoxylic or carved (Figure 3). The body of these type of citterns is tapered, which means that the perimeter of the front's contour diminishes towards the back. Moreover, the depth of the heel is also larger than the height of the bottom.

The soundboard follows a distinctive silhouette essentially formed by a combination of a half a circle and a triangle (Figure 3). however, important characteristic is that the six courses of strings are attached to the bottom by a protruding piece referred to as the comb or string holder and that the pegs are frontal and inserted in the peghead perpendicularly in relation to the strings.⁴¹ This group of instruments originates from the Italian Peninsula, particularly from the making centres of Urbino and Brescia, however many of them have an unknown exact origin within Italy.⁴² Although the historical extant citterns date from the sixteenth century, iconography shows examples dating as far as the second half of the seventeenth. Monoxylic citterns are usually referred to as the 'traditional Italian carved,' which will be a term that will be continuously used throughout this work.⁴³

⁴¹ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 34; Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, Plate VII, 476.

⁴² There is a subgroup that includes instruments that, although are not carved, their construction is an imitation of the carved technique. See Appendix 2, Table 1.

⁴³ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 33.



Figure 3. Italian Traditional Carved Cittern. Augustinus Citaraedus, Italian Carved Traditional Cittern, 1582, Urbino, Victoria and Albert Museum, currently at loan at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Source: Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

The tuning of the carved traditional cittern was first specified by Giovanni Maria Lanfranco (1490-1545) in his *Scintille di musica* published in 1533.⁴⁴ Assuming that the top string is tuned on the note *e*, as suggested by several musical sources from the second half of the sixteenth century,⁴⁵ Lanfranco's disposition can be established as *e'– d'd'– gg'– b– c'– a*. This tuning is an out of order hexachord, or as Lanfranco specified, a *hessachordo maggiore*,⁴⁶ which is a series of six notes ascending stepwise through two whole tones, a semitone and two further whole tones.⁴⁷ In comparison with all other plucked and bowed strings of the sixteenth century, the Italian hexachord tuning stands alone as it is

⁴⁴ Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giovan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 139,140.

⁴⁵ Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*; Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern."

⁴⁶ Lanfranco did not specified pitches and he specifically assigned a major hexachord for his cittern, which was *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*, or *c,d,e,f,g,a*. Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giovan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 139,140.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*; Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern."

rooted in Medieval and Humanist traditions, thereby giving the Italian cittern an artistic, social, and historically rich identity. These topics are discussed in depth in Chapter 3, ‘The Transformation of the Cittern in the Italian Peninsula’.

1.4.2 Brescian

The second important group is constituted by six extant historical instruments all made in the Italian city of Brescia during the second half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ The Brescian citterns are distinguished for having a fine craftsmanship influenced by the famous violin making tradition of the city.⁴⁹ The resonator of these instruments is not carved like in the traditional Italian examples, and instead is built in several pieces and always presents chromatic fretting. Another important difference is the string holder, which instead of protruding from the body, is made of a hardwood edge provided with metal pins. These citterns, as opposed to the carved type, have a more rounded resonator contour, which is characterised by the upper counter curves that complement the circular bottom (Figure 4).⁵⁰ The Brescian instruments follow a six-course tuning described by Paolo Virchi (1551-1610),⁵¹ the son of Girolamo Virchi (1523-1574), who is considered one of the greatest known cittern makers (Figure 5).⁵²



Figure 4. Brescian Cittern. Paolo Maggini, Cittern, 1580-1631, Brescia, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. nr. C62). Source: Courtesy of Alfons Huber. © Kunsthistorisches Museum.

⁴⁸ See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns](#).

⁴⁹ Hadaway, “The Cittern”; Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano.”

⁵⁰ For specific differences between the two types the reader can check Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry.”

⁵¹ Paolo Virchi’s tuning is part of a series of advance tuning created for the citterns. A similar example is lutenist and composer Sixt Kargel, (circa 1540-after 1593), who published an important set of printed cittern music between 1575 and 1578. See [Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings](#).

⁵² Unfortunately, only three historical citterns made by him survive in public collections. See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2 and 3, Table 2. Instrument 6, could arguably be also from Virchi.](#)

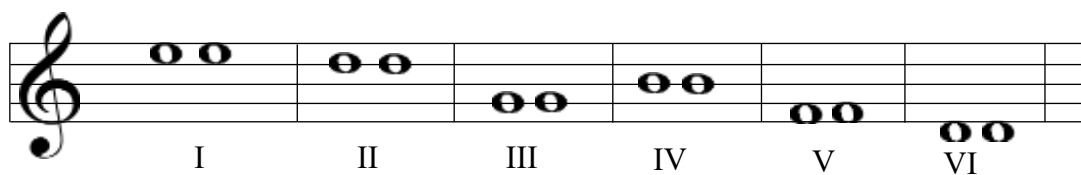


Figure 5. Virchi's Tuning. Paolo Virchi's Cittern Tuning, 1574, Venice. Source: William May, 'A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's *Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara* (1574)' (Brigham Young University, 1986).

1.4.3 Transalpine

The term 'transalpine' is a generalisation used by scholar and polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), who divided cittern tunings between Italian and 'ultramontane'.⁵³ In parallel, other contemporary writers made a clear distinction between citterns built outside the Italian tradition.⁵⁴ Although this division is a generalisation and does not necessarily reflect the specific variety of existent citterns built north of the Alps, it does indicate that these two large categories existed in contemporary perception. Part of this division is explained because historical instruments that come from the transalpine regions (in particular England, Germany, France and the Low Countries) show fundamental differences to the traditional carved Italian type.⁵⁵

The biggest differences between the two types include that the transalpine cittern has generally only four or five sets of strings, is built in several pieces and generally does not have a hook on the back of its pegbox. The latter, instead of being a solid piece of wood, is made as a hollow box where the tuning pegs are fitted on the sides. Figure 6 shows a historical cittern probably built in France during the sixteenth century showing how the transalpine type still retained the scrolls, the fingerboard wedges and a resonator made in a tear drop shape. Moreover, the transalpine model has the traditional style of building, which consists in keeping the neck narrower than the fingerboard. Such a method comes from

⁵³ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, Plate XVI, 99; Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, Book IV, 32; Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, Book VI, 479.

⁵⁴ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, Plate XVI, 99; Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, Book IV, 32; Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, Book VI, 479.

⁵⁵ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 40.

the Italian carved instruments or perhaps a late *cetra*.⁵⁶ These characteristics remained relatively constant throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; however, transalpine citterns showed variations in their manufacture depending on their place of production. Scarce historical instruments are ascribed to France and the Low Countries, the German-Speaking Countries and England.⁵⁷ However, more than fifty paintings made by seventeenth century Dutch artists show a common type of cittern, which is similar to the historical examples and can be defined as the ‘Franco-Flemish’ type.⁵⁸ Correspondingly, a vast number of tablatures coming from the same regions confirm the popularity of this type of cittern.⁵⁹

Besides the scarce presence of English citterns, a few iconographic examples of the British Isles survive.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the significant amount of published music⁶¹ and its recurrent mention in written evidence are proof of the importance of the cittern in English early modern musical culture.⁶² The English cittern had the basic similarities with the transalpine instruments, yet it distinguishes itself for always having a chromatic fingerboard (Figure 7).

⁵⁶ The narrower neck allowed the left-hand thumb to slide along the length and, thus, facilitated playing and kept accuracy.

⁵⁷ Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Michel, “Zistern.” [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Table 3.](#)

⁵⁸ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography.](#)

⁵⁹ [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

⁶⁰ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography.](#)

⁶¹ The reader can find the numerous publications of English cittern music, which are categorised under ‘Italian Tuning’. [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

⁶² Examples are 1570. *A Lamentable Tragedy Mixed Ful of Pleasant Mirth*, Thomas Preston, printed by Iohn Allde, London/1604. *The Dutch Courtesan*, John Marston, London/1604. *The Honest Whore*, Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, London/1606. *Volpone*, Ben Jonson, London/1609. *Epicoene*, Ben Jonson, London.



Figure 6. Transalpine Cittern. Unknown Maker, Cittern, 16th Century, France, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. D.AD. 32026). Source: Musée de la Musique, “Cistre guiterne,” accessed March 6, 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès



Figure 7. Eglantine Table. Unknown Maker, intarsia, circa 1567, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire. Source: National Trust, ‘Hardwick Hall’s so-Called “Aeglentyne” [or Eglantine] Table - circa 1568’, accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/image/1191895>. ©National Trust Images/John Hammond/Property Released.

Figure 8 shows the two tunings that were recurrently used for the transalpine cittern, which are known as ‘Italian Tuning’ ($e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-bb$) and ‘French Tuning’ ($e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-aa'a'$).⁶³ The first is mainly found on musical sources coming from France and the Low Countries, while the latter is found in English tablatures.⁶⁴ The essential difference between the two dispositions is that in the Italian system the fourth course is a b while in the ‘French’ is an a .

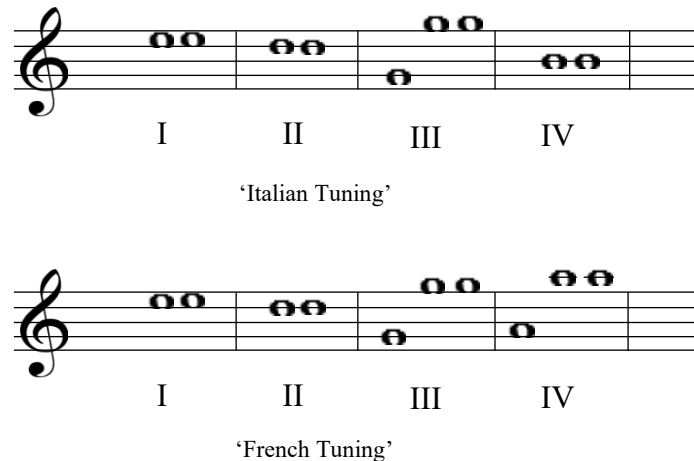


Figure 8. Italian and French Tuning. Source: Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, trans. David Crookes, Early Music Series (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 60,61.

1.5 Literature Review

As mentioned in the ‘Introduction’, existing literature on the cittern has made significant contributions mostly on repertoire, origins and technical documentation of existing instruments. In this literature review this past research will be explored in greater detail, considering especially the contributions that are useful to the present project and the gaps that remain to be addressed.

1.5.1 Citterns from the Italian Peninsula

As opposed to the transalpine type, the Italian traditional cittern has been the focus of few studies. One of the first scholars to deal with this tradition in the 1960s was Ivan Francis Waldbauer in his doctoral thesis on the cittern in the sixteenth century and its music in France and the Low Countries.⁶⁵ Regarding the transformation inside the Italian Peninsula, Waldbauer mentioned the *revolution* of

⁶³ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60, 61.

⁶⁴ [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

⁶⁵ The scholar used the following important iconographic example, already explained in Chapter 2: Girolamo dai Libri, *Virgin with Two Saints*, 1526, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona (Figure*). See section 2.4 From Block Frets to a Wedged Fingerboard. Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries.”

instrumental music of the late fifteenth century as the factor that eventually led to extend the range of the *cetra*, thus creating proto-citterns as early as the 1530's using important iconographic examples.⁶⁶ Waldbauer explained how the addition of strings to the *cetra* increased the number of chords available on open strings, which was part of a development that according to him, never achieved its full potential, claiming that the Italian traditional cittern was 'primitive.'⁶⁷ Waldbauer considers the transformation of the *cetra* into the cittern and its further developments outside the Italian Peninsula as a 'progress' that was not as sophisticated as with other instruments such as the transformation of the lute.⁶⁸ Andreas Michel referred to the same type of carved Italian Peninsular citterns as 'archaic types of instruments, some of which still have a Medieval building tradition.'⁶⁹

Emanuel Winternitz wrote an influential article on the history of the cittern, which stands out as the first work to reveal the lyre-like iconological features of the cittern, both present in sixteenth and seventeenth instruments and also in the *cetra* and citole. Winternitz also mentioned how these features were the vestiges of the ancient *kithara*, and thus, for the first time revealing the cittern's rich humanist heritage.⁷⁰ Regarding the cittern's origins there has been significant research, that has established that the Italian cittern is a direct transformation of the *cetra*,⁷¹ which is either a forerunner or a variant of the citole.⁷²

This perception is partially based on considering the hexachord tuning, which is the disposition assigned to the traditional six course Italian cittern, as having musical limitations.⁷³ Ephraim Segerman partially agreed with the so-called 'shortcomings' of the Italian traditional cittern; however, he was one

⁶⁶ Waldbauer, 135.

⁶⁷ Waldbauer, 164.

⁶⁸ Waldbauer, 334.

⁶⁹ Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Michel, "Zistern."

⁷⁰ Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity."

⁷¹ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta"; Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 26–27; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 75.

⁷² Young, "La Cetra Cornuta"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400"; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern"; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries."

⁷³ Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

of the first scholars to distinguish the tradition, emphasizing its importance by stating that the hexachord was part of a special humanist practice of the cittern, not to be confused with the lute.⁷⁴

Similarly, Robert Hadaway considered the Italian type as more valuable than ‘those modern objects masquerading as English or even continental citterns.’⁷⁵ A decade later after Hadaway’s article, the instruments from the Italian Peninsula underwent significant studies,⁷⁶ almost all of them by the cittern maker Peter Forrester, who is still studying this subject.⁷⁷ Forrester’s work is based on the examination of several historical instruments,⁷⁸ a characterisation of several of the known and documented surviving instruments⁷⁹ and the making of copies of several instruments throughout the decades.⁸⁰

His article on the citterns housed at the Musée de la Musique in Paris is probably one of the first public examinations of these historical musical instruments, which later culminated into a division of extant instruments into similar string lengths.⁸¹

The extensive study of fretting patterns mainly done by Louis Peter Grijp was another milestone in cittern studies for it presented the theory of considering the diatonic fretting changes, which came from the Medieval *cetra*, as a ‘progress’ that culminated with the ‘full-fledged chromatic fretting’ of the Brescian citterns.⁸² At the same time, Grijp was able, probably for the first time, to explain how a diatonic fretting would facilitate fingering and orientation, which in turn explained why it was kept in citterns well into the seventeenth century.⁸³ Crawford Young in his study of the *cetra*, confirmed the probability that the predecessor of the cittern had a diatonic fret arrangement which, because of its

⁷⁴ Segerman, 87.

⁷⁵ Hadaway, “The Cittern,” 77.

⁷⁶ Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire”; Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry”; Forrester, “Die Laute in Europa. II: Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen Und Cistern/The Lute in Europe. II: Lutes, Guitars, Mandolins and Citterns”; Forrester, “Comm. 466”; Forrester, “A Short History of the Cittern.”

⁷⁷ Forrester, “The Cittern”; Forrester, *Historical Wire-Strung Instrument Construction*.

⁷⁸ Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire.”

⁷⁹ Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry.”

⁸⁰ Forrester.

⁸¹ Forrester; Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire.”

⁸² Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 86; Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*; Huber, “Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments.”

⁸³ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 86; Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*; Huber, “Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments.”

usefulness survived in later transformations of the instrument.⁸⁴ Andrew Hartig has provided the most important data base for cittern studies in his website *Renovata Cithara*, which compiles a vast amount of previous scholarship, lists of instruments, musical sources, iconography and recordings.⁸⁵

Significant efforts have been made regarding the analysis of historical citterns.⁸⁶ For example, the instruments at the Musée de la Musique, mainly built by Girolamo Virchi, have been the subject of in-depth organological studies,⁸⁷ and other important works are Kevin Coates's analysis on a cittern built by Girolamo Virchi.⁸⁸ Further research has been occupied with the attempts made to further enhance the musical value of the cittern in the late sixteenth century. There has been interesting research by John M. Ward who suggested how the economic necessities of the early modern musician influenced the adoption of instruments that were more popular with the higher classes, which had the financial means to sponsor and higher them. The practice of mainstream instruments, such as the lute and the harpsichord would then dominate the performance of other plucked stringed instruments, which would be 'enhanced' in order to mimic the predominant trends.⁸⁹ A perfect example of the 'advanced' cittern practice is the Brescian tradition, which has been the subject matter of scholars.⁹⁰

The scholarship of the Italian cittern has had little output regarding the technical and social process of transformation of the Italian instruments, their Medieval past and the dramatic transformations that took place in the sixteenth century.⁹¹ Winternitz's theory of considering the cittern a relic of the ancient *kithara*⁹² presents scarce evidence considering the fact that it deals with a scope of several centuries of

⁸⁴ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 576, 577.

⁸⁵ Hartig, "The Renaissance Cittern Site: [Http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com](http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com)"; Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?"

⁸⁶ Forrester, "Die Laute in Europa. II: Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen Und Cistern/The Lute in Europe. II: Lutes, Guitars, Mandolins and Citterns"; Barber, Harris, and Sayce, "Citterns"; Hellwig, "Makers' Marks on Plucked Instruments of the 16th and 17th Centuries."

⁸⁷ Dugot and Gétreau, "Citterns in French Public Collections."

⁸⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 2.](#)

⁸⁹ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 72.

⁹⁰ May, "A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's *Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara* (1574)"; Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*; Ravasio, "Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano"; Bugini, "Sugli Strumenti Musicali Intagliati Ed Intarsiati Del Rinascimento Bresciano"; Bugini, "Un Cavigliere 'al Femminile' Di Parmigianinesca Leziosità: La Cetera D.MR.R.434 Del Musée de La Musique Di Parigi."

⁹¹ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 57–58; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

⁹² Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Cithole: A Case of Mistaken Identity."

different European cultural contexts, ranging from late antiquity to the seventeenth century.⁹³ This subject matter exceeds the objectives of this dissertation, which will not attempt to verify if the cittern is a late product of the Greek lyre. Nevertheless, this study will raise the question, not only of whether the Renaissance mind considered the cittern and the *cetra* as relatives of the mythological plucked string, but whether these two plucked string instruments are merely different technological stages of the same instrument. The humanist lyre culture underpinning the cittern had fundamental implications for the cultural meanings of the instrument, yet previous studies have not thoroughly dealt with this significance; therefore, this topic will be a fundamental query of this dissertation.

It is necessary to acknowledge direct and contextual historical evidence that places the *birth* of the cittern as a process initiated in the Italian Peninsula. First, it is important to consider the two major forces governing the development of the cittern in the Italian Peninsula because such catalysts created a coalition between two incompatible artistic trends: one bound to a humanist culture and a Medieval past and the other heading towards independence and innovation, which was a characteristic of the growing capitalist mentality of early modern Europe and a characteristic of the revolving state of the sixteenth century. At the same time, there is the need to consider humanism as the central intellectual movement that shaped this process of transformation and allowed for the lyre-like iconological features of the *cetra* to be preserved in the Italian traditional cittern. Moreover, current knowledge on the Brescian cittern school needs to explore in greater depth how such tradition attempted to balance a humanist tradition with musical innovation. There is a need to explain the social and economic factors surrounding the appearance of the Brescian practice in relation to a broad analysis of the object's history and the past research on the international influences of other advances practices such as the cittern books of Anthony Holborne (1545 -1602)⁹⁴ and Sixt Kargel.⁹⁵

Cittern scholarship has not dealt with the musical function of the hexachord and its relation to the cittern's forerunner, the *cetra*. Moreover, there has not been a discussion of the humanist meaning, of

⁹³ Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," Vol, 1, 6-7.

⁹⁴ Jeffery, "Antony Holborne," 129.

⁹⁵ Craig-McFeely, "Reviewed Works: Toppel Cythar. Nova Eaque Artificiosa et Valde Commoda Ratio Ludendae Cytharae (1575) by Sixt Kärgele, Johan Dominico Lais; Il Primo Libro D'Intavolatura Di Liuto (1620) by Michelagnolo Galilei; Albrecht Werl's Lutebook (c.1625-55) by Albrecht Werl, Robert Spencer."

this tuning, which places the Italian traditional cittern as a significant attempt of sixteenth century humanists to revive the Greek lyre of antiquity. Moreover, few works have questioned why the hexachord tuning was kept in the Italian Peninsula and why some scholars considered it as ‘primitive.’⁹⁶ The hexachord tuning has not only not been considered as an intrinsic part of the poetic practices of the cittern, but in general, the role of the cittern in the Renaissance poetic ethos has been widely neglected in recent works.⁹⁷

1.5.2 Transalpine Cittern Scholarship

Francis Ivan Francis Waldbauer provided one of the earliest, most comprehensive works on the transalpine cittern focusing on the cittern in France and the Low Countries. Waldbauer clearly stated how the transalpine instrument had a different function than the Italian models, which were to ‘satisfy lesser demands.’⁹⁸ Waldbauer stated how popular the ‘Franco-Flemish’ cittern was during the first half of the sixteenth century. Moreover, he considered his repertoire as a ‘uniformly, sketchy and poverty-stricken style aimed at the least demanding segment of the public’,⁹⁹ and, thus belonged to a commercial endeavour based on commodification of the instrument and its music. Waldbauer relied on a thorough study made by Francois Lesure, who through archival research was able to compile a great number of inventories of musical instrument makers and musicians, indicating details on prices and types of citterns made on a highly active, innovating, and competitive market of instruments that characterised the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Further repertoire research emphasizes the commercial endeavour of French publishers, mainly Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard, who transformed the cittern into an accessible instrument to be adapted to more complex polyphonic practices.¹⁰¹

Ivan Francis Waldbauer in his doctoral dissertation, for example, maintained the cittern of France and the southern Low Countries connected as one group, practically sharing the same conclusions based

⁹⁶ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 57,58.

⁹⁷ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 8; Dempsey, *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture*.

⁹⁸ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 193.

⁹⁹ Waldbauer, 169.

¹⁰⁰ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 14,1,14.

¹⁰¹ Vanhulst, “Édition Comparative Des Instructions Pour Le Luth, Le Cistre et La Guitare Publiées a Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse (1545-1570)”; Goldobin, “Обработка Вокальной Полифонии Для Гитары и Для Цистры в XVI Веке”; Vanhulst, “Les Emprunts Aux Éditions Perdues de Le Roy et Ballard Identifiables Dans Le Répertoire Pour Instruments à Cordes Pincées Publié à Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse”; Vanhulst, “L’instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l’Hortulus Citharae (1582).”

on the many similar publications of printed music shared between the two countries. For example, he combined the prints of Guillaume Morlaye, Simone Gorlier with Sebastian Vreedman (1542 – late 16th century) and Phalese (1545 – 1629) who were of Flemish origin.¹⁰² Waldbauer proposed that the cittern from the Low Countries is not significantly different than French type and that the French, Flemish and Netherlandish cittern would indeed be a model suited for the rising upper middle class, which was stronger in the Low Countries than in France.¹⁰³

Apart from the technical study made by Joël Dugot and Florence Gétreau, the few extant historical French citterns have not been thoroughly studied yet, however, there has been some analysis of their repertoire, again pointing out the commercial endeavour by French publishers, mainly Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard of using the cittern as an accessible instrument to adapted intricate polyphonic performance.¹⁰⁴

Louis Peter Grijp did significant work regarding the cittern in the Netherlands, establishing an important presence in Antwerp and Amsterdam through archival research and inspection of fretting patterns.¹⁰⁵ Grijp mentioned how popular the instrument was not only because of its presence in seventeenth century Dutch iconography, but because of the evidence provided by archival research on cittern makers.¹⁰⁶

More work on the Netherlandish cittern continued with the research and reconstruction of two identical instruments from a shipwreck, transported as merchandise most likely from Amsterdam to north Netherlands in Zuyderzee. Luthier Sebastian Núñez and Louis Peter Grijp produced valuable research for cittern studies, disseminating cittern types that were most likely made not as luxurious commodities but more as more accessible instruments to diverse layers of Netherlandish society.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Mayer Brown, “Vredeman”; Bain, “Phalèse, Pierre (Ii).”

¹⁰³ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 180.

¹⁰⁴ Vanhulst, “Édition Comparative Des Instructions Pour Le Luth, Le Cistre et La Guitare Publiées a Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse (1545-1570)”; Goldobin, “Обработка Вокальной Полифонии Для Гитары и Для Цистры в XVI Веке”; Vanhulst, “Les Emprunts Aux Éditions Perdues de Le Roy et Ballard Identifiables Dans Le Répertoire Pour Instruments à Cordes Pincées Publié à Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse”; Vanhulst, “L’instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l’Hortulus Citharae (1582).”

¹⁰⁵ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern”; Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns.”

¹⁰⁶ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 83.

¹⁰⁷

Grijp, 79; Núñez and Estevez, “Two Dutch Citterns from a 17th Century Shipwreck: Description of the Remains and of the Reconstruction.”

Research on the cittern of the German speaking countries has been extensively developed by Andreas Michel, who established the Germanic cittern phenomenon as a long ‘unbroken tradition’ with a ‘history of more than 400 years.’ Important for this project is Michel’s evidence on how the Italian influence is evident in the Germanic cittern.¹⁰⁸ Michel gives a wide range of evidence, often inventory records and court statements, that establishes how deeply and quickly the cittern entered the life of the Germanic cities, where places such as Thuringia, Sachsen, Wurttemberg, Dresden and Saxony show evidence of the cittern’s significant social and musical use.¹⁰⁹ Although the instrument was absorbed by the courts, especially in Saxony, by the end of the sixteenth century it was already part of all social layers of Germanic society even becoming a traditional instrument in domestic settings in Dresden, Leipzig, Bavaria and Thuringia. By the seventeenth century, for example, the instrument was well placed in the social fabric of Saxony miners.¹¹⁰ As scholarship and later evidence will show the early German cittern was most likely a prototype for the great majority of transalpine citterns¹¹¹ and is very difficult to divide this type into nations as all shared multiple common features.¹¹²

In 1932 Francis Galpin provided what became the common scholarly opinion of the English cittern for the following decades. Although used by nobles, ‘it was most frequently to be found in taverns and barber shops, where it provided entertainment for customers when daily papers were unknown.’ Besides the common association of citterns with barbers, Galpin mentioned the grotesque head of citterns and how the instrument was used in English drama of the early seventeenth century, which was another opinion widely shared among scholars.¹¹³ Concurrently, subsequent scholarship by Thurston Dart presented the English cittern as a popular, cheaper, easy to play and louder instrument, in comparison to the lute. Dart also used a wide range of literary evidence showing the relevance of the cittern for the

¹⁰⁸ Michel, “Quellen Zur Geschichte Der Zister in Sachsen Vom 16. Bis 19. Jahrhundert.”

¹⁰⁹ Michel, *Zistern: Europäische Zupfinstrumente von Der Renaissance Bis Zum Historismus*; Michel, *Zistern*, 1999.

¹¹⁰ Michel, *Zistern: Europäische Zupfinstrumente von Der Renaissance Bis Zum Historismus*.

¹¹¹ The German cittern can be easily described as the rest of transalpine citterns. For a more detail description see [section 1.2 ‘Types of Citterns’](#). For a specific description of the German surviving citterns see [Appendix 2. Table 3. Instrument 8.](#)

¹¹² An exception could be the so-called Franco-Flemish cittern. [See section 4.3.5 ‘The Surviving Instruments.’](#) and [section 4.1 The Origins and Italian Influence.](#)

¹¹³ Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*, 29.

English upper classes in the second half of sixteenth century,¹¹⁴ and also revealed important social roles of the cittern in consort ensembles.¹¹⁵

John M. Ward provided a fundamental work in cittern studies with a wide range of literary evidence about the performance and social role of the cittern in England, firstly used as by nobles to be later owned by wider sections of the English social strata.¹¹⁶ By the mid 1970's Segerman compiled and expanded the current scholarship of cittern studies and at least for a decade was one of the main authors to research this instrument.¹¹⁷ In fact, the work of Ward was considered by Ephraim Segerman as an 'an excellent compilation of source materials illustrating the changing social roles of the cittern and guitar.'¹¹⁸

Segerman along with Ward was one of the first scholars to state how English instruments were a 'modelled' out of French and Italian citterns.¹¹⁹ However, Ward mentioned how printed music for the cittern, found in virtually all English tablatures, was of a questionable quality, which is an opinion also shared by James Tyler, when he spoke about the earliest French cittern published tablature by Guillaume Morlaye (1510-?), the *Quatriesme Livre Contenant Plusieurs Fantasies*.¹²⁰ Ephraim Segerman, however, confirmed a 'lack of sophistication in the English repertoire', which can be changed due to the 'level of interpretation of competent players.'¹²¹

Peter Forrester has been one of the most prolific researchers on both Italian and transalpine citterns. Active since 1976 and publishing articles since 1983, he has presented significant research on this wire strung plucked stringed instrument. Key publications concern almost always historical musical instruments, which virtually continuously make an important difference between Italian instruments

¹¹⁴ Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music," 49.

¹¹⁵ Dart, "Morley's Consort Lessons of 1599," 2-9.

¹¹⁶ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983.

¹¹⁷ Abbott and Segerman, "The Cittern in England before 1700," 25.

¹¹⁸ Segerman, "Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century," 393.

¹¹⁹ Abbott and Segerman, "The Cittern in England before 1700," 28.

¹²⁰ The full title is *Quatriesme Livre Contenant Plusieurs Fantasies Chansons, Gaillardes, Paduanes, Bransles, reduictes en Tabulature de Guyterne, / & au jeu de la Cistre, par Maistre Guillaume Morlaye, / & autres bons auteurs*. Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*, 138; Morlaye, *Quatriesme livre contenant plusieurs fantasies, chansons, gaillardes, paduanes, bransles, reduictes en tabulature de guyterne. Et au jeu de la cistre*.

¹²¹ Segerman, "Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century," 395.

and those made north of the Alps.¹²² Forrester, as shown in previous articles,¹²³ has also made interesting points regarding the history of the cittern and the development of metallurgy in sixteenth century Europe.¹²⁴ One of the latest's works of Peter Forrester deals with a thorough description and contextualisation of the cittern depiction in the Eglantine Table of Hardwick Hall.¹²⁵

Micheal Fleming and Cristopher Page have made also important contributions to the history of the English cittern by documenting a similar use to the guitar.¹²⁶ In their 'Early English Viols', Michael Fleming and John Bryan have presented important research for the history of English citterns, since they have reported the presence of these instruments in several documents highlighting makers names in inventories and other archival documents.¹²⁷ Such authors have emphasized the role of the upper middle classes and the cittern's capacity to play music of a 'considerable diversity and social range.'¹²⁸

Benjamin Hebbert, dealer, and consultant of fine bowed instruments introduced the first and currently only surviving English cittern.¹²⁹ When this instrument was found in 2007 at Christie's Rockefeller Centre in New York city, its provenance was not defined yet; however, Hebbert, working for Christies at the time as a consultant was able to suggest the English provenance by comparing it with other seventeenth century English viols. Further studies, including a full technical drawing by Jonathan Santa Maria de Bouquet were made at the National Music Museum, which was the institution that finally became the cittern's permanent home.

Although there is significant research on the repertoire attributed to France and Low Countries,¹³⁰ England,¹³¹ as well as on the Germanic cittern tradition,¹³² the cittern has been neglected in certain recent general works. For example, Stewart Carter mentioned that Victor Coelho and Keith Polk in their

¹²² Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 41.

¹²³ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry."

¹²⁴ Forrester, "The Cittern," 153.

¹²⁵ Forrester, 156.

¹²⁶ Page, "The Gittern or Guitar," 140–42.

¹²⁷ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*.

¹²⁸ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 143.

¹²⁹ Hebbert, "The Forensic Challenges of a Renaissance Cittern."

¹³⁰ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries."

¹³¹ Ward, "Sprightly and Cheerful Musick," 1985; Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music"; Weigand, "The Cittern Repertoire"; Abbott and Segerman, "The Cittern in England before 1700"; Forrester, "Comm. 931"; Forrester, "Comm. 1445: The Cittern in Consort"; Forrester, "Comm. 1481: English Citterns"; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern."

¹³² Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Michel, "Zistern"; Michel, "Quellen Zur Geschichte Der Zister in Sachsen Vom 16. Bis 19. Jahrhundert."

‘Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420-1600’ do not mention the wide transalpine repertoire available.¹³³ There is a need to connect them with their major Italian influences based on the history of the early cittern and *cetra*. Moreover, there has not been an explanation of the transalpine cittern as phenomenon linked with consumerism and the rise of the upper-middle class sectors, which has led to a lack of analysis of the musical and social uses of the cittern inside its specific socio-historic contexts.

It is also necessary to question whether the creation of the transalpine instruments was potentialized by individual economic enterprises such as Adrian Le Roy’s (1520-1598) and Robert Ballard’s (1525-1588) cittern books.¹³⁴ Furthermore, a more in-depth reflexion is needed on the change of use, manufacture, and significance of the transalpine cittern within the musical culture of the instrumental ensembles of the late sixteenth century. For example, no one has asked why the citterns from the Italian Peninsula were sometimes considered more valuable than the transalpine examples.¹³⁵

There should be more emphasis on the fact that even for the earliest French publishers, the cittern was something new and different than the guitar, and its repertoire was much more of an adaptation to other in-vogue plucked stringed instruments, notably the lute. This means that the music of the transalpine cittern was in its beginnings a repertoire that was hardly compatible to the manufacture of the instrument, and this adaptation process was mainly done by selling printed music for a growing demand of music and musical instruments. Moreover, scholarship stills need to place the cittern’s predecessor, the *cetra*, into context by comparing it not only with transalpine instruments, since their material similarities are, in essence, Italianate features.

In certain cases, previous research has misjudged the musical capacities of the cittern, referring to it as ‘limited’ or ‘archaic.’¹³⁶ Moreover, the French and Low Countries repertoire has been thought of as having an inferior quality when generally compared to the lute repertoire, and some scholars considered

¹³³ Carter, “Review of Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420–1600,” 857.

¹³⁴ 1564. *Second Livre de Cistre*, Adrian Le Roy, Paris / 1565. *Breve et facile instruction pour apprendre la tablature*, Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard, Paris. [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

¹³⁵ Hadaway, “The Cittern,” 77.

¹³⁶ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music,” 46; Hadaway, “The Cittern,” 77; Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 57,58; Weigand, “Reviewed Work: The Complete Works of Antony Holborne: Volume II, Music for Cittern by Antony Holborne, Masakata Kanazawa”; Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century,” 395; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

the English cittern tuning, also known as ‘Italian’, as a ‘degraded Italian tuning.’¹³⁷ However, no one has asked yet why the transalpine cittern had a simplified ‘French’ and ‘Italian’ disposition, meaning the four-course popular type as instead of the six-course, and why would it be considered a degradation. There is a need to question whether the bifurcation between the Italian and transalpine cittern had significant implications on the musical function of the instruments and, thus, on their social roles, and to consider the commodification process of the transalpine cittern, which relies on the fact that the instrument was launched to a musical cultural market that fundamentally altered its use and meaning. In addition, the true musical practice of the cittern remains to be discovered as tablatures that were highly exchangeable commodities do not represent the music of this instrument, which is ultimately a subject of a historically informed experimentation.¹³⁸

Studies have mentioned associations of the transalpine cittern with barbers,¹³⁹ prostitution,¹⁴⁰ comic roles linked with its grotesque decorations and other misogynous meanings.¹⁴¹ However, none of them have centred on deconstructing such connotations and, consequently, their role in making the cittern a symbol of low status and social control.¹⁴² The transalpine cittern’s complex change of meanings throughout its historical trajectory often displays different positive and negative values that are an important factor for the role of the instrument in the formation of social relations and categories. This topic remains to be further examined, which will allow us to understand the cittern as a valuable historical document for early modern musical culture.

In general, cittern scholarships needs more technical studies, since only a few instruments compared to the large body of surviving examples have been systematically examined and publicly documented.¹⁴³ Moreover, there has been a lack of cittern specialists, leaving technical studies often to

¹³⁷ Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century,” 395; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

¹³⁸ Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century,” 395.

¹³⁹ Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century”; Ward, “Sprightly and Cheerful Musick,” 1985.

¹⁴⁰ E. Maguire, “Cultural Control in the Shrew,” 26; Kanelos and Kozusko, *Thunder at a Playhouse*, 105.

¹⁴¹ Abbott and Segerman, “The Cittern in England before 1700,” 40; Semler, *The Early Modern Grotesque*; Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*; Russo, *The Female Grotesque*; Schur, *Labeling Women Deviant*.

¹⁴² Leppert, “Music, Representation, and Social Order in Early-Modern Europe,” 25; Cook and Tsou, *Cecilia Reclaimed*, 63, 64; Tick, Ericson, and Koskoff, “Women in Music.”

¹⁴³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns.](#)

barely a handful of scholars throughout the decades. There is need for more information on the manufacture of citterns, and more importantly, is essential to contextualize such evidence with its cultural trajectory. There is also a wider need for an open understanding of the social life of the instrument following a cultural study of its evidence across its journey through the European continent based on a substantial number of diverse historical sources. It is important to re-consider the *cetra*-cittern trajectory as the common thread among the different processes of transformation that started in the Italian Peninsula and moved towards the north of the Alps in a heterogeneous way. There is a need to present the cittern as products of the dramatic transformations of social and economic systems of sixteenth century Europe. Such processes obeyed broader cultural factors such as the social functions of music inside courts that increased the demand for instrumental music, which in turn placed the cittern in constant transformation. The examination of this cultural dynamic will allow the cittern's craft and music to be assimilated under a comprehensive view of its cultural significance.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Considerations on Material Culture

Acknowledging the recent developments in music and material culture, the author, having in mind the particular history of the cittern in early modern Europe, has proposed a methodological perspective that will help understand the cittern's cultural significance.

The term 'material culture' itself is almost impossible to define and has been used loosely since the early eighties. Material culture studies are a reaction to the conception of dividing the physical world with the intellectual, and assign an agency to the material world, which would dramatically change other dimensions of culture.¹⁴⁴ This field of studies appeals to the understanding of the 'material dimension' to explain culture and to give objects and their study the same epistemological hierarchy as sociology, geography, literature and economics.¹⁴⁵ Daniel Miller, for example established that one of the first phases of material culture studies was based on acknowledging that 'things matter' and that an

¹⁴⁴ Tilley et al., *Handbook of Material Culture*.

¹⁴⁵ Tilley et al., 1; Anne Gerritsen editor and Giorgio Riello editor, *Writing Material Culture History*.

emphasis on the material worlds would reveal how much they are entangled with social worlds.¹⁴⁶ Material culture studies have become rather complex as they sometimes provide a radical independence to materiality, sometimes, granting objects with behavioural freedom, anarchy and mystic properties.¹⁴⁷ In a similar way, the concept of materiality has become incredible complex, diffuse, and entangled.

Large compass of materiality: the ephemeral, the imaginary, the biological and the theoretical; all that which would have been external to the simple definition of an artefact.¹⁴⁸

In musicology, materialistic thinking is expanding¹⁴⁹ and questions of how identities are built by music and materiality, and the role of technologies in the creations of musical canons are in the centre of recent studies.¹⁵⁰

Musicology seems to place musical instruments as an element of a wide collection of entities loosely called ‘materiality,’ and organology has placed instruments as crucial factors for understanding music both as an art form and a cultural product. Assertive approaches have placed musical instruments within the field of cultural heritage, which would inevitably bring to the table their relationship with people and their capacity to create meanings.¹⁵¹ Moreover, their involvement in iconography has proven to evoke a wide range of symbolic associations.¹⁵² Other approaches have coined the term ‘critical organology’, as John Koster has pointed out, which broadens the study of musical instruments to political aspects inside power discourses. Such endeavours mostly come from the American Musicological Society (AMS); however, they were not linked with the two of the most important hubs for research and dissemination of organology; the American Musical Instrument Society and the Galpin Society in Britain.¹⁵³ As of 2022, the AMS has now an Organology Study Group, which means that the gaps between musicology and organology are reducing.¹⁵⁴ More efforts to distinguish a ‘new organology’, embracing material culture studies appeal for a broad type of discipline that can

¹⁴⁶ For a revision on the history of material culture studies see Miller, *Material Cultures*, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 122.

¹⁴⁸ Miller, “Materiality.”

¹⁴⁹ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 260,261.

¹⁵⁰ Dennis, “Musical Sound and Material Culture”; Dolan, “Seeing Instruments”; Bates, “Actor-Network Theory and Organology”; Bates, “The Social Life of Musical Instruments.”

¹⁵¹ Powell, “Change Lays Not Her Hand.”

¹⁵² Gétreau, “La Recherche En Organologie,” 326.

¹⁵³ Koster, “A View from the Trenches,” 57–59.

¹⁵⁴ “AMS Study Groups - American Musicological Society.”

‘incorporate that study into the relationship with the subject, meaning people and human thought in their historical cultural context.’¹⁵⁵ As with non-musical material culture of the latest decades, there is a trend in organology to focus on the capacity, or agency of objects to create meanings.¹⁵⁶ Elliot Bates, for example, suggests the need to understand the relationship between instruments and people and how they exchange control with one another.¹⁵⁷

Bates made a sensible critique to some of the in-vogue material culture theories, such as Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which gives critical equivalence between human and non-human entities, which he regarded as a problematic supposition since there is no ‘hierarchical ordering of things.’¹⁵⁸ Bates exchanged ANT for Jane Bennett’s mystical approach of ‘vibrant matter,’ a concept that is very complicated to define, involving giving agency to non-human entities as they ‘participate’ and shape the course of events by having ‘vitality.’¹⁵⁹

Simon Waters, although influenced by ANT, seems to lightly apply its approach as it only reaches the conclusion that musical instruments should be studied under their own contexts of knowledge, that is ‘people, ideas and technologies.’¹⁶⁰ Dealing with concepts of agency, Emily Dolan and John Tresch established the necessity to question the intrinsic role of musical instruments as technological tools or machines in the generation of behaviours, tendencies and values.¹⁶¹ Tresch and Dolan, applying a Foucauldian approach, appeal for an immediate cultural and contextual understanding of the musical instrument, including its materials, autonomy or mode of mediation and the way it relates to the collective, such as people, space and other materials. Regarding agency, the authors go even further to award sentient capacities to musical instruments, meaning that human qualities are applied to objects, including, for example, ‘intention.’¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Rossi Rognoni, “Organology and the Others: A Political Perspective.”

¹⁵⁶ Dennis, “Musical Sound and Material Culture”; Dolan, “Seeing Instruments”; Bates, “Actor-Network Theory and Organology”; Bates, “The Social Life of Musical Instruments.”

¹⁵⁷ Bates, “Actor-Network Theory and Organology,” 45.

¹⁵⁸ Bates, 42.

¹⁵⁹ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 122.

¹⁶⁰ Waters, “Networks of Innovation, Connection and Continuity in Woodwind Design and Manufacture in London between 1760 and 1840,” 11.

¹⁶¹ Tresch and Dolan, “Toward a New Organology,” 283.

¹⁶² Tresch and Dolan, 284.

Material culture studies and the ‘material turn’ are a way to refresh fundamental notions in organology. However, since material culture studies are in itself a reaction to the division between intellectual and material knowledge, they can have the tendency to give too much emphasis to the actual material object and seem to lose sense of wider structures or frameworks that play a fundamental role in the formation of cultural phenomena.

The study of musical instruments as cultural objects predates the ‘material turn’ or material culture studies, as there have been clear partnerships between organology and ethnomusicology.¹⁶³ Alan Merriam, as early as 1964, mentioned that any depth study that can encompass the conception of music not only from its aural perspective but also from its broad cultural context needs to start with a preliminary study of its ‘musical material culture,’ which starts with musical instruments. Merriam goes on to say that is necessary first to gather all technical details of the instrument to later explore how the instrument is used in society, in specific regarding its symbolic roles.¹⁶⁴

The author has found heritage conservation literature tremendously important for the cultural study of musical instruments because *it speaks* the ‘material culture’ language. After all, cultural heritage is material culture manifested both as a product and a process or a dynamic medium in which ideas, questions, and consensus are manifested and provide sense and identity.¹⁶⁵ Conservation philosophy proposes the study of the cultural significance of musical instruments, a term developed for cultural sites that essentially encompasses the physical, musical, social and symbolic aspects of the object.¹⁶⁶ Fleshed out, cultural significance is a set of aesthetic, historic, technologic, scientific, social and spiritual values recognized by past and present generations.¹⁶⁷ This set of values is located through a critical judgement of the importance of an object for society.

¹⁶³ DeVale, “Power and Meaning in Musical Instruments”; Doubleday, “Sounds of Power”; Kartomi, “The Classification of Musical Instruments”; Dawe, “The Cultural Study of Musical Instruments,” 196. See for example, Koster, “A View from the Trenches”; Libin, “Organology and the Others: A Response.”

¹⁶⁴ Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*, 45.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.”

¹⁶⁶ The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance also called The Burra Charter provides a practice standard for managing cultural heritage. International Council on Monuments and Sites, “The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter.”

¹⁶⁷ The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance also called The Burra Charter provides a practice standard for managing cultural heritage. International Council on Monuments and Sites.

Robert L. Barclay for example, discussed the values of historic musical instruments and their outstanding potential to produce enjoyment and pleasure, which is only enhanced by their capacity to teach us about the past and to build bridges between the ‘here and now and the over and done with’, where ‘we can experience a past cultural and aesthetic ambience in a very immediate way.’¹⁶⁸

The documentary value of musical instruments is also highlighted by John Watson, who presented the dichotomy of having two main *voices*: a musical and historical. The musical *voice* is the quality of making music, impacting the senses of the listener, and allowing historically informed performance.¹⁶⁹ The *historic voice*, comes from the life cycle of an object, or what Brandi called *historicity*,¹⁷⁰ a *social life* denotes the process in which the object engaged in a number of relationships with other objects subjects and cultural systems through time and space, in such a trajectory that the object acquired new functions, meanings and values.

Regarding the way musical instruments can have agency, Anthony Gritten offers clarity in this subject and is crucial for our understanding of musical instruments, which should be always conceived as technology.¹⁷¹ Gritten gives a list of fundamental authors that have contributed to questions on technology, ranging from Plato, Aristotle, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), Marshal McLuhan (1911 – 1980) and others.¹⁷² Musical instruments are technology, they are devices that produce sound and they all follow acoustical, symbolic, ergonomic, and aesthetic systems which determine their use and value.¹⁷³ Gritten uses the work of other scholars involved in the cultural study of musical instruments such as Kevin Dawe, who has an excellent essay on how these musical devices are more than the ‘thing itself.’¹⁷⁴ Dawe, in fact, established that musical instruments are sites that construct meanings as they embody a set of identities, beliefs, values and ‘artistic and scientific legacy.’¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ Barclay, *The Preservation and Use of Historic Musical Instruments*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ Watson, *Organ Restoration Reconsidered*, 15.

¹⁷⁰ Cesare Brandi, *Theory of Restoration*.

¹⁷¹ Gritten, “Instrumental Technology.”

¹⁷² Gritten, 188; Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*; McLuhan, *Understanding Media*; Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”; Marx, *Capital*.

¹⁷³ Gritten, “Instrumental Technology,” 188.

¹⁷⁴ See for example the use of orchestral technology in Ludwig van Beethoven work’s Botstein, “Sound and Structure in Beethoven’s Orchestral Music,” 165–70.

¹⁷⁵ Dawe, “The Cultural Study of Musical Instruments,” 195.

Drawing specifically on Marc and Heidegger, Gritten stressed the fact that instruments are objects that sometimes behave as tools and sometimes as machines. The first ‘does not completely displace the performer from its operation’ while the machine ‘increasingly though not necessarily digitally driven, is set in motion by its use but operates semi-autonomously and contains within itself the means for further self-generation and self-development.’¹⁷⁶ The machine-like behaviour of musical instruments brings serious consequences to musical-social behaviour. The semi-autonomy of musical machines conditions humans to adapt to them or to match the skills necessary to successfully operate them, thus the birth of a symbiotic system between humans and instruments is created where one feeds the other towards endless transformation.

This is the so-called ‘agency’ of musical instruments. It is true that the musical function is not always the most important element in many of these objects: instead, their visual qualities stand out in their specific contexts. Nevertheless, they are made virtually always to function or at least to mimic the musical capability, which brings their potential autonomy. Even as works of art they are still musical instruments. In addition, their ergonomic nature and their capacity to imitate organisms, meaning a system with many related parts that function together as a whole, in particular the human body, leads to musical instruments being perceived as ‘alive.’¹⁷⁷ Moreover, since musical instruments belong to an individual and social world with specific traditions, cosmologies and global orders, they are used for symbolic purposes, and thus represent specific belief systems of societies across time and space.¹⁷⁸

In particular, musical instruments as many other cultural objects have strong dependence on the economic and social life of societies. It is through commerce and consumption that society, organised in hierarchies such as families, estates and social classes, manifests and transforms culture.¹⁷⁹ A great part of the cultural activity of a society, that is ideologies, patterns, categories, beliefs, symbols, stories, rituals, worldviews, myths, orality and values is largely affected by the material conditions determining its productive forces and the drastic changes these can have throughout history. Concerning musical

¹⁷⁶ Gritten, “Instrumental Technology,” 191.

¹⁷⁷ See for example Cypess and Kemper, “The Anthropomorphic Analogy.”

¹⁷⁸ Dawe, “The Cultural Study of Musical Instruments,” 197.

¹⁷⁹ Erich Fromm, *Marx’s Concept of Man*, 31; Marx, *The German Ideology. Part One*, 61,62; Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 159–60; Karl and Engels, *Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 38*, 38:38:96.

instruments, their nature of not being only aesthetic objects but technological, does make them potentially interdependent of the productive forces of any given society. As opposed to other visual arts,¹⁸⁰ the interdependency with economic and technological conditions is much greater, as makers of instruments can only work with the current knowledge, techniques, tools and society's ways and skills to transform resources into productive forces, which again, is dependent on the economy. In this case, musical instruments can always be conceived as having an artistic and technological dichotomy or bipolarity, that is in some ways their development is independent and in other ways is dependent on the economic factor. Nevertheless, the latter is crucial as they set culture in motion and further transformation; however, it is the intrinsic artistic, independent phenomenon that will obey past traditions and practices, which are set in change through the innovations of a revolving market. At the same time, the social conglomeration of classes, which would be in inevitable conflict with one another, are also crucial for cultural development.¹⁸¹ To further clarify, art would never be isolated but will behave as dynamic dependent on the predominant ideologies, which are governing systems of thoughts, always enclosed by human interests, which are generally driven by dynamics of power in commerce, politics and class relations.¹⁸²

A general consensus of the aforementioned scholarship is the capacity of musical instruments to be documents of past and present cultures not only as reflexions of society but as participants. From a microscopic perspective, musical instruments affect the way music is made by becoming socially, emotionally, and physically embedded with the user. In the musical creation, the performer and maker deal with the musical traditions inherited and with new constant waves of innovation that involve not only new musical formulae but also new instrumental technologies and markets. This dialogue, besides being artistic, is also social as music follows a social function within any given cultural system, which brings an exchange of symbols, meanings, values, and identities for both objects and subjects as they are entangled in a symbiotic system.

¹⁸⁰ Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels on Literature and Art*, 11.

¹⁸¹ Marx and Engels, 9.

¹⁸² Marx and Engels, 9. Further insights into the social nature of art see Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 17,18.

This microscopic sphere of musical practice is set in motion by larger and stronger forces, essentially by the shifts in economic systems, often aligned with ideological and political power structures, as well as social stratifications. The musical practices can change dramatically whenever there are radical alterations in the economic systems of society, which is usually a moment of great creativity, but also of great loss of past traditions in exchange for new ones. These larger shifts directly affect the development of the musical practice where the instrument is involved, and thus, any musical instrument is a reverse image of its culture or as Marx said, *appears upside down as in a camera obscura*.

A musical instrument is then, a hologram or better a *still photograph of a cultural motion picture*, which needs to be discovered through research, which is nothing but the collection and editing of all the other *still images* that compose the *cultural movie*. The study of such process, from the perspective of one musical instrument, is revealing of the nature of its cultural significance.

1.6.2 Research Questions, Chapter Content and Limitations

This thesis aims to understand the cultural significance of the cittern in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe. This broad question needs to be answered from a microscopic level, first, understanding the cittern's partial interdependency of larger cultural structures.¹⁸³ This means that the immediate research process has to involve 'traditional organology' and the revision of past literature, as well as the direct study of the instruments themselves, and also their appearance in any form of written or visual evidence. These aspects have to be newly studied considering the direct factors of their development, which in this case include the rise of instrumental music and the intrinsic vicissitudes of polyphonic and poetic traditions and a constant battle between tradition versus innovation. From these processes, focus is given to understanding how the cittern was socially used and valued in each of its historical moments.

The main challenge of the research topic is that it deals with two centuries and several countries of Europe, and therefore, a vast amount of evidence. Within the scope of a single doctoral thesis there is limited space for such a tremendous endeavour, meaning that some limitations to scope have to be established. For the sake of a broader picture, depth has to be limited in many cases, and this dissertation is characterised by contextualising the microscopic research of the cittern's history against larger

¹⁸³ Hemingway, *Marxism and the History of Art*, 503.

cultural systems, such as the economic factor and basic ruling ideologies of the period, humanism in the Italian Peninsula, the swift change in social classes and rise in consumerism, and the transition to a capitalist economy. For example, it is not a coincidence that the cittern became such a high exchangeable commodity in the Netherlands when the Dutch Republic was the first modern economy in Europe.¹⁸⁴

A fundamental method of delimitation of this dissertation is based on understanding the historical trajectory of the instrument, and specifically identifying the most significant moments of transformation of functions, contexts and meanings, or what Cesare Brandi named *historicity*.¹⁸⁵ This preliminary research will be represented by different kinds of available sources that will be selected based on their capacity to represent the fundamental historical stage, social interaction and associated values of a particular stage of the instrument's *social life*.¹⁸⁶ Another important limitation is that for the transalpine cittern, there would only be major consideration of the countries in which the cittern had a significant presence, which are France, The Low Countries and the Netherlands, England and the German speaking countries. One of the fundamental questions with the technical study of historical citterns is not only the need for further in-depth forensic studies, but a socio-historical and cultural contextualization that can allow their craft and musical capabilities to be integrated under a broad and holistic cultural significance. In this dissertation, there has been a large effort to inspect in firsthand the many surviving historical citterns; however, this can only be conceived as preliminary study meant to understand the historical trajectory of the cittern and its worth as cultural heritage, which should be followed by future projects involving detailed material scientific analysis of the entire body of surviving instruments.

The following sub questions of the dissertation can be grouped within chapters of the thesis. The second chapter,¹⁸⁷ 'The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage', will discuss the forerunners of the cittern, focusing on the transformation of the instrument inside the Italian Peninsula. The second chapter will also explain and expand past research on the transformation of the iconological features associated with

¹⁸⁴ Gelderblom and Jonker, "The Low Countries," 314.

¹⁸⁵ Cesare Brandi, *Theory of Restoration*.

¹⁸⁶ International Council on Monuments and Sites, "The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, The Burra Charter."

¹⁸⁷ The first chapter is the current introduction.

the Medieval conception of the Greek lyre and the cittern. This discussion will explore the symbolism and cultural meanings related to the lyre culture of the *cetra*, as they are part of the cittern's history. Focus will be given to the morphological and technical transformations in order to explain the relation of the cittern with its Medieval past. Finally, this chapter will explain how and why the cittern appeared in the Italian Peninsula.

The third chapter, named 'The Transformation of the Cittern in the Italian Peninsula', will explore how the cittern changed both in its physicality and musical use when its distribution and social ubiquity were affected by the demand for musical instruments, and how this process was related to consumerism, the rise of wealth in the Italian Peninsula. Moreover, this chapter will explain how the cittern was transformed inside the Italian Peninsula, with emphasis on the changes to the humanist tradition and the technical novelties that were intertwined with the musical changes of the second half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Specific space would be devoted to the musical and symbolic use of the hexachord tuning and the implications of the musical and construction changes of the cittern and how the tradition of the early cittern changed throughout time. Moreover, this chapter aims to understand the musical role of the cittern in the instrumental ensembles of the second half of the sixteenth century as well as its advance practice, the Brescian musical tradition.

The fourth chapter, 'The Transformation of the Transalpine Cittern', will explain why the transalpine cittern can be considered as a derivative of either the *cetra* or an early Italian traditional cittern. The chapter will also focus on the social and economic factors surrounding the appearance of a transalpine model in Nuremberg and how it was disseminated through France, the Low Countries and England. Moreover, this chapter will explain how the transalpine cittern was heavily influenced by a commercial context that turned into a highly exchangeable commodity affecting its role in instrumental ensembles and later on its social status. The fourth chapter aims to understand how the role of consumerism, the rise of the upper-middle-class and the economic boost in trading established a contextual scenario for the cittern's change high distribution and social ubiquity. This chapter will also explain the implications of the musical and building changes that the cittern underwent during the second half of the sixteenth century and why this process is related to the cittern being perceived as 'archaic' or 'primitive.' Lastly,

this chapter will discuss the musical and construction transformation of the cittern from its Italian origins into its role as an important member of instrumental music of the second half of the sixteenth century, the advanced solo practice that was seldom cultivated and its further journey into domestic settings.

The fifth and final chapter, 'The Cultural Significance' will be a conclusion based on a reflection on the life cycle of the cittern from the sixteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century, and how does this life cycle reflect Europe's transition from the Renaissance to the modern world. This section compares the values of each stage of the instrument's life in order to offer a balanced perspective based on the particular circumstances of the different socio-historical contexts that were present. Finally, this chapter will propose that the cittern's function of being a flexible medium that can potentially create new ways of enjoying and understanding early modern musical culture.

1.6.3 Selection of Sources in their Context

Although the dissertation uses a comprehensive approach, each chapter will have specific sources, which will require different perspectives. Chapters two to four, for example, will use a more traditional organological approach based on understanding the process of bifurcation from the cittern to the Italian traditional carved and the transalpine type. For discussing the cultural reasons of the transformation, it would be necessary to establish a contextual scenario that can explain the appearance of the transalpine cittern with a completely different ethos. For example, the success of the cittern in the Low Countries and France and England will require contextual research on the rise of consumerism, the commodification of the cittern and the rise of the upper-middle class and general demand of instrumental music to fulfil social functions and dynamics of power.

For the study of the musical changes in chapter three and four, there will be a focus on exploring the music of the instrument in its early stages and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which will require an understanding of selected sources of music and historical musical instruments. The discussion of the hexachord tuning in chapter three will require a cultural contextualisation regarding

Medieval music theory and humanist context.¹⁸⁸ Although this analysis will combine an organological approach based on musical historiography, there will be a correlation with the cittern's humanist context, mainly expressed through iconography. Moreover, there will be a discussion of the Brescian cittern tradition as an example of individual attempts to refine both cittern manufacture and practice. The Brescian citterns are representative of the advanced type of instruments that were present in the second half of the sixteenth century. This will not be an exhaustive musical analysis but an explication of the fundamental musical value of the cittern in the contexts that saw its greatest modification in terms of its musical use.

The musical content of chapter 4, involving the transalpine cittern, will be critically based on a significant body of work made by previous research involving England, France and the Low Countries. Through a selection of key pieces in repertoire, the chapter aims to compare the musical values of the transalpine and Italian humanist citterns with the objective of proposing that both were decontextualized and consequently modified to fit new musical standards that although they have musical values of their own, were adapted into an instrument that was designed not only for a different use but for a different cultural context. Still, the Italian cittern preserved a much stronger humanist meaning, while the transalpine presented a much stronger commodification process. Using these changes, the third and fourth chapter will describe the cittern's function of representing social categories throughout its journey of transformation. The voyage of the *cetra* towards the traditional Italian cittern and the abrupt appearance of the transalpine models, represent a contrasting set of values ranging from humanist meanings to representing social categories characterised for being related to women and low social status.

The fifth chapter and conclusion, 'The Cultural Significance,' will be based on the notion of cultural heritage and Cesare Brandi's theory of conceiving cultural works not only as artistic manifestations, but as participants of individual and collective cultural dynamic systems.¹⁸⁹ From this standpoint, the chapter will explore the cittern as an aesthetic and historical object which has had a culturally valuable

¹⁸⁸ Page, "Instruments and Instrumental Music before 1300."

¹⁸⁹ Brandi, *Teoría de La Restauración*, 14; Stoner and Verbeeck, "The Impact of Paul Philippot on the Theory and History of Conservation/Restoration."

tangible and intangible transformation. Therefore, the instrument can potentially be proposed as a historical document and a vehicle for further understanding of the musical culture in early modern society.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.”

2. The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage

This chapter deals with the origins of the cittern and its transformation process in the Italian Peninsula in the first half of the sixteenth century. There will be first, a definition of the *cetra* and citole; second, there will be a discussion of secondary sources that have considered these Medieval plucked stringed instruments as the cittern's forerunners.¹⁹¹ Using the work of these past scholars, the mythological lyre culture surrounding the *cetra* will be discussed as an important heritage. Thirdly, *The Re-birth*, will focus on a presentation of further primary evidence that elaborates on the transformation of the *cetra* into the cittern.

This chapter will use historical treatises and propose a visual comparison between iconographical examples and surviving historical instruments. The selection of sources is based on the primordial transformative stages of the cittern, and how well they provide insight into these changes. Focusing on Italian evidence produced in the late 1470's until the mid-sixteenth century, this section will discuss the transformative process of specific morphological and musical features of *proto citterns* into citterns. This analysis will demonstrate that morphological features of the Medieval *cetra* and their significances, which were based on the cultivation of the ancient Greek lyre, remained in the sixteenth century cittern. The present discussion is important for solving the main research question of this dissertation, meaning the understanding of the cultural significance of the cittern. In order to start tackling this inquiry, it is necessary to first know what sort of values, meanings, associations, and social uses were linked with the cittern's forerunner and how they were manifested in its manufacture, which changed dramatically by the early sixteenth century. Knowing where the cittern came from will allow us to know where it went afterwards, and why.

2.1 The Citole and the *Cetra*: Differences and Similarities

The citole and *cetra* are often thought as the same instrument; however, past research indicates that although related, they were different plucked stringed instruments that belong to disparate cultural contexts and geographical locations. The citole is a short necked plucked string instrument with different resonator shapes such as holly-leaf, hexagonal, guitar or fiddle-like. Scant evidence indicates that citoles

¹⁹¹ Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400"; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta."

were strung with gut but is generally feasible to consider it in general as having wire strings.¹⁹² The citole, which sometimes also presented shoulder extensions occasionally in the form of trefoil ornaments, was used from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century and was particularly popular in northern France, the Iberian Kingdom of Castile and Leon and England (Figure 9).¹⁹³



Figure 9. Robert De Lisle Citole and Anonymous Historical Citole. Left, Robert De Lisle Psalter, illumination, Citole, circa 1310, England, London, British Library; right, Unknow Maker, citole, circa 1280-1330, British Museum, (inv. nr. 1963,1002.1). Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence, accessed June 2, 2024. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1963-1002-1; © British Library Board, Arundel 83, f.134v.

The *cetra*, also spelled *cetera*,¹⁹⁴ is a short necked plucked string with a spatulate or ovoid carved¹⁹⁵ resonator with end projections also called ‘wings’ or horns, meant to represent the arms of the Greek lyre, as well as blocked frets.¹⁹⁶ This instrument is only found in iconography coming from the Italian

¹⁹² Koster, “Strings and Theories of Stringing in the Times of the Citole and Early Cittern,” 87, 89.

¹⁹³ Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” 353–61.

¹⁹⁴ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” xii; Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” 73.

¹⁹⁵ Unfortunately, there is not a single surviving historical *cetra*, nevertheless, as is similar with Medieval plucked strings, such as the gittern, its structure was most likely carved. Contemporary carved examples to the *cetra*, are the anonymous gittern from Elbląg (Elbing) made in the first half of the fifteenth century currently preserved at the Museum Archeologiczno-Historyczne in Stargard, Poland. Another example is the gittern made by Hans Ott in Nuremberg circa 1450, preserved now in the Wartburg Stiftung in Eisenach in Germany. Schlegel and Joachim, *Die Laute in Europa 2 Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen und Cistern = The lute in Europe 2: lutes, guitars, mandolins and citterns*, 38–40.

¹⁹⁶ Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” 40.

Peninsula, which dates from the twelfth to the first half of the sixteenth century (Figure 10).¹⁹⁷ As Robert Crawford Young has shown, it is historically appropriate to use the term *cetra* to refer to these instruments; however, this hypothesis can be further enhanced for the following reasons. Young stated that the word *cetra* was used in Tuscan and Umbrian fourteenth century literature to refer to a small shield of a spatulate or roundish shape, which is closer to the body of the blocked fretted instrument.¹⁹⁸



Figure 10. Cetra. Benedetto Antelami, stone carving, Circa 1180-96, Parma Baptistry. Sources: Alamy Limited, "Citole, Rosette (ca. 1180) by Benedetto Antelami, Parma Stock Photo - Alamy," accessed May 24, 2025, <https://www.alamy.com/citole-rosette-ca-1180-by-benedetto-antelami-parma-image260374656.html>. Public Domain.

¹⁹⁷ Young, "Lute, Gittern, & Citole"; Buehler-McWilliams, "The British Museum Citole: An Organological Study"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 356.

¹⁹⁸ Young, "Lute, Gittern, & Citole"; Buehler-McWilliams, "The British Museum Citole: An Organological Study"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 356.

This connection, however, is not enough evidence to confirm that the word *cetra* was used for the spatulate blocked fretted instrument, for a combination of both linguistic and visual evidence¹⁹⁹ in a single source is necessary.²⁰⁰ The only documented morphological and terminological connection between the word *cetra* and the blocked fretted instrument is Dante Alighieri's (1265 – 1321) *Divina Commedia*, published circa 1315:

‘The sound is given shape at the neck of the *cetra* or by the wind forced through the vent-holes of a bagpipe, so, holding me no longer in suspense, the murmur of the eagle issued through its neck as though it had been hollowed out. There it became a voice and, coming from the beak, It formed the words my heart was waiting for, And on my heart, I wrote them down.’²⁰¹

By considering the text alone it is impossible to confirm if Dante referred to the blocked fretted instrument. Nevertheless, the word *cetra* in literary contemporary settings can either refer to a string musical instrument or the Greek lyre.²⁰² Therefore, if Dante is referring to either, is possible to deduce the mention of a lyre shaped necked string or some sort of lyre with a neck. Since the *cetra* has a shape that is reminiscent of the Greek lyre and also has a neck, is feasible to suggest that Dante did refer to this blocked fretted string instrument.

The morphological and linguistic connection can be further strengthened by the *cetra* depiction in Giulio Campagnola's (1480-1528) painting (Figure 11). In this image it is possible to see the peghead of the instrument in the shape of an eagle with a distinctive open beak as Dante mentioned. Campagnola, besides being a cittern and lute player, was a gifted engraver, draughtsman, sculptor, gem cutter and poet.²⁰³ Moreover, the painter was immersed in the humanist intellectual life of Venice and Padua, facts that reinforce his involvement in poetic circles that could have influenced his *visual quotation* to Dante.²⁰⁴ Moreover, no other *cetra* in surviving iconography²⁰⁵ shows an eagle or a similar beaked

¹⁹⁹ In the case of the citole, for example, there are Medieval sources that visually and linguistically indicate the correlation of the term with the morphology of the instrument. Young, “Lute, Gittern, & Citole”; Buehler-McWilliams, “The British Museum Citole: An Organological Study”; Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” 356.

²⁰⁰ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 512–13.

²⁰¹ Alighieri, *Dante's Paradise*, Introduction, Canto XX, Lines 9-27, EPUB Reader.

²⁰² The dictionary gives historical examples of variations of the name *cetra*. These names are *cedera*, *cetera*, *citara*, *cyatare*, *cetere*, *ceire*, *cietera*, *cetera*. “TLIO - Il Dizionario Storico Della Lingua Italiana.”

²⁰³ Korbacher, “Poetic Printmaking,” 66–10; Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 469; Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470-1550*, 100.

²⁰⁴ Brown, “Giulio Campagnola,” 86, 93, 96.

²⁰⁵ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta.”

animal on the peghead, which enhances the possibilities of an artistic desire to make his *cetra* Dante's.²⁰⁶

Previous scholars agree on identifying the citole and *cetra* as two different instruments; however, as Alice C. Margerum stated, it is still open to question whether this distinction was accurate or not.²⁰⁷ The two instruments share several features, such as the shoulder extensions, protruding tail piece or string holders, the tapering body, and some contour similarities.²⁰⁸ Also the terms 'citole' and '*cetra*' have a connection²⁰⁹ for in his treatise *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*, the Franco-Flemish theorist Johannes Tinctoris described the *cetra* under the name of *cetula*, which resembles the term citole.²¹⁰ Therefore, it is not clear if the terms citole and *cetra* were interchangeable in some contexts.²¹¹

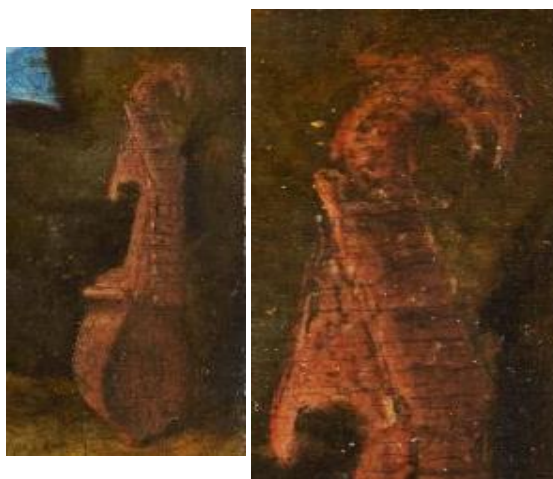


Figure 11. Late Cetra or Early Cittern. Giulio Campagnola, oil on canvas, Eagle Headed cetra in Young Faun Playing the Syrinx, circa 1513-15, Mantua, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, (inv. nr. 76). Source: Alte Pinakothek. "Sammlung | Daphnis." Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/7yxYbq6LYm/jacopo-negretti-gen-palma-il-vecchio/daphnis#&gid=1&pid=1>. CC BY-SA 4.0. CC BY-SA 4.0.

²⁰⁶ A similar eagle, as noted by scholar art historian James Brown, can be seen in Campagnola's painting entitled '[Ganymede as a young boy riding a large eagle \(Zeus\) in flight above a landscape](#)' made circa 1500-1505. Brown, "Giulio Campagnola," 86,93,96; "Giulio Campagnola | Ganymede as a Young Boy Riding a Large Eagle (Zeus) in Flight above a Landscape."

²⁰⁷ Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 75.

²⁰⁸ Margerum, Vol 2, 183.

²⁰⁹ Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 55; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 298; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 158.

²¹⁰ Tinctoris stated that the *cetula* was invented by the Italians and had: 1) four brass or steel strings and played with a quill; 2) flat back, and 3) fitted with wooden elevations or fret blocks on the neck, which are arranged proportionately. The translation presented by Anthony Baines is the most common resource for Tinctoris's writings. Young uses the most recent translation, which is provided by *The Complete Theoretical Works of Johannes Tinctoris: A New Digital Edition* available at the [Early Music Theory Website](#). Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*"; Woodley, J. Dean, and Lewis, "Johannes Tinctoris: Complete Theoretical Works"; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 305-9.

²¹¹ Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 75.

Nevertheless, the *cetra* has a considerably older tradition than the citole, which goes back to the twelfth century.²¹² Crawford Young stated that the very early version of the *cetra* influenced the creation of the citole when it was taken out of the Italian Peninsula to the north of the Alps throughout pilgrimage.²¹³ Therefore, the citole could be considered as a variant of the Italian block fretted plucked string; the latter kept on being used well into the first half of the sixteenth century inside the Peninsula.²¹⁴

2.2 The Lyre Culture of the *Cetra*

While it is not possible to say that the *cetra* was a successor of the Greek lyre, in the fifteenth century the instrument functioned as its icon. Many of its decorative and functional features were iconological elements reminiscent of the mythological plucked string and were kept on in the late sixteenth century models that were later transformed into the cittern.

In 1961 Emanuel Winternitz suggested that the ancient lyre ‘survived’ in the citole and the *cetra*.²¹⁵ This theory is grounded on assuming that non-functional features, specifically the shoulder extensions,²¹⁶ hook and expanded string holder, remained as iconological and decorative elements, which ‘reveal its evolution.’²¹⁷ This means, according to musicologist, that the size of these morphological characteristics of the Greek lyre were gradually transformed into the *cetra* and citole. Winternitz goes on to say that there is a ‘hidden underground stream of tradition, unbroken since classical antiquity.’²¹⁸

²¹² One of the earliest depictions of the *cetra* is part of the sculpture by Benedetto Antelami (1150-1230) from the Parma Baptistery made circa 1180-96 (See Figure 10).

²¹³ The fact that iconographic evidence shows that the citole was used since the thirteenth century, while the *cetra* since the twelfth, supports the idea that the latter developed before the citole. Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 125, 608; Wright, “The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity,” 26–27.

²¹⁴ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 615; Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” 206.

²¹⁵ Winternitz, “The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern,” 222–23.

²¹⁶ According to the Homeric Hymns (650 - 400 B.C.), shortly after being born, Hermes encountered a tortoise and called her a ‘lovely creature, beating time to the dance.’ After scooping out the marrow with ‘a knife of grey iron,’ the god fitted an ox hide as soundboard and two horns with a cross-piece to stretch seven sheep’s gut strings. The manufacture of the lyre by Hermes is the earliest description of how instruments were made in ancient Greece. W. Lundell, “Homeric Hymns”; Homer, *The Homeric Hymns*, Hymn to Hermes, IV, line 30,45. British Library Database.

²¹⁷ Winternitz, “The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern,” 223.

²¹⁸ Winternitz, 226.

By the time this hypothesis was established scholarship had not yet demonstrated the difference between the citole and *cetra*, and so Winternitz's theory was applied to both instruments. However, the scholar's iconographical examples depict the spatulated blocked fretted *cetra* more than the citole's, which suggests that his proposal of the lyre 'lineage' was more inclined towards the Italian plucked string.²¹⁹ In 1977, Laurence Wright made further investigation into the history of the citole and *cetra*; nevertheless, Wright had the same issues as Winternitz's, which were essentially rooted in considering both variants of the same instrument.²²⁰

In 2010, Margerum stated that Winternitz's lyre lineage theory, although possible, required more evidence considering the large scope of time, which ranges from late antiquity to the fifteenth century. Moreover, Margerum stated that the morphological features that show this ancestry could have been a creative product of the instrument makers and not necessarily a 'hidden underground stream of tradition.'²²¹

By 2018 Crawford Young expanded Winternitz's theory showing a complex variety of necked plucked stringed instruments with lyre-like resonators, and corroborated that the form of the Greek lyre was indeed inherited by many Medieval instruments, which were also influenced by other types of long necked lutes coming from the Byzantine Empire.²²²

Whether or not the ancient Greek lyre was gradually transformed into the *cetra* or the citole is a question that does not directly concern the aims of this dissertation, which are focused on the cittern. Therefore, it suffices to consider that the possible 'stream of tradition' of the cultivation of the lyre was certainly manifested as a fundamental iconological aspect of Medieval plucked stringed instruments and was, at least, allegorically recovered and associated with both the citole and *cetra*.

However, a fundamental 'lineage' difference between the citole and *cetra* must be distinguished for the following reasons. As discussed by Crawford Young, the humanist heritage of the *cetra* is rooted in

²¹⁹ Winternitz, 226,227.

²²⁰ Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity."

²²¹ Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," Vol, 1, 6-7.

²²² Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 125.

the twelfth century and could even be older.²²³ The *cetra* was used as a Christianised version of the lyre in thirteenth century Franciscan traditions and late fifteenth century humanist practices.²²⁴ Hence, the oval shape and shoulder extensions were a clear indication of the contour of an idealised shape of a lyre, where the wooden additions acted as icons that, according to mythology, the god Hermes inserted on the tortoise (Figure 12).²²⁵ The citole's resonator, in contrast, had a variety of shapes that depart from the mythical instrument.²²⁶



Figure 12. Galilei's Ancient Lyre. Vincenzo Galilei, print, *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei* 1581, Florence. Source: Vincenzo Galilei, *Dialogo Di Vincentio Galilei Nobile Fiorentino Della Musica Antica, Et Della Moderna* (Giorgio Marescotti, 1581), 126,29. Public Domain.

As explained by Crawford Young, the *cetra* had other consistent morphological associations with the Greek lyre, specifically, the types using tortoise shell resonators and the *kithara*. The latter, portrayed in Attic vase paintings circa 625 - 400 B.C and mentioned in written sources after around 425

²²³ Symbols and icons are signs that allow society to experience meaning and values. Symbols are part of signs, which can be defined as anything perceived with our senses that stands for something else. Icons, in contrast, share a visual, oral, aural, olfactory, or tactile resemblance to its meaning, in other words, they look like what they are referring to. Although both icons and symbols rely on cultural conventions, symbols behave entirely on a cultural agreed link between the object and its meaning. Spradley and McCurdy, *Conformity and Conflict*, 38; Knappett, *Thinking Through Material Culture*, 90; Deacon, *The Symbolic Species*, 70–71; Tilley et al., *Handbook of Material Culture*, 10.

²²⁴ The historical dictionary *Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle Origini*, has several examples relating the term *cetra* with *cithara* and other classical mythological subjects. The dictionary gives historical examples of variations of the name *cetra*. These names are *cedera*, *cetera*, *citara*, *cyatare*, *cetere*, *cetre*, *cietera*, *cetera*. For example, the *Glossario latino-eugubino*, a grammatical treatise and glossary that translates special, old and rare Latin terms into Italian, we find that the *lira* was, in reality, the *cetra* or: 'Hec lira, re id est la *cetra*' (Folio 75 r. entry 565). This late fourteenth-century work from the Italian city of Gubbio is made for assisting learned citizens and scholars to command Latin, a necessary official and prestigious language. For further reading see Crawford Young's doctoral dissertation, which offers a history of the classical associations with the *cetra*. Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," xiv, 135, 537; Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern"; "TLIO - Il Dizionario Storico Della Lingua Italiana"; Navarro Salazar and Navarro Salazar, "Un glosario latino-umbro del siglo XIV," 119,154.

²²⁵ W. Lundell, "Homeric Hymns"; Homer, *The Homeric Hymns*, Hymn to Hermes, IV, line 30,45. British Library Database.

²²⁶ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 615.

B.C.,²²⁷ is distinguished from the other types of lyre for having a massive size and specific parts.²²⁸ Other important *kithara* features, were seven strings coiled around the *kollopes* the crossbar and a complex set of curved inner elements (Figures 13).



Figure 13. Greek Vase. Attributed to the Palermo Painter, ceramic, 415-400 B.C., Greece, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, (inv. nr. 85.AE.101). Note the knobs (a), the crossbar with kollopes (b), and the inner edges (c). Source: J. Paul Getty Museum, 'Lucanian Red-Figure Volute Krater (Getty Museum)', The J. Paul Getty Museum, accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/10948/>. Public Domain.

²²⁷ Maas, "Kithara."

²²⁸ Besides the *kithara*, the two most popular forms of the ancient lyre family were the lyres constituted by a tortoise shell resonator, usually the *barbiton* and *chelys-lyra*. The *barbiton*, for example, was a type of lyre often used to accompany Bacchic revelry. It is often found in iconography with a tortoise-shell resonator and long and curved arms. M.L. West makes an excellent description of the different types of lyres. For more information on the family of lyre see Grove Dictionary entries *Lyra*; and *Barbitos*, *Kithara* and Phorminx McIntosh, "Barbitos"; West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 48-69; Maas, "Kithara"; McIntosh, "Barbitos"; Maas, "Lyra (i)."

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Figure 14. Kithara. Luthier Carlos Gonzalez, Reconstruction of a 5th Century B.C Kithara. Under scientific direction of archaeologist Annie Bélies. Source: Photograph Courtesy of Patrick Gallairdin. Ensemble Kérylos, 'Ensemble Kérylos - Music from Ancient Greece and Rome', accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.kerylos.fr/en/#inst-photos>.

According to Young, the Italian humanists created idealised *kithara* features, which could have been inspired in ancient depictions, and applied them to the late fifteenth century *cetra*. Although Young does not produce direct evidence confirming that the lyre-like features of the blocked fretted instrument were product of the proto musicological and organological enterprises of late *quattrocento* humanists, it does not mean it was not possible and, in fact, it seems likely.

An important piece of evidence presented by Young is the treatise of Giovanni Battista Doni (1595-1647), who from 1630 was devoted to the rediscovery of Greek music.²²⁹ In his 1635-1636 treatise entitled *Lyra Barberina amphichordos: accedunt eiusdem opera*, Doni distinguished the several types of lyre and other types named in the Greek literature.²³⁰ Doni's treatise, although produced far away in time from the late *quattrocento*, does reflect the endeavours of Renaissance humanist craftsmen and scholars, who made studies of the Greek and Roman ancient lyres depicted in sculptures in the second half of the fifteenth century.

²²⁹ Palisca and Barbieri, "Doni, Giovanni Battista."

²³⁰ Doni, *G.B. Doni's Lyra Barberina*.

As noted by Emanuele Winternitz a depiction of an ancient lyre of a third century Roman sarcophagus that belongs to the *Museo Nazionale* in Rome²³¹ is very similar to one of Rafael Sanzio's (1483 -1520) lyres depicted in *The Parnassus* fresco painting in Vatican City.²³² Moreover the same type of lyre, possibly taken from studies of the same Roman sarcophagus, is depicted by Doni's treatise, and, in fact Marin Mersenne (1588–1648) portrayed a strikingly similar instrument, which are both facts not mentioned by Winternitz (Figure 15).²³³

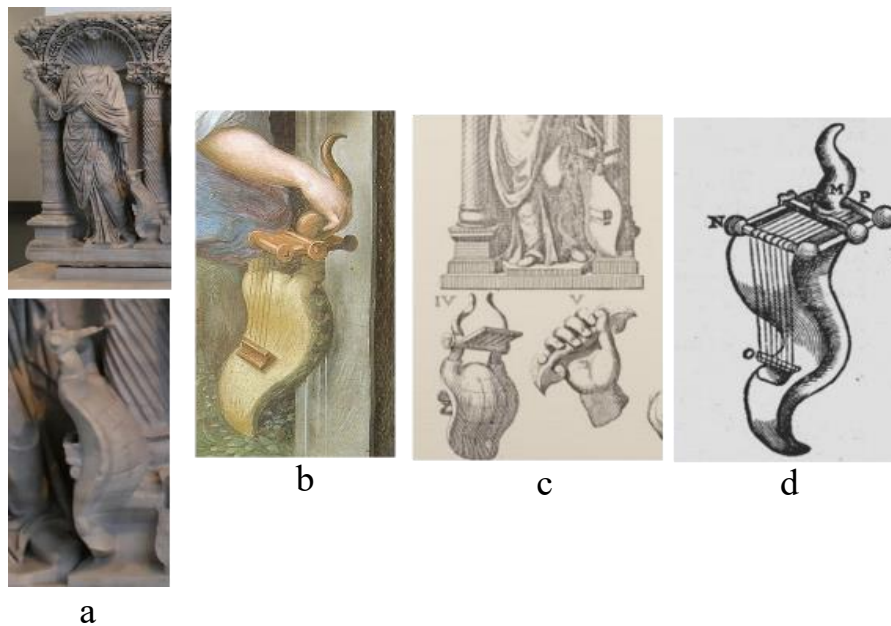


Figure 15. Renaissance Studies of Roman Lyres. a, Anonymous, Marble Sarcophagus, 280 - 290, 3rd Century A.D, Mattei Collection (Villa Celimontana), Roman, Museo Nazionale Romano; b, Rafael Sanzio, fresco, Parnassus, 1509–1511, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City; c, Giovanni Battista Doni, print, *Lyra Barberina amphichordos: accedunt eiusdem opera*, 1635-1636, Florence; d, Marin Mersenne, print, *Harmonie Universelle*, 1636, Paris. Sources: Alamy Limited, 'Stock Photo - Marble Sarcophagus Depicting Muses, National Museum of Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo Alle Terme, Rome, Italy', Alamy, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.alamy.com/marble-sarcophagus-depicting-muses-national-museum-of-rome-museo-nazionale-image69311006.html>. Licensed Purchased; Photograph by Esteban Mariño.; Giovanni Battista Doni and Giuseppe Vecchi, *Lyra Barberina: Lyra Barberina amphichordos*, Bibliotheca Musica Bononiensis Collana (Florence: Arnaldo Forni, 1763); Plate IV, 14; Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1636), Book IV, 7. Public Domain.

²³¹ The 280 - 290, 3rd Century A.D marble sarcophagus depicts the muses, and it used to belong to the Villa Celimontana in Rome.

²³² Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art: Studies in Musical Iconology*, plate 78,185.

²³³ Doni and Vecchi, *Lyra Barberina*, Plate IV,14.

Other artists besides Rafael such as Gentile da Fabriano (1370 -1427), Lucca della Robbia (1400-1482) and Filipino Lippi (1457-1504) studied, copied, interpreted, and re-created ancient visual art.²³⁴ Consequently, it was probable that the tradition of musicians, writers, and instrument makers were *bringing back* the shape of the legendary Greek lyre into the *cetra*. For this reason, it is historically reasonable to consider the iconological *cetra* and lyre-like features as iconological *fruits* of the creative re-construction of Renaissance artists.²³⁵ Moreover, it is possible to say that Luca della Robbia (1400–1482), took such artistic freedom when he, inspired by Roman sarcophaguses, placed two *cetre*, instead of a *kithara*, in his famous relief *cantoria* the *Museo dell' Opera del Duomo* in Florence (Figure 16).²³⁶



Figure 16. *Cetre Instead of Kithara*. Luca della Robbia, stone sculpture, *Cantoria*, 1431-38, Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore now at Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Florence. Source: © 2006 Mary Ann Sullivan.

"Images of *Cantoria* by Luca Della Robbia," accessed June 20, 2025, <https://homepages.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/italy/florence/duomomuseo/cantoriadellarobbia.html>.

²³⁴ Winternitz, "Muses and Music in a Burial Chapel," 272; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526; Shoemaker, "Drawings after the Antique by Filippino Lippi," 35; Panczenko, "Gentile Da Fabriano and Classical Antiquity," 11–13; Pope-Hennessy, Pope-Hennessy, and Robbia, *Luca Della Robbia*, 24,231,244.

²³⁵ Palisca, "Giovanni Battista Doni's Interpretation of the Greek Modal System," 3.

²³⁶ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526; Pope-Hennessy, Pope-Hennessy, and Robbia, *Luca Della Robbia*, 24,231,244; Olson, *Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, 75.

Young has proposed that the *kithara* inner curves, a constant feature of this instrument,²³⁷ were recreated in the late fifteenth century *cetra* in the form of a protruding hook on the back of the peghead, which started to appear in iconography around 1470.²³⁸ The visual evidence presented by Young does not provide a direct visual correlation that can be quantitatively persuasive enough to establish the *kithara* inner curves symbols as icons of the *cetra*. His most persuasive evidence is Doni's *Lyra Barberina amphichordos: accedunt eiusdem opera*, which shows the sketches of two Greek coins depicting *kitharas* (Figure 17).²³⁹ Although there is a great deal of imagination involved in explaining why a frontal element of the *kithara* was symbolically placed on the back of the peghead of the *cetra*, Young made a compelling case when he pointed out the string attached to the hook, which is also found tied on the musical triangle of Fra Giovanni da Verona's (1457-1525) *intarsia* (Figure 17).

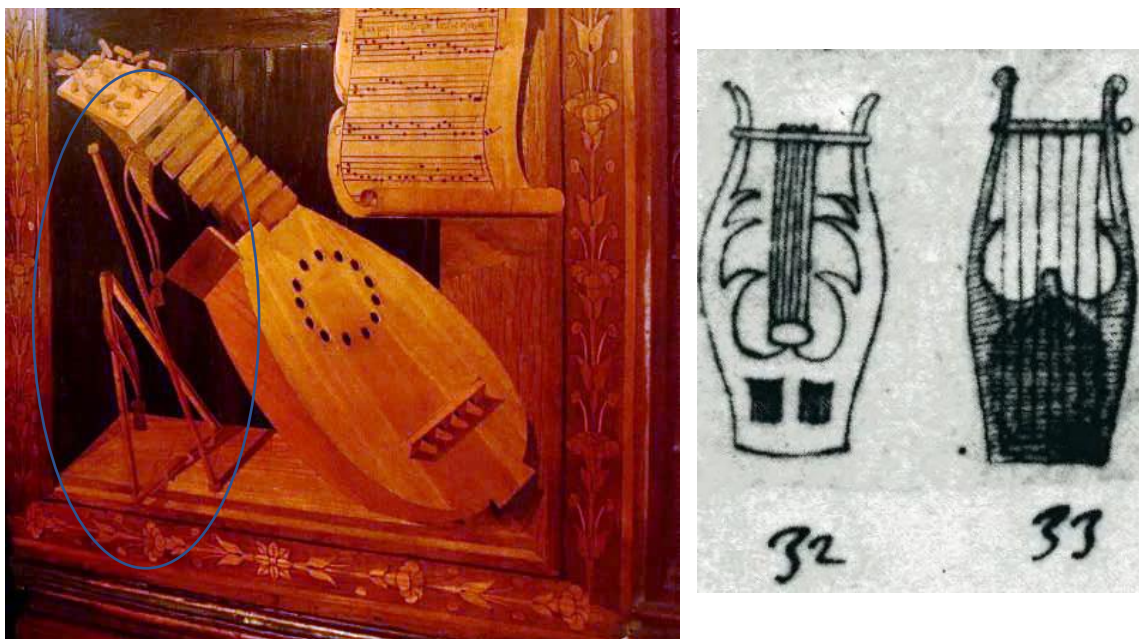


Figure 17. Cetra Hook and Kithara's Inner Ornaments. Left, Fra Giovanni da Verona, intarsia, cetra, 1519-1523, Santa Maria Organa in Verona, Italy; right, Giovanni Battista Doni, print, *Lyra Barberina amphichordos: accedunt eiusdem opera*, Florence, Italy. Sources: Photograph by Esteban Mariño; Claude V. Palisca, 'Giovanni Battista Doni's Interpretation of the Greek Modal System', *The Journal of Musicology* 15, no. 1 (1997): 3-18, Plate 9a.

²³⁷ West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 48-69; Maas, "Kithara"; McIntosh, "Barbitos"; Maas, "Lyra (i)."

²³⁸ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 537, 539.

²³⁹ The Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museum of Berlin holds *Kithara* depicted in a 392-383 B.C silver coin, which clearly shows the inner curves. Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, "MK-B | Chalkidischer Bund ca. 392-383 v. Chr."

Due to the fact that the frets protrude from the bass side of the neck, Young also proposed that the hook and the string allowed *cetra* players to position their thumb and thus have further reach into the protruding bass frets.²⁴⁰

Playing and/or holding the *cetra* in an upright position could have been a practice aimed at emphasizing the iconological lyre heritage of the instrument, for the lyres of classical antiquity were played in such way.²⁴¹ The hook, therefore, allowed the instrument to vertically rest on the side of the hand leaving the thumb and fingers free. Certainly, there are iconographical depictions that suggest the upright position of the *cetra*. For example, one of the most striking iconographic examples involving the Franciscan order and the *cetra* can be found in the frescos of the Basilica of Assisi in today's Italy.²⁴² Sixteen different examples of *cetre* are shown in the hands of the Elders of the Apocalypse and two of them are holding the instrument in an upright fashion. Playing the instrument in a vertical position is also suggested by the citole depicted in the Spanish sculptures of the collegiate Church of Toro (Figure 18)

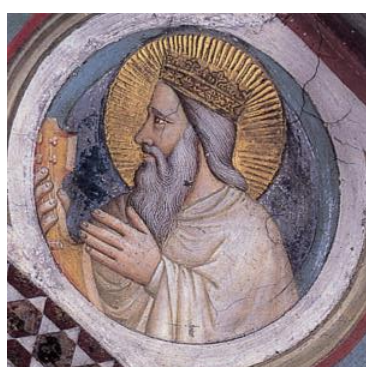


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Figure 18. Cetra and Citole in Upright Position. Left, Workshop of Giotto (1267 –1337), fresco, Elders of the Apocalypse, circa 1315, Assisi, Basilica of St. Francis, lower Church; right, Anonymous, stone relief, Elder of the Apocalypse, circa 1240, Portada de la Majestad, Church of Toro, Spain. Sources: Photograph by Elio Ciol Stefano Ciol, Ghigo Roli and Gerhard Ruf. Images courtesy of the Archive of the Biblioteca Centro Documentazione Francescana, Sacred Convent of Assisi; Alice C. Margerum, 'Situating the Citole, C1200-1400' (Ph.D.diss., London, London Metropolitan University, 2010), vol. 2, 183.

²⁴⁰ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 541.

²⁴¹ Latest research on Greek ancient musical instruments does not specify that the inner curves of the *kithara* served a practical purpose. Scholar Armand D' Angour, associate Professor in Classics at Jesus College at the University of Oxford has lead a team of researchers dedicated over the past six years on the reconstruction of the sound of ancient Greek music of circa 400 B.C. Replicas of ancient instruments have been produced by scholars such as Stefan Hagel who is a founder of the International Society for the Study of Greek and Roman Music & its Cultural Heritage ([MOISA](http://moisa.org)). Hagel as other scholars such as archaeologist, philologist, papyrologist and musician Annie Bélies (member of Ensemble Kérylos), have supervised the re-construction of *kitharas*. Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music*, 366–70.

²⁴² Pagés, "Romanesque Mural Painting in Catalonia"; Brown, "A Corpus of Trecento Pictures with Musical Subject Matter. I/1"; Young, "Zur Klassifikation Und Ikonographischen Interpretation Mittelalterlicher Zupfinstrumente."

Considering the strong symbolism of the instrument, Young's proposal of the role of the block frets as icons of the *kollopes* should be also contemplated. The *cetra* could theoretically have had a usual fingerboard with or without frets to control the string length while playing, which was a feature common in many contemporary Medieval necked plucked stringed instruments such as the citole. In the *kithara*, the *kollopes* were tuning devices made of rolled leather or wood and tied to the yoke of this lyre.²⁴³ The *cetra* block frets, although for a long time a mystery for scholars, are simple means to allow the finger to shorten the string length and thus produce a note.²⁴⁴ The reason for applying blocks of wood to the neck instead of devising a fingerboard with frets, which is present in almost all necked plucked stringed instruments, including the citole, which was contemporary of the *cetra*, is unclear from a practical point of view. Ephraim Segerman offers the suggestion that they would enable easy repairs after a block fret was worn out because of the metal strings: the *cetra* player would pull out the block 'out of the groove it sits in, saw a bit off the treble end and replace it, aligned with the other block "treble" ends.'²⁴⁵ But other solutions could have been found for this problem, such as developing interchangeable wooden wedges over the full fingerboard. In the case of the *cetra*, the mindset behind its manufacture was heavily ruled by a traditional iconological function that the instrument needed to serve. From this perspective, the *cetra kollopes* could have well served the illusory performance style of pretending that the instrument did not have a fingerboard, just as the ancient lyre only had freely vibrating strings. As *kithara* specialist, Stefan Hagel proposed, the ancient instrument, held upright, was performed by muting the strings with a gentle pressing of the fingers of the left hand while a large plectrum was used in the right hand to pluck the strings near the bridge.²⁴⁶ Such technique could have been emulated by the mid fifteenth-century *cetra* players, who would press down the strings over the slots created by wooden blocks, perhaps even holding it upright, and simulating the playing of a re-incarnated *kithara*.

²⁴³ McIntosh, "Barbitos"; West, *Ancient Greek Music*, 48–69; Maas, "Kithara"; McIntosh, "Barbitos"; Maas, "Lyra (i)."

²⁴⁴ Crawford Young has suggested, with practical examples, Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 33; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 618; Allworth, "Comm. 97"; Segerman, Ephraim, "Comm. 125: On Comm. 97: Cetra Fret Blocks."

²⁴⁵ Segerman, "Comm. 1940: Another Look of the Cetra in the Gubbio Intarsia."

²⁴⁶ Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music*, 366–70.

According to Young, the string holder, or comb, could have been an iconic feature meant to represent an idealised form of the Greek lyre. However, instead of representing the tortoise's horns, the comb of the *cetra* represented an ideal lyre stand.²⁴⁷ Figure 19 shows on the left an early sixteenth century early *cetra intarsia* with the comb protruding in the lower end of the instrument. The realism of Fra Giovanni's woodworking skills is contrasted by the prominent fantastic stand placed below the *cetra* that is vertically held by King David in Bernardino Luini's (1482 -1532) fresco.

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Figure 19. Cetra String Holder. Left, Fra Giovanni da Verona, intarsia, 1503-1505, Monte Oliveto Maggiore, Italy, Choir Stall; right, Bernardino Luini, fresco, 1529, Santa Maria degli Angioli, Milano. Sources: Crawford Young, 'La Cetra Cornuta: The Horned Lyre of the Christian World' (Ph.D. diss., Netherlands, University of Leiden, 2018), 437,495.

Another *lyrical* iconological feature of the late fifteenth century *cetra*, proposed by Young, is the tapering body. This feature, consists in the instrument becoming shallower towards the bottom end, and a gradual decrease in size of the contour, where the perimeter is larger on the soundboard and smaller in the bottom board.²⁴⁸ Young goes on to say that the tapering depth was an emulation of the 'sound-chamber of the *kithara* and/or the tapered contour of the mythical concave tortoise shell.'²⁴⁹

As with the *cetra kollopes* and hook, the cultural context of the humanist attempts of the late fifteenth century makes the possibility of makers producing an 'imitation' of the concave shape of the tortoise shell feasible. This view becomes more persuasive if the shape of Vincenzo Galilei's (1520- 1591)

²⁴⁷ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526.

²⁴⁹ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526.

‘ancient’ *lira* is considered. Figure 20 depicts the theorist’s version of the ancient lyre’s resonator as a vortex-like tortoise shell.²⁵⁰

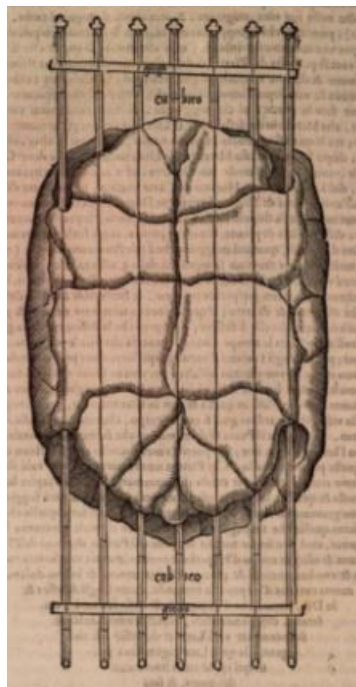


Figure 20. Ancient Tortoise Shell. Vincenzo Galilei, print, Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei 1581, Florence. Source: Vincenzo Galilei, Dialogo Di Vincentio Galilei Nobile Fiorentino Della Musica Antica, Et Della Moderna (Giorgio Marescotti, 1581), 126,129. Public Domain.

The lyre culture of the *cetra* cannot be overlooked and should be considered as having a fundamental iconological heritage that made it a distinct Medieval and early Renaissance plucked string instrument with specific terminological and morphological features that acted as significant icons of the Greek lyre.²⁵¹ This humanist context was the catalyser for the blocked frets, protruding string holder, shoulder extensions, and hook to be acted as icons. The *cetra* of the sixteenth century experienced dramatic changes, for some features were kept and others were modified; however, its iconical heritage, based on the lyre culture of late antiquity and Medieval period, remained well into the sixteenth century when it was transformed into the cittern.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ The tapering body is also present on the citole as scholar Alice A. Margerum has studied. In fact, the scholar mentioned the correlation between the concept of *conca* (shell) and citole in the humanist Geoffrey Chaucer (1340s -1400) use of the citole in *The Knight Tale*, which is a story that forms part of his *Canterbury Tales*. Margerum, “Situating the Citole, C1200-1400,” Vol 1, 172,173, 59,237,256,300; Steadman, “Venus’ Citole in Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale and Berchorius”; Fisher, “The New Humanism and Geoffrey Chaucer,” 29.

²⁵¹ Winternitz, “The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern.”

²⁵² For example, Crawford Young presented a 1548-1548 depiction of a *cetra* by Tintoretto or Jacopo Robusti (1518-1594). Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 509.

2.3 From the *Cetra* to the Cittern

The theory of conceiving the block fretted *cetra* as the direct forerunner of the cittern has been proposed and accepted, although it has not been fully developed.²⁵³ The earliest proposal was presented by Emanuel Winternitz who suggested that the lyre's morphological transformation not only passed through the citole and *cetra* but reached the sixteenth century cittern.²⁵⁴ For Winternitz the cittern's 'buckles' or wings, the hook on the back of the peghead, the protruding tail piece or string holder as well as the tapering body indicate the 'survival of the *kithara*'.²⁵⁵ Laurence Wright further developed the theory and used the famous historical citole housed at the British Museum as a comparison to the cittern.²⁵⁶ Wright in fact introduced a theoretical development diagram, which began, firstly, with an image of the citole at the British Museum; secondly, a thirteenth-century citole depiction in Rheims Cathedral; thirdly, a 1478-82 *cetra intarsia* at Federico da Montefeltro's *studiolo*; then, fourthly, and lastly, a late sixteenth century historical cittern.²⁵⁷ Wright further elaborated on how the citole and *cetra* features were gradually changed and diminished significantly as time passed.²⁵⁸

The issues concerning Winternitz's and Wright's statements, as with the citole/*cetra* lyre ancestry theory, is that the amount of evidence presented is incipient compared to the scope of time the authors propose.²⁵⁹ Moreover, both Winternitz and Wright treat the citole and *cetra* as the same instrument, which, as aforementioned, were related but different.

To consider the cittern's origins, it is necessary to establish the citole as a variant of the *cetra* and not a direct forerunner of the cittern. This reasoning is based on the fact that the citole was

²⁵³ Forrester, "The Cittern"; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 4,5; Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 32; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 86–89.

²⁵⁴ Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern," 222–23.

²⁵⁵ Winternitz was referring to what would later be recognized as the typical block frets of the *cetra*.

²⁵⁶ The [diagram](#) used by the author illustrates better the development of the hole in the neck of the citole that was later further made into a large hook, which decreased in size as instrument making approached the fourteenth century. Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 29, 30–31.

²⁵⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 15. Table 1.](#) Wright, 36.

²⁵⁸ Wright, 29, 30–31.

²⁵⁹ Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," Vol. 1, 6-7.

chronologically disconnected from the cittern and appears to have no longer been used for a century before the latter ever appeared.²⁶⁰

Proposals on the transformation of the *cetra* into the cittern have been briefly developed and, therefore, as proposed by Wright there is a need for a more in-depth systematic explanation that can involve a comparison with iconographic evidence and historical surviving instruments.²⁶¹

One would dearly like to know if certain features which are described by Tinctoris (tuning, metal strings, frets made of wooden blocks) and which correspond to those of the cittern (the wooden blocks become wooden wedges fixing brass frets) were present on the citole [*cetra*] of earlier centuries.²⁶²

Laurence Wright's question regarding the transformation of the wooden blocks into wedges and brass frets is relevant for this study. Besides the fret disposition, this study includes other features and transformative processes such as the reduction of the string holder, the fretboard upright cut-away, the neck and fretboard joint and the tapering body. This methodology uses the same principle established by Winternitz; nevertheless, instead of having a research scope of centuries, which would require a vast amount of visual evidence, this analysis will concentrate on evidence produced not only from the same geographical cultural context but from the last two decades of the fifteenth century to circa 1550.

2.4 From Block Frets to a Wedged Fingerboard

The use of Gaudenzio Ferrari's fresco at Milan has served as one of the latest depictions of a blocked fretted *cetra*,²⁶³ which shows a considerable reduction of the space between blocks as compared to older depictions such as the late fifteenth century *cetra* at Federico da Montefeltro's *studiolo* (Figure 21). While Montefeltro's *cetra* has clear blocks spaced between each other, Ferrari's instrument has what seems to be an entire individual fretboard and an extension of escalated blocked frets, which are nearer to the soundboard. This suggests that the idea of having a solid fingerboard, instead of blocks, was present in iconography.

²⁶⁰ Young, "Lute, Gittern, & Citole"; Buehler-McWilliams, "The British Museum Citole: An Organological Study"; Margerum, "Situating the Citole, C1200-1400," 356.

²⁶¹ Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 33; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 618; Allworth, "Comm. 97"; Segerman, Ephraim, "Comm. 125: On Comm. 97: Cetra Fret Blocks."

²⁶² Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 29, 30–31.

²⁶³ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 3.

These two depictions can be a reliable source regarding realism. Montefeltro's *cetra* is part of an *intarsia*, which are known to be hyperrealist artworks.²⁶⁴ In the case of Ferrari's, this reasoning could be complicated for in the fresco it is possible to see several other musical instruments with characteristics that oscillate between reality and fantasy. Nevertheless, it is possible to trust Ferrari's *cetra* for having the escalating block frets, which put them closer to a vast number of iconographical examples showing *cetre* with similar wooden blocks.²⁶⁵ Moreover, Ferrari's proto fingerboard along with the tear drop shape are unmistakably similar to the traditional Italian extant citterns (Figure 22).²⁶⁶



Figure 21. Gaudenzio Ferraris' Proto Fingerboard. Up, Francesco di Giorgio Martini (designer), intarsia, ca. 1478-82, Gubbio, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, (inv. nr. 39.153); below, Gaudenzio Ferrari, fresco, 1535-36, Dome of the Santuario Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Saronno, Milan. Sources: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 'Designed by Francesco Di Giorgio Martini | Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio | Italian, Gubbio | The Met', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, i.e. The Met Museum accessed June 2 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/198556>, Public Domain; Photograph by Esteban Mariño.

²⁶⁴ Raggio et al., *The Gubbio Studiolo and Its Conservation*, 3.

²⁶⁵ Robert Crawford Young presented circa fifty depictions of wooden block *cetre*. Young, "La Cetra Cornuta."

²⁶⁶ See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.



Figure 22. Traditional Italian Cittern. Franciscus Citaraedus, Cittern, 1584, Urbino, Provisional loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Source: Photograph Courtesy of Luca Rocca.

Another *cetra* with reduced block frets can be appreciated at Girolamo di Benvenuto's (1470-1524) *Convento della Santissima Trinità alla Selva* (Figure 23).²⁶⁷ Aligned with Ferrari's aesthetic purpose, there could be a fantastical element in this depiction for the peghead of this *cetra* has an elaborated scroll that also vacillates between reality and fiction. In fact, other musical instruments of this work have unreal morphological shapes. Nevertheless, the realism of the neck and finger board or fretted

²⁶⁷ The transformation from individual block frets into a solid individual fingerboard with cut slots was probably not linear and subject to complicated factors such as the ingenuity of makers. Moreover, therein lies the probability that these instruments are older than the date of the depiction, which could be possible if the intention of the artist was to depict a traditional older practice. Nevertheless, in any case they are older, suggesting that the reduction of block frets and the appearance of a solid fingerboard was a process that substantially predated the creation of the iconography.

block joint can be attested by the way virtually all historical citterns' necks are built.²⁶⁸ Figure 23 shows the aforementioned fingerboard/neck joint, which also suggests how the wooden wedges in the traditional Italian cittern by Augustinus *Citaraedus* are traces of the slots of the blocked fretted *cetra*.²⁶⁹

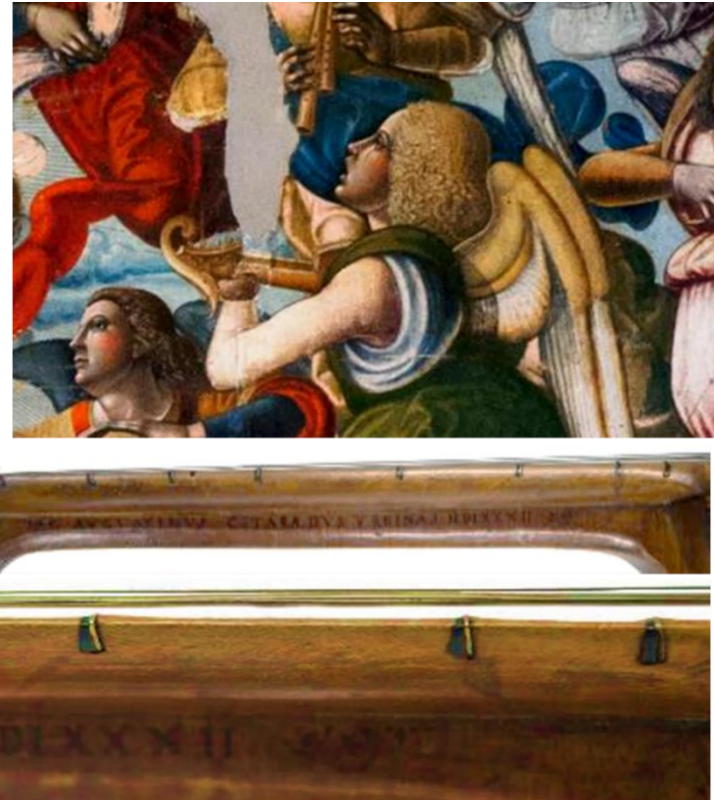


Figure 23. Cetre Proto Fingerboard and Neck Joint. Up and middle, Girolamo di Benvenuto, oil on canvas, 1500-1510, Convento della Santissima Trinità alla Selva, Fiora, Italy; below, Augustinus Citaraedus, Italian Traditional Carved Cittern, 1582, Urbino, Victoria and Albert Museum, currently at loan at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Source: Alamy Limited, 'Girolamo di Benvenuto Assunzione di Maria al cielo tra Santi', Alamy, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.alamy.es/foto-girolamo-di-benvenuto-assunzione-di-maria-al-cielo-tra-santi-asuncion-de-maria-al-cielo-con-los-santos-escuela-senese-oleo-sobre-madera-segunda-mitad-siglo-xv-pitigliano-italia-171388511.html>. Purchased License ®; Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Urbino Cittern | Unknown | V&A Explore The Collections', Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58649/urbino-cittern-cittern-unknown/>; Esteban Mariño, 'Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study' (University of South Dakota, 2016), Victoria and Albert Museum ®.

The distinctive way of joining the fretboard to the neck, which is reminiscent of the *cetra*'s building technique in Figure 23, is evident in the historical cittern signed by Raffaello da Urbino, which is currently preserved in the National Music Museum in South Dakota (Figure 24). In this image, taken during the restoration process of the instrument in the 1985, it is possible to see how the cittern was

²⁶⁸ As aforementioned in the introduction one distinctive feature of the cittern is that the neck is narrower than the fretboard which leaves a thumb rest that eases the technique. See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.

²⁶⁹ Wright, "The Medieval Gittern and Citole: A Case of Mistaken Identity," 29, 30–31.

carved from the same piece of wood, which left a narrow neck.²⁷⁰ This method would have allowed an ideal flat surface for placing the block frets of the *cetra*, and as the instrument-building craft developed, the appearance of a solid fingerboard with wedges instead of independent block frets could have become a more logical and practical way of building. Then, at one point in time, probably after the first decades of the sixteenth century, the *cetra* was fitted not only with a solid fingerboard but also with metal frets.²⁷¹



Figure 24. Carved Structure. Raffaello da Urbino, Cittern, circa 1540, Urbino, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (Inv. nr. 3386). Source: Photograph Courtesy of the National Music Museum.

One of the earliest traditional Italian citterns with metal partial frets²⁷² can only be publicly appreciated through photographs for its current whereabouts are unknown (Figure 25).²⁷³ In this image, it is possible to see how the wedges occupied the space where the slots between block frets used to be. Similarly, Figure 26 illustrates with greater detail the thinness of the brass frets of the early citterns and the wide space of the wedges.

²⁷⁰ As mentioned in the introduction, the Italian traditional citterns are carved or monoxylic, which means their resonator, neck and peghead are made out of a single piece of carved wood. [See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.](#)

²⁷¹ Gary Stewart, Conservation Report, *Raffaello* cittern catalogue file 3386, NMM. Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study," 71.

²⁷² Forrester, "Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire," 11.

²⁷³ Another traditional Italian cittern made in a very early date is the 1536 Franciscus Plebanus instrument, which also has a cutaway in its fingerboard as the A. Rossi cittern. [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 10 and 17, Table 1.](#)



Figure 25. Early Traditional Italian Cittern. A. Rossi, cittern, 1530?, Urbino, unknown location. Source: Photograph Courtesy of the National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota.



Figure 26. Unoriginal Fingerboard. Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, Urbino, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (Inv. nr. 3386). Source: Photograph Courtesy of the National Music Museum.

It is not clear exactly when the *cetra* was provided with a full solid fingerboard and metal frets. The painting made by Giulio Campagnola is one of the earliest pieces of evidence which, under our modern understanding, could be considered a fusion between the cittern and *cetra*. In Figure 27 it is possible to observe what seems to be a fingerboard, which still shows block frets or wide slots between them. The

reason for considering this is based on the way this piece appears to be suspending over the soundboard, as if it was a solid individual piece.



Figure 27. Late Cetra. Giulio Campagnola, oil on canvas, Young Faun Playing the Syrinx, circa 1513-15, Mantua, Alte Pinakothek, (inv. nr. 76). Source: Alte Pinakothek, “Sammlung | Daphnis,” accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/7yxYbq6LYm/jacopo-negretti-gen-palma-il-vecchio/daphnis#&gid=1&pid=1>. CC BY-SA 4.0.

The 1526 Girolamo dai Libri instrument is one of the earliest visual evidence of the use of partial fretting and well could be the earliest cittern ever depicted in Italian iconography (Figure 28).²⁷⁴ In this image, is possible to see how this instrument is provided with fingerboard and partial frets.²⁷⁵ As with many iconographic depictions, there are some unreal elements that may be ascribed to the creative labour of the artist. However, in this case, although the outline of the *cetra* is rather strange when compared to the typical tear drop shape of other instruments, there is a high degree of realism because of the way the tuning pegs are inserted on the peghead. This satellite fashion of insertion is common in all traditional Italian citterns.²⁷⁶ Moreover, the existence of early citterns with peculiar contour shapes is attested by the similarities found on the instrument signed by Rafaello da Urbino and the Girolamo dai Libri *cetra*/cittern (Figure 29).

²⁷⁴ The Girolamo dai Libri *cetra* or early cittern is one of the earliest sources that evidences the use of partial fretting. Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 64.

²⁷⁵ The fundamental changes of the *cetra* were adapting a full fingerboard, increasing the string length, placing a longer neck and the addition of more strings. Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 3.

²⁷⁶ [See chapter 1. ‘Introduction’. Section 1.4.1.](#)



Figure 28. Earliest Cittern Fingerboard. Girolamo dai Libri, altar painting, Virgin with Two Saints, 1526, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona. Source: “Angeli Musicanti / Girolamo Dai Libri,” image, Gallica, 1985 1945, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8429437t>. Public Domain.



Figure 29. Girolamo dai Libri and Raffaello da Urbino Citterns. Up, Girolamo dai Libri, altar painting, Virgin with Two Saints, 1526, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona; below, Raffaello da Urbino, 1550, Urbino, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386).

Note that the Raffaello da Urbino does not have a cutaway, which is a recurrent characteristic of the Urbino citterns. It is also worth noticing that the Girolamo dai Libri cetra/cittern does not have a comb or string holder, and instead the strings are attached by pins, in a very similar way to Brescian citterns. Sources: National Music Museum. “Cittern.” Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/6525/cittern>.; “Angeli Musicanti / Girolamo Dai Libri,” image, Gallica, 1985 1945, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8429437t>. Public Domain.

Another feature that connects the *cetra* and the cittern is the fingerboard cutaway located at the lower end of the piece of the soundboard, which indicates how the bass and middle strings were not played so often as the treble. This constitutes a typical feature present in several historical citterns²⁷⁷ and *cetre* iconography. For example, the circa 1520 *cetre* depictions by Fra Giovanni da Verona in the temple of Santa Maria Organa in Verona show how the block frets decreased in length as the pieces

²⁷⁷ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 Table 1.

approach the body of the instrument, which automatically leaves the space of what later was made into a cutaway (Figure 30).

Some cittern makers took advantage of the space provided by the fingerboard cutaway and created beautiful carvings such as the siren depicted in Figure 31 which is registered in a 1921 catalogue.²⁷⁸ In this image it is possible to appreciate the general tapering ‘tear drop’ shape as well as the aforementioned neck/fingerboard joint.

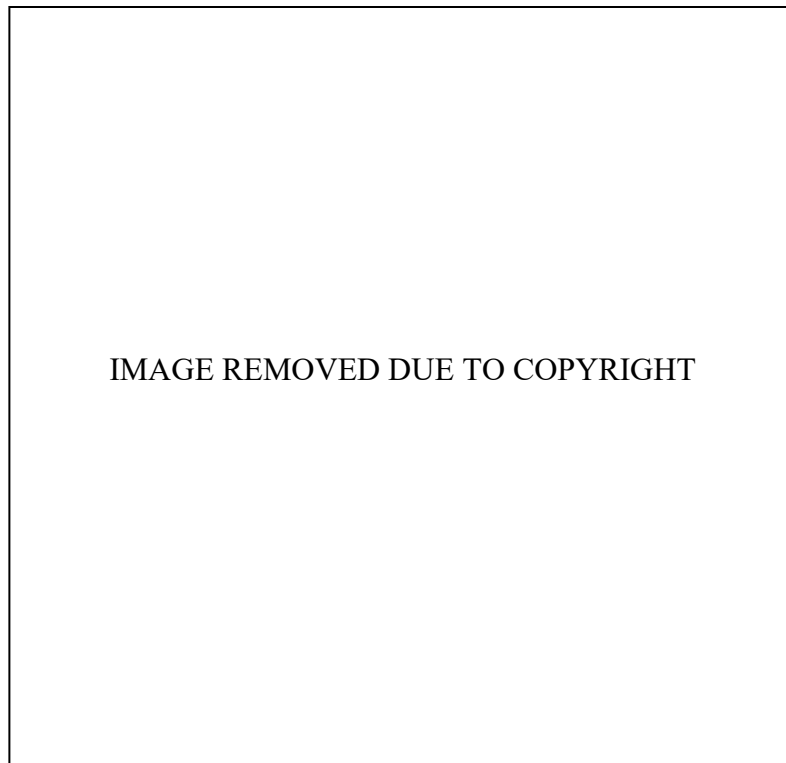


Figure 30. Cetre Cutaway. Fra Giovanni da Verona, wood relief, cetre, 1519-1523, Santa Maria Organa in Verona, Italy. Sources: Photograph by Esteban Mariño; Courtesy of Pepe Rey (founder of the Seminar of Early Musical Studies in Madrid).

²⁷⁸ Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare and Unique.*, Plate XIV.



Figure 31. Cutaway Decoration. Unknown maker, cittern, sixteenth century, probably Urbino, location unknown. Sources: Alfred J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare and Unique*. (London: A and C. Black, 1921), Plate XIV. Public Domain.

2.5 String Holder and Tapering Body

The string holder, present in virtually all traditional Italian citterns, was kept much longer than the shoulder extensions because it was a practical feature that provided traditional carved instruments with a string holder, which was part of the same resonator.²⁷⁹ Similar string holders can be seen in the historical citterns depicted in Figure 32, which shows how this piece considerably decreases in size when compared to the aforementioned iconographical examples.

²⁷⁹ [See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.](#)



Figure 32. Cittern String Holders. Up, Rafaello da Urbino, cittern, 1550, Urbino, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386); below, Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Urbino, Victoria, and Albert Museum, currently at loan at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Sources: Courtesy of the National Music Museum; Photograph by Esteban Mariño.

The tapering body is another technical feature that indicates that the cittern was developed out of the *cetra*.²⁸⁰ Such a feature, virtually present in all Italian traditional citterns,²⁸¹ is a characteristic of the carved construction, for through this carving technique it is possible to obtain a gradual decrease in size of the contour, which is larger on the soundboard and smaller in the bottom board.²⁸² Similarly, the height of the walls is larger on the heel of the instrument than near the comb, which is another recurrent characteristic of cittern and *cetre*. Figure 33 shows the tapering body of two *cetre* and the Augustinus Citaraedus Urbino cittern. The realism of the iconographies is attested not only by Montefeltro's *intarsia*, but by lute and cittern player Giulio Campagnola's late *cetra*, which shows a later version of the instrument with shorter hook, an apparently individual fingerboard, smaller comb and reduced horns

²⁸⁰ Michel, "Zistern."

²⁸¹ [See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.](#)

or ‘wings’, which are closer to the cittern’s scrolls.²⁸³ The Augustinus Citaraedus cittern shows how these features became smaller relics of the iconic *cetra* features.

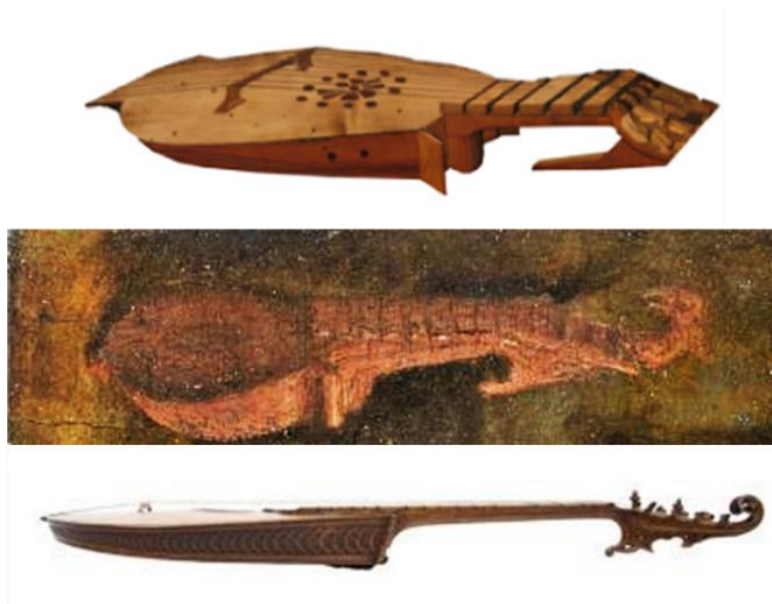


Figure 33. Cittern’s and Cetre Tapering Body. Up, Francesco di Giorgio Martini (designer), intarsia, cetra depicted in studiolo, ca. 1478-82, Gubbio, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, (inv. Nr. 39.153); middle, Giulio Campagnola, oil painting, Young Faun Playing the Syrinx, circa 1513-15, Mantua, Alte Pinakothek; below, Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Urbino, Victoria, and Albert Museum, currently at loan at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. Nr. 392-1871). Sources: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Designed by Francesco Di Giorgio Martini | Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio | Italian, Gubbio,” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/198556> .Public Domain; Alte Pinakothek, “Sammlung | Daphnis,” accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/7yxYbq6LYm/jacopo-negretti-gen-palma-il-vecchio/daphnis#&gid=1&pid=1>. CC BY-SA 4.0.

²⁸³ [See chapter 1. ‘Introduction’. Section 1.2.](#)

2.6 The Tuning of the *Cetra* is Transformed into the Cittern's

As Ivan Francis Waldbauer and Louis Peter Grijp have suggested, Tinctoris' *cetula* tuning is related to later tunings of the cittern.²⁸⁴ In the early 1470's the Franco-Flemish theorist Johannes Tinctoris (1435-1511) travelled to Naples under the service of King Ferdinand I (1423 – 1494).²⁸⁵ Tinctoris's twenty years' service at the Neapolitan court could have enabled him to encounter the *cetra*, and thus be familiar with its features,²⁸⁶ which were described in his 1478 *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*:

Yet another derivate of the lyra is the instrument called *cetula* by the Italians, who invented it. It has four brass or steel strings usually tuned: a tone, a tone, a fourth, and back again a tone, and it is played with a quill. Since the *cetula* is flat, it is fitted with certain wooden elevations on the neck, arranged proportionately, and known as frets. The strings are pressed against these by the fingers to make a higher or a lower note.²⁸⁷

Tinctoris' *cetula* description,²⁸⁸ the earliest written source that connects the cittern with the *cetra*, stated that between the first and second course there is an interval of one tone, while between the second and the third one there is a fourth. Nevertheless, the Franco-Flemish theorist's fourth course tuning has confused generations of cittern scholars, who have interpreted Tinctoris in different ways. The problem arises with the phrase *ac rursus tonum*,²⁸⁹ which can be translated as 'back again a tone.' Indeed, Grijp stated that is not clear what does the Franco-Flemish theorist means:

Tinctoris's description of the tuning is slightly awkward: *ad tonum et tonum*: diatessaron: *et rursus tonum* (to a tone and a tone, a fourth and again a tone).²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 90; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 42.

²⁸⁵ Woodley, J. Dean, and Lewis, "Johannes Tinctoris: Complete Theoretical Works."

²⁸⁶ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 305–9.

¹⁹⁹ Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*," 23.

²⁸⁸ The most recent edited translation is provided by *The Complete Theoretical Works of Johannes Tinctoris: A New Digital Edition* available at the [Early Music Theory Website](#). It is worth noticing that scholar J. Dean Woodley translates *cetula* as cittern: 'From the lyra likewise proceeded another instrument, named by the Italians, who devised it, a "cittern", upon which four brass or steel strings, commonly disposed by a tone, a fourth, and back a tone, are stretched. And this cittern itself, being flat, has certain wooden raised parts that are popularly called "frets" arranged proportionally on the neck, against which the strings, pressed down by the fingers, make the sound either higher or lower.' Woodley, J. Dean, and Lewis, "Johannes Tinctoris: Complete Theoretical Works"; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 305–9.

²⁸⁹ The original Latin text that specifies the *cetula* tuning reads as follows: 'ad tonum, et tonum: diatesseron: ac rursus tonum: communiter disposite tenduntur: pennaque tanguntur.' Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*," 23.

²⁹⁰ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 90.

Ivan Francis Waldbauer proposed two possibilities, which either could be (*e'-d'-g-a*) or (*e'-d'-a-b*).²⁹¹ He used the tunings of the mid-sixteenth century cittern tablatures as a reason to state that the first option, (*e'-d'-g-a*), is the most historically appropriate (Figure 34)²⁹².

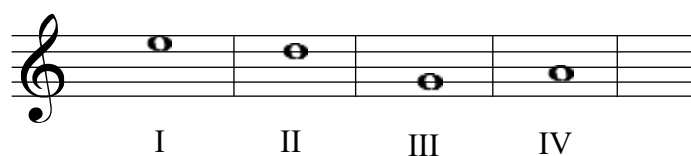


Figure 34. Tintoris' Tuning. Interpretation of Johannes Tintoris *Cetula*, circa 1487. Source: Diagram by Esteban Mariño based on Ivan Francis Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries" (Ph.D., Ann Arbor, Harvard University, 1964).

Similarly, Louis Peter Grijp suggested the option of (*e'-d'-g-a*) which is based on considering Tintoris's description with the tuning of the sixteenth century citterns.²⁹³ Crawford Young stated that it is possible to interpret 'ac rursus tonum' as 'going back to the original interval,' however, one octave higher.²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Young eventually concurred with Louis Peter Grijp's proposal of considering Tintoris's tuning indications as *e'-d'-g-a*, essentially because it provided more advantages in forming chords and, as aforementioned, this disposition is related with the mid-sixteenth century cittern tablatures.²⁹⁵

Although Tintoris did not produce clear indications of the *cetula* tuning, and therefore different interpretations can be made of his instructions, the string disposition is 'unmistakably related to one of the later tunings of the cittern,' which as aforementioned, suggests that the tuning of the *cetra* was the cittern's forerunner string disposition.²⁹⁶ Virtually all tunings of the cittern in their first three courses follow Tintoris's intervallic disposition, which is a major second between the first and second and a major second between the third and fourth.²⁹⁷

²⁹¹ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 42.

²⁹² [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

²⁹³ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 587.

²⁹⁴ Young, 587.

²⁹⁵ Young, 587.

²⁹⁶ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 90.

²⁹⁷ [See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.](#)

Tinctoris's tuning is connected with the disposition described by music theorist from Parma Giovanni Maria Lanfranco (1490-1545). In his *Scintille di musica* of 1533, he gave the instructions for an early six string *cethara* with a major hexachord. Figure 35 depicts the theorist's diagram and allows us to discern the tuning indications. Lanfranco chooses *a* as the single first and highest course, the second one (*g*) is a double course at the unison, the third one (*c*) is a double course at the octave, the fourth one (*e*) is a single course, the fifth one (*f*) is a single course, and finally the sixth (*d*) is also single. It is worth noticing that the capital letters of the diagram indicate the alphabetical disposition of the strings, which increase in pitch from lowest to highest for they do not imply pitch nomenclatures (*a-gg-cc-e-f-d*).

140 **Essempio della Cethara.**

F.	Tuono.	la.
E.	Vnifone.	sol.
	Quinta.	
A.	Ottave.	ut.
C.	Terza maggiore.	mi.
D.	Semituō minore.	fa.
B.	Terza minore.	re.

P A R T E

Laqual Cethara e diuisa per tasti: per il che molte uoci per essi tasti caminādo si possono trouare. Ma dalla B. alla F. & dalla A. alla E. la quinta si forma.

Del Liuto.

Il Liuto il q̃l (secōdo il mō credere) e q̃lla p̃pria: & tāto celebrata lyra o Cethara: che si chiama: che fu primieramēte ritrouata da Mercurio, & accresciuta da i suoi successori: e il piu p̃fetto instrumēto di tutti glia'tri: Percioche i esso di tasto i tasto ogni uoce, & suono si ritroua. Laonde i esso instrumēto si puo puare: che i ogni positio ne della Mano: e q̃l sillaba catabile si uuole. Perche ponēdo la nota ut, sopra q̃l tasto si sia: le sue seguēti note senza error ne i seguēti tasti si trouera. Quātūque pcedēdo p un certo suo ordine la Mano principale (da A, re, cōmiciādo) nel modo che dirēmo, si cōfide

Figure 35. Lanfranco's Tuning. Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, print, *Scintille Di Musica*, 1533, Brescia. Source: Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, 'Scintille Di Musica', in *Collected Work: Viole de Gambe: Méthodes, Traités, Dictionnaires et Encyclopédies, Ouvrages Généraux*, Vol. 1. Series: *Méthodes & Traités*. IV: Italie 1600-1800, No. 17 Courlay, France: J.M. Fuzeau, 2004, 140.

Lanfranco's tuning indications are associated with Tinctoris' *cetula* for the following reasons. First, the term *cethara* is ideal historical evidence that shows the relationship between *cithara* and *cetra* or *cetera*. It is possible to suggest that the letter *i* and *e* were interchangeable, while the *h* and *a* were dispensable [*cithara/cethara/cetera/cetra*].²⁹⁸ Secondly, Lanfranco described the *cetra* as belonging to the Perugians, which indicates a cultural community that belonged to the region of Perugia in today's Italy. This province is near to Assisi, which is a township that has been identified as having a significant

²⁹⁸ For example, in a 1584 French to Italian dictionary the word *Cithera* is paired with *cethra* and *cetra*. On the other hand, a 1596 version of the *Divina Commedia* by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) translates the word *cetra* as *cithara* and *cistre*, which was the French name of the cittern. Fenice, *Dictionnaire François et Italien*; Dante Alighieri and Grangier, *La Comedie de Dante, de l'Enfer, du Purgatoire et Paradis, mise en ryme françoise et commentē*, 434.

amount of *cetra* iconography, such as the aforementioned Franciscan frescos of the Basilica of Assisi.²⁹⁹

Thirdly, as noted by Ephraim Segerman,³⁰⁰ Lanfranco's first four courses follow a variation of the intervals that are present in Tinctoris's blocked fretted *cetula*, which could have been changed into a hexachord disposition.

The early 16th century Italians increased the number of courses to 6, adding the remaining notes of a hexachord to those of the *cetra*, giving the tuning *e''-d'-d'-gg'-b-c'-a*. To get to this tuning from the *cetra* tuning *e'-d'-a-b*, one can add a *c'* fifth course and move the *a* from the third to the sixth course, replacing it with a *g* course.³⁰¹

As aforesaid, is not clear if in Tinctoris' fourth course goes higher or lower with respect of the third course (Figure*). Therefore, is not possible to know with certainty if his *cetula* has a re-entrant tuning or not.³⁰² Nevertheless, Lanfranco did use a re-entrant disposition, establishing the lowest pitch in the third course as the start of the out of order hexachord tuning.³⁰³ At the same time, Lanfranco could have well described the tuning of the cittern, because the theorist uses the term *tasti*, which in this context means frets, and so therein lies the possibility that he was referring to an early cittern.

The connection between Tinctoris's and Lanfranco's tuning disposition with the seventeenth century cittern is clear when considering the work of the Italian theorist, singer and priest, Pietro Cerone (1566–1625). The *cethara* explanation of *Scintille di Musica* was practically copied by Cerone in his treatise published in 1613 and entitled *El melopeo y maestro: tractado de música theorica y pratica*. Cerone established a very similar tuning arrangement as Lanfranco's, with the exception that the pitches for each course are specified in the following fashion: *a-gg-c'-e-f-d* (Figure 36).³⁰⁴

²⁹⁹ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 160.

³⁰⁰ Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

³⁰¹ Segerman, 87.

³⁰² Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 587.

³⁰³ Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giouan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 140; Tyler, "Cittern."

³⁰⁴ Cerone, *El Melopeo y Maestro: Tractado de Música Theorica y Pratica; En Que Se Pone Por Extensio; Lo Que Uno Para Hazerse Perfecto Musico Ha Menester Saber*, XXI:1055.

Que es de los Conciertos, e instrum. music. y de su temple. vo 55

estas tenemos anotadas, dando à cada cuerda la fuya; tirando las dos cuerdas acompañadas debaxo de vna mesma letra: las quales letras (como dicho es) sirven solamente de guía para las fuyas naturales, y no de letras de la Música; como en la siguiente figura se muestra. *Exemplo.*

Tono 8 Segunda.			
5	B. Violon.	sol	5
	Quinta.		
4	A. Octava.	Vt	4
3	C. Tercera mayor.	mi	3
2	F. Semitono cantable.	fa	2
1	D. Tercera menor.	re	1

Este instrumento es dividido por trastes, à causa de que, caminando por ellos con Arte, muchas mas voces se pueden hallar; todas musicales y bien proporcionadas. Finalmente advertian, que desde la letra B à la F, y desde la A à la B, se forma la Quinta.

Para proceder con mayor claridad, ponre la dicha orden por puntos de Solfa; por los quales se verá mas claramente lo que haze al caso: y para esto imaginamos la Cithara de C Solfa.

Seg. la ord. de las cuerdas del instrum.	Cuerdas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Seg. la ord. de las voces mudas.	Cuerdas.	4	3	2	1	6

Figure 36. Cerone's Tuning. Pietro Cerone, print, *El Melopeo y Maestro* 1613, Naples. Source: Pietro Cerone, *El Melopeo y Maestro: Tractado de Música Theorica y Pratica; En Que Se Pone Por Extenso; Lo Que Uno Para Hazerse Perfecto Musico Ha Menester Saber*, vol. XXI (Naples: Juan Bautista Gargano y Lucrecio Nucci, 1613), 1055. Public Domain.

Cerone referred to the cittern as *citola* and *cythara*, which were the Spanish names of the cittern. In fact, Cerone who wrote his treatise in Spanish, was well associated with the music of Spain and the Spanish owned kingdom of Naples (Figure 37).³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ Stevens, *A New Spanish and English Dictionary*; Margerum, "Situating the Cithara, C1200-1400," 20; Barton, "Cerone, Pietro."

Del modo de temprar la Cytbara ò Citola. Cap. XVI.

Quando las cuerdas ay en la Cytbara.
MAs en la Citola, es à sauér en aquel instrumento que de los de Perusa es llamado Cethara, se halla el Exachordio mayor en la diferencia de sus cuerdas; las quales son solamente seys. *Diga seys, porque dos posiciones son acompañadas de manera, que cada una dellas, tomamos por una sola; por quanto la una en Octaua, y la otra en Unisonus con su compañera, se templa. Y así en aquella cuerda, aquíen se da la Octaua en agudo, señalada con el A, (por ser la mas baxa de sonido,) hemos puesto la nota Vt, como la q es el fundamento del dicho Exachordio, en las seys cuerdas comprehendido Mas el Re, se da à quella cuerda que possee la B, porque de la vna à la otra se oye el Tono Sexquioctauo: y el Mi, à la que es señalada con la letra C; por quanto la mesma diferencia de Tono, se ve entre la B y la C. Mas el Fa, se pone en la cuerda del D, porque el sonido que ay entre D y C, es el proprio intervalo del Semitono cantable. El Sol, despues hemos puesto en la letra E; que desde la D à la E, de nuevo hallamos la distancia de Tono. Finalmente el La, se pone en el sonido mas agudo, que es en la cuerda con F señalada: y así con la guia de las seys syllabas, Vt re mi fa sol la, (que hazen la composicion del Exachordio) la dicha Citola se puede temprar. Cuyas cuerdas (por no darles algunos nombres mas estraños desto que les damos) con seys le-
Las cuerdas se pueden nombrar como mejor pareciere.
 oras*

Figure 37. Cerone's Cythara or Citola. Pietro Cerone, print, *El Melopeo y Maestro* 1613, Naples. Source: Pietro Cerone, *El Melopeo y Maestro: Tractado de Música Theorica y Pratica; En Que Se Pone Por Extenso; Lo Que Uno Para Hazerse Perfecto Musico Ha Menester Saber*, vol. XXI (Naples: Juan Bautista Gargano y Lucrecio Nucci, 1613), 1055. Public Domain.

The link between the aforementioned theorists and the seventeenth-century cittern is well attested by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621), Marin Mersenne (1588 - 1648) and Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680). The exact same intervals of Lanfranco and Cerone, with specific pitches, were described in Michael Praetorius's cittern description, who stated that such disposition belongs to the 'Italians of former times', suggesting that the cittern hexachord tuning was an old one. Praetorius was probably referring to the early tuning proposed by Lanfranco, which could have been applied to a late *cetra* or early Italian cittern tuning.³⁰⁶ Praetorius transposed Cerone's indications a fifth higher, giving the following disposition: *e'-d'-g-b-c'-a*. Nevertheless, he explained that the last two courses (*c* and *a*) could not always be necessary, which in fact, placed his tuning closer to the early sixteenth-century Tinctoris's indications. Concurrently, the music theorist Marin Mersenne showed the same type of hexachord tuning for his Italian cittern, with slight changes: *a'-g'-c'-e' f-d'*, which match the exact intervals as Cerone and

³⁰⁶Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60,61.

Lanfranco. Moreover, scholar and polymath Athanasius Kircher also mentioned the same Italian cittern tuning as Mersenne's.³⁰⁷

By linking the tuning intervals of Tinctoris, Lanfranco and Cerone, it is possible to connect them with the cittern iconography provided by Praetorius, Mersenne and Kircher, who as aforementioned indicated variations of the same hexachord disposition (Figure 38). As a conclusion is possible to state that the previously mentioned six different treatises, connect the *cetra* with the sixteenth and seventeenth century cittern tuning, which allows to deduce that the intervallic disposition of the cittern, independently from pitch, was rooted in the Italian blocked fretted instrument.

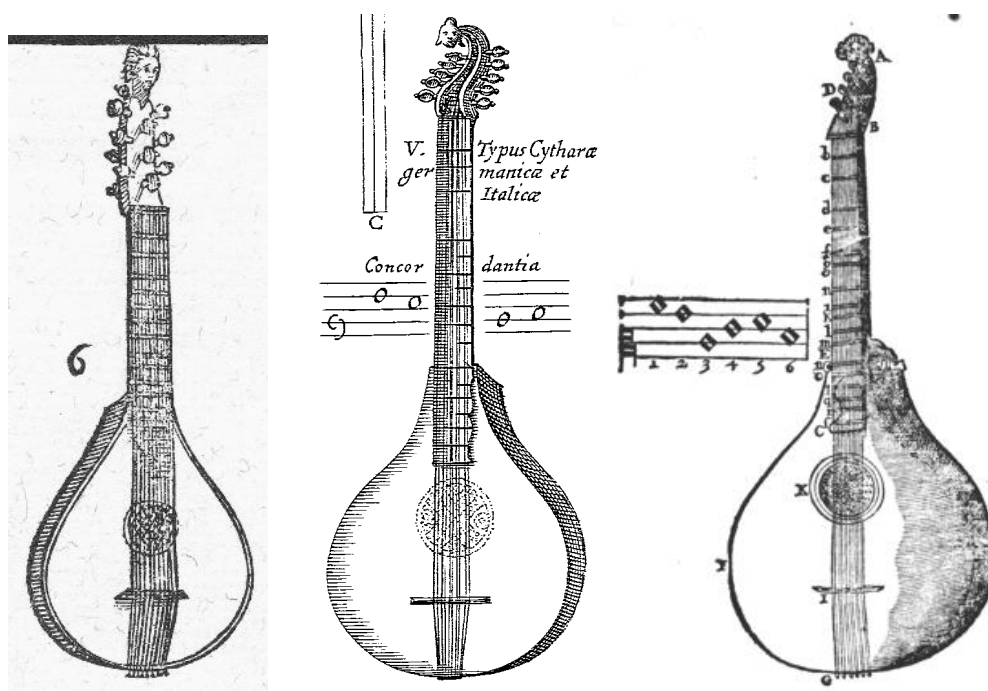


Figure 38. Citterns by Praetorius, Kircher and Mersenne. Left, Micheal Praetorius, print, Syntagma Musicum, circa 1620, Wolfenbüttel; middle, Athanasius Kircher, print, Musurgia universalis, 1650, Rome; right, Marin Mersenne, print, Harmonie Universelle, 1636-7, Paris. Note that Kircher's depiction has some irregularities, which are the placing of the cutaway on the treble side and considering the 'Germanic' and Italian categories as the same type of cittern. Instead of showing different types of citterns as Praetorius or Mersenne, Kircher only depicted one four course model. Sources: Micheal Praetorius, Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia, vol. II (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), Plate XVI; Athanasius Kircher, Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta (Rome: Haeredum Pranscisci Corbelletti, 1650), Plate VII, 476; Marin Mersenne, Harmonie Universelle (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1636), Book IV, 32. Public Domain.

³⁰⁷ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, IV,32; Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, 479.

2.7 Summary: The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage

Scholarship indicates that the *cetra* and *citole* were different musical instruments, yet they were related to each other. The latter was probably a variant of the *cetra*, which had a longer heritage, related to the cultivation of the lyre during late antiquity, which belonged to the Italian Peninsula. Emanuel Winternitz's theory of conceiving the *cetra* as predecessor of the Greek lyre has been expanded by Crawford Young; however, the vast period of study still overweighs the amount of evidence produced so far and the possible classical origins of the *cetra* could be more related to an iconological creative tradition and not necessarily to an organological transformation. This significance was certainly kept in the late versions of the *cetra* that were still present in the first half of the sixteenth century. This chapter has confirmed past proposals of conceiving the Italian blocked fretted plucked stringed instruments as the direct forerunners of the cittern, which kept the same terminology (*cetra/cetera*) as its Medieval predecessor before it was introduced north of the Alps.

The history of the cittern shows an organological transformation of the following *cetra* features: 1) Tinctoris tuning was expanded into Lanfranco's major hexachord; 2) the block frets were changed into wedges supplied with thin brass frets; 3) the individual blocks were made into a solid fingerboard with a cutaway; 4) in some cases the neck length was increased; 5) the iconological lyre features (hook, shoulder extensions and string holder) were reduced in size.

This is the first cultural moment in the historical trajectory of the cittern because it represents the point of departure for its journey of transformation. The past of the cittern is rich in meaning for it is the only plucked stringed instrument to have deep roots in humanistic heritage and five centuries of autochthonous Italian tradition. No other early modern musical instrument can claim to represent a comparable Medieval Christianisation of an instrument of antiquity, as it is the only one that embodies that actual heritage in its materiality. Building on the proposals of Crawford Young in relation to the *cetra*, this dissertation seeks to highlight the cultural legacy of this wire strung plucked string as a true child of the Renaissance.

3. The Transformation of the Italian Cittern

Using iconography, treatises, extant historical instruments and tablatures, this chapter sets out to explain the transformation of the cittern inside the Italian Peninsula. This endeavour will be developed as an object-based *biographical study*, meaning an analysis of the historic trajectory of the instrument through the different stages of its transformation and the relevant musical, social and economic forces involved. On the one hand, this chapter will propose that the Italian cittern history can be understood in terms of a set of innovations that were a product of the flourishing instrumental performance of the sixteenth century. On the other, this chapter will explain how the Italian cittern was rooted in a humanist tradition that preserved the traditional manufacture of the *cetra*. First, there will be an explanation of the humanist features of the cittern and how these informed the advanced manufacture of the Brescian school of the second half of the sixteenth century. Of particular importance is the relationship with the humanist ethos, the poetic practices of the epoch and the connection of these elements with the traditional manufacture and decoration of the instrument. These elements encompass the essence of the intrinsic identity of the cittern in Italy.

3.1 The Survival of the Humanist Heritage

To understand the humanist significance of the cittern it is necessary to consider its past as the *cetra*, widely regarded as an iconological, idealised recreation of the mythical Greek lyre. The distinction between the *cetra* and the cittern is a modern one; historically speaking, both were just very different versions of the same musical instrument. The *cetra* was renovated into the traditional cittern, which preserves many of the lyre-like iconological features that made it a humanist musical and visual icon involved in poetic practices that evoked the revival of classical antiquity. As with much of humanist culture, such practices were not direct recreations of ancient models but were offsprings of appropriations and transformations of vernacular traditions ‘viewed anew through the lens of ancient precedents.’³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 8; Dempsey, *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture*.

The revival of antiquity heavily permeated the musical culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁰⁹ The renewal of ancient sources offered a rhetorical content that greatly influenced the development of instrumental and vocal music.³¹⁰ Pythagorean, Platonic and Boethian knowledge,³¹¹ often involving the combination of Christianity with classical antiquity, was recovered by small groups of privileged scholars, who in turn influenced musical culture.³¹² Theoretical publications, encouraged by patrons of the main city-states of the Italian Peninsula such as Naples, Florence, Bologna, Rome and Venice, adapted contemporary performance practice with idealised theories rooted in their interpretation of classical antiquity. Humanist writers, teachers, composers, and performers belonged to intellectual networks that discussed Platonic and Aristotelian ideas.³¹³ Through a re-examination of antiquity, the writings of Boethius were further studied; the relationship between ancient modes and the ‘modern’ Western theory was scrutinized thoroughly and the effects of musical scales on human behaviour for dramatic purposes were a common connective thread among discussions.³¹⁴

In the sixteenth century, however, humanism did not have the same strength it had in the previous centuries, for the unstoppable transformation of instrumental music re-directed the vanguardist, vocal polyphonic development towards musical instruments.³¹⁵ The Italian traditional cittern, then, reflects the processes in which a humanist ethos eventually gave way to the revolutionary instrumental performance practice of years to come.³¹⁶ Notwithstanding this process, the humanist significance of the Italian traditional cittern survived in its poetic practices and in its iconological manufacture.

³⁰⁹ Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 49.

³¹⁰ Palisca, “Baroque.”

³¹¹ Virtually all aspects of the revival of antiquity, a combination of philosophical and religious elements, an amalgamation best represented by Boethius (circa 477 – 524 A.D), which was one of the most influential writers throughout the early modern musical culture. Carter, “The Concept of the Baroque,” 49; Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre*, 630; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 6.

³¹² Carter, “The Concept of the Baroque,” 49, 50; Tomlinson, “Renaissance Humanism and Music,” 4.

³¹³ Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 11.

³¹⁴ Palisca, 10–13.

³¹⁵ Banks, “Renaissance Instrumental Music,” 145; Polk, “Instrumental Performance in the Renaissance,” 344–45.

³¹⁶ [See section 3.2. The Cittern Inside a Growing Social Practice of Instrumental Music.](#)

3.1.1 The Cittern and the Singing Poet

The role of Renaissance poetic practices has been largely neglected in scholarship on the Italian cittern or *cetera* due to conflicting terminology. Strongly rooted in oral practice, there is little written music that can truly be linked with the poetic practices of the traditional Italian cittern.³¹⁷ A quantitative analysis of the import of the Italian cittern in the art of sixteenth and seventeenth-century poetic practices, rooted in the revival of antiquity, would require substantial archival research that can carefully distinguish the term *cetera* from its generic meanings and recover the use of the cittern in this practice. This task lies beyond the scope of this research; however, the following pages will, nevertheless, contribute to such an analysis and to showing how this instrument was a part of a vibrant practice of the speech-song or solo poetic singing accompanied by a plucked or bowed stringed instrument.

The terminology of the poet-singers is not consistent. Wilson offered important clarifications that can serve as rough guidelines for study. Usually, practices prior to the fourteenth century are *ioculator*, *giullare*, *histrion*, and later *buffone*. The fourteenth century saw terms as *cerretani*, *ciurmadori*, and *ciarlatani*. Also, there are terms such as *cantimpanca* (*cantinbanca*), *cantastorie* and *canterino*, *cantore* or *cantatore*, who often sang vernacular poetry. The *cantastorie* was more involved with *cantari*, which were long epic poems in *ottava rima*, which were subject to ancient and Medieval epic history and legends.³¹⁸ By the late fourteenth century there was a practice involving *Rhapsodes* and *Citharoaedes*, which in particular, invoked the mythological lyre of antiquity, a practice which is also called *Cantare ad Liram/cantare in sulla lira*.³¹⁹ One of the main goals of the poet-singer was to create a partly improvised, partly memorised³²⁰ song inspired by the revival of classical antiquity, in particular, the

³¹⁷ The *Secondo Libro d'Intavolatura di Citara* by Giacomo Vincenti, published in 1602, together with a manuscript belonging to private collector Robert Spencer (circa 1620), are the only surviving examples of Italian cittern repertoire. However, they cannot be linked with poetry as they do not have a text whatsoever. Tyler, "Cittern."

³¹⁸ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 4,7.

³¹⁹ Wilson, 7.

³²⁰ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*; Degl'Innocenti, Richardson, and Sbordoni, *Interactions between Orality and Writing in Early Modern Italian Culture*. Haar, *European Music, 1520-1640*, 28; Stubbs, "L'armonia Sonora," 29.

Orphic bard practices of storytelling through music.³²¹ Following Platonic ideals, the idea was to embody a poetic furore as if the performer was in some sort of ‘quasi-divine’ inspiration.³²²

Blake Wilson’s ‘Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy’ does not recognise either the *cetra* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries or the traditional Italian cittern of the sixteenth as amongst the plucked stringed instruments that were used for the oral practices of singing and improvising poetry. He mentions that the terms *lira* or *lyra*, *cetra*, *cetera*, *citera*, *quitarra* are all used interchangeably to denote an idealised name of the mythological lyre, *lira* or *cithara* used by the ancients *kitharoidos*, and he furthered advises not to treat the terms *cetra* and *citera* as reference to the cittern.

The varied terms for the instrument involved all appear to specify some kind of bowed instrument, probably a viola, while the generic Latin term *citera/quitarra* (*cetra*, *cithara*) was used here as a synonym for viola, and not as a reference to the cittern (*cantarinum cum viola*, *quittarista/citarista seu violinista et cantarinum*, *ad canendum seu cantandum cum dicta viola seu quitarra*, *cantarinum seu citarizantem*).³²³

However, whenever the term *cetra* or *cetera* appears along physical or musical descriptions, or together with terms that clearly denote other early modern plucked stringed instruments such as the lute, it is almost certain that such evidence is referring to the Italian traditional cittern, and if the source is from before the mid-1600s it is most certainly an indication to the cittern’s forerunner.³²⁴ Even where a late fifteenth-century source, such as the example provided by Wilson, mentions only the term *cetera* among, for example, *zampogne*, which are bagpipes, the first term could still be a reference to the early cittern.

Crawford Young provided many sources indicating the use of *cetera* and *cetra* for the sixteenth-century cittern or its earlier block fretted version, and in many cases, the terms are used alongside the guitar and lute, thus clearly distinguishing between them.³²⁵ There are more examples to cite, although for reasons of space, the author can only name a few. Playwright Alfonso Romei (flourished in 1600),

³²¹ The poet and musician Serafino Aquilano (1466-1510), compared by his friends to Apollo or Orpheus, was a celebrated performer of the late fifteenth century. Serafino was equated also with the *kitharoidos* by writer Angelo Colocci (1467-1549). Dall’Aglia, Richardson, and Rospocher, *Voices and Texts in Early Modern Italian Society*; Haar, “Serafino de’ Ciminelli Dall’Aquila.”

³²² Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 420.

³²³ Wilson, 3.

³²⁴ [See chapter 1. ‘Introduction’. Section 1.3.](#)

³²⁵ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 786, 790, 792, 793.

for example, mentioned the *cetra* along with the lute or *liute* and other instruments such as the trumpets (*trombe*) and percussions (*tamburi*).³²⁶ Moreover, poet Alessandro Tassoni (1565-1635) also distinguished between harp (*arpa*), harpsichord (*cembalo*), cittern (*cetera*) and lute (*liuto*).

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Suole á punto cosí Maestro accorto;
Arpa, cembalo, cetera, ó liuto
Qualhor sonando altrui porge conforto;
Romper nel bel principio il suono arguto,
Per maggiormente muovere gli affetti,
E riprendendo dar maggior diletti.³²⁷

Therefore, the terms *cet(e)ra*, when they are present in sources describing poetic practices and they are referring to the Italian cittern, should be also linked with such poetic culture, in particular the art of the *citharoedus*.³²⁸ Interestingly Blake Wilson mentioned how the Renaissance plucked stringed instruments could hardly mimic the morphology of the idealised lyre.³²⁹ Nevertheless, the Italian cittern's heritage of being an iconological instrument meant to symbolize the lyre of classical antiquity, which involved not only the exact same Italian terminology as the ancient lyre but also its characteristic 'u-shape' and scrolls at the shoulders invoking the arms of the mythical instrument, place it as an important element of the humanist poetic practices of the times.

Written sources regarding the definition of *citaredo* or *citharaoedus* can be found in works by Giovanni Battista Spada (1597 – 1675) who defined the *cetera* or *cetra* as a musical instrument with a similar body to the lyre and with strings of brass or steel, played with a feather plectrum. He later

³²⁶The original text reads: 'Otracanna á me la Guerra é fomma dolcezza. L'impugnar questo brando gioia infinita; e il veltir la corazza giubilo inmenso. Io reputo il suono, e lo strepito delle trombe, e de' tamburi un soavissimo tintino di bene accordata cetra, ó liuto, o stimo entrare in sestossissima danza l'affrontar mille schiere, e finalmente tengo un andare a delixatissime nozze porger' il petto ignudo alle percosse dell' artiglierie'. English translation by the author: 'For me was its maximum sweetness. Holding this weapon its infinite joy and wearing the armour immense rejoice. I consider the sound of trumpets and drums as the most pleasing jingle of a well in tune cittern or lute, or I think that facing a thousand ranks is like entering to a festive dance, and I finally think of going to a most joyous wedding, offering my bare breast to the blows of the artillery.' Romei, *Gli Afflitti consolati, Comedia*, 36.

³²⁷ English translation by the author: 'As a meticulous Master finely does; / Harp, harpsichord, cittern or lute / When playing them brings comfort; / Stopping the witty sound at the beginning, / To move affections more, / And resuming [the sound] to give a greater delight. Tassoni, *Dieci libri di Pensieri diversi*, 79.

³²⁸ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 3,331.

³²⁹ Wilson, 7.

defined the *citaredo* or *citarista* as the player of the *cetera*. Moreover, the *citharaoedus*, according to Tommaso Caccini (1574–1648), played the *cetera* or *liuto*, meaning cittern and lute, and for Pietro Galesini, the *citharaoedus* is a player of the *cetera*. Is clear that the latter author does not confuse lute and cittern, for in his dictionary he has a separate entry for the lute (*liuto*).³³⁰

More evidence of the poet-singers and the cittern can be found in the surviving citterns from Urbino,³³¹ which under the rule of the Montefeltro family that lasted roughly from the second half of the fourteenth century until the turn of the seventeenth century was a flourishing artistic niche. Educated by Paduan scholar, teacher and writer Vittorino da Feltre (1378 – 1446), the Montefeltro family created a cultural centre in their city by sponsoring architects, scholars and artists of all kinds. Examples are the humanist Polidoro Vergilio (1460-1555), the painter Raffaello Sanzio (1480 – 1520) and the printer Ottaviano Petrucci (1466 – 1539). The importance of music is not only attested by the many musical instruments depicted in the *studioli*, but by the fact that their court had a great concentration of singers, musical instrument makers, poet-musicians, percussionists, organists, and dancing masters.³³²

As opposed to the other instruments used by these poet-singers, the extant Urbino citterns are the only instruments that are signed with the terms *citharaoedus*, which shows how these instruments were connected with the *cantare ad lyram* practice. One of the citterns is signed by *Franciscus Citharaoedus* and the other by *Augustinus Citharaoedus*, and although the cittern signed *Rafaello da Urbino*³³³ does not have the word ‘citharaoedus’ in its signature, the signature is found in the same places as the other Urbino citterns, which is on the neck, near the heel, suggesting a similar context. As Blake Wilson has pointed out, the *citarede* tradition required a visual, oral and textual performance that stood alone

³³⁰ Galesini, *Dittionario o vero tesoro della lingua volgar, latina. Con un ditionarietto nuovo, che comincia dalle voci latine accomodato alle volgaridi detto tesoro ... di Cesare Mirani Calderino*, 61,96,41,329, 645; Caccini, *Storia ecclesiastica del primo Concilio Niceno adunato, e confermato da San Saluestro papa scritta dal padre maestro Fra Tommaso Caccini fiorentino, dell'Ordine de' Predicatori*, 145; Spada, *Giardino de gli epiteti, traslati, et aggiunti poetici italiani del P. maestro F. Gio. Battista Spada di Fiorenzuola piacentino dell'Ordine de' predicatori ...*, 143,159.

³³¹ See Appendix 2, Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, 6, 7 and 17, Table 1.

³³² W. Atlas, “Urbino”; Osborne, *Urbino*, 13; Piperno, *L'immagine del duca*, 115-40,249; Jarran and Carter, “Frottola.”

³³³ The signature *Rafaello da Urbino* was identified after several hours of examination carried out by Mathew Zeller and Arian Sheets at the National Music Museum, South Dakota in 2015. The signature is quite similar to another traditional Italian cittern ([Instrument 17 in Appendix 2. Historical Citterns, Table 1 Italian Traditional Citterns](#)), which suggests is original. The signature does not refer to the painter Rafael Sanzio. See Mariño, “Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study.”

amongst other musicians.³³⁴ Within this tradition, the *citaredi* could have attempted to evoke the practice of the *kitharoidos*, whose virtuosic poetic performance, was said to be inspired by a divine frenzy.³³⁵

Figure 39 shows the *Franciscus Citaraedus* cittern and its coat of arms painted in the lower front section near the string holder, which has not yet been identified.³³⁶ In contrast, the *Rafaello* cittern presents a coat of arms that is similar to the family of Pallavicini, which goes back at least to the thirteenth century. The two coats of arms are not the same; however, their similarities might offer clues for further research on the provenance of the instrument (Figure 39).³³⁷

The fine craftsmanship of Urbino instruments and the presence of coats of arms indicates a noble context. *Augustinus*, *Franciscus* and *Rafaello* could have been musicians and especially *improvvisatori* working for the Urbino court during the sixteenth century; however, is not clear if these *citaredi* had a high social status, or if they were themselves nobles and amateur citternists. The latter is a possibility considering contextual facts, for example, Lorenzo d' Medici (1449-1492), enthusiastic humanist ruler of Florence, was himself a poet-musician and Isabella d' Este sang and played several musical instruments including the *lira da braccio* and the cittern.³³⁸ Italian princes and rulers would be also presented with citterns made by *citaredi*, such as Vincenzo *Citaredo* (?-1574), also known as Vincenzo delle *Cetere*, who was poet-singer and musical instrument maker that worked at the court of Urbino in the middle of the sixteenth-century.³³⁹ Vincenzo *Citaredo* presented to his patron, Duke Guidobaldo II Della Rovere (1514 – 1574) a cittern which was ‘something newly found by him with all the harmonies that can be in a cittern and so his excellence hold it very dear.’³⁴⁰ As Blake

³³⁴ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 277.

³³⁵ For more on the *kitharoidos* and theatre tradition see Wilson, 4.

³³⁶ Since the instrument belongs to a private collector, it is not possible to examine it, which leaves the coat of arms as a feature that could be a later addition to the instrument. This is not the case of the *Rafaello* cittern's coat of arms that shows all the characteristics of an original design. For more information the reader can consult Mariño, “Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study.”

³³⁷ The similarity between the two coats of arms was first noted and researched by Arian Sheets, Curator of Stringed Instruments (NMM), who catalogued the instrument in 2007. The author is extremely grateful for her generosity in sharing the products of her academic endeavour. The reader can find more depictions of coat of arms belonging to the Pallavicini family in the Biblioteca Estense Universitaria's [website](#).

³³⁸ Jarran and Carter, “Frottola.”

³³⁹ Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600*, 57,74-76,78,79; Piperno, *L'immagine del duca*, 144.

³⁴⁰ Piperno, *L'immagine del duca*, 144.

Wilson indicated, the practice of *Cantare ad Lyram* was practiced by well-educated humanists, who sang in courtly venues, but also professional diplomats, orators, advisers, scholars, and teachers and visual artists.³⁴¹



Figure 39. Coats of Arms in Citterns. a and b, Franciscus Citharaoedus, cittern, 1584, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; c, Augustinus Citarædus, cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); d, Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386); e, Coat of arms, print, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Pallavicini, 1480-1524. Sources: Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Urbino Cittern', 1582, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58649/urbino-cittern-cittern-unknown/>; Araldica Vaticana Anno XIV, 'Pallavicini Giovanni Battista', accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.araldicavaticana.com/px002.htm>; Bill Willroth, Courtesy of National Music Museum, South Dakota; Photograph by Esteban Mariño.

³⁴¹ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 6.

The use of the cittern by nobility was not a constant, for as Peter Burke has suggested, popular culture and courtly culture nurture each other.³⁴² For example, some of the poet-singers, such as the *cantimpanca*, besides performing on a bench, sold printed popular songs and pamphlets as well as medicinal beverages.³⁴³ The Italian painter Federico Zuccaro (circa 1540-1609) gave us visual evidence of a street performer when he drew the portrait of Paolo di Matteo di Santuzzo, a probable street musician in the city of Abruzzo. Di Matteo is not only playing a cittern but carrying other objects such as what it seems a canteen a bag and a staff (Figure 40). Moreover, Neapolitan music theorist Scipione Cerreto (1551 -1633) mentioned how the cittern was used either by nobles and low classes in places such as Lombardy, the Marche and Rome by the seventeenth century.³⁴⁴

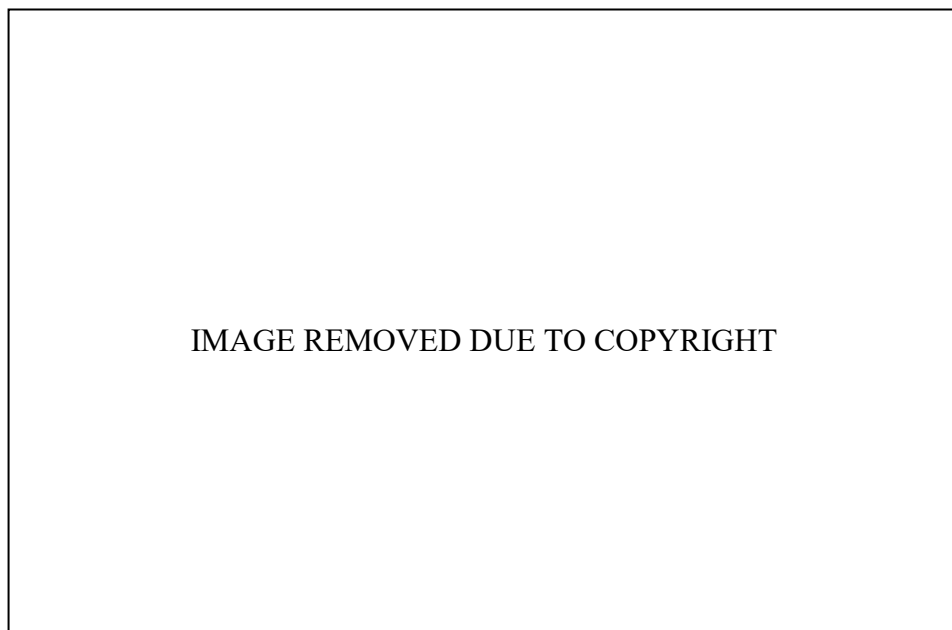


Figure 40. Street Musician Playing a Cittern. Federico Zuccaro, drawing, second half of the sixteenth century, Sothesby Auction House. Source: Sothesby and Co., ‘Zuccaro Zuccari Zucc ||| Old Master Drawings ||| Sotheby’s N08403lot3m6vnen’, accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/old-master-drawings-n08403/lot.121.html>.

³⁴² Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 374.

³⁴³ Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600*, 78.57.74-76, 79.

³⁴⁴ More socially unprivileged contexts involving the cittern are the main theme of a mid-sixteenth century painting entitled ‘Joyeuse compagnie auto d’une table’, which depicts a rather modest household with what appears to be drunken peasants and a *citaredo*. Interestingly, the cittern player is looking up, appearing to be in a state of frenzy or heavenly inspiration, and he wears what appears to be a distinctive hat, perhaps related to his profession of *canterino*. [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography. Image 84.](#) Cerreto, *Dell’arbore Musicale, Di Scipione Cerreto Napolitano, Espositioni Dodici. Con Le Postille Dell’istesso Autore*, 37.

A significant aspect of the humanist value of the Italian traditional cittern is thus its involvement in the poetic practices of the Renaissance, which remains a fertile ground for research. The Urbino citterns, especially the ones signed by their respective *chitaraoedus*, are a remarkable material resource representing the remains of a lost artistic practice that awaits to be discovered.

3.1.2 The Hexachord, the Monochord and the Cittern

The distinctive hexachord tuning of the cittern, discussed in the previous chapter, has been linked to the humanist fascination with the Greek lyre of antiquity, as represented by the fifteenth century *cetra*.³⁴⁵ Ephraim Segerman, for instance, suggested that the cittern's hexachord, while having musical disadvantages for being a close tuning, arose as part of a theoretical tradition of Medieval modal theory that distinguished the cittern from other musical instruments of the time. He additionally suggested that the application of the hexachord on the *cetra* was an attempt to re-create the ancient *kithara*.³⁴⁶ Evidence in support of these proposals is limited, and the likelihood that the tuning of the Italian cittern was devised for strictly musical purposes should not be discounted; nonetheless, in the context of the current discussion it is worth persisting with the connections to which Segerman points.

The hexachord can be defined as a series of six notes ascending stepwise through two whole tones, a semitone and two further whole tones.³⁴⁷ The cittern's earliest stringing method is shown in the 1533 *Scintille Di Musica* by Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, who was part of the circle of humanists that discussed the use of music according to the classical sources, mainly Plato and Aristotle.³⁴⁸ The hexachord was, in fact, first explained by Guido D'Arezzo, who established it as the combination of tetrachordal structures, which according to him derived from the Greek tonal system.³⁴⁹ The modern scale, as devised by Guido D'Arezzo was constructed by expanding the tetrachordal structure of melodies to include one

³⁴⁵ Late *cetre* in the end of the fifteenth century, could have been strung with between four and six courses of strigns, reaching the standard six-course instrument of Lanfranco, which can be considered either a very late state of the *cetra* or a cittern. The best indication to consider this instrument as a cittern is Lanfranco's use of the word *tasti*, which in Italian means frets. See chapter 1 'The Re-birth', section 2.6 The Tuning of the *Cetra* is Transformed into the Cittern's. Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 617; Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giouan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 140.

³⁴⁶ Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

³⁴⁷ Berger, "Cithara, Cribrum Und Caprea: Wege Zum Hexachord."

³⁴⁸

Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 11.

³⁴⁹ Mengozzi, "Virtual Segments."

tone on either side of the tetrachords that started on *a* and *d*, thus giving as a result two hexachords: one from *c*- *a* and another from *g* – *e*.³⁵⁰

The tetrachordal concept had mythological and religious connotations for, according to Boethius', it derived from the four strings of the lyre devised by Hermes.³⁵¹ Later treatises adapted the writings of Boethius to contemporary string instruments, drawing a parallel between the development of vocal and instrumental music. According to this notion, current string instruments, all predecessors of the Greek lyre, were tuned either in a tetrachordal or hexachordal fashion. For example, a treatise that attempted to link the ancient Greek theory with the performing practice of the period was written by Hucbald of Saint Armand (circa 840-850) in his *Harmonica Institutione* (circa 880), who devised the hexachord tuning of a lyre-like (*citara*) musical instrument. Although is not clear if this instrument actually existed, in theory it served as a basis for a notation system and perhaps, as some kind of 'tablature.'³⁵² Moreover, one of the late fourteenth-century French collection of five theoretical treatises known as the 'Berkeley Treatises' adapted Boethius' tetrachordal theory to contemporary string instruments.³⁵³

As explained by Crawford Young the cittern's forerunner, the *cetra*, had a tuning influenced by Boethius' initial conception³⁵⁴ of the lyre of four strings, an invention assigned to the god Hermes.³⁵⁵ More theoretical evidence, in this case involving the harp, can be found in Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle*, in which the Gothic harp's tuning is based on a Guidonian hexachord series of notes.³⁵⁶ As explained by Mersenne, the concept behind the hexachord tuning was to provide the six voices in which all music and chant is composed and constructed (*ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*). More than a sequence of notes, the hexachord could be considered a theoretical and practical musical device that is rooted in the syncretism between Medieval modal theory and the idealised adaptation of ancient sources. Throughout

³⁵⁰ Throughout the twelfth century, theorists had acknowledged the existence of several hexachords, however, sixteenth century practice was usually bound to the three notes as starting points: G, C and F. Kate Clark and Amanda Marwick present an excellent explanation of the use of the hexachord in Renaissance practice. Clark and Markwick, "The Hexachord," 160–73; Hirshberg, "Hexachord."

³⁵¹ Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 30–32.

³⁵² Page, "Instruments and Instrumental Music before 1300."

³⁵³ Page, "Fourteenth-Century Instruments and Tunings," 26; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 580–82.

³⁵⁴ Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 29,30.

³⁵⁵ This treatise discusses the proportions used for intervals and the development of the ancient Greek and Medieval scales, with several references to musical instruments. Page, "Fourteenth-Century Instruments and Tunings," 26; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 580–82.

³⁵⁶ Dooley, "Reconstructing the Medieval Irish Harp," 107; Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, the Books on Instruments*, 60.

the Medieval period, musical culture regarded the modes of plainchant and ancient Greek music as not only related but part of a continuous development.³⁵⁷

The humanist significance of the hexachord deserves consideration since, besides being a solmization tool that influenced major aspects of music performance, it represented the tradition of Boethius' *musica mundana* and *humana*.³⁵⁸ The latter reflects respectively the cosmic music ordained by fixed consonances that rule the behaviour of the heavens, and the harmony between the human body and the soul regulated by the same musical consonances.³⁵⁹ At the same time, the hexachord was also a practical tool for compositions such as masses and instrumental *fantasias*, essentially rooted in series of hexachords in an ascending and imitative fashion, which places it in strict practical use within the music of the period.³⁶⁰ Thus, the hexachord as a tuning system could have functioned partially as a symbolic element, but also as a practical device informing *cetra* practice that was later revived and modified in the cittern.

Caution should be exercised when interpreting the symbolism of the hexachord as there is little direct evidence of its use as a humanist allegory. Existing data at this stage is only contextual and is not enough to confirm Segerman's argument of considering this tuning as a humanist, theoretical, symbolic and practical tuning that distinguished cittern players from lute players. While there is no doubt that several treatises mentioned that the hexachord was the tuning of the traditional Italian instruments,³⁶¹ we do not know how it was used. For example, Marin Mersenne explained that the tuning of the Italian cittern was subject to experimentation.³⁶² On another note, there is little surviving written music for the cittern's hexachord, and the one available only shows that the last two courses were not used with frequency and only as open strings, which has led to the conclusion that the fifth and sixth courses were

³⁵⁷ In Boethius' philosophy, there is an important connection between the modes, the tetrachord and the music of the spheres, which is often related to the Platonic notion of how certain music and its instruments have a fundamental role in changing human nature. Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 280; Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 2,3,29,30,31; Rosen, *Plato's Symposium*, 187a,186e, 444d, British Library.

³⁵⁸ For a thorough revision of the history and significance of the monochord and the hexachord see Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory*.

³⁵⁹ Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 10.

³⁶⁰ Such potential facts have never been considered in the history of the cittern and will be further explored in Chapter 4: *The Music of the Cittern*. Hirshberg, "Hexachord."

³⁶¹ [See chapter 2. 'The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage.' Section 2.6.](#)

³⁶² Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, 141.

either drones or most likely superfluous.³⁶³ At the same time, we have to question whether these musical sources are true representations of the cittern's practice, given the fact that most of its performance, at least in the Italian Peninsula, was orally practiced.³⁶⁴ The question remains as to why, if the transition from four to six courses was simply based in adding more resonance and a wider range, an out of order hexachord was chosen in the first place and not a more musically practical tuning of fourths and fifths? Extended research is needed to solve such questions, which may be facilitated by future experimentation with replicas of traditional Italian citterns.³⁶⁵ For now, it suffices to note that the cittern's connection to the revival of classical antiquity may provide part of the answer.

Another important humanist concept aligned with the cittern and its history as the *cetra*, is the evocation of the monochord. The use of this instrument dates to the fifth century B.C and is traditionally described as an invention by Pythagoras, raising it to a symbol of Pythagorean ideals during the sixteenth-century revival of antiquity. Pythagoras' doctrines were essentially based on conceiving all nature and the world as numerical, mathematical truth, immediately and easily apprehended in elementary musical consonances.³⁶⁶ The Pythagorean doctrine heavily influenced late antiquity, and scholars such as Boethius transmitted these ideals to Medieval Western Europe.³⁶⁷ The monochord, in Boethius' writings, was fundamental for explaining the creation of modes and the basic partition of theoretical and practical divisions of musical scales.³⁶⁸ At the same time it was a device that allowed the physical demonstration of the philosophical principles of the *musica mundana* and *humana*.³⁶⁹ The

³⁶³ See Section 3.2.10 'A Lacunae in Written Sources.' Vincenti, *Secondo libro d'intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati*.; Forrester, "Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire," 18; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

³⁶⁴ See Section 3.2.10 'A Lacunae in Written Sources.' Vincenti, *Secondo libro d'intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati*.; Forrester, "Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire," 18; Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

³⁶⁵ For example, as Andrew Hartig mentioned, the diatonic fretting of the cittern allowed for the Dorian mode to be performed on the highest strings, revealing modal possibilities of the cittern, that would eventually be appreciated in humanist poetic practices. It is worth to mention that Hartig, discussed transalpine citterns, however, as explained in chapter 4, the earliest transalpine fretting layout is a derivation, in fact, an exact copy of the Italian earliest fretting layouts. Hartig uses the illustration of the 1570, *Hortulus cytharae, in dus distinctus libros, quorum, passomezo*, by Pierre Phalèse and Jean Bellère, published in Leuven. However, such illustration comes from the 1564, *Second Livre de Cistre* by Adrian Le Roy, published in Paris. Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?," 46; Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 90–91.

³⁶⁶ For more on the reception of Pythagorean ideals and Renaissance music see Brach, "Music and the Pythagorean Tradition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages"; Hicks, "Music and the Pythagorean Tradition from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages."

³⁶⁷ Barbera, "Pythagoras."

³⁶⁸ Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, xiv.

³⁶⁹ Seay, "The 15th-Century Coniuncta," 728.

monochord was a tool to demonstrate the mathematical ratios so important to the philosopher, where the place of each tone was calculated through the use of the movable bridge. The semitone was not just a note halfway in between two notes a tone apart, but had many variations in size, depending on the mathematical processes by which it was determined.³⁷⁰ This single string instrument was thus a representation of the breadth of all music because any scale and any interval could be found, which in turn was interpreted by the late Medieval mystical mind as having religious and ancient overtones.³⁷¹

The symbolism of the monochord, nevertheless, permeated well into the sixteenth century for it was a tool that both combined geometrical principles and musical theory, making it an ideal symbol of music as a science, and thus aligned with Pythagorean ideals.³⁷² Perhaps, the best example of the philosophy embedded in the monochord is explained in the Robert Fludd's 1617 *Utriusque cosmi... metaphysica, physica atque technica histories* where he postulated that the universe was a divine monochord, which was a metaphor of the Boethian concept of *musicae* (*instrumentalis, mundana* and *humana*) and had the pyramid, an essential Pythagorean elements, as a divine and cosmological structure.³⁷³ The monochord was also aligned with the doctrine of the music of the spheres, as it showed how proportions, measurement, geometry and music were the foundations of the natural order of humanity, nature and cosmos.³⁷⁴ The music of the spheres is an ancient doctrine and model to describe the physical universe that lasted until the seventeenth century when it was confronted with more accurate models. It was thought of as a Pythagorean doctrine and played a major role in the development of Western thought. The music of the spheres was based on the belief that the universe is ordered by the same numerical proportions as those which produce harmonies in music, or as Boethius called it, *musica mundana*. The subject was recurrently discussed in ancient, Medieval, and early modern philosophy. It was also part of music theory, architecture, literature, medicine, and even musical practice.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁰ Seay, 728.

³⁷¹ T. Flynn, "Singing with the Angels: Hildegard of Bingen's Representations of Celestial Music," 226.

³⁷² Koster, "The Compass as Musical Tool and Symbol," 23, 24.

³⁷³ Ammann, "The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd"; Godwin, *Robert Fludd*; Guariento, "From the Divine Monochord to the Weather-Glass."

³⁷⁴ James Haar, 'Music of the Spheres', in Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online (Oxford University Press), accessed March 1, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19447>.

³⁷⁵ Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen, *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres*, 30; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 161–67. For more analysis on the music of the spheres and the monochord see Westbrook, "The Divine Vina and the World Monochord," 9–17.

In practical terms, the efficiency of producing clear-cut intervals, which was an excellent tool for singers and instrumentalists, made the monochord the main device to produce pitches for note singing; until the thirteenth century it was a pedagogical tool for teaching music.³⁷⁶ It was not until the late fifteenth century that the status of the monochord as the main accurate device to refer to when tuning and tempering, declined for new technologies, such as harpsichords.³⁷⁷ These new musical instruments, and the increasing development of polyphonic vocal music and its imitation in instruments, made this single stringed instrument a symbolic relic of its Medieval past.³⁷⁸ Such symbolism permeated the ethos of fretted stringed instruments, which were considered multiple monochords: those with movable gut frets such as the lute and the viol were praised for their flexibility to better change the intonations. One of the best examples of the associations between Boethian philosophy, the hexachord, the modes and plucked strings is Franchinus Gaffurius's (1451-1522) frontispiece of his 1496 *Practica Musicae*.³⁷⁹ Such symbolism was nothing but a syncretism of Pythagorean and Platonic notions of how the Greek lyre and its tuning was a representation of the attunement between the human soul and the cosmical order of the planets.³⁸⁰

The associations of the *cetra* with the monochord are briefly suggested by Crawford Young, who proposes a diatonic block-fretting disposition that could be related to the application of the hexachord.³⁸¹

In fact, having five diatonic frets [in the *cetra*] would allow the hexachord pattern, ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la, to be played moving up the frets on each string respectively; each string would thus be a kind of monochord unto itself, conforming with the solmization system associated with Guido D'Arezzo c. 1000.³⁸²

³⁷⁶ Adkins, "Monochord." For more information on the use of the monochord for mathematical, musical calculations and theories of octave divisions and tunings see LaRue and Reese, *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music*, 321,322,638,642,645,728.

³⁷⁷ Adkins, "Monochord."

³⁷⁸ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 571; Bower, "Boethius"; Bower, Palisca, and Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, 30.

³⁷⁹ For a detail explanation of the correlation of the modes with the planets, the muses and plainchant theory see Haar, "The Frontispiece of Gafori's *Practica Musicae* (1496)," 9–13.

³⁸⁰ For more on the meaning of the *kithara*, Boethius' concept of *musica mundana*, and specific Platonic notions involving the Greek lyre see Anderson and J. Mathiesen, "Plato"; Plato, *Plato*, 2013, 27d–36d; Plato, *Phaedo*, Christopher Rowe quoted 85d3–8e5; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 136–38.

³⁸¹ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 581.

³⁸² Young, 581.

Although Young established the block frets as symbols of the *kithara kollopes*,³⁸³ which were wooden and leather devices used to change the tension of the strings, the block frets could also symbolize the bridges of the monochord that were used to divide the string length and establish the ratios and musical scales. Such symbolism was readily expanded to the hexachord tuning of the late *cetra* or early cittern of Giovanni Maria Lanfranco,³⁸⁴ where each note of the hexachord scale would also be represented in each open string provided with its own fret division.

The conception of the music of the spheres, specifically alluding to the correct intervals of the symbolic monochord, creates just consonances, which according to Pythagorean and Platonic knowledge reflect the cosmological and geometrical order of all life. Such symbolism, in particular the authority of the monochord and poetic associations are embedded in the blocked-fretted *cetra* in Federico da Montefeltro's (1444-1482) studiolo in Gubbio (Figure 41).³⁸⁵



Figure 41. Cetra in Federico da Montefeltro' Studiolo. Francesco di Giorgio Martini (designer), intarsia, Gubbio, 1478-82, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 'Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/39.153/>. Public Domain.

³⁸³ See chapter 2. 'The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage', section 2.2 'The Lyre Culture of the Cetra'.

³⁸⁴ Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giouan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 140; Tyler, "Cittern." See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.

³⁸⁵ For a detail explanation of the symbolism of Montefeltro's *cetra* see Cheles, "The Inlaid Decorations of Federico Da Montefeltro's Urbino Studiolo," 23.

The monochord and the Italian cittern are brought together in *Triumph of Poetry* or *Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia*, made by Lorenzo Costa (1460 - 1535) in 1505. In the painting we can see how a woman in the centre, who could be Isabella herself,³⁸⁶ is crowned by Eros, who is held by a clothed Aphrodite, an allusion to the concept of earthly and worldly love.³⁸⁷ The crowning is surrounded by six characters that represent a musical and poetic setting, where Pythagoras plays the monochord, and two musicians play two plucked stings. On the left hand there is a male playing a type of fantastic *lira da braccio*, while a female character plays what could be considered as a half-real, half-fantastic cittern or late *cetra* (Figure 42). It is worth noticing the similarities between the idealised neck of the cittern and Pythagoras' monochord, suggesting the fusion between the instruments and also the poetic context surrounding the cittern. Stephen John Campbell has stated that the cittern player³⁸⁸ is not only related to poetry by being placed next to a *lira da braccio* performer, but could be the celebrated lyric ancient poet Sappho (circa 612 B.CE), who in the painting is associated with love, harmony and the deities Aphrodite and Eros.³⁸⁹

The humanist legacy of the cittern was thus manifested not just through the poetic practice of the singer-poet but also through a musical instrument rooted in a Medieval, idealised reincarnation of the *kithara*, evoking the Platonic and Pythagorean ideals relating to the doctrine of the music of the spheres. As I discuss in the following section, this heritage was also manifested in the manufacture of the instrument, which in some instances amount to the creation of an actual humanist iconological artwork.

Stephen John Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D'Este* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 194.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁷ Plato, *Plato's Symposium*, 180c–85, 39; Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 192–93.

³⁸⁸ Is possible to identify this depicted musical instrument as an early cittern because of how similar the body is to virtually all traditional Italian carved citterns. The painting even shows the typical tapering features between the front and back as well as heel and bottom. For a more detail image See Figure 50. [See chapter 1. 'Introduction'. Section 1.4.1.](#)

³⁸⁹ Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 190–95, 200–206.



Figure 42. The Cittern and the Monochord. Lorenzo Costa, oil on canvas, Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia, 1504-1506, Museum of Louvre, Paris. Source: Louvre "Allegorie de la Cour d' Isabelle d' Este." Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010059310>. © 2005 GrandPalaisRmn (Musée du Louvre) / Thierry Le Mage.

3.1.3 A Visual Humanist Icon

As opposed to the visual arts, sixteenth-century music culture had little ancient surviving examples that could have served as guidelines for scholars wanting to revive music from ancient Greece. As noted by Claude Palisca, there were few examples of ancient music in a written form, and if anything survived this was probably in oral form.³⁹⁰ Instruments with a long iconic visual heritage such as the cittern were perfect candidates to be cultivated and renovated in sixteenth-century humanistic musical culture. Therefore, it should not be a surprise to encounter the cittern as a visual recreation of what humanists

³⁹⁰ Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 23–29.

thought to be the closest instrument to the long-lost ancient *kithara*.³⁹¹ The lute, viol, guitar, vihuela, *viola da braccio*, and even the harpsichord were associated with the Greek lyre; however, it was the cittern that bore the *kithara*'s Latinized name, its stylised shoulder scrolls, curved outline and most importantly, its idolised past.³⁹² Moreover, most of the historical instruments³⁹³ show fascinating grotesque carved decorations rich in classical mythological meaning, attesting to the intention to renovate the *cetra* as a modern sixteenth century resurrection of the Greek lyre.

Direct evidence indicating that the Italian traditional cittern was transformed out of the *cetra* to recreate the Greek lyre is revealed when Vincenzo Galilei mentioned how the cittern or *cetera*, used by the nobility, was invented to recall the ancient *kithara*, which is one of the forms of the Greek lyre. Galilei mentioned that 'our *cetera*' is very different than the ancient one. In the same manner, when describing the Greek lyre and the use of the Dorian mode, the humanist Giovanni Battista Doni (1595 – 1647) described the mythical lyre as *cetera*; however, this should not be confused with the modern *cetera* (cittern) which according to him is very different than the ancient one.³⁹⁴ As Kevin Coates noted, the cittern had a strong Neoplatonic posturing by being 'consciously designed' instrument such as our to bear the 'vestiges' of the ancient Greek lyre.³⁹⁵

The majority of historical Italian citterns are carved, meaning that the string holder, body, neck and peghead³⁹⁶ are all carved from one single piece of hardwood, which in the vast majority of the cases is

³⁹¹ Such connection could have served well the notion of prioritizing classical texts for the expression and dramatic effects in monody, which were not only expressed musically but visually. Haar, "The Concept of the Renaissance," 41; Carter and Levi, "The History of the Orchestra," 2.

³⁹² Winternitz, "The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern," 222–28; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526.

³⁹³ For more information on these features the reader can consult Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study."

³⁹⁴ Doni's original text reads: 'Cosi la chiamo, e ron Cetera con nome volgare: perche era cosa molto diversa; dall nostra Cetera comune.' This can be translated to: 'So I call it Cetera, not with its vulgar name because it was very different from our common Cetera' (author's translation). Doni, *Annotazioni sopra il compendio de' generi, e de' modi della musica, di Gio. Battista Doni. Doue si dichiarano i luoghi piu oscuri, e le massime piu nuoue, & importanti si prouano con ragioni, e testimonianze euidenti d'autori classici. Con due trattati l'vno sopra i tuoni, e modi veri, l'altro sopra i tuoni o armonie de gl'antichi. Et sette discorsi sopra le materie piu principali della musica, o concernenti alcuni instrumenti nuoui praticati dall'Autore*, 51; Galilei and Palisca, *Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music*, 369.

³⁹⁵ Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*, 141.

³⁹⁶ The majority of the peghead is made from one single piece of wood and is part of the carved structure, however, the top is usually decorated with an independent section inserted to the main structure. This piece can be sculpted in the shape of scrolls or in female or fantastical characters. Examples of the first are citterns in Table 1 with numbers: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. Examples of the latter are citterns with numbers: 8, 12, 14, 15 [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Table 1.](#)

maple (*Acer* sp.).³⁹⁷ The shape of the resonator is also standard, and follows a ‘rain drop’ contour, which is essentially the combination of a circular and a triangular shape. Figure 43, for example, shows the standard shape present in all known and documented iconographic examples from the Italian Peninsula.³⁹⁸ Besides the carved *kithara* scrolls, the comb or string holder is also part of the same piece of wood and can represent the stand of the idealized shape of the mythical instrument.³⁹⁹

The cittern’s grotesques are splendid decorations of the traditional cittern, many of them presenting humanist iconographic themes.⁴⁰⁰ Usually located in the peghead, heel and back of their resonator, the predominant carved ornaments in the peghead are: 1) scrolls⁴⁰¹; 2) female characters;⁴⁰² and 3) grotesque reliefs.⁴⁰³ Moreover, located in the heel⁴⁰⁴ and back⁴⁰⁵ there are also grotesque and organic carved decorations. Because the grotesque designs are rarely seen in the *cetra*,⁴⁰⁶ they can be conceived as specifically belonging to the sixteenth century cittern craft.⁴⁰⁷ Instruments signed by *Raffaello da Urbino*, *Franciscus Citaraedus*, *Franciscus Plebanus* and a now lost instrument illustrated in a 1921 catalogue by James Hipkins,⁴⁰⁸ are distinguished by their rich grotesque ornamentation, which is usually placed in sections that are not as visible as others such as the back, the heel, the back of the peghead and the cutaway in the bass side.

The cittern grotesques can be classified in the following manner: 1) female characters;⁴⁰⁹ 2) satyrs, nymphs, and sirens; and 3) monsters or unidentifiable creatures (Figure 43). These designs are

³⁹⁷ For example, the instruments signed by Raffaello da Urbino and Augustinus Citaraedus. [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 5, 6, Table 1.](#)

³⁹⁸ [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography.](#)

³⁹⁹ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 526.

⁴⁰⁰ For an interesting reading of humanist meanings inscribed in the cittern by Franciscus Plebanus see Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire,” 17. [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 10. Table 1.](#)

⁴⁰¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1,2,5-7, Table 1.](#) Iconographic examples showing citterns with scrolls in the peghead are images 84, 86 and 87. [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography.](#)

⁴⁰² [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 12, 15, Table 1.](#)

⁴⁰³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 5-8, 15, Table 1.](#)

⁴⁰⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 5-8, 10, 12, Table 1.](#)

⁴⁰⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 7,8, Table 1.](#)

⁴⁰⁶ The visual aesthetic impact of the *cetra* is characterised by its iconological lyre-like features. Young, “La Cetra Cornuta.”

⁴⁰⁷ Grotesque art, in vogue specially during the first half of the sixteenth century, generally refers to surprising, monstrous, or bizarre characters. The term, a French derived word from the Italian word *grottesco*, is used to define the style of frescoes found in the Golden Palace of Nero (circa 64-68 A.D). Since the site was built under the street level it was believed that it was built as a *grotto*, which means that it was an artificial or natural habitable cave. Riccardi-Cubitt, “Grotesque”; Connelly, “Grotesque.”

⁴⁰⁸ Alfred J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare and Unique*. (London: A and C. Black, 1921), plate XIV.

⁴⁰⁹ The female characters attached to the peghead are constantly found wearing ruffs, which are high collars that were wore around the neck by women and men during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which usually indicate a

characterized by always combining a mixture of humanoid, vegetative, floral, and animal features. The latter could be considered a predominant aspect when considering the symbolic tortoise shell, created by the tapering sides of the resonator as mentioned earlier. A shell-like design is in fact, vividly expressed by the inlaid design of the cittern made by Giovanni Salvatori (Figure 44).

The surviving historical citterns and iconographical examples show a consistent style of scroll making, which is open as opposed to the classic scroll in violin making. Figures 45 and 46 show the similarity between the scrolls found in both iconographical examples and historical citterns, as well as the joint between the peghead and scroll in two citterns from Urbino.⁴¹⁰ The scrolls form part of general organic design of the Italian traditional citterns. For example, the cittern signed by *Augustinus Citaraedus* shows the combination of floral designs both on the back of the peghead where the hook is carved as a scroll and on its sides, where it shows a combination of overlapping flowers (Figure 47). More organic elements in the cittern design are the flowers and plants usually found in the same places as the grotesques and in some cases, they form part of the design of the many creatures.

noble background, again something already confirmed by Vincenzo Galilei's statement. A cittern signed by Giovanni Salvatori presents one of these female characters, which as explained by scholars G treau and Jo l Dugot is very similar to the iconographic example by Antiveduto della Grammatica (1570/71–1626), made circa 1620. G treau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," 2004, 1–5; Galilei, *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei ... della musica antica, et della moderna*, 126,129; Picken, *A Dictionary of Costume and Fashion*, 74.

⁴¹⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 5 and 6, Table 1.](#)



Figure 43. Grotesque Designs in Italian Citterns. a and b, Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386); c, Girolamo Campi, cittern, 1580, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048); d, Franciscus Plebanus, cittern, 1535, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1131); e and f, Unknown maker, cittern, Unknown location (Hipkins catalogue); g, Franciscus Citaraedus, cittern, 1584, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (temporary loan). Sources: Photographs by Esteban Mariño; Courtesy of Royal College of Music Museum; Alfred J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare and Unique*. (London: A and C. Black, 1921), plate XIV; Photographs Courtesy of Luca Rocca; 'Cistre', accessed 21 February 2022, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0157871/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès



Figure 44. Shell-like Design in Giovanni Salvatori Cittern. Giovanni Salvatori, cittern, mid-16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E. 543). Source: Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, 'Cistre Giovanni Salvatori', Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, n.d., accessed March 8, 2020, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0158494?_ga=2.93639261.1332408595.1583666834-205298415.1576072532. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.



Figure 45. Cittern Scrolls in Iconography. Left, Orazio Riminaldi, oil on canvas, *Amor Vincit Omnia*, 1624-1625, Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (inv. 1912 nr. 422); middle, anonymous, oil on canvas, *Joyeuse compagnie auto d'une table*, mid-16th century, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. nr RF: 451); right, Pietro Paolini, oil on canvas, *Bacchic Concert*, 1625-1630, Dallas Museum of Art, Inv. nr. 1987.17. Sources: Dallas Museum of Art, 'Bacchic Concert - DMA Collection Online', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://dma.org/art/collection/object/3346485/Image> courtesy Dallas Museum of Art. Public Domain; Le Gallerie Degli Uffizi, 'Amor Vincit Omnia', Le Gallerie Degli Uffizi, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/amor-vincit-omnia>; Louvre Museum, 'Joyeuse Compagnie Autour d'une Table', accessed 14 April 2022, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010065999>. Public Domain.

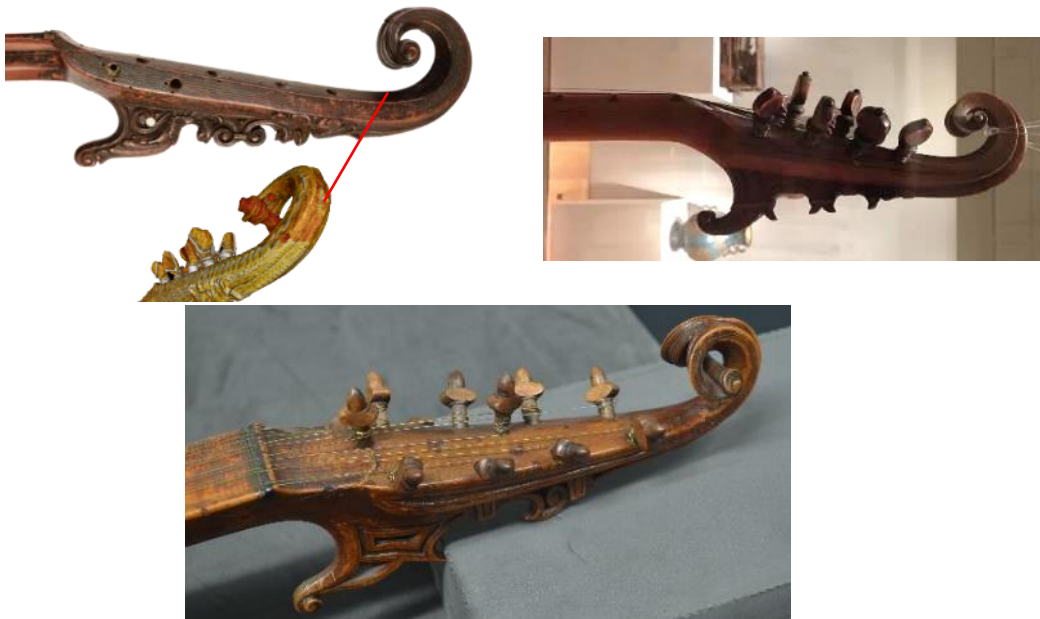


Figure 46. Scrolls in Historical Citterns. Up, Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386); middle, Augustinus Citarædus, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); below, Franciscus Citarædus, cittern, 1584, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Note the CT scan image highlighted with a red arrow, which indicates the joint between the peghead and scroll, as well as the different densities of the hardwoods used (*Acer* sp). Sources: Photographs by Esteban Mariño and Luca Rocca, CT scan image provided courtesy of the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Vermillion, South Dakota.



Figure 47. Floral Designs in the Augustinus Cittern. Augustinus Citarædus, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Source: Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT

Figure 48. Iconographical Examples of Italian Traditional Citterns. Above, Antiveduto della Grammatica, oil on canvas, Terpsichore or Musica, 1570/71–1626, private collection in England; below, Giovanni Serodine, oil on canvas, Allegoria della Scienza, circa 1626, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan (inv. nr not disclosed). Sources: Invaluable, ‘Sold Price: Antiveduto Gramatica (Rome 1571-1626) - July 3 0113 12:00 AM BST’, invaluable.com, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/antiveduto-gramatica-rome-1571-1626-194-c-e972835c18>.; Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ‘Allegorical Female Figure’, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.ambrosiana.it/en/opere/allegorical-female-figure/>.

Virtually all historical citterns have this distinctive triangular/circular and pyramidical carved resonator (Figure 48). One example from Urbino, signed by *Augustinus Citaraedus*, shows how these shapes are embedded in its intrinsic design. Figure 49 shows a drawing of the *Augustinus* cittern, and its basic triangle and circular design based on a single unit, which in this case is the vibrating string length. This unit can be divided by two and thus produce half a standard module that is in fact very close to the width of the cittern, which can also be interpreted as the side of a theoretical equilateral triangle that outlines the upper sides of the instrument. At the same time, half of the vibrating string length roughly corresponds to the diameter of a theoretical circle that almost perfectly outlines the bottom board of the *Augustinus* instrument. A closer analysis in fact reveals that the vibrating string length could correspond to the historical unit of measurement of Urbino, which is the *braccio da seta*. The city, like many other urban centres of the Italian Peninsula had different sized units depending on the craft materials used for the different trades available. The *braccio da seta* or 612 mm, used for the silk trade, was divided between 5, 6 and 12 units. As it was common with the manufacture of musical

instruments, the simple fractions of the local units of measurements were used as multiples of a standard unit that were sometimes useful for the maker's project at hand.⁴¹¹

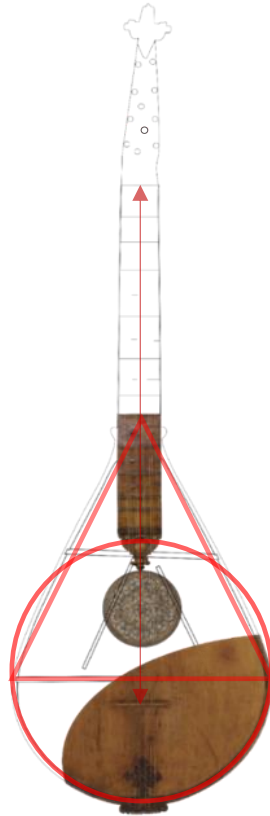


Figure 49. Triangular and Circular Outline. Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Source: Drawing by the author based on his own study of the instrument and in consultation with the technical drawing by Stephen Barber, Four Course Cittern, Urbino 1582. Augustinus Citaraedus Urbinas MDLXXXII, Museum No. 392-1871, 1981, Technical Drawing, 1981, Victoria and Albert Museum.

The traditional narrow neck present in all historical citterns, comes from the *cetra* block frets that functioned as icons of the *kollopes* of an idealised *kithara*. The block frets were placed over a narrower neck that was part of the whole carved structure, and therefore suggest the idea that the instrument does not have a fingerboard but freely vibrating open strings, just like the mythological lyre. As with the *cetra*, a practical reason for devising wooden blocks attached to a neck cannot be conceived, and the cittern's narrow neck manufacture is no exception. There is no practicality whatsoever in carving the

⁴¹¹ See Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study"; Zupko, *Italian Weights and Measures from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, 45; Birkett and Jurgenson, "Why Didn't Historical Makers Need Drawings?," 280; Winternitz, "Muses and Music in a Burial Chapel," 272; Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526; Shoemaker, "Drawings after the Antique by Filippino Lippi," 35; Panczenko, "Gentile Da Fabriano and Classical Antiquity," 11–13; Pope-Hennessy, Pope-Hennessy, and Robbia, *Luca Della Robbia*, 24, 231, 244.

neck and peghead out of the same piece of wood, unless there is tradition and symbolism involved, which is why the narrow neck of the Italian citterns can be considered as part of a whole visual design. With the appearance of a fingerboard with metal frets, the narrow neck tradition of the *cetra* was preserved in the cittern, and with it, its iconological quality of conceiving a single carved structure with idealised vibrating open strings – in other words, a lyre with a fingerboard.

The best iconographical example to exemplify this possibility is the afore mentioned *Triumph of Poetry or Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia* (Figure 50). As suggested by Emanuel Winternitz, in this 1504 or 1505 painting⁴¹² there is a recreation of a half fantastical, half realistic cittern or late *cetra*, which acts as an idyllic *kithara*.⁴¹³ This instrument, which is held by a female character, presents the tapering, concave shape that is common in all historical citterns, as well as the attempt to conceive its fingerboard as part of the system of *kollopes* of the ancient *kithara*. Moreover, the hybrid between fantasy and realism shows how the scrolls of the cittern were extended all the way up to its peghead. This could imply the desire to conceive the cittern as a single carved lyre, which is why the carved tradition acquires an important significance.⁴¹⁴



Figure 50. Isabella d' Este Fantastical Cittern. Lorenzo Costa, oil on canvas, *Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia*, Museum of Louvre, 1504-1506, Louvre, Paris (inv. nr. 255). Source: Louvre "Allegorie de la Cour d' Isabelle d' Este." Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010059310>. © 2005 GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Thierry Le Mage.

⁴¹² For a full iconological reading of the painting see Stephen John Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D'Este* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 194.

⁴¹³ Winternitz, 'The Survival of the Kithara and the Evolution of the English Cittern', 255.

⁴¹⁴ As opposed to the transalpine cittern, the traditional Italian cittern iconography is significantly humanist in meaning with several examples also related to Christianity. [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography.](#)

Citterns already had, since at least 1520,⁴¹⁵ the remarkable innovation of implementing more strings, a longer neck and a fingerboard with frets made of brass sheets. Moreover, the late *cetra* of the early sixteenth century was one of several other necked plucked stringed instruments with much more intricate construction, such as the lute or the early guitar,⁴¹⁶ which could have served as influential models for a complete renovation of the wire plucked string instrument.

Therefore, it is important to formulate the following question: how come the makers of the Italian cittern kept on building the resonator, neck and peghead out of the same piece of wood well into the sixteenth century? Andreas Michel rightly pointed out how a tradition is often a resistance force in the instrument-builder's craft,⁴¹⁷ yet in this case, just as the block frets remained in the *cetra* for centuries, it was the unyielding carved Medieval method that resisted well into the seventeenth century, probably because it was bound to an idealised cultural significance, based on the revival of antiquity expressed by its visual features.

In the cultural trajectory of the cittern, humanism was a predominant ideology that manifested itself as in no other musical instrument of the period. Only the Italian cittern presented such a strong force of tradition linking sixteenth-century music with the fascination in classical antiquity. Through its presence in the lost oral tradition of the poet-singers and *citharoaedes*, to the possible symbolism of the hexachordal tuning and its past as the *cetra*, the cittern preserved in its manufacture the lure of the mythological lyre. In the battle between tradition against innovation, humanism survived and was a definite orienting force that preserved a heritage that still needs further exploration. Nevertheless, humanism was to collide with wider social and economic circumstances that placed music and musical instruments in an artistic revolution that soon challenged the passion over classical antiquity.

⁴¹⁵ [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography. Images 79 and 80. See chapter 2. 'The Re-birth: The Cittern's Heritage.'](#)

⁴¹⁶ Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*."

⁴¹⁷ Michel, "Zistern."

3.2 The Cittern Inside a Growing Social Practice of Instrumental Music

The development of instrumental music at the turn of the sixteenth century was fertilized by a socio-economic sphere that held music in the highest esteem. The newly invented Italian cittern of the early sixteenth century had its practice and manufacture heavily transformed as it gained popularity within this context. As much as the cittern was a product of a humanist tradition that made it preserve and cultivate its iconological context within the revival of antiquity, musical practice was speeding towards independence, which functioned as a cultural force that placed this instrument in a historical moment of great tension and, therefore, transformation. The creation of the Italian cittern or the *cetera* of the sixteenth century, involving a longer neck, a fingerboard with fixed brass frets and wooden wedges, was only the start of a series of changes fundamentally based on its performance in instrumental ensembles and the search for expression, range, chromaticism, and tonality.⁴¹⁸

To understand the process of transformation of the cittern in the Italian Peninsula, it is necessary to step back a few decades before its appearance. The *cetra* manufacture remained as a constant craft tradition throughout the late Medieval period to the sixteenth century, having a relatively standard manufacture throughout the centuries. It was however at the beginning of the sixteenth century that this blocked fretted instrument radically changed into the Italian cittern. By the 1510's, judging from the earliest Italian iconographic depictions of cittern *embryos*,⁴¹⁹ the *cetra* started to be involved in a series of changes, specifically made to increase its range of notes, and improve its use in performance. The changes of this Medieval instrument seem to be quite radical and surprisingly sudden when compared to its long history of gradual transformation; nevertheless, this phenomenon ceases to be a surprise considering the contextual factors of sixteenth-century instrumental music.

As Keith Polk clearly indicated, 'between 1430 and 1600 performance practice for instrumental musicians turned on its head.'⁴²⁰ Before the middle of the fifteenth century, 'instrumental music' as a

⁴¹⁸ Polk and Coelho, "Renaissance Instruments," 228; Polk and Coelho, "Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons," 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

⁴¹⁹ [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography. Images 79, 80, 81.](#)

⁴²⁰ There is great scholarship on Renaissance fifteenth and sixteenth century instrumental music impossible to summarize in this work. Scholar Richard Taruskin in the encyclopaedic work *Oxford History of Western Music*, presented a list of bibliographic sources on Renaissance instrumental music including outstanding general sources on instrumental music of the Renaissance. Taruskin, "Further Reading: A Checklist of Books in English"; Polk, "Instrumental Performance in the Renaissance," 345; Bouterse, "The Woodwind Instruments of Richard Haka (1645/6-1705)," 27, 70.

concept did not exist, since vocal music was the predominant practice of the late Middle Ages,⁴²¹ which is why before the early fifteenth century instruments were limited to aid vocal music by doubling the voice and had no major part in complex improvisations.⁴²² Moreover, instruments besides sustaining the voice were built to play plain melodies and used for single accompanying notes.⁴²³

As noted by Hannah Smith, before the sixteenth century, plucked stringed instruments were not an essential part of the polyphonic development of vocal music and therefore their performance was limited when compared to the flexibility of the human voice.⁴²⁴ The body of performers and makers, which created an *instrumental revolution* in the sixteenth century, maximised as much as possible the possibilities that late fifteenth-century musical instruments had to offer. Such a process was catalysed by specific cultural circumstances in the Italian Peninsula. There was an increase of wealth due to Italy's central location in Europe, a practical access to the sea and its commercial condition of middlemen between East and West. Cities such as Genoa, Venice and Florence had a leading role in what Peter Burke defines as 'Europe's commercial revolution' already happening since the thirteenth century. Moreover, business and banking organizations were further expanded, and with them the economic power of Italian courts.⁴²⁵

For example, since the thirteenth century until the beginning of the sixteenth, the North of Italy, especially Venice, was Europe's most economically advanced area. At the same time, the political status of the Italian Peninsula was far from stable, and although commercial expansion and warfare gained power, the courts used their rich world of arts and goods as vehicles to preserve it and enhance it. Italian music and musical instruments were part of a rich artistic culture that soon created an overwhelming influence across Europe. Music had an unparalleled incentive from the patronage of the Italian courts,

⁴²¹ There is a vast amount of research made on musical instruments in the Middle Ages and their music. The scarce quantity of sources, is a difficulty that has created a thriving research endeavour in Britain and France since the 1980's. For a critical bibliography of the instrumentation of the Middle Ages see Wilkins, "Instruments and Their Music"; Duffin, *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*; Marcuse, *A Survey of Musical Instruments*; Crane, *Extant Medieval Musical Instruments: A Provisional Catalogue by Types*; McGee, *Instruments and Their Music in the Middle Ages*; Page, *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages*. The [Oxford Bibliographies](#) gives another list of significant modern scholarship on the Middle Ages.

⁴²² Except for the organ, who was already a very complex musical instrument with many number of possibilities and had its own performance practice. Smith, "Instrumental Music," 121; McGee, *Instruments and Their Music in the Middle Ages*, xix; Page, "Medieval."

⁴²³ Smith, "Instrumental Music," 121.

⁴²⁴ Smith, 121.

⁴²⁵ Smith, 121.

which encouraged re-thinking and renovating both the performance practice and the available instrumentation, making courts artistic hubs of experimentation that made music develop in a rapid pace hitherto unseen in Western music history.⁴²⁶ At the same time, music started to be modified and separated from their vocal-related practice, which left the instruments limited to substituting a vocal line, and started to develop an independent character, which was essentially based in having a new protagonist role as if they were voices.⁴²⁷

The last decades of sixteenth-century instrumental music were widely practiced in social circles of professional and domestic performers.⁴²⁸ It is important to contextualize here that music and instruments as much of Renaissance art had a very important social function of preserving and enhancing economic and political power.⁴²⁹ In particular, the northern courts assigned intellectual and sensuous values to music and its instruments, and the practice was programmatic and socially functional.⁴³⁰ This means that music was an important part of the private and nonprofessional environment, which was in fact the context where it was widely developed.⁴³¹ At the same time, instrumental music was made for social, institutional, and ceremonial purposes and was mostly devoted to ‘providing a soundtrack to one kind of event or another.’⁴³² Howard Mayer Brown, for example, explained how ‘almost every genre of secular music known to early sixteenth-century Italy was represented at the banquets,’⁴³³ which is an example of how a single social occasion was accompanied by an explosion of exciting instrumental music that eventually created ‘a constant demand for instruments [which] stimulated local makers to produce them in quantity and to develop new varieties and designs.’⁴³⁴ More importantly, as stated by

⁴²⁶Polk and Coelho, “Prologue,” 1–2; Magrini et al., “Italy”; Polk, “Instrumental Performance in the Renaissance,” 345; Goldthwaite, “The Economy of Renaissance Italy,” 19; Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*, E-book, 1.; Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*, 11; Trivellato, “Renaissance Florence and the Origins of Capitalism,” 236; Motture and O’Malley, *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 22; Frankopan, *Silk Roads*, 201; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 16,17,20.

⁴²⁷This way of performing musical instruments is associated with what is known as *stile antico*, which represented the ‘old-fashioned’ exchange of contrapuntal lines of equivalent status that inevitably left instruments to be limited to substituting a vocal line. The term ‘stile antico’ appear until the 1640’s in the works of musician and theorist Marco Scacchi 1600-1662 and Severo Bonini (1582 – 1663). Banks, “Renaissance Instrumental Music,” 145; Polk, “Instrumental Performance in the Renaissance,” 344–45; Smith, “Instrumental Music,” 121,122; Carter and Levi, “The History of the Orchestra,” 3; Stephen R. Miller, “Stile Antico.”

⁴²⁸ Haar, “The Concept of the Renaissance,” 42.

³¹Motture and O’Malley, *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 22.

⁴³⁰ Carter and Levi, “The History of the Orchestra,” 1.

⁴³¹ Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 5.

⁴³² Polk and Coelho, “Prologue,” 3,7; Freedman, *Music in the Renaissance*, 39.

⁴³³ Mayer Brown, “A Cooks Tour of Ferrara in 1529,” 225.

⁴³⁴

Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 5.

Keith Polk and Victor Coelho, non-professional players led the direction of not only the consumption of music and their instruments, but also adapted them according to their taste and abilities.⁴³⁵ As John Banks stated, the involvement of the amateur player was a fundamental social change for the development of music as there was now a middle-class educated with humanist social ambitions with enough leisure time and economic means to pursue and direct musical performance.⁴³⁶

Niccolo di Sinibaldo Gaddi (1537 -1591) was one of the most important collectors and patrons of arts in Florence during the sixteenth century. Noble man, banker and landlord, he amassed a fortune largely spent on art, books, music books and musical instruments. Inventories show that in 1591 his collection included ‘ten viols, six lutes, one lyre, one harp, two citterns, two pandouras, one clavichord, one harpsichord, six trombones in their cases, seven flutes in a case, and a cornet.’⁴³⁷ More instruments acquired and then inherited are found in an inventory of 1628 were a clavichord, six lutes, three citterns, two ‘Spanish guitars, a ‘little lute,’ six trombones, a ‘black bone flute with a silver sleeve’, one violin, a ‘suono’ and eleven ‘ralini.’⁴³⁸ Since there were strings found in one of the rooms of the house, it is possible to infer that the instruments were not simply objects to be displayed but they were played by the members of these noble contexts.⁴³⁹

Instruments were already in a rich aristocratic and popular practice that was nurtured by the networks of performers and makers of instruments.⁴⁴⁰ Thus, a constant demand for instruments made local markets produce them in larger quantities and influenced the creation of newfound designs.⁴⁴¹

The new context of recreational performance produced novel attitudes towards instrumental practice which were based in playing music and using musical instruments as essential accomplishments of the

⁴³⁵ Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instruments,” 228; Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons,” 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

⁴³⁶ Banks, “Performance in the Renaissance,” 12.

⁴³⁷ Inventario 1591, c. 79v: ‘Nella stanza de’ suoni: Dieci viole, sei liuti, una lira, un ‘arpa, due cetere. due pandore, un sordino, un gravicembalo, sei case da trombone con loro trombone dentro, una cassa di quoio con sette flauti, un cornetto, due toppe grande di ferro per il cassone’. From Moretti, “The Palazzo, Collections, and Musical Patronage of Niccolò Gaddi (1536–91),” 201.

⁴³⁸ Inventario 1628, c. 47r: ‘Seconda stanza della galleria: un sordino coperto di quoio;...undici [ralini]; sei luti; tre cetere; dua chitarre alla Spagnuola; un violino; un liutino; un [suono]; sei cassette di quoio dorate entrovi tromboni; una custodia di albero di un [suono]; una scatola entrovi trentacinque rocchetti di corde;...un flauto di osso nero con manicha d’argento’ From Moretti, 201.

⁴³⁹ Moretti, 194.

⁴⁴⁰ Freedman, *Music in the Renaissance*, 39.

⁴⁴¹

Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 5.

genteel society.⁴⁴² The cittern soon became part of such growing social practices as it was in fact ideal for the amateur practice of music inspired in humanistic themes. Much of this had to do not only with its iconological nature and past heritage, but also with the manufacture of the instrument.

3.2.1 *Il Cortegiano* and the *Tasti* Instruments

The early cittern's inlaid metal frets, diatonic disposition and the loud and brilliant wire strings were perfect features for a growing social practice amongst courtiers and aspiring nobles. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the practice of reciting poetry against a necked plucked string became a trend, best exemplified by the most popular book that stated the aspirations of courtier, *Il Cortegiano*, or the *Book of the Courtier*, published in 1528 and written by Baldassarre Castiglione (1478 - 1529). According to Castiglione, the courtier should read music, play several instruments, and have a good sense of style.⁴⁴³

Baldassarre Castiglione lived during the years that the *cetra* was being transformed into the cittern. His twelve years of service at the Urbino court started in 1504, with the administration of Federico da Montefeltro's son, Guidobaldo who died in 1508 to be replaced by Francesco Maria della Rovere and finished in 1516 when he returned to Mantua. Around the time of his death in 1529, citterns with full fingerboards and extended necks were just emerging.⁴⁴⁴ This helps explain why Baldassarre Castiglione did not mention the cittern in *Il Cortegiano*. It was probably in these early years that the cittern was not only achieving a full new form but also gaining widespread distribution, precisely because by the early decades of the sixteenth century a social trend, represented best by Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*,⁴⁴⁵ was favouring fretted plucked stringed instruments not only for instrumental ensembles but for the recitation of poetry. The cittern was a perfect candidate for these tasks.

⁴⁴² Banks, "Performance in the Renaissance," 12.

⁴⁴³ Haar, *The Science and Art of Renaissance Music*, 20–23.

⁴⁴⁴ [See Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography. Images 80, 81.](#)

⁴⁴⁵ Haar, "The Concept of the Renaissance," 42.

Above all musical practices, Castiglione favoured the improvised recitation of poetry against the *viola*. Although, however, *viola* could refer to a *lira da braccio*,⁴⁴⁶ the fact that Baldassarre uses the term *viola da arco* to refer to viols, suggests that *viola* meant a necked plucked string and possibly a vihuela (*viola da mano*) or a lute.⁴⁴⁷ Still, the term *viola*, might have been a generic term for plucked stringed instruments, for many of these instruments were interchangeable.⁴⁴⁸ Another important fact in *Il Cortegiano* is the preference of *strumenti da tasti*, which places the cittern's fixed metal frets as a pleasing feature for the courtier amateur:

All *strumenti da tasti*, indeed, are harmonious, because their consonances are perfect, and they make possible many effects which fill the soul with sweetness and melody.⁴⁴⁹

The term *tasti*, however, must be treated with caution for they could mean instruments with either keys or frets.⁴⁵⁰ The influential Italian theorist Gioseffo Zarlino (1517 – 1590) offers some clarity in his *Sopplementi musicali*, published in 1588, where he presents a classification system for musical instruments. The writer established how instruments 'that sound with strings' can be divided between having or not having frets, or in his words: 'sono con Tasti, ó che sono senza'. Furthermore, this classification can be further separated between 'Tasti sono mobile, ó che sono con tabili', meaning movable frets or fixed ones, which would be the case of the cittern or *cetera* (as he calls it).⁴⁵¹ Zarlino goes on to divide the fixed frets category (*stabili tasti*) by dividing the ones played with: 1) a bow, such

⁴⁴⁶ There is the possibility that Castiglione was referring to two types of practices, one involving the lyrical tradition, and the other the simple act of singing to the accompaniment of a string instrument. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 153-154. E-book.

⁴⁴⁷ For instance, in an English translation of *Il Cortegiano* by Thomas Hoby (1530-1566) the term *viola* was translated as lute. Moreover, the vihuela, known in the Italian Peninsula and Portugal as *viola*, was closely associated with the lute, which again encourages the possibility that Castiglione's *viola* was a plucked instrument. Moreover, Johannes Tinctoris referred to the *viola* as an 'Italian' name given to the guitar. Poulton, "Vihuela"; Minamino, "The Spanish Plucked Viola in Renaissance Italy, 1480–1530," 177; Wright, "Gittern"; Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's De Inventione et Usu Musicae," 20–26; Cypess, "Evidence about the 'Lira Da Braccio' from Two Seventeenth-Century Violin Sources," 148; Castiglione, *The Courtier ... Done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby. B.L.*, 51.

⁴⁴⁸ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 81. Second Book. E-book.

⁴⁴⁹ Cypess, "Evidence about the 'Lira Da Braccio' from Two Seventeenth-Century Violin Sources," 148; Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art: Studies in Musical Iconology*, 95; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 12,13; Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, Second Book; Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 67-68. E-book.; Zecher, *Sounding Objects*, 26.

⁴⁵⁰ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 81. Second Book. E-book.

⁴⁵¹ Cypess, "Evidence about the 'Lira Da Braccio' from Two Seventeenth-Century Violin Sources," 148; Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art: Studies in Musical Iconology*, 95; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 12,13; Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano*, Second Book; Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 67-68. E-book.

⁴⁵² Zarlino, *Sopplementi musicali*, 216.

as the viols;⁴⁵² 2) plucked by the quill, such as the cittern, and 3) by the fingers such as the lute or guitar.

The cittern, according to Zarlino is a plucked string instrument with fixed frets and played with a plectrum.⁴⁵³

But of those that have fixed and stable frets, there are three of its species; where the player with one hand, rubs the chords with the bow, with the other presses them on their frets, as is the case with the *violone*; or with one hand he touches the strings with a quill, and with the other he presses them in the place of the frets, as is with the *cetera*.⁴⁵⁴

Since Baldassarre Castiglione favoured singing or reciting poetry against a necked plucked stringed instrument with fixed frets, both the lute and guitar were excellent candidates for such a task. Nevertheless, the cittern's inlaid permanent metal frets, diatonic disposition and wire strings were ideal for the amateur practice and Castiglione's idea of a spontaneous, yet brilliant performance. Castiglione wished the ideal courtier to have, or at least to show musical skill and knowledge, but as a hobby and never as a professional pursuit. More important, the courtier should not show the painstaking vicissitudes of playing and learning a musical instrument, but display himself as a carefree and talented musician:

So the courtier should turn to music as if it were merely a pastime of his and he is yielding to persuasion, and not in the presence of common people or a large crowd. And although he may know and understand what he is doing, in this also I wish him to dissimulate the care and effort that are necessary for any competent performance; and he should let it seem as if he himself thinks nothing of his accomplishment which, because of its excellence, he makes others think very highly of.⁴⁵⁵

Having fixed pitches as opposed to having to develop the mental and physical memory required in the performance of fretless strings made the cittern a practical instrument for the courtier performer. For other plucked stringed instruments of *tasti* such as the guitar and the lute, the performer needed at

⁴⁵² Interestingly, even though the frets of the lute or viol can be moved to be adjusted to the many types of temperaments available, for Zarlino, such instruments were still classified as with fixed frets or *stabili*; perhaps the term *tasti* was used to refer to instruments with fixed pitches. In *Sopplementi musicali*, the category of moving frets or *tasti mobili* are used to refer to the movable keys of the keyboard instruments. This group has two partitions: 1) instruments with *tasti mobili* that sound pressing the *tasti* with one hand while the other rotates a wheel, such as the *Sinfonia* or hurdy-gurdy; and 2) instruments sounded by pressing the *tasti* with both hands such as the *Arpichordo*, il *Gravecembalo* and 'other families.' Zarlino, 216–18.

⁴⁵³ Zarlino, 216.

⁴⁵⁴ The original reads: 'Ma di quelli c'hanno I tasti fissi and stabili, sono tre le sue Specie; percioche, over che il Sonatore con una mano, fregando le Chorde con l'archetto, con l'altra le preme sopra i loro Tasti, come é il Violone; ó con una mano tocca le Chorde con una penna, e con l'altra le preme nel luogo de i Tasti, como é la Cetera; ó con una mano muove le chorde, con l'altra premendole sopra il manico dell'Istrumento ne i luoghi de i Tasti, viene á formar le sue Harmonie, come nel Liuto.' Translation made by the author. Zarlino, 216–18.

⁴⁵⁵ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 81. Second Book. E-book.

least some basic knowledge and practice on placing and intonating the gut frets for each performance. The cittern, on the other hand, was an instrument already tempered to the popular 1/5 or 1/6th meantone. Moreover, for an amateur player, producing clear tuned notes and chords, which will potentially be helpful in harmonising the voice, is easier to do on fretted than on fretless strings. In addition, its set of wire strings gave the performer an important advantage for sustaining the voice with its loudness and brilliance.⁴⁵⁶

Indeed and as noted by Stefano Lorenzetti, the cittern was part of the instrumentation of fine gentleman, however, some authors such as humanist and philosopher Alessandro Piccolomini (1508-1579) considered the cittern way too easy to play or too simple for the ideal courtier. Piccolomini said that the wind instruments are improper for the player as they the provoke unwanted facial expressions while playing. However, the viol, lute, and *viola* and the harpsichord are the most excellent instruments since they are appropriate for polyphonic playing. In fact, Piccolomini prefers the lute over the harpsichord, as the latter can be carried anyplace in any moment in the busy life of the genteel. It seems clear that although the cittern mingled with the privileged and the courtiers who wanted to climb the social ladder, the polyphonic virtues of musical instruments were far more important for that matter than any humanist heritage, no matter how rich it was.⁴⁵⁷

3.2.2 The Poetic vs. the Polyphonic

The musical heritage of the cittern was mostly connected with its poetic practices, which were based on a combination of genres, such as the *lauda* and *frottola*, that do not survived in written form.⁴⁵⁸ The *lauda* is a non-liturgical, vernacular song developed during the late thirteenth century, which was mostly played in urban contexts and not in court settings.⁴⁵⁹ The *lauda* is religious in nature and rose in the central-city states of the Italian Peninsula as a poetic, rhetorical, preaching practice over an instrumental accompaniment.⁴⁶⁰ However, during the fifteenth century, the *lauda* experienced important influences

⁴⁵⁶ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 168; Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 98.

⁴⁵⁷ Lorenzetti, “Musica e Identità Nobiliare Nell’Italia Del Rinascimento,” 180–81; Piccolomini, *Della institution morale di m. Alessandro Piccolomini libri 12. Ne’ quali egli leuando le cose souerchie, & aggiugnendo molte importanti, ha emendato, & à miglior forma, & ordine ridotto tutto quello, che già scrisse in sua giouanezza della Institution dell’huomo nobile*, 153–55.

⁴⁵⁸ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 625.

⁴⁵⁹ Wilson, “Lauda.”

⁴⁶⁰ Wilson.

from polyphonic music.⁴⁶¹ Crawford Young stated that the *cetra*, as the *lira da braccio* and the lute was used in the practice of poetic singing combining texts with melody patterns. Most likely the *cetra* held an important place for its strong association with classical antiquity.⁴⁶² For example, string player Marc Lewon and singer Giovanni Cantarini, explained how the *cetra* belonged to a rich heritage of recitation of poetry, making it an early example of an ‘Orphic’ instrument. As historically informed musicians, both have been performing late fifteenth century music on replicas of the *cetra*, based on the research of Crawford Young.⁴⁶³

Florence had a particular rich tradition of *lauda* which was significantly present from 1380 to 1560, a pivotal time for merging polyphonic styles with the traditional forms, which culminated in new styles and poetic forms such as the *frottola*. The latter is a form that mixes poetry with music, and that initially was meant to deliver a clear syllabic text, with rhythmic precision and a significant presence of chordal accompaniment,⁴⁶⁴ features that later led to the development of the madrigal.⁴⁶⁵ By the first half of the sixteenth century, for example, the *laude* and *frottola* became popularised through printing, which also brought new contrapuntal music, mixing several voices with a mixture of imitative and non-imitative texture.⁴⁶⁶

The poetic practices of singing against an instrumental background had a strong popularity within certain circles, especially during the first half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁶⁷ For example, Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590) in his *Le istituzioni harmoniche* of 1562 mentioned how the generic use of musical instruments for the recitation of poetry moves the human soul as it did with the ancients, and that a monodic accompaniment against a powerful bardic text is more pleasant than any modern way of presenting poetry through polyphonic music:

Even in our times we see that music induces in us various passions in the way that it did in antiquity. For occasionally, it is observed, when some beautiful, learned, and elegant poem is recited by someone to the sound of some

⁴⁶¹ Wilson.

⁴⁶² Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 635.

⁴⁶³ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta”; Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 419; Raggio et al., *The Gubbio Studiolo and Its Conservation*, 132; Dempsey, “Luciano Cheles. The Studiolo of Urbino,” 8; Cheles, “The Inlaid Decorations of Federico Da Montefeltro’s Urbino Studiolo,” 23; *The Cetra (Re-)Constructing a 15th-Century Italian Cithara-Lyre. The Cetra (Re-)Constructing a 15th-Century Italian Cithara-Lyre*.

⁴⁶⁴ Jarran and Carter, “Frottola.”

⁴⁶⁵ Jarran and Carter.

⁴⁶⁶ Jarran and Carter.

⁴⁶⁷ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 8.

instrument, the listeners are greatly stirred and moved to do different things, such as to laugh, weep, or to similar actions. This has been experienced through the beautiful, learned and graceful compositions of Ariosto: when among other passages, the sad death of Zerbino and the tearful lament of his Isabella are recited, the listeners, moved with compassion, cried no less than did Ulysses hearing the excellent musicians and poet Demodocus sing. Thus, if we do not hear that the music of today works on diverse subjects the effects that it did on Alexander, this may be because the causes are different, and not alike, as some [the chromaticists] assume. For, if such effects were wrought by music in antiquity, it was recited as described above and not in the way that is used at present, with a multitude of parts and so with greater pleasure than the learned compositions in which the words are interrupted by many voices.⁴⁶⁸

Although Zarlino commonly uses the term *cetera* to refer to the ancient mythological lyre or *kithara*,⁴⁶⁹ there is evidence that in his treatise the traditional Italian cittern is included among other musical instruments. For example, in his *Division of Music into Speculative and Practical; Through Which one Differentiates between the Musician and the Performer*, he uses the term *cetera* to distinguish between other contemporary instruments such as the organ, indicating his reference to the Italian traditional cittern.⁴⁷⁰ Zarlino's discussion of contemporary practices also mentioned the *ceterone* as used by the 'Spaniards', cited along with the lute; he goes on to say that the *ceterone* differs little from the lute.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ The original reads 'La onde vedemo etianodio a i nostri tempi, che la Musica induce in noi varie passioni, nel modo che anticamente faceua: imperoche alle volte si vede, che recitandosi alcuna bella, dotta, & elegante Poesia al suono di alcuno istrumento, gli ascoltanti sono grandemente commossi, & incitati a fare diverse cose, come ridere, piangere, overo alter cose simili. Et di ciò si è veduto la esperienza dalle belle, dotte & leggiadri compositioni dell'Ariosto, che recitandosi (oltre le altre cose) la pietosa morte di Zerbino, il lagrimeuol lamento della sua Isabella, non meno piangeuano gli ascoltanti mossi da compassione, di quello che faceua Vlisce udendo cantare Demodoco musico, et poeta eccellentissimo. Di maniera che se ben non si ode, che la Musica al di d'hoggi operi in diversi soggetti, nel modo che già operò in Alessandro; questo può essere perche le cagioni sono diverse, & non simili, come presuppongono costoro: Percioche se per la Musica anticamente erano operati tali effetti, era anco recitata nel modo, che di sopra hó mostrato, & non nel modo, che si usa al presente, con una moltitudine di sono da I cantori insieme pronunciate, che la dotte compositioni, nelle quali si odono le parole interrotte da molte parti.' Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 372,373; Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche del reuerendo m. Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia; nelle quali; oltre le materie appartenenti alla musica; si trouano dichiarati molti luoghi di poeti, d'historici, & di filosofi; si come nel leggerle si potrà chiaramente vedere*, 75.

⁴⁶⁹ Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche del reuerendo m. Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia; nelle quali; oltre le materie appartenenti alla musica; si trouano dichiarati molti luoghi di poeti, d'historici, & di filosofi; si come nel leggerle si potrà chiaramente vedere*.

⁴⁷⁰ Zarlino, 21; Corwin, "'Le Istitutioni Harmoniche' of Gioseffo Zarlino, Part 1," 253.

⁴⁷¹ Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche del reuerendo m. Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia; nelle quali; oltre le materie appartenenti alla musica; si trouano dichiarati molti luoghi di poeti, d'historici, & di filosofi; si come nel leggerle si potrà chiaramente vedere*, 295.

However, the speech-song traditions soon collided with two cultural forces. On the one hand, their extreme popularity and the many kinds of people with diverse social backgrounds that formed a part of it led to the creation of a purist view, coming from religious orthodoxy and essentially based by the Counter-Reformation, which lasted from the mid-sixteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth.⁴⁷² This elitist tendency, having Petrarchan canons as foundations, was also based on social discrimination and distinguishing artistic expressions from one another.⁴⁷³ At the same time, while certain elite circles were trying to distinguish themselves from professional *canterini* by trying to apply an orthodox practice, the fact is that polyphonic music and the madrigal's influence was pervasive, and the poet-singer had lost the status it had in the middle of the sixteenth century, as it was entering the era of written polyphony and new forms of monody that transformed the practice of the solo singer.⁴⁷⁴ Wilson stated, for example, that the polyphonic madrigal displaced the *cantare ad lyram* in poetic practices with novel sets of several voices and monodic models. However, as they moved towards more complex polyphony, they gradually lost humanist significance.⁴⁷⁵

Music, once conceived as an art bound to the Boethian, Pythagorean and Platonic rhetoric, was losing its practical relevance against an unstoppable musical experimentation.⁴⁷⁶ These changes are not related to a decrease in the fascination of the revival of classical antiquity, but they do signify a new way of conceiving the classical text and poetic practices, which are now expressed much more musically than through text, as if the poetic essence was now the music.⁴⁷⁷ Much Renaissance music was based on considering ancient classical texts as the premise for musical creation; however, the music itself soon seemed to be following its own agenda, and by being independent it rapidly shifted the idealised union between poet, musician, and composer.⁴⁷⁸ Claude V. Palisca sums up how madrigal composers used poetic texts in a free form, where the music would dominate the text. Palisca goes on to say that while

⁴⁷² Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 407.

⁴⁷³ Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 374.

⁴⁷⁴ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 415.

⁴⁷⁵ Wilson, 418.

⁴⁷⁶ Carter, "The Concept of the Baroque," 49,50.

⁴⁷⁷ Wilson, *Singing to the Lyre in Renaissance Italy*, 420.

⁴⁷⁸ Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 369.

there was a shift towards using music as the meaning of the poem, there was still another tradition that placed the text as important as the music.⁴⁷⁹

Is fundamental to consider that the notion of the ‘text’ in music alludes to a universe of knowledge, principles and ideologies all rooted with the fascination of ancient Greece. Essentially platonic, the ‘text’ was a way of making sure music had the correct nourishment and could express proper moral messages. The concern of some orthodox circles with stripping music from this knowledge was that not only polyphonic music was making the text hard to understand but that in this confusion human character would be compromised too.

This tension between musical styles and their corresponding meanings is beautifully expressed in Pietro Paolini’s *Bacchic Concert*, which depicts the god Bacchus, the god of wine and the unreasoning and irresistible force of life (Figure 51).⁴⁸⁰ Playing a pipe, an unmistakably allusion to the ancient aulos, a polymodal instrument and the chief symbol of the drunken god, Bacchus seems to lead a musical and soon to be erotic performance characterised by a woman who plays a large multi-stringed lute and looks at the viewer with an intriguing expression. Singers around her show red cheeks, which is a sign of their musical and alcoholic intoxication. The greatest tension in the painting arises when we see the characters surrounding the lute player offering gifts, one of them putting her arm around her gently caressing her as if about to seduce her. Bacchus wears his characteristic crown of vine leaves and grapes and while semi-naked he seems to thrust his pelvis towards the lute player as if both characters were about to engage in a sexual encounter which is contrasted by their lavish velvet sheets that wrap their naked bodies. With Caravaggian *chiaroscuro*, the erotic, polyphonic scene is contrasted with a woman, who turns her back to the scene. Wearing a cittern on her back as if it was a shield against the carnal dangers, she reads a poem by Petrarch. In this composition, the cittern is a symbol of chastity and the rightness brought by music controlled by rhetoric, by text and by poetry.

Indeed, Plato considered music as a divine gift, but an essential entity that resonated with the cosmic and the human order. The melodies granted from the gods rotated like the revolutions of the soul, and,

⁴⁷⁹ Palisca, 369,370.

⁴⁸⁰ Warren Anderson and Thomas J. Mathiesen, ‘Dionysus’, n.d., accessed March 7, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.07825>

thus, must be used by humanity not for foolish pleasure, but for the pursue of harmony. Pleasurable music, therefore, could lead to corruption of a man's character,⁴⁸¹ and in order for music to be educational, it should be as far away as possible from the vulgar pleasure of complex, technical solo instrumental music.⁴⁸²



Figure 51. The Cittern by Paolini. Pietro Paolini, oil on canvas, Bacchic Concert, 1625-1630, Dallas Museum of Art (inv. nr. 1987.17). Source: "Dallas Museum of Art," accessed May 29, 2024, <https://dma.org/art/collection/object/3346485>. Image courtesy Dallas Museum of Art. Public Domain.

Another beautiful example of the cittern symbolizing the unity of poetry and music the breakage between humanism and the coming of the modern age has been thoroughly dealt by Victor Coelho. Giovanni Serodine's (1600-1630) *Allegoria della Scienza* depicts a woman who squeezes her breast as if trying to milk a cittern lying on the table together with other objects symbolizing the liberal arts and the platonic notions of the music of the spheres, the latter represented by the structural orb barely held by her right arm (Figure 52). Following Homeric and Dantean traditions, the idea of milking the arts, humanities and sciences alludes to the power of the muses to inspire humanity with the classical heritage and knowledge of antiquity. In specific, Giovanni's muse is trying to nurture the arts, but her milk does

⁴⁸¹ Plato, *Plato*, 2000, 89; Plato, *Plato*, 2013, 42e–47e.

⁴⁸² Plato, *Republic*, 399d; Plato, *Plato's Laws*, Book 2.

not reach either the arts or sciences. Instead, it seems to be splashed on her other breast while the structural sphere on her right arm is about to fall down. This dramatic tension is an allusion to the coming of a new age, where the muses, meaning humanism and the revival of antiquity cannot longer inspire humanity as not only music, but knowledge has found independence from the wisdom of the ancients.⁴⁸³

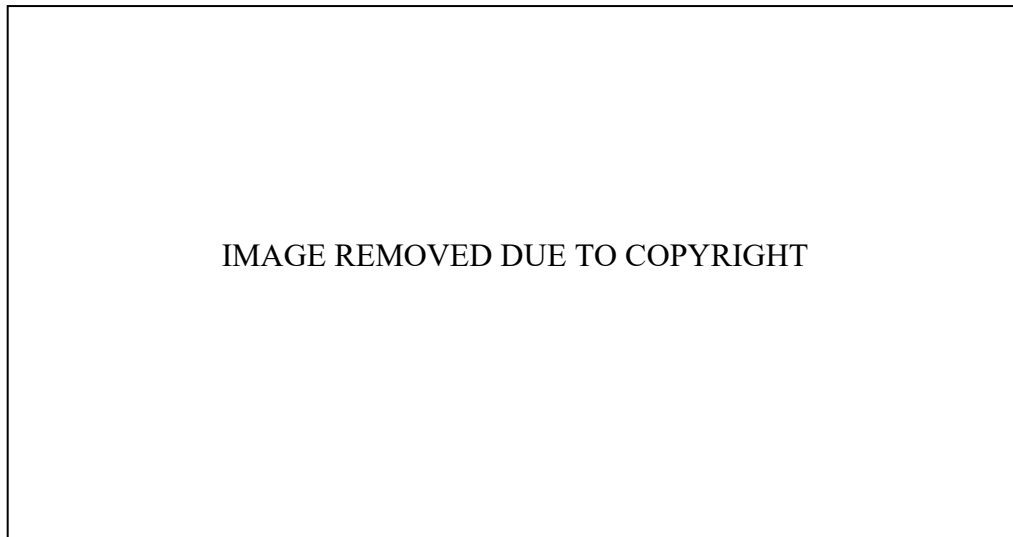


Figure 52. The Cittern and the Muse's Milk. Giovanni Serodine, oil on canvas, *Allegoria della Scienza*, circa 1626, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan (inv. nr. Not disclosed). Source: Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 'Allegorical Female Figure', Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.ambrosiana.it/en/opere/allegorical-female-figure/>.

It is very likely that by the second half of the sixteenth century, the previous bardic use of plucked and bowed strings, such as the Italian cittern was eclipsed by poetic polyphonic practices such as the madrigal, which were both vocal and instrumental.⁴⁸⁴ Still, the cittern had a number of musical characteristics that allowed it to be integrated in the new forms of instrumental music. The percussiveness, brilliance and chordal capacities of the instrument allowed it to be an excellent harmonic instrument, which also provided melodic lines mostly in the first course. Moreover, the interval of the second in the first courses, and the fourth and fifths on the subsequent one, although Medieval in nature, allowed the exploitation of harmonic sustaining drones.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸³ Coelho, "Musical Myth and Galilean Science in Giovanni Serodine's *Allegoria Della Scienza*," 106–13.

⁴⁸⁴ Palisca, "Camerata."

⁴⁸⁵ Michel, "Zistern."

Such developments were really only the start of an instrumental music culture that culminated later in early baroque practices and the eventual surgency of the basso continuo performance. Therefore, the humanist Italian traditional cittern, as it participated in these experimental moments, offered several acoustic possibilities to the growing combination of poetic, polyphonic instrumental practices.

3.2.3 New Designs

The cittern, having a humanist heritage and particular sound, mainly coming from the wire strings, had its own musical identity inside the instrumental ensembles of the late sixteenth century. The performance practice of instrumental music allowed for informed improvisation to adapt tempo, dynamics, rhythm, and ornamentation to serve the meaning of the dramatic content.⁴⁸⁶ As explained by Nino Pirrota the purpose of this practice was the expression of ‘melodic beauty and touching harmonic intensity’, as well as the creation of contrasting tensions related to feelings such as sorrow and desperation, as well as expressive resolution.⁴⁸⁷ Leading composers of the early operatic practice such as Jacopo Peri (1561 – 1633) and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) mixed dramatic speech-song based on the influence of the writings on ancient music, and thus it is not a coincidence to find a large cittern or *ceterone* in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo*.⁴⁸⁸ These larger citterns were part of a growing instrumental practice that by the end of the sixteenth century was heavily influenced by the search for expression, with composers and performers creating specific roles for certain instruments according to their intrinsic possibilities and qualities they could offer to the ensemble.⁴⁸⁹

New designs are also evident in Simone Balsamino’s *Prima Novellete*, published for the Duke of Urbino. Balsamino (worked in court from 1590 - 1607) was an Italian composer, poet and instrument inventor employed by the Della Rovere family. In the preface of the collection of twenty madrigals, the majority set to the play *Aminta* written by Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), he describes his *cetarissima*.⁴⁹⁰ Such an instrument has never been found, but the potential ingenuity of Balsamino is attested by the description of what he called ‘the queen of portable instruments,’ which established seven strings with

⁴⁸⁶ Stubbs, “L’armonia Sonora,” 87–98.

⁴⁸⁷ Pirrota, *Music and Culture in Italy from Medieval to Baroque*, 236.

⁴⁸⁸ A more in-depth analysis of the cittern’s music in Italian and Transalpine contexts can be found in *Chapter 5. The Music of the Cittern*. Williams and Ledbetter, “Continuo”; Carter and Levi, “The History of the Orchestra,” 2–5.

⁴⁸⁹ Walls, *Baroque Music*, xiv.

⁴⁹⁰ Bianconi, “Balsamino, Simone.”

a completely different tuning suited for playing ‘any kind of madrigal’ and ‘every sort of consonance’.⁴⁹¹ While no *cetarissima* with such tuning is described in another written source, nevertheless, as theorist Marin Mersenne stated, the Italian cittern, besides having the standard hexachord of six double courses, could have undergone several variations on its tuning and stringing:

Still other methods of tuning can be used as is done on the other instruments, depending on the pieces one wishes to play. So that each instrument is in some way infinite, by virtue of the great multitude of tunings of which it is capable, according to the fancy and wishes of those who play it, and the diverse ornaments that the skilful hands add to it. But is not possible to explain them or to comprehend them without hearing them.⁴⁹²

In the 1607 *Del Sonare sopra'l basso*, the cittern was not classified as a foundation instrument, probably because, using Agostino Agazzari’s words, it was ‘imperfect’.⁴⁹³ His foundation instruments, the organ, harpsichord, lute, and double harp, were classified by him as ‘perfect’ probably because of their significant range and possibility to be tuned to several temperaments.⁴⁹⁴ The lute’s frets are movable, while the cittern’s are fixed, which places the latter in a rigid temperament. Agazzari prefers the ‘perfect’ instruments as *fondamento* because they are presented with the possibility to play rich and extended harmonies and registers, while if necessary, they can play only the *continuo* line as ‘purely’ and ‘exactly’ as possible.⁴⁹⁵ Marin Mersenne mentioned the ‘perfection of the lute’ over the cittern and other string musical instruments, when he said that the ‘the cittern is more used in Italy than in France, where the lute is at such perfection that the greater part of the other stringed is scorned.’⁴⁹⁶ Another characteristic of the cittern that led it to be classified in *Del Sonare sopra'l basso* as an ornamental instrument, is its ‘closed’ tuning. This means that the intervals of notes available between the courses is limited in comparison with any instrument that is tuned with a broader range of fourth and fifth

⁴⁹¹ Fortune, “An Italian Arch-Cittern,” 43.

⁴⁹² Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, 141.

⁴⁹³ Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Conserto*, 10; Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 429.

⁴⁹⁴ As stated by Johannes Tinctoris who is the only author that discusses the *cetra*, musical instruments of the late fifteenth century were valued for their use in polyphonic style derived from vocal music. Those that could perform such task were seen as ‘perfect’, while the ones that could not were seen as ‘imperfect.’ For example, on discussing the *tibia* [possibly the dolzaina or a type of crumhorn] he said that ‘since not every kind of piece can be played on it, it is considered to be imperfect.’ Baines, “Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris’s *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*,” 20.

⁴⁹⁵ Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Conserto*, 10; Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 429.

⁴⁹⁶ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, the Books on Instruments*, 140.

intervallic dispositions, which is characteristic of nearly all other necked plucked and bowed strings from the period.

For Agazzari, the foundation instruments are meant to guide and support all the other instruments of the ensemble, while the instruments for ornamentation, which include the cittern, should, ‘in a playful and contrapuntal fashion, make the harmony more agreeable and sonorous.’ Along with the guitar and the *lirone*, Agazzari’s cittern or *cetera* and *ceterone* have the purpose to beautify and ‘season’ the concert and, therefore, should be used in a different way than the foundation instruments and make the melody more attractive. However, Agazzari advises that the ornamental instruments, as opposed to the ones used for foundations, require more knowledge in the art of counterpoint, as the foundation instruments would be focused only on the bass.⁴⁹⁷

Agazzari indicated that the common cittern or the *ceterone*, should imitate the way of playing the lute when used as an ornamental instrument, that is in a playful way:

The cithern [cetera ó sia ordinaria] or the ceterone, is used with the other instruments in a playful way, making counterpoints upon the part. But all this must be done prudently; if the instruments are alone in the consort, they must lead it and do everything; if they play in company, each must regard the other, giving it room and not conflicting with it; if there are many, they must each await their turn and not, chirping all at once like sparrows, try to shout one another down.⁴⁹⁸

Interestingly, Agazzari is ambiguous regarding the place of the *ceterone* as a foundational instrument, for only the ‘ordinary cittern’ or *cetera ó sia ordinaria* is listed as an ornamental instrument,⁴⁹⁹ and perhaps the *ceterone* having a wider range and not a closed tuning, could function as the lute, just as Zarlino suggested, when he said that the *ceterone* differed little from the lute.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁷ Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 428; Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Conserto*, 8,9.

⁴⁹⁸ Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 429; Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Conserto*, 9.

⁴⁹⁹ Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Conserto*, 4; Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 425.

⁵⁰⁰ Zarlino, *Le istituzioni harmoniche del reuerendo m. Gioseffo Zarlino da Chioggia; nelle quali; oltre le materie appartenenti alla musica; si trouano dichiarati molti luoghi di poeti, d'historici, & di filosofi; si come nel leggerle si potra chiaramente vedere*, 295.

In terms of plucked stringed instruments, the favouritism towards the lute, both musically and socially, placed it as the prominent instrument to be imitated by other plucked stringed instruments.⁵⁰¹ Being one of the lead instruments in *continuo*, it underwent major changes in its manufacture, tuning and stringing.⁵⁰² In parallel, another fundamental instrument for the *continuo* practice, the harpsichord, led the way for the development not only of keyboard music, but of the major changes of Western musical experimentation.⁵⁰³ Both instruments were important in such pivotal moments of musical practice because of their tonal and tuning flexibility, as well as their range, which also influenced other instruments.⁵⁰⁴

The lute affected the manufacture and use of many, if not virtually all, necked plucked stringed instruments, and the cittern was no exception.⁵⁰⁵ The contrast of the sound of the cittern to the lute's was vividly explained by Giovanni Maria Artusi, who surprisingly did not find the difference in the sound of the metal strings but on the body of the cittern:

Concerning the first, I say that because the body of the lute is made of sweet and very fine wood and has a bigger body than the cittern, because of this characteristic, as the sound projects throughout that body, the resonance comes to be a bit more disunified and consequently more agreeable (sweet) than the [cetra], which, as it has a small, low, and a bit heavier body than the lute, cannot project much so that it could acquire sweetness and temper in a certain manner the crudeness (*crudezza*) that is brought to it by nature: consequently, the sound remains in that harshness. Experience itself will be the most certain proof: place some *cetra* strings on the lute and the strings of the lute on the *cetra*, and in carefully striking the one and the other, you will hear that they are different in sound and in effect from what they made when they were arranged on the proper instrument. This arises from the body of the instruments and not from the strings, which did not change any quality in themselves.⁵⁰⁶

The lute influence is also seen in the cittern signed by *Augustinus*, which besides presenting the usual main soundbar below the soundhole, has not only a second one, but a third one, which is very

⁵⁰¹ Minamino, "The Dissemination of Lute Music in Renaissance Society," 50; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39; Polk and Coelho, "Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons," 30; Spring, "The Development of French Lute Style 1600-1650," 173, 188.

⁵⁰² Minamino, "The Dissemination of Lute Music in Renaissance Society," 50; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39; Polk and Coelho, "Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons," 30; Spring, "The Development of French Lute Style 1600-1650," 173, 188.

⁵⁰³ Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, 1.

⁵⁰⁴ Kottick, 1.

⁵⁰⁵ Minamino, "The Dissemination of Lute Music in Renaissance Society," 52.

⁵⁰⁶ Artusi, *L'Artusi overo delle imperfettione della moderna musica*, 6, 7; Artusi, "Giovanni Maria Artusi's L'artusi Overo Delle Imperfettioni Della Moderna Musica (1600): A Translation and Commentary," 93.

similar to the lute's bass bar. Usually, lutes made before the late seventeenth century had a disposition of soundbars placed vertically, in relation to the bridge, and near to the bottom of the soundboard (Figure 53).⁵⁰⁷

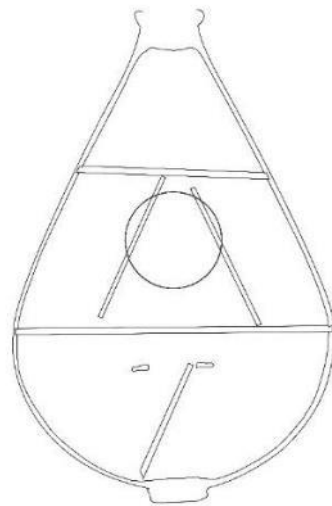


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TO COPYRIGHT

Figure 53. Cittern and Lute Barring. Left, Augustinus Citaraedus, Cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); right, Michel Hartung, bass lute, 1602, Padua, Nuremberg, German, National Museum, (inv. nr. MI 44). Note the bar placed on the lower end that resembles a lute's bracing. Drawing by the author based on his own study of the instrument and in consultation with the technical drawing by Stephen Barber available from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Source: Friedemann Hellwig, 'On the Construction of the Lute Belly', *The Galpin Society Journal* 21 (1968): 129–45. Not to scale.

The traditional humanist manufacture of the Italian citterns was suited for an old fashion, monodic, poetic recitation. Although this was essentially the artistic purpose of its creation, the particular sound of the wire strings, the percussive, chordal nature of the instrument and its Medieval rooted technique of drone-against melody playing, made it a member of the growing practice of instrumental music, which was overcoming the humanist ethos and orthodox views of text versus music. The cittern, thus, was inserted inside an instrumental hierarchy, best expressed by Agazzari's treatise, which turned the instrument into a constant change towards the needs of the early baroque ensembles and to mimicking the most important polyphonic plucked stringed instrument of the epoch, the lute.

⁵⁰⁷ For a variety of visual examples depicting the arrangement of the soundbars on lutes see Hellwig, "On the Construction of the Lute Belly," 135–45.

3.2.4 Monteverdi's *Ceteroni*

Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo, Favola in Musica*, published in 1607, opens with the sound of the *chitaroni*, symbolizing the mythological lyre or *cetera* as Monteverdi called it, and playing against the singing speech of the soprano, portraying *Music*, who recites to the audience the prologue of 'one of the first work of genius in the history of opera.'⁵⁰⁸ It was precisely the genius of Monteverdi to combine classical mythology with the thriving instrumental practice of the time, new forms of poetic-polyphonic music, such as the madrigal, and novel, recitative styles of the early Baroque.⁵⁰⁹ The latter were based on a response by humanist circles against the success of the four or sometimes six-voice madrigal of the late sixteenth century. Most likely, the best example of such reactions was from Giovanni de' Bardi (1534-1612) who led the famous *Camerata Fiorentina*, a group of intellectuals and musicians such as Giulio Caccini (155-1618), Vincenzo Galilei (1520 – 1591) and Pietro Strozzi (1510 -1558) who would also be accompanied by nobles, leading performers and poets to discuss music, astrology and other sciences.⁵¹⁰ The musical output of the *camerata* was to imitate the ancient music, specifically the replication of the modes in order to pursue the affections on the texts with a correct range of voice, having only one melody sung at one time and using counterpoint to assure a fulness of harmony in the accompaniment; moreover, the rhythm and melody should follow the manner and speaking voice of someone that is under the effect of an affect.⁵¹¹

Monteverdi shared the respect shown by the *Camerata* for solo song, when compared to the so-called imperfections of 'modern' music; however, he never wholeheartedly adopted the intellectual aspirations of the Florentines when it came to the orthodox practice of poetic recitation.⁵¹² Monteverdi claimed to be respectful of Platonic notions, essentially based in the predominance of the text over music, but he was still by no means a conservative musician and his interest in Plato was more rhetorical.⁵¹³ As noted by Tim Carter, the classical sources available for composers were far from being

⁵⁰⁸ Whenham, "Orfeo (i)."

⁵⁰⁹ Carter, "The Concept of the Baroque," 30.

⁵¹⁰ Palisca, "Camerata."

⁵¹¹ Palisca.

⁵¹² Carter, "Artusi, Monteverdi, and the Poetics of Modern Music," 178.

⁵¹³ Carter and Chew, "Monteverdi [Monteverde], Claudio."

blue prints for modern compositions. Therefore, even if there was a will for orthodoxy, the composers only had at their disposal their creative power, inherited musical traditions and formulae, as well as the instrumental forces available. Carter goes on to say that the Platonic notions of the *seconda pratica* for Monteverdi were only suggestions and not directions for compositions.⁵¹⁴

Therefore, it is not a surprise to find the *ceteroni* used in this early opera as a simple addition to the ensemble, as it seems that the classical heritage of this instrument was not significant for the narrative of *Orfeo*. In fact, Monteverdi's use of the *ceteroni*, the plural of *ceterone*, is rather surprising as they are not mentioned by the author within the list of instruments that he included in the first publication of this early operatic work.⁵¹⁵ Instead, the *ceteroni* appear suddenly in one of the instrumental descriptions in the changeover from act IV to act V.⁵¹⁶ The indications called for the *cornetti*, *trombone* and *regali* to stop playing and requested the sound of the *viole da braccio*, *organi*, *clavicembali*, *contrabasso*, *arpe* and *chitaroni* to play an instrumental brief piece. The instruments that should be silent can be identified as trumpets, trombones and regals, while the ones playing are violins, organs, harpsichords, contrabass viol, harp, chitarrone or theorbo along with the *ceteroni* (Figure 54).⁵¹⁷

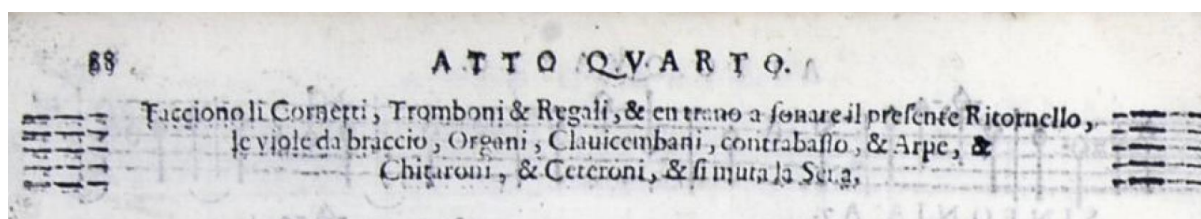


Figure 54. Ceteroni in L'Orfeo. Claudio Monteverdi's Ceteroni in the Ritornello between Act IV and V. Source: Claudio Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo Favola in Musica* (Veneia: Ricciardio Amadino, 1609), 88. Public Domain.

The written music for this instrumental section is a simple *ritornello*, which is played frequently between scenes, and there does not seem to be a particular use of the *ceteroni*. The score does not indicate any phrase that the *ceteroni* should play and it is not clear if these instruments should be playing the melody or the bass line together with a probable improvised basso continuo. The mythological lyre played by Orpheus seems to be represented by a wide range of musical instruments, which could be the violins, harps, *chitarroni*, *ceteroni*, and viols, as the *ritornelli* indicates 'Orfeo sonando con la lira il

⁵¹⁴ Carter, "The Concept of the Baroque," 30.

⁵¹⁵ Monteverdi, *L'Orfeo Favola in Musica*.

⁵¹⁶ Monteverdi, 88.

⁵¹⁷ Monteverdi, 88.

seguinte ritornello.’⁵¹⁸ Even in act IV, when Orpheus is singing in the underworld and is about to free Euridice from Hades, his song is accompanied by the harpsichord, violin and *chitarrone*.⁵¹⁹

Most likely the *ceteroni* formed part of the ‘continuo forces’, which were in total two harpsichords, a double harp, three *chitarroni*, two organs, three viols and a regal. Such a large continuo instrumentation could even be divided in itself, and Monteverdi, for example, in the beginning of Act V, instructed the song of Orpheus to be accompanied by two organs and two *chitarroni*, having one group on the left of the stage and another on the right.⁵²⁰ Still, the fact that the *ceteroni* are only mentioned in this transitional part means that, as indicated by Jane Glover, ‘it is just possible to ignore them,’ unless there is a genuine attempt to create an authentic performance. For example, a modern interpretation of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* by Paul Agne, completely dismisses the inclusion of the *ceteroni* in this transitional instrumental piece.⁵²¹

3.2.5 A *Lacunae* in Written Sources

To the author’s knowledge, the only sources of written music for the Italian traditional cittern are the *Secondo Libro de Intavolatura di Citara, Nelquale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di Balli* by Giacomo Vincenti (died in 1619)⁵²² published in 1602,⁵²³ a manuscript in the private collection of Robert Spencer,⁵²⁴ two early seventeenth century sources from the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence,⁵²⁵ and a circa 1615 compilation for lute, cittern and guitar entitled *Composizioni per chitarra in forma di danze intavolate su rigo di 6 linee* at the Library of the Conservatoire S. Pietro a Majella in Naples.⁵²⁶ In the following subsection these sources will be compared to one another and there will be an understanding of how well represent the cittern’s practice, in particular regarding the use of hexachord.

⁵¹⁸ Stubbs, “L’armonia Sonora,” 96.

⁵¹⁹ Monteverdi, *L’Orfeo Favola in Musica*, 80.

⁵²⁰ Glover, “Recreating Orfeo for the Modern Stage,” 141; Monteverdi, *L’Orfeo Favola in Musica*, 89.

⁵²¹ Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* / CLC Productions, Radio France ; Isabelle Soulard, director ; Paul Agnew, stage director.; Glover, “Recreating Orfeo for the Modern Stage,” 141.

⁵²² Vincenti, *Secondo libro d’intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati*.

⁵²³ Vincenti.

⁵²⁴ Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire,” p.18.

⁵²⁵ Tyler, “A Checklist for the Cittern.” Inventory numbers. Magl. XIX.25/ Magl.XIX.29.

⁵²⁶ Fabris, “Composizioni per ‘cetra’ in Uno Sconosciuto Manoscritto per Liuto Del Primo Seicento (Napoli, Cons., MS. 7664),” Inventory number MS 7664.

Giacomo Vincenti was a prolific bookseller and music printer who during the last decades of the sixteenth century published the music of the most important composers from the North of the Italian Peninsula.⁵²⁷ His *Secondo Libro de Intavolatura di Citara* may be the second print of a first one that is now lost; conceivably, the first volume had more musical pieces than the second, as this music print only has eleven short pieces for the cittern:

Passomezzo.

Romanesca.

Galgiarda Della Romanesca.

La Vilanella.

Padovana.

La Contenta.

Aria Alla Romauesca.

L'Amorosa.

Galgiarda.

Tu te patti.

Pase Mezzo Secondo.⁵²⁸

Vincenti called for a six-course cittern tuned to the typical hexachord (*e'– d'– g– b– c'– a*).⁵²⁹ As noted by Louis Peter Grijp, this tablature can be played on virtually any kind of diatonic cittern.⁵³⁰ One particular striking characteristic of this tablature is how the last two strings of this cittern are seldomly used when compared to the first four, and when called for they are indicated to sound as open strings (See Figure 55).⁵³¹ Peter Forrester has suggested that this fact indicates that the hexachord cittern was

⁵²⁷ W. Bridges, "Vincenti [Vincenci, Vincenzi], Giacomo."

⁵²⁸ Vincenti, *Secondo libro d'intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati.*, 13.

⁵²⁹ Forrester, "A Short History of the Cittern," 348.

⁵³⁰ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 81.

⁵³¹ Vincenti, *Secondo libro d'intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati.*

mostly as a four-course instrument with extra strings.⁵³² Ephraim Segerman also suggested that, indeed, the fifth and sixth courses were possibly ‘expendable.’⁵³³



Figure 55. Vincenti’s Galliard. Giacomo Vincenti, print, *Secondo libro d’intavolatura di citara*, 1601, Venice. Note the asterisks possibly indicating vibrato. Source: Vincenti, Giacomo. *Secondo libro d’intavolatura di citara, nel quale si contengono varie, & diverse sorti di balli, raccolti da diversi autori, et nuovamente stampati*. Venetia: Vincenti, 1602. The author is grateful to Peter Forrester for sharing Vincenti’s Tablature. Public Domain.

The Robert Spencer manuscript is dated circa 1620 and although short it provides much more chord shapes than Vincenti’s. In this case the fifth course is not used, the sixth course is only used as an open string,⁵³⁴ and the required fretting can be played on all kinds of diatonic citterns from the Italian Peninsula.⁵³⁵ Having dances as the main body of musical pieces, the Spencer manuscript is similar to Vincenti’s and also to the 1615 manuscript *Composizioni per chitarra*.⁵³⁶ The latter is a compilation of

⁵³² Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire,” 18.

⁵³³ Segerman, “A Short History of the Cittern,” 87.

⁵³⁴ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 82.

⁵³⁵ Grijp, 81.

⁵³⁶ Fabris, “Composizioni per ‘cetra’ in Uno Sconosciuto Manoscritto per Liuto Del Primo Seicento (Napoli, Cons., MS. 7664),” Inventory number MS 7664.

a hundred compositions for lute, a few dance pieces for the cittern, which is named *cetra*, and one for the guitar.⁵³⁷ The compositions for the cittern are only seven:

Anime liete.

Galiarda del Santino.

Vil[anell]a.

Spagnoletta (possibly by Francesco Quartiron)

Anepigraphic (no legend or inscription). Text that reads ‘Hora che ogn’animal repos’è dorme.’ Vocal composition.

Anepigraphic (no legend or inscription). Text that reads ‘Udit udit’ amanti.’ Vocal composition.

Anepigraphic (no legend or inscription).⁵³⁸

The Neapolitan manuscript calls for a hexachord tuning, which Dinko Fabris has placed as an octave lower than the usual disposition, yet still preserving the usual intervals and notes.⁵³⁹ However, further research is needed to confirm if it’s just the usual tuning of the typical hexachord layout (*e’– d’– g– b– c’– a*). Moreover, it seems that the author is surprised by not finding the tablature suited to a chromatic instrument, when the music would fit a diatonic cittern, the most common type in the Italian Peninsula.⁵⁴⁰

Fabris reported that the owner and one of the authors of the manuscript, which is written by three different types of handwriting styles, was most likely Franciscus Quartironus from the city of Lodi in Lombardy, who had a lute master named John Nanécimo. The latter could have been the first possessor, or perhaps the compiler of the first section of the manuscript.⁵⁴¹ Further important insights are the possible use of a plectrum, since the tablature shows a consistent pattern of conjoined parts, and the asterisk sign (*) found in many notes, not only in this manuscript, but also in Vincenti’s printed tablature, which could be indications of vibrato⁵⁴² or other forms of ornamentation (Figure 56). Fabris

⁵³⁷ Fabris, 185.

⁵³⁸ Fabris, 189.

⁵³⁹ Fabris, 199.

⁵⁴⁰ Fabris, 201.

⁵⁴¹ Fabris, 191.

⁵⁴² Fabris, 201.

also tressed the lute influence not only in the Neapolitan manuscript but also in Vincenti's *Secondo Libro de Intavolatura di Citara*. In the first, there is one piece that shows direct influence from the lute practice, which is the *Gagliarda del Santino*, which could be one of the compositions of the famous lutenist Santino Garsi da Parma (1524-1604).⁵⁴³

The repertoire of the Italian traditional cittern that has been found so far requires more research that this dissertation can hold at the present time. However, an initial hypothesis is that the music represented in these manuscripts belongs more to the lute repertoire than to the cittern's, especially the Neapolitan manuscript, which can be confirmed to be done by a lutenist. The hexachord tuning, in specifically, the last two courses, probably had a different practice than these sources can provide.

Moreover, Vincenti's quality of production could range from precise, well-accomplished pieces to examples of 'technical stagnation and artistic decline'.⁵⁴⁴ In general, in fact, the early seventeenth century is characterised by publications of declining quality.⁵⁴⁵ The shortness of the pieces and the lack of chordal figures compared to the other two manuscripts could well indicate that the *Secondo Libro de Intavolatura di Citara* belonged to the phase of his late prints; his possible first cittern book conceivably had better examples.

The musical use of the hexachord remains a puzzle and, since these sources reflect an expendable use of two cittern courses, it might reflect the fact that the instrument being written for was not chromatic, or, even if it was diatonic, did not had the several available semitones in the last two courses that some citterns have. For example, the two historical citterns at the University of Leipzig,⁵⁴⁶ despite being diatonic, show entire chromatic frets in the last three courses, which indicates the use of several semitones of the scale.⁵⁴⁷ Still, the majority of historical citterns show that the last three courses were intended to be diatonic and not chromatic, at least, before some practices demanded the chromatic fingerboards. For example, Louis Peter Grijp reported that before 1570, there were no chromatic fret

⁵⁴³ "Garsi [Garsi Da Parma], Santino"; Fabris, "Composizioni per 'cetra' in Uno Sconosciuto Manoscritto per Liuto Del Primo Seicento (Napoli, Cons., MS. 7664)," 203.

⁵⁴⁴ W. Bridges, "Vincenti [Vincenci, Vincenzi], Giacomo."

⁵⁴⁵ Bernstein, *Print Culture and Music in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 174.

⁵⁴⁶ In Table 1, citterns 4 and 9 (Appendix 2).

⁵⁴⁷ Michel, "Zistern."

arrangements.⁵⁴⁸ Andreas Michel established that the roots of diatonic fretting are born in the Medieval past of the cittern,⁵⁴⁹ which lingered on due to the tradition of the *cetra* and its humanist practice, which by the seventeenth century was obscured by the lute practice.

On another note, it is important to observe that the art of the cittern was mostly an oral tradition and the tablatures so far mentioned could have been mere indicators or schematic blueprints of an improvisational practice. For example, the *passamezzi* and *Romanesca* are dances used for instrumental variations since the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. The *passamezzo* provides a basic material design that was repeated several times during a dance, until later followed by other dance progressions such as the *saltarello*, *gagliarda* or *paduana*,⁵⁵⁰ which were also famous for reaching elaborated variations of polyphonic texture.⁵⁵¹ Perhaps these instrumental pieces are frameworks that could be used for instrumental practices, such as the ones presented by Agazzari, where the cittern is part of a continuo force instead of being used as a solo instrument, this deploying its chordal nature to full advantage. Still, caution should be placed on the use of the hexachord; until there is sufficient experimentation with historically informed practice of Italian citterns in connection with poetic practices, which seemed to be the core of the cittern's musical values, it suffices to bear in mind the symbolism of the hexachord for the cittern and the revival of antiquity.

By the first half of the seventeenth century, the Italian cittern was only a secondary instrument in the mainstream, avant-garde practice of the early Baroque instrumental culture. The Medieval roots of the cittern allowed for a limited ornamental use in the ensembles as seen in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Agazzari's *Del Sonare sopra 'l basso*. The experimentation level of the early operatic movements was heading towards much more complex polyphonic practices that were going to culminate in the establishment of the modern eighteenth century orchestra.⁵⁵² The little surviving music for the Italian traditional cittern indicates that this was an instrument poorly adapted to the lute practice, and the use of the hexachordal tuning in relation to humanism remains to be explored further. The role of the cittern

⁵⁴⁸ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 64.

⁵⁴⁹ Michel, "Zistern."

⁵⁵⁰ Gerbino and Silbiger, "Passamezzo."

⁵⁵¹ Brown, "Galliard."

⁵⁵² Carter and Levi, "The History of the Orchestra," 2.

as a secondary instrument in the mainstream of Baroque polyphony was a historical reality; however, the large number of surviving citterns and their technical transformation indicate the existence of another road that seems largely unwritten and implies a thriving experimental practice of cittern culture that still remains to be discovered.⁵⁵³

3.2.6 An Ongoing Transformation

Leading polyphonic instruments such as the lute significantly influenced the traditional nature of the early cittern, and through its involvement in more complex instrumental ensembles a transformation started to take place. The major technical changes that the *cetra* underwent due to the first stages of the transformation of the instrumental practice of the early sixteenth century were only the start of a set of modifications in manufacture, stringing and tuning. The implementation of a longer neck and fingerboard was already a technological innovation having an ingenious ‘solution’ to the *cetre* block frets. Generally, all citterns present a standard fingerboard, made of a single piece of hardwood, which in several cases is made from maple (*Acer* sp.),⁵⁵⁴ cut in a quarter with the radial grain in direction of its length. Following the *cetra* manufacture, the fingerboard has a system of brass frets⁵⁵⁵ and wedges, where the former are held using a hardwood strip placed through fingerboard with a dovetail joint (Figure 56). The wedges are a practical device to fix the frets without having to do a laborious metal work, for a simple brass sheet can be fitted into place by installing this wooden strip that creates enough pressure to keep the fret secure.

⁵⁵³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments. Table 1.](#)

⁵⁵⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, 4 - 7, 9, 10, 12 – 17, Table 1. Italian Traditional Citterns.](#)

⁵⁵⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, 4 - 7, 9, 10, 12 – 17, Table 1. Italian Traditional Citterns.](#)

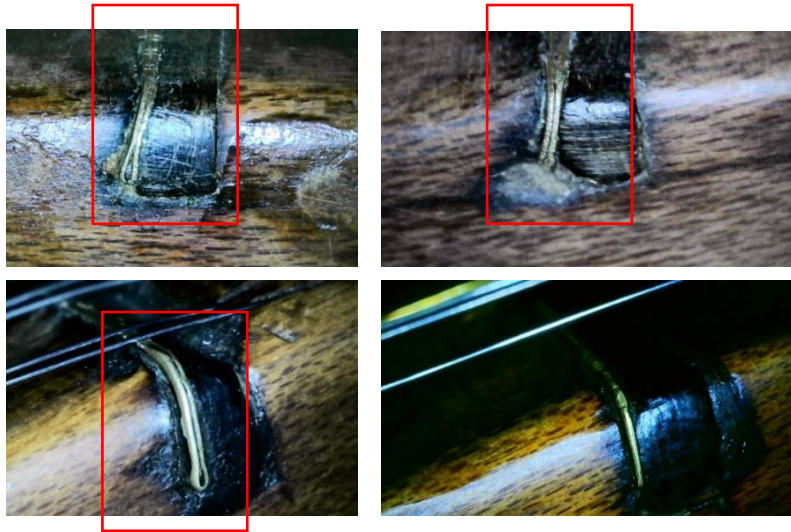


Figure 56. Close Up to Frets. *Above*, Unknown maker, cittern frets (3 and 2), International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna, (inv. nr. 1746); *Below*, Girolamo Campi, cittern frets (nut and fret 5), 1580, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048). Note the double folded sheet of brass sometimes used (highlighted with a red square). Source: Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

At the same time, the wedges and frets of the cittern are a logical derivation of the *cetra* wooden blocks, for the space between them already existed in the cittern's forerunner, and the necessity of adding metal frets was solved by filling these gaps with both metal sheets and wooden strips. Moreover, the wedge, depending on its width, can serve as a hard surface that protects the hardwood of the fingerboard by receiving the constant abrasion of the wire string.⁵⁵⁶ It is worth mentioning that the fingerboards can be scalloped⁵⁵⁷ to allow the string to be further pushed down towards the wedge and fingerboard in order to produce a clear division of the string length, improving intonation (Figure 57).

⁵⁵⁶ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 33–36.

⁵⁵⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns, 5, 15, Table 1.](#)

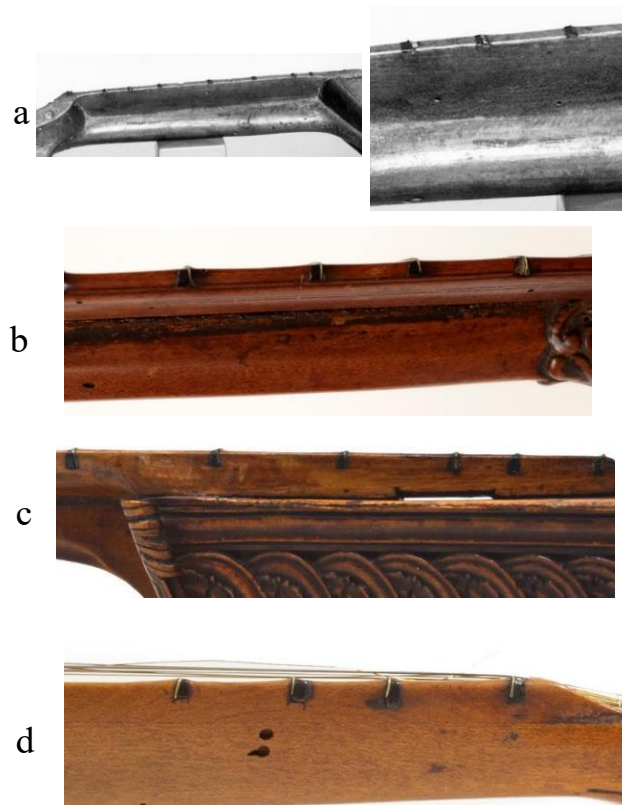


Figure 57. Italian Cittern Fingerboards, Wedges and Frets. a, A. Rossi, cittern, circa 1540, Urbino, unknown location; b, Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386); c, Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); d, Girolamo Campi, cittern, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048). Sources: Photographs courtesy by the National Music Museum in Vermillion South Dakota, photographs by Esteban Mariño.

The brass frets and wooden wedges were an important innovation; nevertheless, they were only the start of a series of changes fundamentally based on its performance in instrumental ensembles and the search for expression, range, chromaticism, and tonality.⁵⁵⁸ As explained before, the changes in musical instrument craft are not aligned with a single purpose of ‘improvement’; in a way, each cittern has not only a unique history and social context, but as a keyboard with a short octave, it is provided with a set of available notes intended for the music it performed. The main problem with the history of the Italian cittern is that the repertoire is mainly non-existent, for its practice was essentially rooted in the art of

⁵⁵⁸ Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instruments,” 228; Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons,” 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

improvisation and was largely unwritten.⁵⁵⁹ Therefore, extant musical instruments are essential to understand the transformation of their fretting layouts.

Italian citterns combined diatonic and chromatic dispositions; however, as the transformation of instrumental music became more complex, performers and makers added more frets to play more notes. The tendency of adding frets to increase available notes culminated in the complete chromatic fingerboards. Such transformation is neither gradual nor chronological; as with the *cetra*, diatonic and chromatic fretting layouts coexisted, reflecting the fact that, as mentioned before, the diatonic fretting is bound to the Medieval humanist heritage of the *cetra*, which is related to the tetrachordal tuning that was later changed into the hexachord of the Italian cittern.⁵⁶⁰ At the same time, the diatonic disposition also allowed the players to better orientate themselves through the fingerboard and be less precise with their fingering, which allowed for less stretching of the left hand.⁵⁶¹

Nevertheless, the transformation of cittern fingerboards shows a standard fretting pattern, which changed as shown in specific examples. The earliest pattern, found in the 1536 cittern by *Franciscus Plebanus*, leaves the 4th fret completely absent, the 6th, 8th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 18th frets serve only the two first set of strings, and the 16th and 17th frets serve the four first sets only. This layout is more or less the same in many other examples,⁵⁶² which have partial frets in the fourth course.⁵⁶³ The practice of the early cittern, was probably still very influenced by the tradition of its predecessor, the *cetra*, which seldom required chromaticism, in contrast to the lute performance.⁵⁶⁴ As mentioned, the 1526 Girolamo dai Libri instrument is one of the oldest visual evidences of the use of partial fretting and could well be the earliest iconographic example of the Italian cittern.⁵⁶⁵ It is evident, however, that this early cittern did not had an extended neck for it only has nine frets, while citterns made after the 1530s generally have eighteen.

⁵⁵⁹ [See section 3.2.10. 'A Lacunae in Written Sources'.](#)

⁵⁶⁰ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 615–17.

⁵⁶¹ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns"; Huber, "Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments"; Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry"; Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?"

⁵⁶² This fact is first shown in the work of Louis Peter Grijp. Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 63.

⁵⁶³ Citterns 4-7 in Figure 21.

⁵⁶⁴ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 615–17.

⁵⁶⁵ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 64. See Chapter 2. 'The Re-Birth: The Cittern's Heritage. Section 2.4 From Block Frets to a Wedged Fingerboard.'

As with the earliest fretting pattern, preserved in the 1536 Franciscus Plebanus cittern (example 1 in Figure 58), the disposition clearly shows the partial frets destined for the first courses only, while the bass strings are left with their partial disposition. There is a general tendency in surviving historical citterns to leave the 4th fret completely absent while the 6th, 8th and 11th frets only serve the two or three first set of strings. The 1580 Girolamo Campi cittern at the Royal College of Music (example 2 in Figure 58) is almost identical, thus, only changing frets 14 – 17. These two examples show a tendency to leave the third, fourth and six courses with fewer available notes. Similarities between instruments 5-7 of Figure 58 and iconographic sources can be seen in Figure 59.

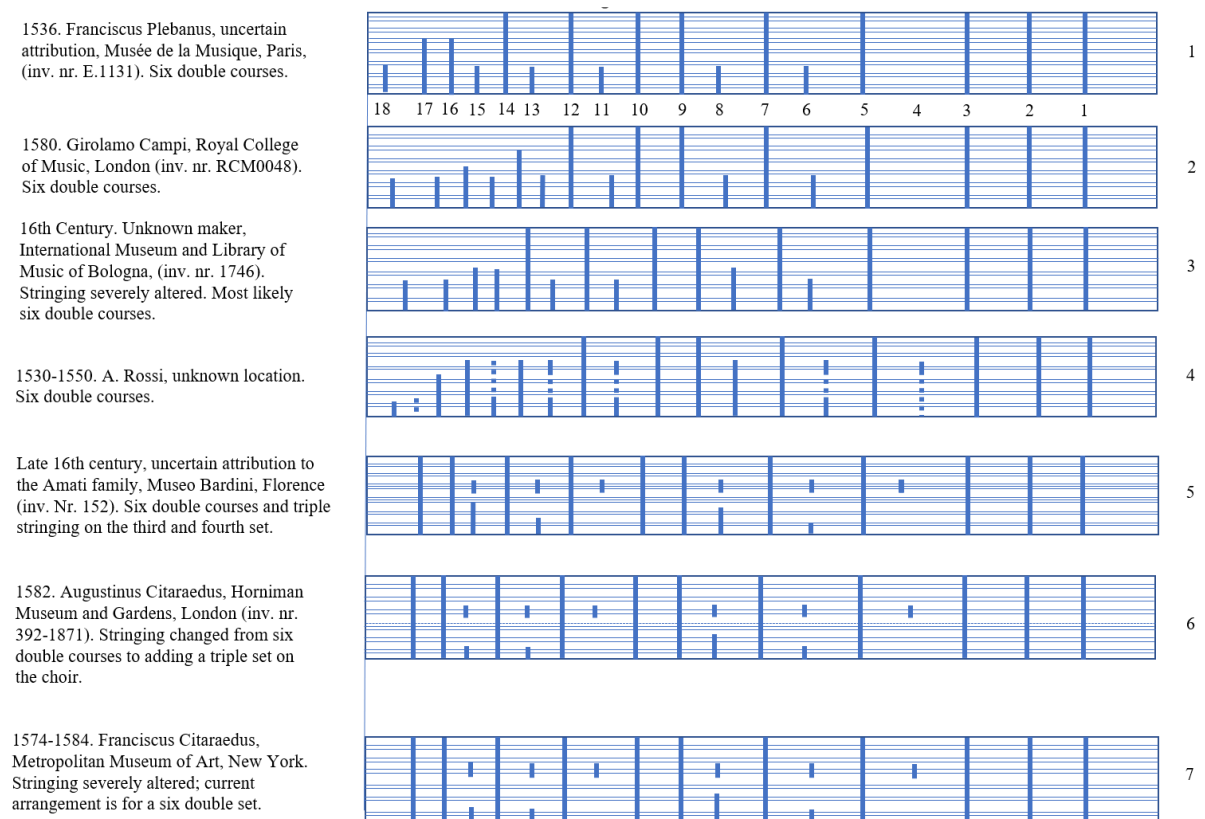


Figure 58. Standard Tendencies in Italian Cittern Fretting Layouts. The diagram was made using detailed photographs and technical drawings of the historical instruments, citterns 2, 6 and 7 were examined by the author. Not to scale. The correspondence between the upper courses and frets of citterns 3, 4, 5 in this diagram is an estimate. Cittern 4, at this moment only survives in photographs. Cittern 5 was not allowed to be examined because of its fragile condition. The nut of cittern 3 is severely altered. Sources: Photographs by Esteban Mariño, Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, ‘Cistre Giovanni Salvatori’, accessed March 8, 2024, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0161792?_ga=2.132167822.1611217876.1561566535-1388324293.1560439961

IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT



Figure 59. Iconographical Examples of Partial Fretting on the Bass and Mid-Range. Above, Antiveduto della Grammatica, , oil on canvas, Terpsichore or Musica, (1570/71–1626), private collection in England; below, anonymous, oil on canvas, mid-16th century, Joyeuse compagnie auto d'une table, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. nr RF: 451). Note the partial fretting on the fourth and fifth course. Sources: : Invaluable, 'Sold Price: Antiveduto Gramatica (Rome 1571-1626) - July 3 0113 12:00 AM BST', invaluable.com, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/antiveduto-gramatica-rome-1571-1626-194-c-e972835c18>; Louvre Museum, 'Joyeuse Compagnie Autour d'une Table', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010065999> . Public Domain.

Louis Peter Grijp explained how the addition of frets on the fourth course would be based on the necessity of bass notes, which can be seen in historical examples 4-7 in Figure 58. The necessity for more notes, hence, the need to constantly add more frets, can be witnessed as a process in the Urbino citterns signed by A. Rossi. The first example shows how the fingerboard was changed from a usual fretting, into the incorporation of more notes. Figure 60 shows the addition of strips of wood in the 4th, 6th, 11th, 13th and 15th and 18th frets, which were alterations for adding more notes in all courses, except the last two, suggesting their use as drones.

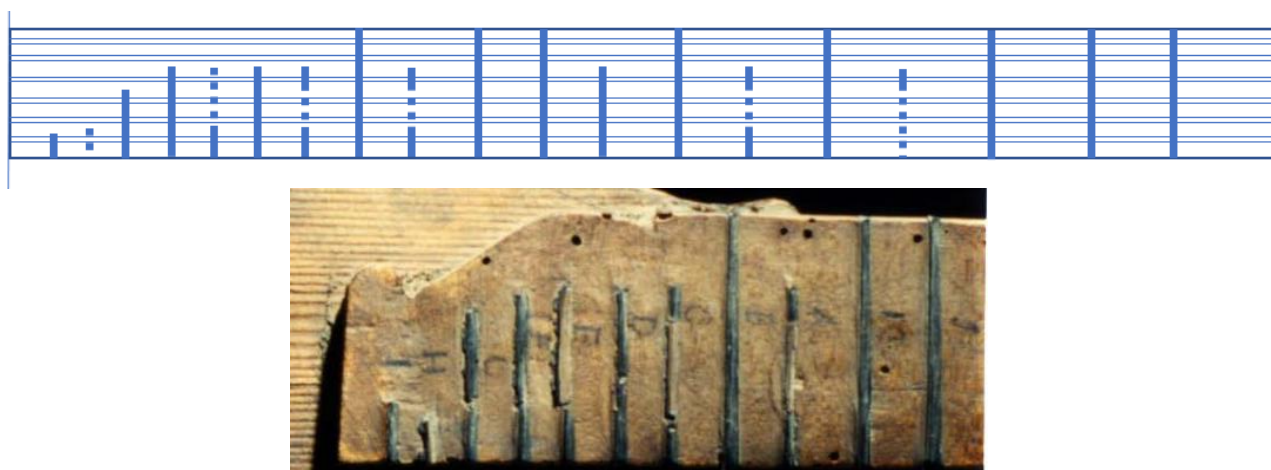
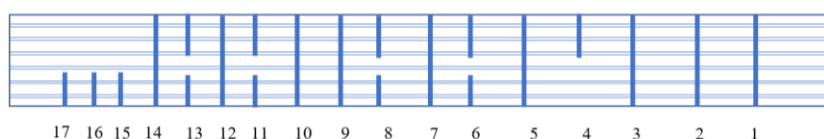


Figure 60. Altered Fretting. A. Rossi, cittern, 1530?, Urbino, unknown location. Adapted from photograph. *Source:* Courtesy of the National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota.

Further historical examples show almost a complete chromatic fingerboard with almost identical patterns (Figure 61). The road towards chromaticism should be treated as an agglomeration of individual cases rather than a general linear tendency, something attested by the *Rafaello da Urbino* cittern, which apparently had its fingerboard completely replaced for a chromatic one, that could even be from another cittern, now lost. This theory is based on the fact that: 1) the piece is clearly too large for the neck surface; 2) the joint between the fingerboard and neck is too rough; and 3) an incision on the side of the neck suggests quite a rough intervention of removing a very well glued previous fingerboard (Figure 62).

Mid-16th century. Unknown maker,
Musikinstrumentenmuseum der
Universität Leipzig (inv. nr. 612).
Six double courses.



Sixteenth century, Piero Paulo,
Private Collection, Unknown location.
Six double courses.



Mid-16th century. Unknown maker,
Musikinstrumentenmuseum der
Universität Leipzig (inv. nr. 612).
Six double courses.



Figure 61. Towards Chromatic Fretting Layouts. The diagram was made using detailed photographs of the historical instruments. Not to scale. Sources: Andreas Michel, 'Zistern', *Instrumentarium Lipsiense* Zistern, accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.studia-instrumentorum.de/MUSEUM/zistern.htm>; Courtesy of Peter Forrester.

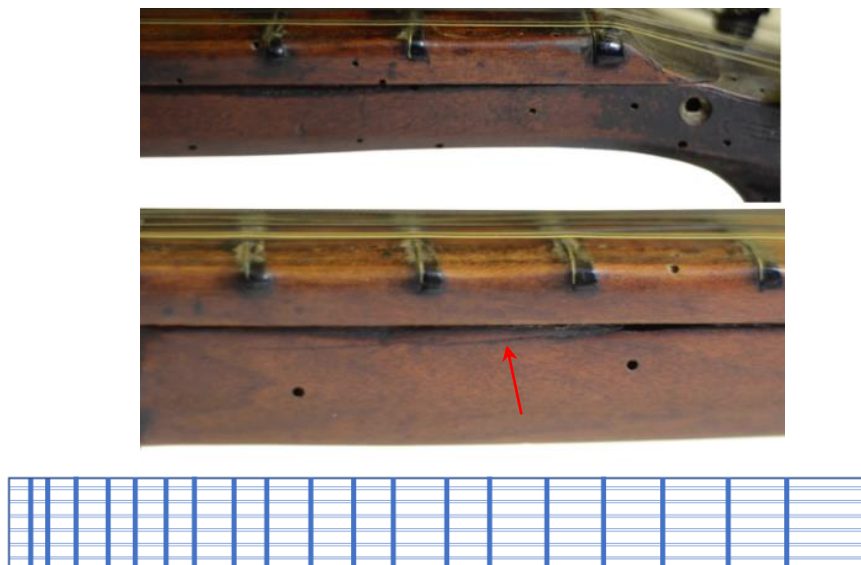


Figure 62. Replacement of Fingerboard. Raffaello da Urbino, Cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386). Note the rough joint between the fingerboard and the neck as well as the incision indicating the removal of the original fingerboard (highlighted by red arrow). The diagram of the full chromatic layout is not to scale. Source: Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

More evidence shows that the chromatic layout was probably already present in citterns since the mid sixteenth century and kept on being used during the sixteenth century, which is something attested by the Giovanni Salvatore Cittern and the written works of Michael Praetorius (1619) and Marin Mersenne (1636) (Figure 63).

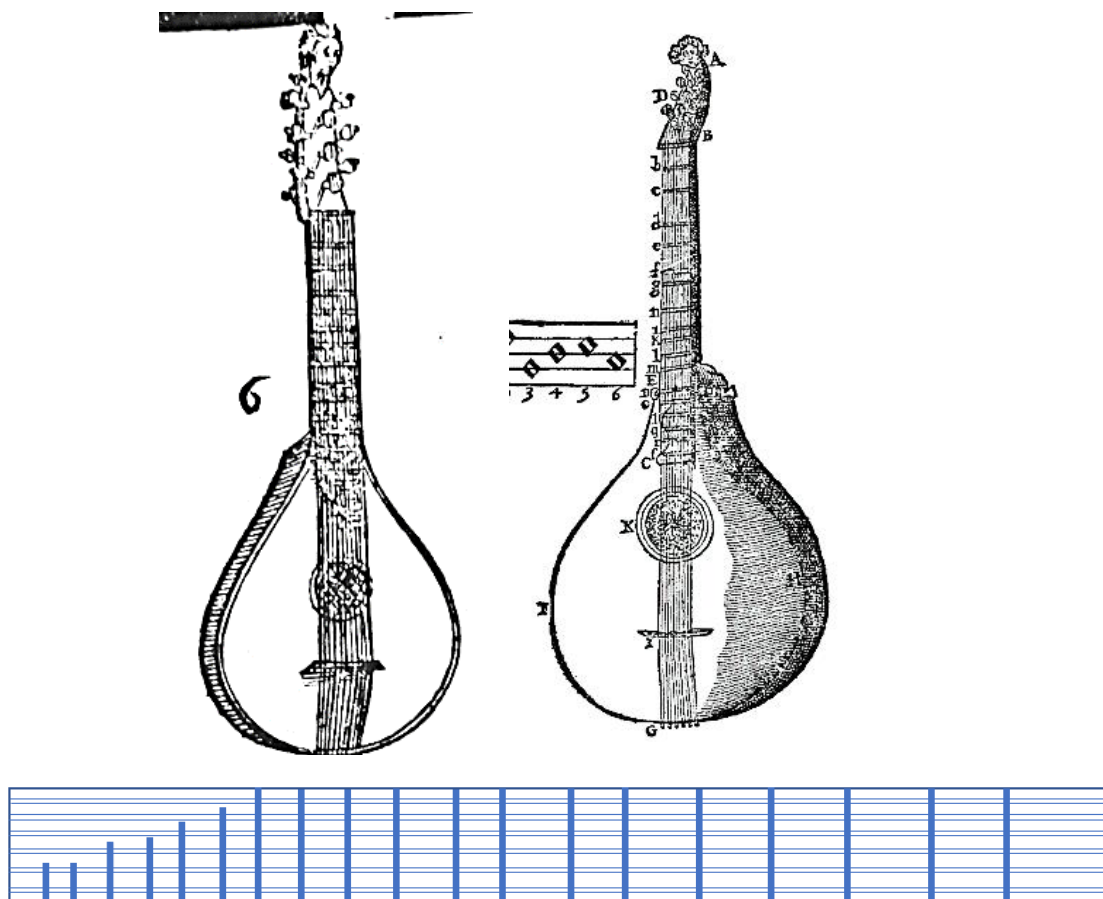


Figure 63. Citterns by Praetorius, Mersenne and Giovanni Salvatori. Above, Micheal Praetorius, print, *Syntagma Musicum II*, Wolfenbüttel, circa 1620; middle, Marin Mersenne, print, *Harmonie Universelle*, 1636-7, Paris; below, Giovanni Salvatori, cittern, mid-16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E. 543). Sources: Micheal Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, vol. II (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), Plate XVI; Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1636), Book IV, 32; Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, 'Cistre Giovanni Salvatori', Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, n.d., accessed March 8, 2020, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0161792?_ga=2.132167822.1611217876.1561566535-1388324293.1560439961 .Public Domain.

3.2.7 An Old Tradition in a New Practice

Musical and manufactural ‘improvements’ were part of the history of the cittern and although most Italian citterns had a six double course stringing, there are examples showing the tendency to make octave triple courses in the third and fourth course to increase the bass range of the instrument and provide more resonance. Such is the case of the cittern doubtfully attributed to the Amati family, which besides having this arrangement, shows signs of further alterations in stringing.⁵⁶⁶ Other instruments such as this include the cittern signed by *Augustinus Citharaoedus*, which shows an original triple set on the third course, and the rest double. Most likely, this cittern was changed into a standard double six courses, which is the present arrangement. There is also the possibility that the fourth course was complemented with a third string, yet the string wear mark on the nut is not as clear as the thick bass string evidence shown in the slot of the third course. Figure 64 does not only show the evidence of such change but also how the peg hole was filled up, thus showing the original triple set up in the third course.



Figure 64. Alterations in Stringing 1. Augustinus Citaraedus, Cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

The cittern made by an unknown maker housed at the International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna⁵⁶⁷ shows many signs of altered stringing, including two different bridge positions used at different moments in the instrument’s life. Although the peghead shows an original standard double six string set up, the string holder was changed in order to fit another set of strings in the first course. This

⁵⁶⁶ This instrument was photographed and briefly examined by late Stephen Gottlieb in June 1974. Andrew Hartig made Gottlieb’s notes public in his [website](http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com). Instrument damaged in a museum flood and separated in several pieces. Hartig, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: [Http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com](http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com).”

⁵⁶⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 16.](#)

alteration can be spotted by the different tool marks made on the first slot when compared to the rest, which not only have a different manufacture but appear to be much older. In contrast, the extra notch made in the first slot displays a much fresher saw mark (Figure 65).

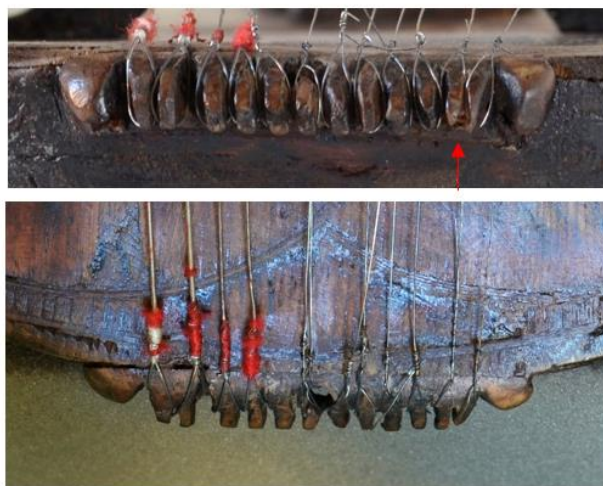


Figure 65. Alterations in Stringing 2. Unknown maker, cittern, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna, (inv. nr. 1746). a) original arrangement with the triple third set; b) altered stringing showing the present six double set; c) the altered first slot of the string holder. Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

The experimentation with musical instruments in ensembles led to the creation of different sizes according to tenor, bass, and soprano ranges.⁵⁶⁸ As explained by Peter Forrester, and shown in Table 1, the body of extant historical citterns can be divided in its different sizes as follows; 1) vibrating string lengths between 620 to 610 millimetres; 2) between 545 to 538 millimetres; 3) between 490 and 482 millimetres; 4) between 430 and 420 millimetres.⁵⁶⁹ Based on the breaking point of iron or steel, which is suggested by historical sources⁵⁷⁰ and a selected modern pitch standard, it has been suggested that the instruments from 430 and 482mm, could have their higher course in *e'*, while the 545 to 538 mm were tuned to *b*, and the 620 to 610 mm were tuned in *a'*.⁵⁷¹ Such arrangement would render different

⁵⁶⁸ Smith, "Instrumental Music," 122.

⁵⁶⁹ Forrester, "Die Laute in Europa. II: Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen Und Cistern/The Lute in Europe. II: Lutes, Guitars, Mandolins and Citterns," 154.

⁵⁷⁰ Giovanni Battista Spada (1597 – 1675) indicated that the *cetera* or cittern has a body like the lyre (*lira*) and is provided with strings of brass, steel, and its played with a plectrum. Spada, *Giardino de gli epiteti, traslati, et aggiunti poetici italiani del P. maestro F. Gio. Battista Spada di Fiorenzuola piacentino dell'Ordine de' predicatori ...*, 143.

⁵⁷¹ Forrester, "Die Laute in Europa. II: Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen Und Cistern/The Lute in Europe. II: Lutes, Guitars, Mandolins and Citterns," 154.

combinations of hexachords available in each size of cittern. At the same time, there lies the probability that the cittern was fully strung in brass for the possible tunings are dependent on the pitch standard, which varied from region to region.⁵⁷² For example, in 1640 the Italian Peninsula had the following variations: 1) Venice (a' equal 460 Hz to 470 Hz); Lombardy (a' equal to 440 Hz); Tuscany (a' equal to 415 Hz); Rome (a' equal to 392 Hz); Naples (a' 370 Hz). In Italy, the pitch standard of a' equal to 440 Hz was also known as *tutto punto* and the 460 Hz to 470 Hz was called *mezzo punto*, which was not only used in Venice, but also in general use in Northern Italy.⁵⁷³

Still, Forrester's suggestion of having citterns tuned in e and a is likely because historical sources suggest it. Michael Praetorius, for example, clearly stated that his Italian cittern was tuned in e' , which renders the hexachord $e'-d'-g-b-c'-a$, yet his illustration shows a cittern of around 500 mm of string length, equivalent to the regional standard of measurement, which was one Brunswick foot, plus nine inches (Figure 66).⁵⁷⁴ Such measurement, coincides with pitch standards used in Italy, such as Lombardy, which is part of the regional Northern provenance of the Italian cittern. At the same time, Praetorius's string length is close to the 490 and 482 mm of the aforementioned historical examples tuned to e' . Moreover, it is very likely that theorist Giovanni Maria Lanfranco and Pietro Cerone were discussing a larger type of cittern tuned in a , which would be a fifth lower than the examples tuned in e' and could well be the tuning of the larger types of citterns of circa 610 mm of vibrating string lengths.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷² For example, regarding the vibrating string length of a cittern of 444 mm. Under the basic assumption that a brass string about 285 mm long can safely be tuned to c^2 with a^1 at 415 Hz, the vibrating string length of 444 mm could be tuned to the interval below c^2 (that is the ratio of 444 mm divided by 285 mm) which gives a value of 1.5578. This number is approximately the interval of a minor sixth ($8/5$ equal to 1.6), which is about e^1 . On the other hand, the highest pitch that an iron string of 444 mm string could be tuned to can be found by the interval below c^2 , which is the ratio 444 divided between 360. The result is 1.2333, which is approximately a major third ($5/4$ or 1.25) that would be equivalent to a -flat¹ at a^1 at 415 Hz; or g^1 at a^1 at 440 Hz, or a^1 at 390 Hz; or g -flat¹ with a^1 at 460 Hz. These calculations are based on an equal semitone ratio of 1.0595.

⁵⁷³ Bruce Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch*, 76.

⁵⁷⁴ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, II:Plate XVI.

⁵⁷⁵ Cerone, *El Melopeo y Maestro: Tractado de Música Theorica y Practica; En Que Se Pone Por Extenso; Lo Que Uno Para Hazerse Perfecto Musico Ha Menester Saber*, XXI:1055; Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giouan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo ...*, 140.

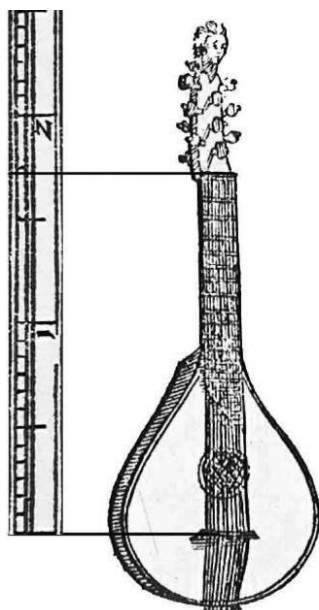


Figure 66. Cittern by Praetorius. Micheal Praetorius, cittern, circa 1620, Wolfenbüttel. Source: Micheal Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, vol. II (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), Plate XVI. Public Domain.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were ages of instrumental exploration, and the cittern's variety of sizes is a product of such trialling, which was based on the invention of possibilities each instrument could offer to the ensemble. In fact, different ranges of plucked and bowed strings were used and devised by composers according to their aesthetic needs, which always brings the possibility of having different sizes even for a single tenor model.⁵⁷⁶

The creation of different sizes, stringing layouts and tuning probably led to further changes in barring. Cittern soundboards are generally made of a coniferous quarter sawn softwood with the radial grain, which is regularly spruce (*Picea abies*) or fir (*Abies*),⁵⁷⁷ resting upon the edges created by the carved structure and rebates in the comb and neck.⁵⁷⁸ However, the soundboard is mainly supported by

⁵⁷⁶ Pirrotta, *Music and Culture in Italy from Medieval to Baroque*, 236; Duffin, *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, 73; Montagu, *Origins and Development of Musical Instruments*, 56.

⁵⁷⁷ Two instruments can be confirmed to have a soundboard made by the usual method of construction of all plucked strings, which is joining two planks with the grain aligned. Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study," 54. [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 5 and 6.](#)

⁵⁷⁸ The cittern housed in the International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna in Figure 70 was restored in 1991. The online museum catalogue and restoration report can be consulted [online](#). The intervention consisted in filling the several holes made by xylophagous insects, regluing of soundbars, reconstruction of missing sections near the string holder. Reconstruction of pegs and bridge. Cleaning of entire surface and varnish retouched. Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 33.

a bar inserted through the sides, usually located between the sound hole and the bridge (Figure 67-68).⁵⁷⁹



Figure 67. Bar Inserted Through the Ribs. Unknown maker, cittern, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna, (inv. nr. 1746). Note the bar going through the sides highlighted in red. Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

Another bar, located above the rose was also added sometimes to increase the support of soundboards.⁵⁸⁰ Interestingly, the second can not necessarily go through the walls but is rebated (Figures 69-70).⁵⁸¹

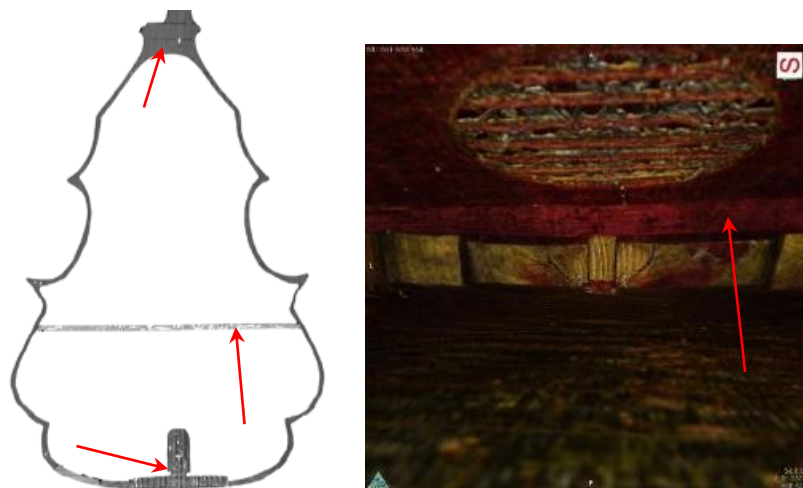


Figure 68. Internal Structure. Raffaello da Urbino, cittern, circa 1540, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386). Note the rebates and main soundbar (highlighted with a red arrow). Sources: Photographs by Esteban Mariño, adapted from a CT scan image provided courtesy of the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Vermillion, South Dakota.

⁵⁷⁹ See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, Table 1.](#)

⁵⁸⁰ Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 33.

⁵⁸¹ In Table 1, cittern 6 has both bars rebated, while instrument 16 has the main bar going through the sides and second one rebated. See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 6 and 16, Table 1.](#)

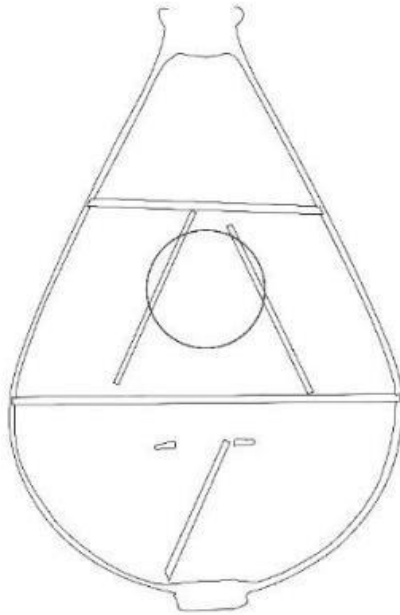


Figure 69. Secondary Bar. Augustinus Citarædus, cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). Source: Drawing by the author based on his own study of the instrument and in consultation with the technical drawing by Stephen Barber, Four Course Cittern, Urbino 1582. Augustinus Citarædus Urbino MDLXXXII, Museum No. 392-1871, 1981, Technical Drawing, 1981, © Victoria and Albert Museum.

IMAGE REMOVE DUE TO COPYRIGHT

Figure 70. Cittern Soundboard under Restoration. Unknown maker, cittern, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna, (inv. nr. 1746). Note the mark of the secondary bar above the rose on the back of the soundboard (highlighted with a red box. Source: Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna, 'Cetera, Italia, Sec. XVII', Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica di Bologna Strumenti Musicali, accessed 2 June 2024, <http://www.bibliotecamusica.it/cmbm/scripts/strumenti/scheda.asp?id=83&path=/cmbm/images/ripro/strumenti/vdm112/>

Although the cittern was being heavily renovated and improved, the traditional carved, Medieval manufacture remained and in some cases was not compatible anymore with the demands of instrumental music. The bars that go through the walls of the traditional citterns can produce instability between the soundboard and resonator. This is the case in at least two instruments, the Urbino cittern at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the cittern signed by Girolamo Campi at the Royal College of Music Museum in London.⁵⁸² In Figure 71 is possible to see how the dimensional shift of the bar has pushed the ribs outwards and generated a series of cracks in the wood.



Figure 71. Damage of Ribs Caused by Structural Bars. Franciscus Citaraedus, Cittern, 1584, Urbino, Provisional loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photograph Courtesy of Luca Rocca.

⁵⁸² [See Appendix 2. Historical Instruments. Instruments 7 and 15, Table 1.](#) Instrument 7, at the Metropolitan Museum of New York was kindly inspected by conservator Manu Frederick and his results were verbally shared with the author, who is grateful for his help.

Figure 72 shows the exact same manufacturing problem, which however, has generated minor cracks in the ribs and a severe dimensional distortion that has made the treble side larger than the soundboard.



Figure 72. Damage of Ribs and Resonator Distortion. Cittern, 1580. Girolamo Campi, Brescia, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048). Photographs by Esteban Mariño.

Instruments built out of a single piece of wood presented issues when it came to the trend towards expansion and increased sizes and tunings. All carved musical instruments can be fragile in their lower section, which is where the string holder is placed. This happens because large pieces of wood tend to have a strong dimensional shift in one way depending on the direction of the grain. Considering a reverse bird's eye perspective, which is placing the view of the instrument below its bottom, it is possible to understand this potentially structural instability. When the grain is directed in a parallel way in relation to the soundboard, the shrinkage would happen across the back and possibly neutralize the pressure of the strings on the soundboard, something already noted by Peter Forrester in the sixteenth century cittern by Giovanni Salvatori.⁵⁸³

However, when the grain direction is not parallel to the soundboard, the dimensional pull is directed in a perpendicular way and could lead to a fracture. The tension of the strings is received by the string holder that is part of the structure, and when this pressure is combined with the dimensional shift of the

⁵⁸³ See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 12, Table 1.](#) Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 33.

carved resonators, the production of fractures is further potentialized. This occurrence is possible to see on at least four traditional historical citterns,⁵⁸⁴ which exemplify the fragility of the string holder when is carved out of the resonator. For example, Figure 73 shows how the A. Rossi cittern's⁵⁸⁵ comb was pulled apart in its entirety and with it, a substantial part of the resonator, which seemed to be a similar problem of the cittern signed by Raffaello da Urbino, which was heavily repaired.⁵⁸⁶ Figure 74 shows how the comb of this cittern was re-attached to the lower end of the body by means of brass holders nailed down to the wood to prevent a further separation.⁵⁸⁷ In a similar way, the cittern made by Girolamo Campi,⁵⁸⁸ circa 1580, has a very similar problem as the other mentioned examples for there are fractures in its back that seem to be originated in its string holder, which is also fractured (Figure 75).⁵⁸⁹



Figure 73. Fragility in String Holder I. Cittern, A. Rossi, 1530, Urbino, location unknown. Source: Courtesy of the National Music Museum.

⁵⁸⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, 15, 16, 17, Table 1.](#)

⁵⁸⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 17, Table 1.](#)

⁵⁸⁶ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, Table 1.](#) Mariño, “Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study,” 82.

⁵⁸⁷ Furthermore, by a close examination under CT scan, the instrument shows how the multiple repairs could correspond to different moments in its *life*.

⁵⁸⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 15, Table 1.](#)

⁵⁸⁹ Similar fractures in the bottom of traditional carved instruments can be seen in the anonymous gittern from Elblag (Elbing) made in the first half of the fifteenth century currently preserved at the Museum Archeologiczno-Historyczne in Stargard, Poland. Schlegel and Joachim, *Die Laute in Europa 2 Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen und Cistern = The lute in Europe 2: lutes, guitars, mandolins and citterns*, 38–40.

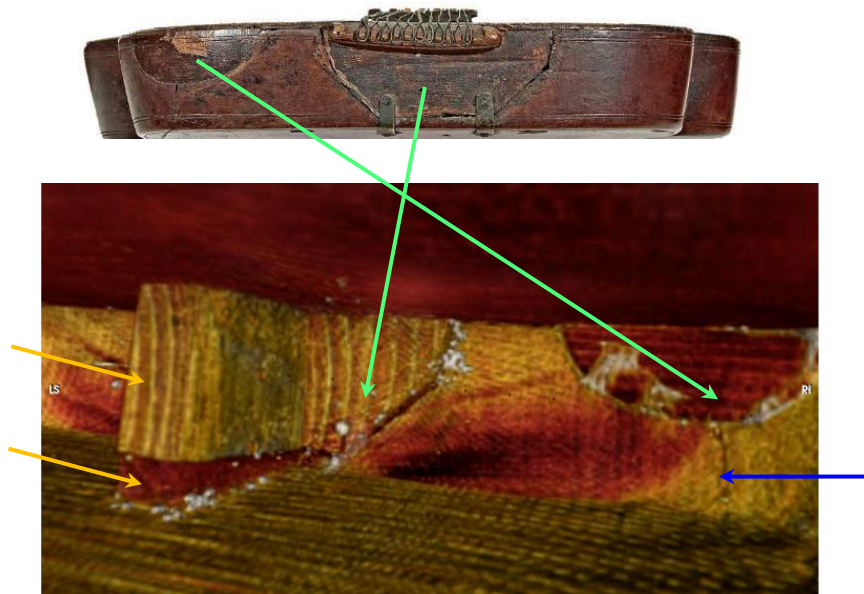


Figure 74. Multiple Repairs in String Holder. Cittern, Raffaello da Urbino, 1550, National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386). *Above*, photograph showing the external appearance of the heavily repaired bottom of the instrument; *below*, a CT scan rendered image of the inside of the bottom shows the internal appearance of the same repairs (highlighted with green arrows) and a crack (highlighted with a blue arrow). Note the two different blocks of wood meant to provide structural strength to the string holder. Sources: Photograph by Esteban Mariño adapted from a CT scan image provided courtesy of the Sanford Vermillion Medical Center, Vermillion, South Dakota.



Figure 75. Fragility in String Holder II. Cittern, 1580. Girolamo Campi, Brescia, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048). Photograph by Esteban Mariño.

Cittern manufacture changed radically from its carved craft as instruments were built in several pieces that still imitated the carved tapering design of their predecessors. Such is the case of the citterns by Piero Paulo, the instrument doubtfully attributed to the Amati family and the large cittern, inspired by the *chitarrone*, built by Girolamo Campi (Figure 76).⁵⁹⁰



Figure 76. Girolamo Campi Cittern with Extended Bass Range. Cittern, Brescia, Museo Bardini, Florence (inv. nr. no.152). Courtesy of Peter Forrester.

Networks of humanist nobles, scholars, instrument makers, visual artists and performers played a very important role in the creation of the cittern, which was founded on the Medieval *cetra* and its idealised ancient heritage. The ‘primitive’ or ‘archaic’ features of the traditional Italian cittern remained in late stages of its history because there was a need to preserve its tradition of serving as a symbolic aspect, typical of the Renaissance arts. The revival of antiquity was however declining by the seventeenth century and music was increasingly more and more independent from such an ethos as it became part of an unprecedented boom due to its social function and patronage. The cittern became more and more relevant for instrumental practice and its musical qualities were sought by performers and composers, who in turn kept expanding its possibilities. These developments could only reach a certain limit, best exemplified by its close hexachordal tuning and carved manufacture. As Marin

⁵⁹⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, 13, Table 1.](#)

Mersenne pointed out, such tuning was probably altered throughout its practice and the carved tradition was now imitated with built-in models. Italian traditional citterns kept on being made well into the seventeenth century; however, the continuous transformation of musical instruments in the mid-sixteenth century, the commercial incentives in local markets and the welcoming of new designs submitted the cittern to a constant process of identity change. Circulating among higher and lower classes, amateur and professional circles, the cittern's humanist identity was further transformed, more and more becoming a copy of itself. However, by the 1560s a school of manufacture that held tradition and heritage in the highest of esteems was being founded and by the last decades of the sixteenth century it shone briefly but brightly as the existing Italian cittern craft was taken to a modernized yet elevated artistic summit, this was the Brescian school.

3.3 The Brescian School

The Brescian citterns represent a high state of cittern making not only because of the innovation of technological enhancements, but because they recovered a fundamental part of the humanist culture of the Italian tradition. At the same time, the Brescian manufacture is a perfect example of the high achievements of the Renaissance artistic genius. The Brescian craft can be characterised as an amalgam of technological development, traditional humanist meaning and socio-economic entrepreneurship.⁵⁹¹

Before explaining such fine craftsmanship, it is important to understand the several cultural reasons for this development. First, the city had a strong patronage coming from the Venetian Republic, which ruled the city-state from 1428 to 1797.⁵⁹² Second, Brescian musical activities were elevated by the second half of the sixteenth century. The Britannico family, for example, was an influential printing house of music and scholarly content that resided in the city.⁵⁹³ In fact, it was this printing house that published the work of Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, *Scintilli di Musica*, in 1533,⁵⁹⁴ which was not only the earliest broad treatise on music theory in Italian, but the first one to mention the early cittern.⁵⁹⁵ Third,

⁵⁹¹ For possible influences between the transalpine citterns and Brescian see [chapter 4. 'The Transformation of the Transalpine Cittern', section 4.3.5 'The Surviving Instruments'](#).

⁵⁹² Peruchetti, "Brescia."

⁵⁹³ Costas, *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe*, 76.

⁵⁹⁴ Peruchetti, "Brescia"; Blackburn, "Lanfranco, Giovanni Maria."

⁵⁹⁵ Peruchetti, "Brescia"; Blackburn, "Lanfranco, Giovanni Maria."

there was also a distinguished culture of *maestri di cappella* and organists.⁵⁹⁶ Fourth, Brescia was also a particular centre of instrument manufacture. The mountainous pre-Alpine province to the north of the city was wooded on its lower hills and was also mined for the minerals and metals used in all crafts, mainly the local armaments industry.⁵⁹⁷ Brescian lutherie reached the court of Ferrara where art patroness Isabella d' Este commissioned viols from an anonymous maker from the city.⁵⁹⁸ Since the early sixteenth century, Brescian performers and makers formed an industrious network of apprenticeships that cemented a school that was tremendously influential for the following generations of Italian craftsmen, in particular the violin makers of Cremona.⁵⁹⁹

A key example of such a rich context is instrumentalist, composer and organist Paolo Virchi (1551-1610), who had a successful career not only in Brescia but in Ferrara and Mantua.⁶⁰⁰ Virchi was the first Italian composer to compile, edit and re-arrange works of the Italian cittern in a published volume: the 1574 *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara di ricercarti, madrigali, canzoni napolitane et saltarelli*, dedicated to the Duke of Parma and Piacenza Ottavio Farnese (1524 - 1586).⁶⁰¹ Paolo Virchi worked for the Este court at Ferrara sometime between 1579 and 1586, both as an organist and music teacher of the noble Este family. By the end of 1598, he was transferred to the Mantuan court as an organist in the basilica of Saint Barbara where he stayed until his death.⁶⁰²

Paolo Virchi was also known as *Targhetta*. Some scholars, however, have considered that *Targhetta* or *Targhetti* were second surnames used for other members of the Virchi family, including the famous maker of citterns and father of Paolo, Girolamo Virchi.⁶⁰³ William May explained that these sub-surnames were usually acquired through marriage.⁶⁰⁴ In fact Gianfelice Riccardi stated that the members

⁵⁹⁶ Newcomb, "Virchi, Paolo."

⁵⁹⁷ Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 64; Ravasio, "Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano," 5–6.

⁵⁹⁸ Peruchetti, "Brescia"; Beare, "Gasparo Da Salò [Bertolotti]."

⁵⁹⁹ Surian, "Cremona (i)"; Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 68–69.

⁶⁰⁰ Newcomb, "Virchi, Paolo."

⁶⁰¹ Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*.

⁶⁰² Newcomb, "Virchi, Paolo."

⁶⁰³ Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 56–60.

⁶⁰⁴ May, "A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara (1574)," 2.

of the Virchi family used this second surname out of a family relation with the *Targhetti* or *T'argeti* of the house of Pralboino, a province of Brescia.⁶⁰⁵

It is quite interesting, therefore, to see how Ottavio Rossi (1570 – 1630) referred to both Girolamo and Paolo in his *Elogi storici di bresciani illustri*. The Brescian erudite stated how *Targhetta*, in this case Girolamo, was an excellent *citaredo* and cittern maker, while Paolo Virchi was an organist and composer of the finest airs as well as a great cittern performer (Figure 77). Rossi goes on to state that there was never a greater *cetra* player than ‘our Targhetta [meaning Girolamo], who with celestial harmony gave it spirit, voice and an angelically humane affection.’ Rossi completes Girolamo’s entry by stating how he retired to Mantua where he lived and died with fame. As for Paolo Virchi, Rossi mentioned how his talents as a cittern player and composer led him to be at the service of Alfonso II of Ferrara. However, due to ‘some misunderstandings in that Court,’ he took refuge in Mantua, and served as long as he lived as an organist of Duke Guillermo Gonzaga (1538-1587).⁶⁰⁶

Both Paolo and Girolamo Virchi belonged to an old family of Brescian luthiers and wood inlayers or *intarsiatori*, which can be traced to the fourteenth century.⁶⁰⁷ Girolamo’s father, Bernardino was a maker of wooden clogs, and a general wood carver.⁶⁰⁸ Girolamo’s siblings, Benedetto and Battista were also known as cittern and plucked stringed instrument makers, although the first was also a shoemaker like his father.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁵ Riccardi, “Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Cithara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli,” 57.

⁶⁰⁶ Rossi, *Elogi storici di bresciani illustri teatro di Ottavio Rossi*, 494, 498.

⁶⁰⁷ Riccardi, “Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Cithara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli,” 56.

⁶⁰⁸ Bugini, “La liuteria bresciana e il collezionismo musicale del Rinascimento,” 20.

⁶⁰⁹ Bugini, 24.



Figure 77. Girolamo (Targhetta) and Paolo Virchi. Ottavio Rossi, 1620, Brescia. Source: Ottavio Rossi, *Elogi historici di bresciani illustri teatro* di Ottavio Rossi (Brescia: per Bartolomeo Fontana, 1620), 494. Ottavio Rossi, *Elogi historici di bresciani illustri teatro* di Ottavio Rossi (Brescia: per Bartolomeo Fontana, 1620), 494. Public Domain.

Girolamo Virchi went on to become a celebrated cittern maker who participated in thriving networks of plucked and bowed stringed instrument makers such as Gasparo da Salo and Paolo Maggini.⁶¹⁰ Girolamo, was in fact, the teacher of da Salo, who in turn was later the master of Maggini.⁶¹¹ Both Gasparo and Maggini continued the tradition of cittern making towards the end of the sixteenth century and both makers were also fundamental figures for the development of violin making and influential craftsmen for the Cremonese school.⁶¹² Virchi combined the best of both worlds with the Brescian cittern, coming from a traditional cittern making and playing, he brought a new craftsmanship yet he still was attentive to the humanist meaning of the instrument. However, in order to place the cittern into the late sixteenth century modernity, it was necessary to change an essential feature of its classical identity: the hexachordal tuning, which was a task left to his son, Paolo.

⁶¹⁰ Beare, "Gasparo Da Salò [Bertolotti]."

⁶¹¹ Beare.

⁶¹² Tyler, "Cittern."

3.3.1 A New Tuning and a Chromatic Fingerboard

A fundamental change within the Brescian school of manufacture was Paolo Virchi's new tuning.⁶¹³ Such changes were clearly made to align the instrument with parallel plucked string instruments. In his 1574 publication, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, Virchi stated how this wire plucked string instrument had a 'lively' and 'grateful' sound, as well as good proportions, which made it not very dissimilar to those instruments that had reached 'perfection' such as the harpsichord and lute.⁶¹⁴

Among the other instruments in which men have usually delighted, the cittern, by virtue of its being among those of the quill, whose liveliness and pleasing sound keep them in that esteem, and by having a well order proportion and differing little from those which have a high degree of perfection like the harpsichord and the lute, has likewise its following in the way that a small star giving light receives light from the sun.⁶¹⁵

The Brescian musician also stated that the former art of the cittern, having once been 'occulted and difficult', was now 'opened' to the polyphonic practice of the period.⁶¹⁶ Virchi's comment resonates with Ephraim Segerman's notion that the cittern practice, when rooted in the hexachordal tuning, was uncommon and unique practice inside the polyphonic mainstream performance.⁶¹⁷ Paolo's *primo libro di tabolatura* is an example of his distinguished career as a composer of five and six part madrigals, and shows preference for the use of *musica ficta*, which essentially means balancing the use of fixed extensions of the hexachord system with the growing polyphonic practice that required the adding of accidentals when necessary.⁶¹⁸ The growing of basso continuo as a popular practice, which brought the

⁶¹³ There are six Brescian historical citterns that survive today in public collections. As with the traditional Italian citterns. [Table 2 in Appendix 2](#) condenses the basic technical information of all documented citterns and allows to specifically locate details of the instruments.

⁶¹⁴ Virchi compared the cittern to a small satellite star that receives light from the staring 'perfect' instruments. Moreover, Michael Praetorius explained how the clavicytherium, which is an upright harpsichord, has a 'sonorous body that sounds like a harp or a cithern [cittern].' Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60; Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 2; Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 5.

⁶¹⁵ The original text reads: 'Tra gl'altri stromenti ove comunemente si sono compiaciuti gl'huomini, la Citthara, per essere tra quelli di penna di vivace e grato suono, è sempre stata in qualche consideratione; e per aver ben ordinata proportion, et poco dissimile à quelli, che già hanno havuto assai di perfettione, come l'Arpicordo & il Lautto; ah come loro seguace, nel modo che suole picciola stel la stella dal Sole.' Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 2; Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 5.

⁶¹⁶ Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 2; Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 5.

⁶¹⁷ Segerman, "A Short History of the Cittern," 87.

⁶¹⁸ Bent and Silbiger, "Musica Ficta"; May, "A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's *Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara* (1574)," viii.

need for chromaticism and lower notes, is reflected in Virchi's tuning, designed specifically to serve his ambitious collection of high quality music that demanded a considerable technical virtuosity from the performer.⁶¹⁹ Although the possibility should be acknowledged that Paolo Virchi simply based his new tuning by adding two new courses after the usual first four, it is worth recalling that the Virchi family was well rooted in the craft and art of the traditional Italian cittern and this was known for having a six-course hexachord tuning. Therein lies the possibility that Paolo Virchi, as suggested by Gianfelice Riccardi, modified the traditional hexachord tuning and used it as the foundation for his new tuning.⁶²⁰

Virchi's modifications essentially added two new courses tuned in *d* and *f*, whereas Lanfranco's only went as low as *g*.⁶²¹ In order to generate a larger range, Virchi lowered the fifth course to a sixth, in relation to the second one, while the sixth and lowest course was dropped to an octave in relation to same first course (Figure 78).⁶²² Virchi named the first course *canto*, the second, *sotanella*, the third, *argentina*, the fourth, *contralto*, the fifth *tenore* and the sixth *basso*. Using the *sotanella* as a reference point, Virchi established that the fifth course, the *tenore*, was an octave in relation the *sotanella*, raised three half tones or three steps on the frets of the fingerboard. Moreover, the sixth course or *basso* was an octave in relation to the same *sotanella*.⁶²³ It is also significant to notice how Virchi decided to have the *sotanella* and the *canto* as single courses, which is a common feature on lute stringing and, thus, reflects the desire of placing the cittern as close as possible to the lute's practice.⁶²⁴

Besides the tuning, Brescian citterns were adapted through an entire chromatic fretting board, a culmination of a process seen in the manufacture and transformations of the traditional Italian citterns.⁶²⁵ As its forerunners, the Brescian fingerboards were made of a hardwood, usually maple (*Acer* sp), and the brass frets were kept in place with the same type of wedges. However, the preservation of

⁶¹⁹ May, "A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara (1574)," 3.

⁶²⁰ Riccardi, "Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli," 15.

⁶²¹ May, "A Critical Edition of Paolo Virchi's Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Citthara (1574)," 15.

⁶²² Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 3.

⁶²³ Virchi, 3.

⁶²⁴ Schlegel and Joachim, *Die Laute in Europa 2 Lauten, Gitarren, Mandolinen und Cistern = The lute in Europe 2: lutes, guitars, mandolins and citterns*, 24.

⁶²⁵ Nevertheless, is important to clarify that chromatic fingerboards in citterns can be found in traditional citterns such as the mid sixteenth century instrument by Giovanni Salvatori. [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 12, Table 1.](#)

the previous diatonic fretting patterns was preserved in the Brescian fingerboards by a colour coding system that combined dark and light wedge. The latter were placed in the same positions as the partial frets of previous instruments,⁶²⁶ thus keeping a visual diatonic disposition while still having a full chromatic fingerboard (Figure 79).

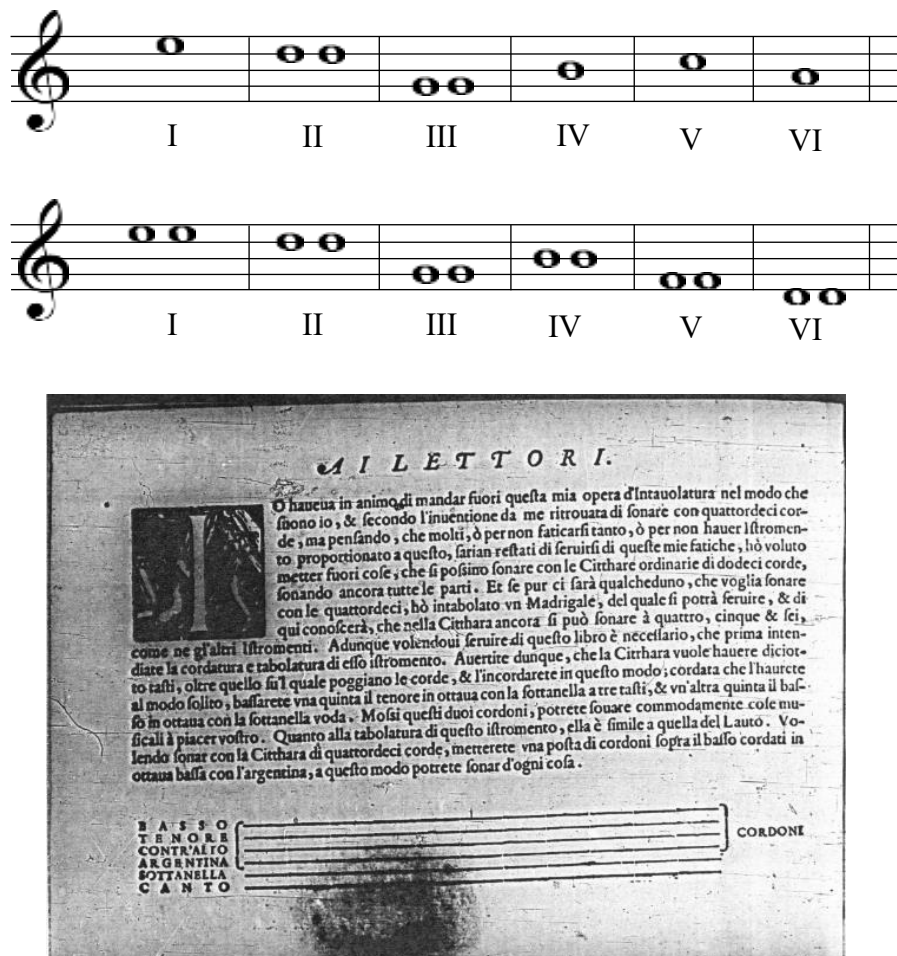


Figure 78. Lanfranco and Virchi Tunings. Above, Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, print, *Scintille di Musica*, 1533, Brescia; below, Paolo Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di cithhara*, 1574, Brescia. Note in the tuning above how the last two courses were dropped down to create lower notes. Also note the denomination of canto, sotanelle, argentina, contralto, tenore and basso. Sources: Giovanni Maria Lanfranco, *Scintille Di Musica* (Brescia: Lodovico Britannico, 1533), 140; Paolo Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di cithhara: di ricercati madrigali canzoni napolitane et saltarelli* (Vineggia: G. Scotto, 1574), 3. Public Domain.

⁶²⁶ Except for the first fret, that kept a lighter wedge.

In this way, cittern players that were used to the diatonic arrangement could now have a visual cue, just as today the modern acoustic steel string American guitar presents inlaid white fret indicators. The six historical citterns that survive today have had several alterations to their fretting; however, the instrument built by Girolamo Virchi, preserved at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna,⁶²⁷ is perhaps one of the few citterns that preserves all its original features.

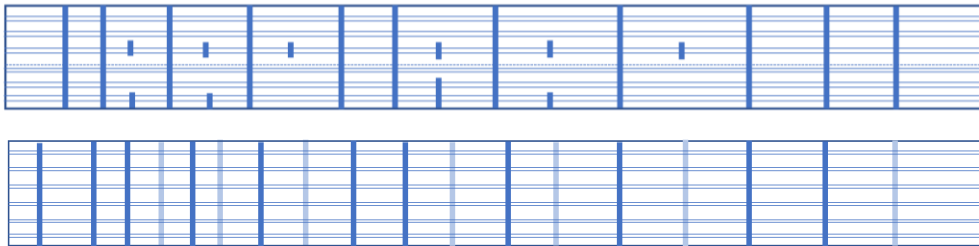


Figure 79. The Brescian Fretting Layout. Above, Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); below, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. 56). Not the light colour frets aligned with the partial frets (except for the first fret) of the Augustinus Citaraedus instrument. The diagram was made using detailed photographs of the historical instruments. Not to scale. Sources: Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Courtesy of Peter Forrester; Esteban Mariño, “Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study” (University of South Dakota, 2016).

Even the internal catalogue sheets of this cittern indicate that it is almost in mint condition, still having antique strings, including twined brass examples, original bridge, pegs and fretting arrangement.⁶²⁸ Other instruments by Virchi, such as the 1570 cittern at the Musée de la Musique in Paris,⁶²⁹ show a peculiar fingerboard transformation, in which, the original chromatic fretting layout was changed; however, the original colour coding wedges were still preserved and, in fact, they follow the same pattern as the instrument at the Kunsthistorisches Museum.⁶³⁰ Having the 1st, 4th, 6th, 8th, 11th, 13th, 15th frets in colour wedges is also a constant in other instruments, which suggest that this was the usual pattern in Brescian citterns.⁶³¹ There are citterns that have had a long-playing history, which has led to

⁶²⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 3, Table 2.](#)

⁶²⁸ Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

⁶²⁹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 1, Table 2.](#)

⁶³⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 3, Table 2.](#)

⁶³¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, 3, 4, Table 2.](#)

them having their original fretting severely altered.⁶³² Examples of this are the cittern made by Gasparo da Salo at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford,⁶³³ which now presents an ebony fingerboard fitted with 18 chromatic frets, all arranged in an equal temperament. The original Brescian pattern, because it follows the traditional one, has the same type of temperament, which is most likely a 1/6 or 1/5 of a comma meantone temperament.⁶³⁴ In the same manner, the cittern built by Girolamo da Virchi, also housed by the Ashmolean, has a heavily altered fingerboard with twentieth-century mandolin-style frets arranged in an equal temperament.⁶³⁵

In terms of stringing, Paolo Virchi, in his *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, indicates that the ordinary cittern has twelve courses of strings and most of his published music is intended for this type of instrument. However, Virchi also claimed that he had invented a cittern of fourteen strings, meaning an instrument with seven double courses, and indeed in his *primo libro* there is a madrigal written for this type of instrument (Figure 80).

If you want to play the cittern of fourteen strings, you can place another set of strings over the bass register, which should be tuned to a low octave in relation with the argentina [third course]. In this way, you can play anything.⁶³⁶

Virchi was ahead to the madrigalist, Simone Balsamino who in his *Prima Novellate*, defined the so-called *cetarissima*, which did not preserve the root tuning of the first four courses of the hexachord and changed them all in their entirety. It is possible, thus, to suggest that Virchi was keen in preserving some degree of tradition and authenticity on his tuning, even in this fourteen-string cittern.⁶³⁷ It is likely

⁶³² See [Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, Table 2.](#)

⁶³³ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57.; Technical drawing made by John Pringle in 1982, Ashmolean Museum, The Hill Collection of Musical Instruments.

⁶³⁴ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 86; Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*; Huber, “Fingerboards of Sixteenth-Century Citterns as a Primary Source for Temperaments of (Other) Fretted Instruments”; Mariño, “Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study,” 76–79.

⁶³⁵ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57.; Technical drawing made by John Pringle in 1982, Ashmolean Museum, The Hill Collection of Musical Instruments.

⁶³⁶ The original text reads: ‘Volendo sonar con la Citthara di quattordeci corde, metterete una posta di cordoni sopra il basso cordati in ottava bassa con l’argentina, a questo modo potrete sonar d’ ogni cosa’. Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 3.

⁶³⁷ Fortune, “An Italian Arch-Cittern,” 43.

that both Virchi and Balsamino were referring to a type of cittern with several extra bass strings that were usually attached to a second extended peghead or pegbox. As mentioned by James Tyler, the tendency to extend the range came not only from the practice of basso continuo, but also from the imitation to the lute practice.⁶³⁸

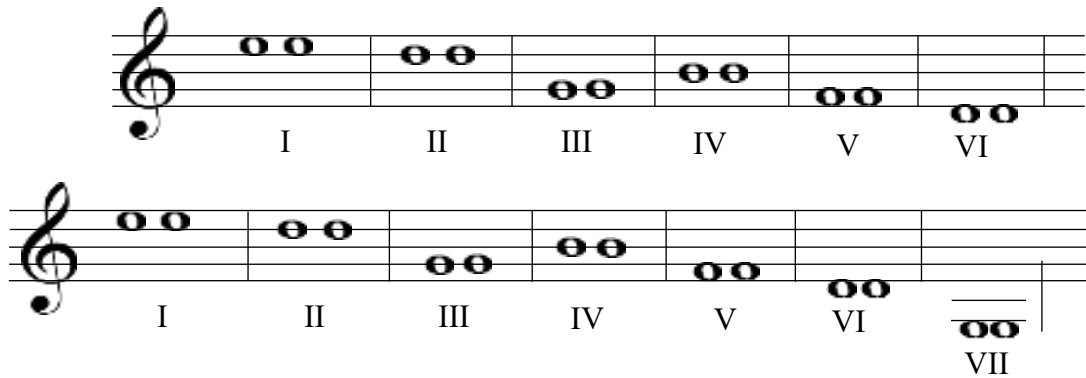


Figure 80. Paolo Virchi's Tunings of 12 and 14 Strings. Paolo Virchi, cittern tuning, 1574, Brescia. Above, twelve string tuning of six double courses: below, fourteen string tuning with seven double courses. Note the denomination of canto, sotanella, argentina, contralto, tenore and basso in the Virchi tuning. Source Paolo Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara: di ricercati madrigali canzoni napolitane et saltarelli* (Vineggia: G. Scotto, 1574), 3.

Virchi's tuning is one example of the many theorb-citterns or *ceteroni* string dispositions of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. We must recall theorist Marin Mersenne, who stressed the fact that the level of experimentation of artists led to the invention of several tunings for the cittern and *ceteroni*, which was known to him as 'cisteron'.⁶³⁹ For example, the lutenist and composer Pietro Paolo Melli (1579-1623), in *his liuto attiorbato*, presented novel tuning schemes and ambitious compositions for a ballet, which was performed for Holy Roman Emperor Matthias (1557-1619). Melli included a rich instrumentation for his *balletto*, including harpsichord, bass viol, double harp, four different lutes and a theorb-cittern or what he called a *citara tiorbata* tuned as indicated by Paolo Virchi, named by Melli as 'Paolo Virgo' (Figure 81). Interestingly, Melli's tablature is made for an instrument of at least nine courses, which contrasts Virchi's indication of seven double courses. Moreover, the tuning is

⁶³⁸ Tyler, "Ceterone."

⁶³⁹ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, 141.

different apart from the first four courses, which again proves the gamma of tunings during these moments of instrumental novelty.⁶⁴⁰



Figure 81. Melli's Cordatura del Signor Paolo Virgo. Pietro Paolo Melli, print, *Citara Atiorbata*, 1616, Venice. Source: Pietro Paolo Melli, *Intavolatura Di Liuto Attiorbato. Libro Quarto Nel Quale, Si Contiene Due Corrente Sopra Alcuni Toni Senza Replica Cioe Una Parte Sopr'a l'altra Nel Capo Del Libro Un Capriccio et Nel Fine Una Corrente Sopra Una Batalia Aggiuntovi Un Ballet to Concertato Con Nove Instrumenti*. (Venetia: Giacomo Vincenti, 1616), Book 4, 35. Public Domain.

There are no documented extant Brescian types of *ceteroni* or *citara atiorbata*,⁶⁴¹ instead, the surviving historical citterns show a standard six double course compass as Virchi indicated.⁶⁴² Again, the unusual original condition of the Virchi cittern at the Kunsthistorisches Museum confirms a standard six double course set up with variations of octave stringing.⁶⁴³ The same is true of the instrument by the same maker preserved at the Musée de la Musique⁶⁴⁴ and the cittern built by Paolo Maggini.⁶⁴⁵ At the same time, the particular history of each instrument shows a great deal of changes in stringing. For example, one Virchi cittern has a clear change in stringing evidenced by the wear marks on the nut. The instrument by Gasparo da Salo at the Ashmolean Museum currently has seven courses; however, it is very likely that this originally had one triple and four double strung, making it a five- course cittern. Another cittern by Virchi housed in the same institution, shows an extremely interesting stringing

⁶⁴⁰ Tyler, "Ceterone"; Theophil, "Melli [Meli, Melij, Mely], Pietro Paolo."

⁶⁴¹ The *ceterone* built by Girolamo Campi at the Museo Bardini in Florence (cittern 1 in Table 1, appendix 2), although is made out of different sections of wood like the Brescian citterns, imitates the carved construction, which makes it much more aligned with the traditional Italian instruments.

⁶⁴² Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di cithara*, 3.

⁶⁴³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 3, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁴⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁴⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 4, Table 2.](#)

transformation. Although, it currently has a double course set up, the peghead shows eighteen plugged holes, meaning that the original holes made for the tuning pegs were cancelled and filled with wood. This original eighteenth string cittern design was conceivably triple-strung in more than one course, possibly including octave stringing.⁶⁴⁶

3.3.2 A New Method of Building

One of the most admirable features of the Brescian school is the way the body itself is designed and crafted. From the carved traditional cittern, the Brescian examples brought a light construction with much more flexible curves. The pyramidal and circular, ‘tear drop’ outline of the traditional instruments was contrasted with a smoother oval and circular contour (Figure 82). Kevin Coates, in his study of a cittern by Girolamo Virchi, stated that the design is carefully planned under ‘commensurable proportions.’⁶⁴⁷ Coates study reveals that simple proportions, above all the ratio 2:3, rule the composition of the instrument. However, although Coates used the front as reference, as noted by Ugo Ravasio, the general procedure of construction was to first create the bottom board with the two sides joined side by side.⁶⁴⁸ In such a way, Brescian makers did not use moulds,⁶⁴⁹ as the bottom board served as the main guide for assembling the instrument. Florence Gétreau and Joël Dugot suggested a very interesting theory of conceiving the back of the cittern as the main design that allows to build the body around it.

One of the most interesting aspects of this technique concerns the back of the instrument, which is used as a [pattern] to build the body. In fact, the ribs are adjusted around the back (and not upon it, as for violins and guitars). Because of that, it is not useful to have a mould for the construction.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁶ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern Anonymous Italian 17th Century*.

⁶⁴⁷ Coates, *Geometry, Proportion and the Art of Lutherie: A Study of the Use and Aesthetic Significance of Geometry and Numerical Proportion in the Design of European Bowed and Plucked String Instruments in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*, 142.

⁶⁴⁸ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 5–6.

⁶⁴⁹ The confirmation of Ravasio’s proposal regarding Brescian building methods require further research, which for matters of space must be delegated to a future project specifically based on the technical study of the Brescian citterns as a whole.

⁶⁵⁰ Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” n.d.



Figure 82. Brescian Outline. Girolamo da Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271). Source: Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Claude Germain.

All Brescian citterns are built with the method of overlapping or wrapping ribs around the bottom board, which then join the heel where the small balusters or scrolls meet.⁶⁵¹ A cittern built by a member of the Virchi workshop, for example, presents ribs made from one continuous thin piece of maple (*Acer sp*). Such delicate continuous joining of elements distinguishes these citterns from the carved bulkier designs, and this change is also an example of the effect of the influence of the leading plucked and bowed string instruments, such as the lute, violin and viol, which were part of the production line of the distinguished Brescian lutherie.⁶⁵² While other makers of traditional citterns⁶⁵³ imitated the carved construction through a build in method, the Brescian school borrowed the techniques of other instruments and turned them into an innovative style.⁶⁵⁴ Similarities with the bowed string instrument

⁶⁵¹ Gétreau and Dugot, 8.

⁶⁵² Evan, "Cremona's Elder Brother," 39; Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57.

⁶⁵³ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, 13. Table 1.

⁶⁵⁴ Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," n.d.; Ravasio, "Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano," 1,2.

craft, such as aligning the figures of grain of the maple (*Acer* sp) in the back in an horizontal fashion, can be witnessed in the cittern built in 1570, now at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (Figure 83).⁶⁵⁵ It is also relevant to mention that the figured back of this instrument is made out of a single plank of wood, which is contrasting to the sophisticated style of joint staves of two citterns signed by Virchi; the latter instruments have, nonetheless, the same pattern of figured maple (*Acer* sp).⁶⁵⁶



Figure 83. Maple Grain in Brescian Cittern. Girolamo Virchi Workshop, cittern, 1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. Nr. WA1939.30). Source: © Courtesy Ashmolean Museum.

⁶⁵⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁵⁶ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2 and 3, Table 2.](#)

The slender design of the Brescian citterns is accompanied by a curve back and a curved soundboard, which is present in many instruments.⁶⁵⁷ For example, a cittern by Girolamo Virchi at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, presents a domed back, which has its most prominent curve at the middle while it gradually decreases towards the string holder and towards the heel.⁶⁵⁸ In the same manner, the soundboard presents a similar vaulted style that is also pronounced at the middle, yet not as much as the back's vault.⁶⁵⁹ Another cittern by Gasparo da Salo,⁶⁶⁰ housed in the same Museum, presents a very pronounced soundboard arching in comparison with its back;⁶⁶¹ however, in general it is very similar to the aforementioned Virchi cittern.⁶⁶²

The internal structure of the Brescian citterns is very different from the traditional instruments. Most of the examples show two support bars for the internal surface of the back, which are positioned in the same place as the two soundboard bars, one of them passing below the soundboard. This element is also supported by small wooden blocks joined to the sides. There are of course alterations, such as the example of the cittern by Girolamo Virchi,⁶⁶³ possibly modified by Antonio Stradivari (1644 – 1737), which has no bar under the rose, as this was removed along with the whole soundboard.⁶⁶⁴ Moreover, the cittern by Gasparo da Salo presents alterations in barring too, which consists in eliminating the bar below the soundboard and adding two bars, while the bars of the back of this instrument were left intact.⁶⁶⁵

Another important innovation of the cittern craft was the elimination of the comb or string holder that used to protrude from the body and usually forms part of the structure, carved out of a single piece

⁶⁵⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁵⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁵⁹ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern Anonymous Italian 17th Century*.

⁶⁶⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁶¹ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern Anonymous Italian 17th Century*.

⁶⁶² [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁶³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁶⁴ As scholars Joël Dugot and Florence Gétreau stated, the instrument presents a Stradivari label that reads: Antonio Stradivarius Cremonensis/Faciebat Anno 1700», followed by a printed design «A+S», which is enclosed by a double circle. Dugot and Gétreau have reported that violin expert Charles Beare, after examining the instrument, concluded that the label could be indeed authentic and the varnish, in fact, is very similar to a Cremonese type. Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” n.d., 8.

⁶⁶⁵ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern Anonymous Italian 17th Century*.

of wood of the traditional citterns. Instead, the Brescian luthiers created a simple strip of a hard material, such as ebony, ivory or bone, that follows the outline of the bottom. This element serves as a sacrifice surface for the strings to pass over and thus protects the wood of body. At the bottom, brass hitch pins are inserted through an internal block, which allow the strings to be secured (Figure 84).



Figure 84. Ebony String Holder with Brass Pins. Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Note the bottom string holder highlighted with a blue circle. Source: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 'Cister', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/>. ©KHM-Museumsverband.

3.3.3 The Preservation of the Tradition

The Brescian school of cittern craft, besides all the innovations mentioned, retained many elements from the traditional instruments, mainly, the lyre-like features such as the hook on the back of the peghead and the scroll on the shoulders. In the following sections there will be a description of the elements inherited from past traditions and the innovations of Brescian cittern making.

As shown in Table 2 all woods between the carved and Brescian examples, remained very similar,⁶⁶⁶ and the tapering body, from heel to bottom was still preserved (Figure 85). However, the convex shape, once present in the traditional instruments, did not become part of the Brescian features. Overlapping the sides around the bottom is a peculiar technique not seen in other plucked stringed instruments, which although innovative allows the instrument to appear as if it was still carved (Figure 86). Another traditional carved feature still preserved in the Brescian craft is the carving of the heel and neck. Several citterns⁶⁶⁷ have the heel, neck and peghead carved out of a single piece of wood, which was the same building technique used in the traditional citterns. Precious examples are the Virchi cittern built for the Archduke Ferdinand at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the instrument by Paolo Maggini, housed in the same institution, and the Gasparo da Salò cittern at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Such material evidence is an indicative of how the Brescian craft managed to preserve the carved elements of the past tradition, first recovered by Girolamo Virchi, who later taught it to his apprentices.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ Except for citterns 3 and 5 in Table 2, which have a precious wood on the soundboard, possible Cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*). [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁶⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 3, 4, 5, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁶⁸ Beare, “Gasparo Da Salò [Bertolotti].”



Figure 85. Traditional vs. Brescian Cittern Outlines. Left, Cittern, 1580. Girolamo Campi, Brescia, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048); Right, Girolamo Virchi Workshop, cittern, 1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. Nr. WA1939.30). Source: Photograph by Esteban Mariño and © Ashmolean Museum.



Figure 86. Overlapping Sides in Girolamo da Virchi's Cittern. Girolamo Virchi Workshop, cittern, 1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. Nr. WA1939.30). Note how the overlapping sides in the bottom give the impression of continuity as if the instrument was carved out of one single piece of wood (highlighted with blue ovals). This visual effect is most striking in the back of the instrument. Also, note the separation between the ribs and back, which breaks the illusion of continuity (highlighted with a red circle). Source: © Ashmolean Museum.

This is not the case in all extant historical Brescian citterns. Three citterns by Virchi, two at the Musée de la Musique in Paris,⁶⁶⁹ and one at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford,⁶⁷⁰ have the peghead and neck built out of a different piece, thus breaking with the carved tradition. Such diversity can be explained by reasons of practicality: large pieces of maple (*Acer* sp.) are more difficult to find than separate pieces, and the building process is faster and less laborious than carving an entire piece of wood.

Girolamo Virchi's work shows an exquisite precision both in carving and joining elements. Figure 87 shows a Gasparo da Salo cittern, and an instrument built by either Girolamo Virchi or an artist working in his workshop.⁶⁷¹ In the first instrument, the heel, neck and pegbox are all carved out of a single piece of maple (*Acer* sp.), while in the latter, only the peghead and neck are carved out of a single piece of wood while the heel is a separate piece. It is quite striking to notice Virchi's intention to create the illusion of continuity even when having a heel and neck made from different pieces of maple (*Acer* sp.).

⁶⁶⁹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1, 2, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁷⁰ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 2.](#)

⁶⁷¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 2.](#)



Figure 87. Heel-Neck-Back Conjunction in Gasparo da Salo and Girolamo da Virchi. Above: Gasparo da Salo, cittern circa 1560-1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.29); below; Girolamo Virchi Workshop, cittern, 1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.30). © Ashmolean Museum.

3.3.4 A Claim for Heritage and Social Status

Continuing the humanist tradition is linked to the history of the city, which like the cittern had an idealised ancient classical heritage. A great part of the Brescian collective memory during the sixteenth century was based on the belief that the city had an ancient Roman noble past.⁶⁷² Brescian council members, chancellors and other officials considered it a civil duty to celebrate Brescian myths, some of them telling how Hercules had built the earliest Brescian building, and how the city was originally populated by Trojans.⁶⁷³ Brescian writer Ottavio Rossi stated that their first architect was Hercules, which is why the Brescians not only created the most beautiful temple in his honour but venerated him even more than Jupiter (Zeus), Saturn (Cronus), and Apollo.⁶⁷⁴ Most important, the Brescians considered that the Roman invasion of their city only made it flourish, which is why they proudly claimed to be a relic of a Roman colony.⁶⁷⁵

In parallel, the fact that Brescia had since the middle of the fifteenth century been under the patronage of Venice resonated with the myths of being once a loyal subject of Roman rule. The collective memory of the Brescians had two strands; on one side they saw themselves as faithful sons and daughters of Venice, yet their claim to ancient Rome brought a sense of local pride and independence. Brescia saw itself as having a semidivine or noble nature, which contrasted with the mercantile mentality of the Venetians.⁶⁷⁶ In reality, Brescia had no political independence and was almost a colony of the lagoon city, yet the local and popular attitude was one of pride and independence by evoking their ancient Roman origins, an attitude also manifested through art.⁶⁷⁷

Considering this context, then, it is no surprise to find, first, that the Brescian cittern craft was part of a distinctive independent school that as Ugo Ravasio stated, ‘highlights how Brescia, although embedded in the context of Venetian culture, developed its own stylistic forms, closer to Lombard culture.’⁶⁷⁸ Secondly, it is no coincidence to encounter in the Brescian cittern art a preservation and

⁶⁷² Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 28–29; Campbell, *The Endless Periphery*, 9.

⁶⁷³ Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 34.

⁶⁷⁴ Rossi, *Le memorie bresciane*, 1–3.

⁶⁷⁵ Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 38.

⁶⁷⁶ Rossi, *Le memorie bresciane*, 1–3.

⁶⁷⁷ Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 28–29.

⁶⁷⁸ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 3.

enhancement of the humanist traditional features of the cittern, for we can recall the words of Vincenzo Galilei who referred to the Brescian makers as wanting to ‘resuscitate the ancient *kithara*.’⁶⁷⁹ Ugo Ravasio insisted on the respect enjoyed by the cittern in certain circles for being considered as an instrument of classical antiquity.⁶⁸⁰

Claiming ancient origins was not only a belief or an expression of local pride and independence, but also a way to obtain economic and social status. After all, Paolo Virchi dedicated his cittern book, *Il Primo Libro*, to the Duke of Parma and Piacenza Ottavio Farnese, as a way of paying tribute, increase his employment portfolio as well as commercial venture.⁶⁸¹ Most likely, Paolo, as well as his father, were trying to elevate the cittern’s artistic and social status so to increase their commercial and business opportunities both as musicians and makers. According to Virchi, the cittern, before his *Primo Libro*, had only limited consideration among musicians, scholars, as well as the nobility. According to the son of the most famous maker of citterns, his book will help the cittern no longer be underestimated by the nobility.

It has seemed to me to share my labours with the world, so that those who delight in such a gentle instrument may, with greater favour from their Princes, make the Cithhara known to be of no less excellence and value, being well played, than some other instruments that are so often recommended by the world.⁶⁸²

It seems that by the mid sixteenth century the instrument held an important place in the general scene of instrumental music. However, it is possible that by the time of Virchi’s publication the cittern did not enjoy a wide support within the higher circles of musicianship, at least not compared to the harpsichord or the lute. As Ugo Ravasio stated, the cittern was somewhat of an outsider of the general scene of Renaissance music, yet in popular circles, it held a significant presence, which still needs to be researched with more depth as the musical literature ‘only reflects the real substance.’⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁹ Galilei and Palisca, *Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music*, 369.

⁶⁸⁰ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 1.

⁶⁸¹ Towne, “Patronage of Printed Music in Brescia and Bergamo before 1600,” 423.

⁶⁸² The original text reads: ‘Con che si é fatta la via di apparere avanti a Prencipi, e trattenere le orecchie loro, come in Italia e fuori, apertamente si vede, massime presso l’ Eccellentissimo Duca di Baviera, e presso l’ Eccellentissimo Arciduca Ferdinando, e altri Prencipi.’ Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di cithhara*, 2; Riccardi, “Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Cithhara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli,” 5.

⁶⁸³ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 123.

As much as the cittern was considered in certain areas as the ancestor of the Greek *kithara*, it was also a popular instrument widely practiced in instrumental music of all kinds of social settings, which were probably increasing more and more as the life of the instrument approached the turn of the seventeenth century. Scipione Cerreto wrote how the cittern, just as the Spanish guitar or *Chitarra alla Spagnola*, is played by both people of high and low status. The cittern, according to Cerreto, was now a ‘perfect’ instrument for it had all the ‘voices’ for any sort of music and although it was not used by the nobility of Naples, it was held in high esteem by both nobles and low classes of northern regions, such as Lombardy, the Marche and even Rome. Cerreto goes on to say that by the time of his writings there were excellent cittern players, as he heard some of them in Rome in 1602 (Figure 88).⁶⁸⁴

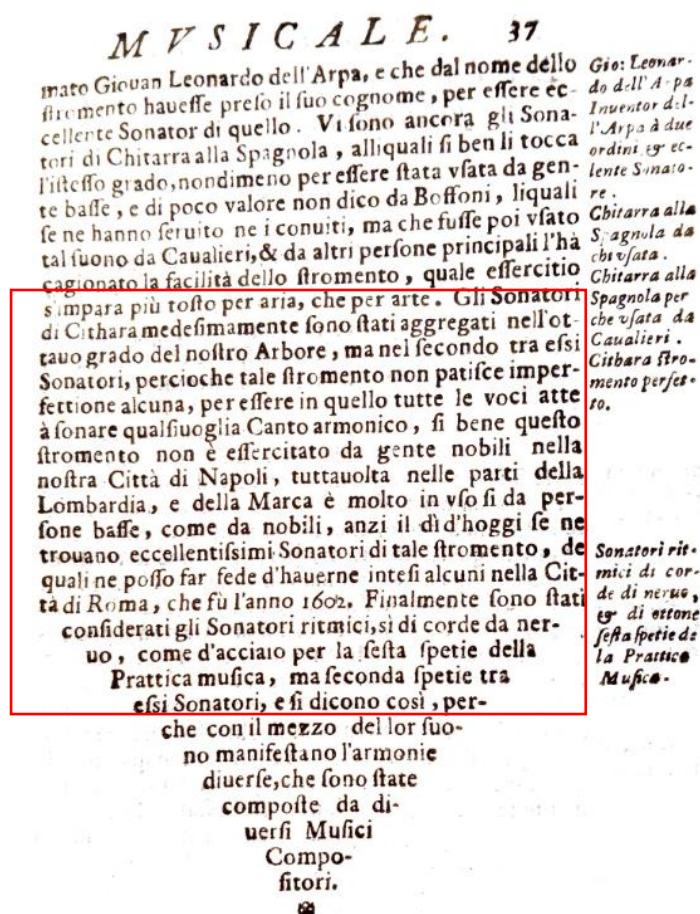


Figure 88. The Cittern's use by Scipione Cerreto. Scipione Cerreto, print, *Dell'arbore Musicale*, Di Scipione Cerreto Napolitano, Naples, 1608. Source: Scipione Cerreto, *Dell'arbore Musicale*, Di Scipione Cerreto Napolitano, Espositioni Dodici. Con Le Postille Dell'istesso Autore (Napoli: Nella Stamperia di Gio. Battista Sottile; per Scipione Bonino, 1608), 37.

⁶⁸⁴ Cerreto, *Dell'arbore Musicale*, Di Scipione Cerreto Napolitano, *Espositioni Dodici. Con Le Postille Dell'istesso Autore*, 37.

Paolo Virchi was, therefore, trying to further expand the popularity of the cittern within the nobility and higher circles, which is why he mentioned that some foreign princes such as the ‘most excellent Duke of Bavaria’ – possibly Albrecht V (1528 -1579) and the Archduke of Austria Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529-1595) - were aware of the cittern’s importance within instrumental ensembles.⁶⁸⁵ Interestingly, it was Paolo’s father, Girolamo who was commissioned to build arguably the finest cittern that survives today and which could well be considered the pinnacle of Renaissance cittern craft. This instrument, housed at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, was made for Archduke Ferdinand, who was a highly educated humanist and art lover.⁶⁸⁶ Both the work of Paolo and Girolamo, and the influence it had on successive artists such as Maggini and da Salo, is an example of the symbolic and traditional qualities of the Brescian cittern craft, which reflected their own independence and pride over their classical heritage.

Lastly, the independent and free enterprise spirit of the Brescian school is also attested in the marking of their instruments. Such a feature could well be part of the aforementioned social need to project images of social status.⁶⁸⁷ As opposed to some of the anonymous traditional instruments that were carved out of a single piece of wood,⁶⁸⁸ the Brescian makers wanted to distinguish themselves and create prestige for their own workshops.⁶⁸⁹ The case of the Virchi family is quite revealing, for they not only used the nickname *Targhetti* to be perceived as members of the house of Pralboino, but also used a coat of arms in their signature to be linked with the noble family of Foresti.⁶⁹⁰ As Friedman Hellwig stated, the maker’s marks are a ‘visible guarantee of authenticity and value.’⁶⁹¹ Hellwig goes on to say how difficult it is to ‘determine whether marking was an imposition by either the towns or the guilds, or whether it was free to all makers with a workshop of their own.’⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁵ Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*, 1–3.

⁶⁸⁶ The ruler of Further Austria and Tyrol was one of the many powerful individuals who had boundless resources and the will to create encyclopaedic collections of books, art works as well as objects of science and wonder. Some of the most magnificent galleries, many of them in central Europe, are renowned to be the forerunners of the modern museums, better known in their original language, *Kunst* and *Wunderkammer*. Bubenik, *Reframing Albrecht Dürer*, 53.

⁶⁸⁷ Bowd, Harvard University, and Press, *Venice’s Most Loyal City*, 61–64.

⁶⁸⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2-5, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, Table 1.](#)

⁶⁸⁹ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 2.

⁶⁹⁰ Ravasio, 2, 5–6.

⁶⁹¹ Hellwig, “Makers’ Marks on Plucked Instruments of the 16th and 17th Centuries,” 22–23.

⁶⁹² Hellwig, 22–23.

While there is no evidence of a Brescian guild system that regulated the cittern craft, the Virchi family business reveals a rather entrepreneurial orientation. Firstly, according to Elena Bugini, Girolamo himself can be considered an artisan who technically rose from a shoemaking craft to fine luthery by, it seems, his own talents and initiatives.⁶⁹³ Secondly, the coat of arms in the cittern of the Musée de la Musique (Figure 89) already indicates the freedom of choosing a distinctive trademark. Thirdly, as already mentioned, Girolamo Virchi employed two carvers with a yearly wage,⁶⁹⁴ and his son Paolo was essentially a freelance musician working for the courts of Ferrara and Mantua, who dedicated his cittern book to the Duke of Parma, possibly looking for a position in his court.⁶⁹⁵ Furthermore, the students of Virchi, Gasparo da Salo and Maggini used their own marking, showing how independent was the Brescian cittern craft. The first depicts a two-tailed mermaid, while Maggini uses what seems to be a violin scroll.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹³ Bugini, “La liuteria bresciana e il collezionismo musicale del Rinascimento,” 22–24.

⁶⁹⁴ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 123–56.

⁶⁹⁵ Virchi, *Il primo libro di tabolatura di citthara*; Newcomb, “Virchi, Paolo.”

⁶⁹⁶ Hellwig, “Makers’ Marks on Plucked Instruments of the 16th and 17th Centuries,” 22–23.



Figure 89. Makers Marks in Citterns. Above left, Girolamo Virchi, cittern circa 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. D.MR.R. 434); Above right, Gasparo da Salo, cittern circa 1560-1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.29); Below centre, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Sources: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 'Cister', accessed 18 November 2022, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/>, 'Cistre', accessed 20 May 2024, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0158494?_ga=2.189869419.1749979086.1666009497-2007878943.1666009497. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès; ©KHM-Museumsverband; © Ashmolean Museum.

3.3.5 The Carved Decorations

Brescian makers celebrated the humanist tradition of the traditional citterns with an exquisite set of carved decorations mostly inspired by classical themes. Such subjects, as with the traditional examples, are usually found on the back, the heel, and the back of the peghead and the cutaway on the bass side. Also, in a similar way as the traditional instruments, the themes are grotesque in nature and present satyrs and nymphs, female characters, and further monstrous and unidentifiable hybrid creatures. It is worth distinguishing that all Brescian citterns, except an instrument signed by Paolo Maggini,⁶⁹⁷ present female characters on the top of the peghead (Figure 90).⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁷ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 4, Table 2.

⁶⁹⁸ For interesting insights regarding some social meanings of the carved decorations on citterns see Vai, "Chapter 15 Fantastic Finials."

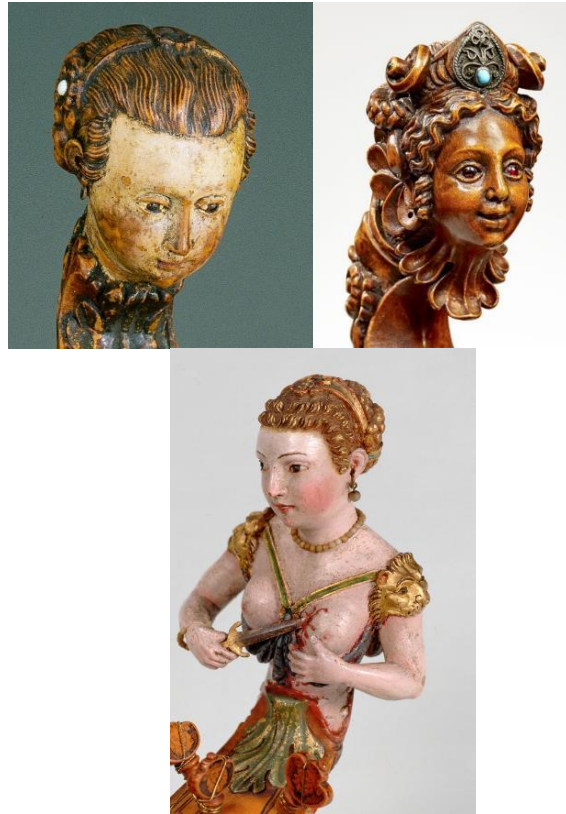


Figure 90. Female Characters in Brescian Pegheads. Above left, Girolamo Virchi, cittern circa 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. D.MR.R. 434); Above right, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271); Below, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Sources: Kunsthistorisches Museum, ‘Cister’, accessed 18 November 2022, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/>. ©KHM-Museumsverband. ©KHM-Museumsverband.; Musée de la Musique, ‘Cistre’, accessed 15 November 2022, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0158494?_ga=2.189869419.1749979086.1666009497-2007878943.1666009497 ; Musée de la Musique, ‘Cistre’, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.

There is written evidence from 1568 showing how Girolamo Virchi hired two carvers for his workshop, *Maestro Zoan* and *Maestro Battista*, who lived in the cittern maker’s house under his expenses.⁶⁹⁹ Although there is no information about Zoan, Battista was Girolamo’s brother, who signed the inlay on the eleventh seat in the Chapel of Conception in the church of St Francesco in Brescia as ‘Battista Virghi Brissiano.’⁷⁰⁰ Girolamo Virchi employed these two carvers with an annual salary of *290 lire planette*, which was equal to one quarter of the value of his house.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁹ Archivio Civico Storico of Brescia, valuation policies for year 1568, folder no. 140, mentioned in Riccardi, “Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Cithara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli,” 81.

⁷⁰⁰ Fappani, “Virchi”; Fappani, “Virchi Benedetto e Battista”; Riccardi, “Paolo Virchi: Il Primo Libro Di Tabolatura Di Cithara Di Ricercati, Madrigali, Canzoni Napoletane et Saltarelli,” 81–82.

⁷⁰¹ Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano,” 123–56.

A Girolamo Virchi cittern at the Musée de la Musique in Paris bears a horned smiling satyr on the back of the peghead and a female character on the top.⁷⁰² This decoration is distinguished for being not only carved but painted and having petrous and gilded beads on the horns and eyes of the satyr (Figure 91).



Figure 91. Smiling Satyr and Female Character in Virchi's Peghead. Girolamo Virchi, cittern, circa 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. D.MR.R. 434). Source: Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 15 November 2022, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0158494?_ga=2.189869419.1749979086.1666009497-2007878943.1666009497. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.

In the same manner but in a much more elaborated way, the Virchi cittern built for Archduke of Austria Ferdinand II of Tyrol,⁷⁰³ has a rich polychrome carved decoration made by the hands of *Maestro* Zoan and *Maestro* Battista.⁷⁰⁴ The back of the peghead bears a smiling character whose nose is also the hook of the instrument, and in its forehead, there is a female character that is crowned by a satyr. Most strikingly, there is a detailed carved and painted bust of a female character identified as the mythological character of Lucretia stabbing herself. In the same instrument there is a richly elaborated carved, gilded, and painted heel bearing monsters and royal elements such as Tyrol's coat of arms and a siren crawling from a shell in the bass cutaway (Figure 92).

⁷⁰² See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 1, Table 2. It is quite interesting to find on the bass cutaway what it seems a Mars character painted and not carved, which probably indicates that it was not original.

⁷⁰³ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 3, Table 2.

⁷⁰⁴ Schlosser, *Die Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente*, 60–61.



Figure 92. Cittern Built for Archduke of Austria Ferdinand of Tyrol. Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Not the bottom string holder highlighted with a blue circle. *Source:* Kunsthistorisches Museum, 'Cister', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/>. ©KHM-Museumsverband. ©KHM-Museumsverband.

In contrast to these painted sculptural models, another cittern built by Girolamo Virchi and now at the Musée de la Musique⁷⁰⁵ presents a carved decoration that although bearing inlaid precious stones, is mostly finished in wood. Still, the level of craftsmanship is quite striking, especially considering the detailed top carved horned female character, which seems to be a hybrid between the human, floral and animal world. This character is crowned with a tiara that presents a metallic badge with a precious stone inlaid in its centre. Perhaps one of the most striking elements is its red eyes made from glowing red precious stone beads (Figure 93).

⁷⁰⁵ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 2.](#)



Figure 93. Female Character on the Peghead. Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271). Source: Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.

Two more citterns,⁷⁰⁶ one from Girolamo Virchi's workshop and the other one by his student Gasparo da Salo, present similar decorations although with important differences. The first presents an elaborated set of grotesques. The back of the peghead has an exquisite scene of two satyrs, one male and one female, who are joined together as if they were conjoined twins. These characters are crowned by a male face that presents human, animal, and vegetal features. Curiously, the end of the hook presents another character monstrous in nature. It is worth noticing that these designs present semi-precious inlaid beads in the eyes of the mentioned creatures. Such design is present in two more historical citterns, one of them a traditional instrument carved out of a single piece of wood and made by Brescian

⁷⁰⁶ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 5 and 6, Table 2.

maker Girolamo Campi,⁷⁰⁷ which indicates how close was the Brescian craft to its traditional counterpart (Figure 94).



Figure 94. Similar Carvings on the Back of Peghead of Brescian Citterns. Left, Girolamo Campi, carved cittern, 1580, Brescia, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048); Middle, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271); Right, Girolamo Virchi workshop, cittern, 1570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.30). Sources: Photograph by Esteban Mariño; Musée de la Musique, ‘Cistre’, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès, Musée de la Musique; © Ashmolean Museum.

Although the decoration of Brescian citterns follows similar floral and vegetative motives that are interconnected with the grotesque designs, the traditional open scroll in the peghead is not found on any of the Brescian historical examples. Nevertheless, a female character coming out of a shell-like scroll is common in three examples that came from Virchi’s workshop (Figure 95).⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁷ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 15, Table 1. See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2 and 6. Table 2.

⁷⁰⁸ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2, 3 and 6, Table 2.



Figure 95. Shell- like Scroll in Female Carved Character. Left, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271); Right, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Sources: Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès, Musée de la Musique; Kunsthistorisches Museum, 'Cister', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/> Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès;©KHM-Museumsverband. ©KHM-Museumsverband.

Much more striking are the geometrical staves and purfling patterns found on Brescian examples. Figure 96 shows the different designs and craftsmanship found in four historical citterns, one traditional made by Giovanni Salvatori, and the rest of the Brescian type and made out of several pieces of maple (*Acer* sp) joined together. The Salvatori cittern, possibly the oldest example, could have been made in Brescia circa 1550, which was twenty years before Girolamo Virchi's most prolific years. The reason for this hypothesis is what Florence Gétrau and Joël Dugot established in their examination of the instrument; the purfling design in the back and sides is very similar to other instruments made by Virchi and his apprentice Gasparo da Salo. Figure 96 shows how the geometrical design made from several elongated lines and curves could suggest an intention to make the back appear as an animal or floral element, or both. Such intention is highly dramatized with the superb stave design that came from Virchi's workshop. Figure 96 shows also the back of two Virchi citterns made from independent maple (*Acer* sp) staves skilfully fashioned into convex shapes, outlined by black purflings.



Figure 96. Shell- like Designs on the Back. Left, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1570, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271); Right, Girolamo Virchi, cittern, 1574, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. Nr. SAM 56). Sources: Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 15 November 2022, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0158494?_ga=2.189869419.1749979086.1666009497-2007878943.1666009497; Musée de la Musique, 'Cistre', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0160997/cistre>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès. © Ashmolean Museum; Kunsthistorisches Museum, 'Cister', accessed 2 June 2024, <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/84731/>. ©KHM-Museumsverband. ©KHM-Museumsverband.

3.4 Summary: The Transformation of the Italian Cittern

The nature of the Italian traditional cittern changed as the seventeenth century transitioned into the doors of the modern age. The iconological features of the cittern that were still reminiscent of its idealised past decreased in size just as the relevance of the revival of antiquity diminished in favour of the independence of music.

The fundamental research presented by cittern scholars in the past is now complemented with a historical understanding of the immediate past of the instrument and its trajectory through the sixteenth century Italian context. This chapter described the cittern as a process involving a heritage that was shifted due to the tension of two pivotal forces of its historical period: the revival of antiquity and the instrumental performance practice of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The cittern can be considered as an actual product of the humanist endeavour meant to literally resurrect the ancient Greek lyre in their ‘modern’ times.⁷⁰⁹ In contrast to other plucked stringed instruments that were paralleled with the Greek lyre: the manufacture of the cittern, including its tuning, which was its key element of identity, was designed to resemble in theory and in practice the ancient and ‘modern’ world. The hexachord tuning, the iconological manufacture and decoration combined a rich series of meanings, which reveal its nature as a *child* of the Renaissance that linked Medieval and Greek musical theory, mythology and religion, the music of the spheres, the invocation of the modes, the symbolism of the monochord and the Guidonian hexachord. There is no other Renaissance plucked stringed instrument with such heritage.

The instrumental performance, expanded and supported by the commercial activities of the Italian Peninsula was a symbol of its wealth and status and became an overwhelming influence for the rest of Europe. Music’s wide social ubiquity and prestige among the elites created an explosion of styles, instruments, ensembles, and sensibilities that surrounded the cittern and eventually sacrificed its iconological nature for the sake of its performance practice.

The cittern could have been born in humanist circles of the early sixteenth century, yet its popular character was always part of its practice because the invention of this instrument was a product of

⁷⁰⁹ Galilei and Palisca, *Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music*, 369.

intellectual, practical, commercial, and social practices that were both present in high and low classes. Girolamo Virchi, for example, came from a popular background of artisans who were cittern makers and players, and his citterns, together with the music of his son dedicated to the instrument, reached the highest courts of Europe.

The high stages of cittern craft preserved its humanist meaning while at the same time expanding its musical possibilities, as exemplified in the marvellous Brescian school of the end of the sixteenth century, that brought exceptional technological innovations and new artistic values. The commercial entrepreneurship of Girolamo and Paolo Virchi show how a tradition was renovated until the limit, when the intrinsic nature of the cittern was changed as it left the hexachord for a new tuning.

The traditional carved construction was substituted by a slim, delicate, and preciously designed outline that exchanged the simple triangular and circular outline for a more sophisticated contour. In the same manner, the partial fretting was completely abandoned and replaced with the Brescian chromatic fingerboard, which still preserved a colour coding reminiscent of its diatonic past. With a radical new tuning and an almost completely new manufacture, the cittern was now far from what it was or intended to be when it was created in the early decades of sixteenth century.

4. The Transformation of the Transalpine Cittern

Soon after the Italian traditional cittern was being created out of the *cetra*, or possibly at the same time, a completely different type of cittern was being made for the first time in history. It had all the Italianate features, even some of the Brescian characteristics, but the context that surrounded it was far from being the same. This chapter deals with another important moment in the *social life* or *historicity* of the instrument when it became a popular instrument in countries such as France, The Low Countries, England and the German-speaking countries. In this chapter I explore why the transalpine cittern can be considered a derivative of the Italian cittern tradition, and how it differs from the Peninsular instruments. Moreover, there will be a contextualisation of the instrument inside of the different social uses it had across the centuries and its role in instrumental ensembles. Emphasis will be given to the understanding of the cultural forces behind the process of transformation of the transalpine cittern and how this affected its cultural significance.

4.1 The Origins and Italian Influence

While is extremely difficult to pinpoint the exact moment of creation of a new musical instrument, is possible to throw some light on what is a complex of transformation that is far from being linear and static. It is, therefore, important to explain and critique what other scholars think of the *birth* of the transalpine cittern in order to propose an alternative view on the transalpine origins of this wire strung plucked stringed instrument.

According to Peter Forrester, the cittern, both Italian and transalpine, is a product of the German-speaking countries' leading metallurgic industries. The cittern maker goes on to say that the 'German' cittern was introduced, first to France and the Low Countries, next to England and was later brought back into Italy.⁷¹⁰

Citterns appeared quite suddenly all over Europe in the middle of the sixteenth century, seemingly originating in the iron and steel industrial areas of Germany, from where there seem to be a stream of influence leading through France and the Low Countries, via England, to Italy.⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ Forrester, "The Cittern."

⁷¹¹ Forrester, 152.

It is however unclear how this process happened, and the evidence presented is scarce. Forrester, quoting James Tyler, presented the lost music book entitled *Cythare Germanice*, which was published in 1525 or 1532, by Jo. Schlumberger as the earliest evidence of a first appearance of the instrument in the Germanic territories.⁷¹² However, the connection between this source and the cittern is far from certain since the term *Cythara*, as earlier mentioned, was also commonly used for other instruments at the time.⁷¹³

Forrester separates the historical transformation of the cittern by relating the appearance of an early Germanic example to French and Low Countries ‘relatives’, meaning the transalpine examples, which were developed after the middle of the sixteenth century.⁷¹⁴ This early source is the depiction of a cittern that can be found in one of the pilasters of the Tucher Mansion at Nuremberg, which was built between 1533 and 1544 (Figure 97).⁷¹⁵



Figure 97. Oldest Transalpine Cittern Depiction. Peter Flötner, wood carving, 1534-1544, Nuremberg, Hirsvogelsaal Hall. Source: Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, ‘Pilasterabfolge Im Hirsvogelsaal | Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst’, Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, accessed 2 June 2024, <https://museum-nuernberger-kunst.de/projects/show/775-pilasterabfolge-hirsvogelsaal>. Photo: © Theo Noll / www.nuernberg.museum

⁷¹² Tyler, “A Checklist for the Cittern,” 28.

⁷¹³ [See section 1.3.4 ‘Standardised Terminology’.](#)

⁷¹⁴ The Hirschvogel depiction was initially reported by Andreas Michel. Forrester, “The Cittern,” 153; Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 41; Michel, *Cither—Cithrinchen—Zister: Beiträge Zur Geschichte Eines Traditionellen Musikinstrumentes in Deutschland*.

⁷¹⁵ Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, “Pilasterabfolge Im Hirsvogelsaal | Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst.”

Figure 97 shows a cittern with a resonator with ribs placed perpendicular to the soundboard, which suggests that the instrument was built in several pieces, as opposed to the tapering carved Italian instrument. Moreover, the Hirschvogel cittern shows a pegbox with lateral tuning pegs, a lack of a hook on its back and the absence of a protruding string holder, which are the basic characteristics of the transalpine cittern.⁷¹⁶ The Hirschvogel depiction also presents a significant decrease in the number of tuning pegs, showing a possible disposition of four or five courses, which is another typical feature of the citterns built north of the Alps.

One initial difficulty of stating that the cittern was developed in Germany is that besides the Hirschvogel Hall depiction, no source has currently emerged to suggest the existence of a Germanic cittern tradition before the mid-sixteenth century. In fact, the omission of this instrument from comprehensive German works on musical instruments of the early sixteenth century seems to confirm not only a later introduction of the cittern, but that it was not developed in the Germanic cities. For example, neither Sebastian Virdung (1465-after 1511) in his *Musica geutuscht* (1511) or Martin Agricola (circa 1486-1556), who modelled his *Musica instrumentalis deudsch* (1529) after Virdung's work, include any reference to the cittern.⁷¹⁷ It is more likely that because of the social, economic and artistic relations between the northern Italian courts and the Germanic cities, in particular Nuremberg, a Germanic cittern model based on the Italian early citterns was created some time before the middle of the sixteenth century.

Either the *cetra* or a very early cittern of the Italian Peninsula was introduced North of the Alps in the first half of the sixteenth century, and such craft probably influenced the creation of the transalpine models. The tradition of the *cetra* could have come either from an instrument with a full fingerboard⁷¹⁸ or as a late form of the blocked fretted instrument with a narrow neck. This can be explained by presenting the Italian features that are present in the Hirschvogel cittern depicted in Figure 97. These are the distinctive Italian cutaway on the bass side, the scrolls on the shoulders, partial frets, and full

⁷¹⁶ Although the Hirschvogel depiction shown in Figure 97 does not show the bottom of the instrument, this can be seen on the [Virtual Museum of Nuremberg Art](#). Association for the Promotion of the Museum of Cultural History Nuremberg, "Pilasterabfolge Im Hirsvogelsaal | Work of Art | Virtual Museum of Nuremberg Art."

⁷¹⁷ Agricola, *The "Musica Instrumentalis Deudsch" of Martin Agricola*; Virdung, *Musica Getuscht*; Busse Berger, "Agricola [Sore], Martin."

⁷¹⁸ See Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 3,4.

fingerboard.⁷¹⁹ All these features, are present in the *cetra* tradition and, therefore, suggest the influence of Italian craftsmanship (Figure 98).



Figure 98. Late Cetra and the Hirschvogel Cittern. Left, Giulio Campagnola, oil on canvas, Young Faun Playing the Syrinx, circa 1513-15, Mantua, Alte Pinakothek, (inv. nr. 76); right, Peter Flötner, wood carving, 1534-1544, Early Transalpine Cittern Depiction, Nuremberg, Hirsvogelsaal Hall. Sources: Alte Pinakothek, “Sammlung | Daphnis,” accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/7yxYbq6LYm/jacopo-negretti-gen-palma-il-vecchio/daphnis#&gid=1&pid=1>. Public Domain.; Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, ‘Pilasterabfolge Im Hirsvogelsaal | Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst’, Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, accessed 2 June 2024; CC BY-SA 4.0; <https://museum-nuernberger-kunst.de/projects/show/775-pilasterabfolge-hirsvogelsaal>. Courtesy of Theo Noll © / www.nuernberg.museum

⁷¹⁹ The Hall’s pilasters were not only decorated with musical instruments, as the northeast corner is decorated with carved grapes, pumpkins, and flowers. Another pilaster in the same section features several geometrical tools such as dividers, a square, a ruler, a celestial globe, and a dodecahedron. Moreover, in the southeast corner is possible to find the industrious materiality characteristic of Nuremberg, represented by cranes and a variety of working tools used for metal and wooden works. Near the southeast corner, the Hall is fitted with the agriculture materials including shovels, wooden buckets, a rooster, a hat for the sun, crops, a strainer, an oz tool, horse saddles and carts. In the southeast wall, there are many animals that provided the nutrition of the household, among them there are pigs, chickens, and other caged birds. In the same section there is a rich armament including fire weapons and armours, which is later followed by the lord’s hunting gear including a hound dog to trace the preys. All these depicted objects can be seen in the [Virtual Museum of Nuremberg Art](https://www.virtualmuseumnuremberg.org/). Association for the Promotion of the Museum of Cultural History Nuremberg, “Pilasterabfolge Im Hirsvogelsaal | Work of Art | Virtual Museum of Nuremberg Art.”

4.1.1 An Economic and Social Transformation

What is remarkable about the Hirschvogel cittern depiction is that is the clearest example of not only a dramatic technical transformation but a social one too. This renovated cittern presented advanced technological features such as being built in several pieces and a full fretted fingerboard, which were developments that took place at least forty years before than the Brescian renovations. Moreover, the comb or large string holder of the traditional instruments was replaced by a more practical strip to receive the hitch pins and hold the strings.

How is it possible to explain the radical transformation of a carved Medieval instrument into an amalgam of innovation and traditional features in such a short span of time? This can only be elucidated through an understanding of the socioeconomic changes of Europe during the sixteenth century, when Europe ‘was transformed from an economic backwater into the most advanced region in the world.’⁷²⁰ Pre-capitalist Europe was ‘the source of the economic creativity of the world’⁷²¹ and the transalpine cittern is an excellent example of such cultural revolution.

By the end of the fifteenth century Europe became an immensely rich continent. The mercantile industries of the Italian Peninsula and the Low Countries led the way for a proto-capitalist mentality ready to expand in unprecedented ways. With the plundering of Latin America, started in 1492, large amounts of wealth ran through Spain and later were placed as investments in foreign continental markets that further expanded the accumulation of capital. Other factors that helped forge a capitalist economy was the rise in urbanisation and in population, but surely it was the vigorous expanding market economy that above all planted the seed for what later would be a much more unrestricted commerce between Europe and the rest of the world.⁷²²

Such economic factors made the European sixteenth century an impressive expansion of deorbited investment, rising demand and exponential growth.⁷²³ Specifically, regions such as the north of the Italian Peninsula, England, the Low Countries and Germany had a combination of factors that allowed

⁷²⁰ Persson, “Markets and Coercion in Medieval Europe,” 225.

⁷²¹ Braudel and Reynolds, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th - 18th Century*. <<Vol. 1=1>>, 1:562.

⁷²² Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism 15th - 18th Century. Volume II*, 2:3.

⁷²³ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 163; Persson, “Markets and Coercion in Medieval Europe,” 225, 235–36, 238, 241, 243, 260, 261.

them to create a favourable economy for the growth of commodities. Among them was not only a capable industry to produce and sustain innovations but also a domestic demand to justify the output of manufacture. Probably the most important element was a supportive or at least not obtrusive government.⁷²⁴

The birth of the modern consumer society which started to take shape essentially in the Italian Peninsula and the Low Countries from the sixteenth century to the seventeenth had an impressive world of art works and objects of consumption directed to its new type of consumer, the early modern ‘burghers.’⁷²⁵ These upper-middle classes were part of the same elite as the nobility; however, they could be in conflict with each other.⁷²⁶

The desire to consume and collect all kinds of objects fostered the economy for the elite classes, who were the minority of the population of Europe. Over ninety percent of the people were below the new upper middle class and nobility. In this sector were the artisans, craftsmen and musicians who could seldom attain privileged conditions based on being supported by patrons. The demand for art and the birth of consumption in Italy since the twelfth century was due mainly to financial activities such as lending and banking and was interrupted by the disastrous black plague. By the fifteenth century the Italian commercially driven cultural world had spread North of the Alps, creating two *Europes*, a large traditional sector and a small consumerist niche of burghers and nobleman.⁷²⁷

Started in the Italian Peninsula, consumerism for the elites created a cycle of market expansion, accumulation of objects and an inevitable practice of the consumers to define themselves through the objects they acquired, practicing thus a form of self-fashioning. Their consumption traditions required selection, discrimination, and refinements, all eventually leading to the production of new notions of taste.⁷²⁸ Richard Goldthwaite suggested an interesting insight, which is based on conceiving the

⁷²⁴ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 163.

⁷²⁵ Findlen, *Early Modern Things*, 10.

⁷²⁶ Decker, “Memorializing the Middle Classes in Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Anne Leader, Ed. *Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*. Kalamazoo, MI,” 3.

⁷²⁷ Martines, “The Renaissance and the Birth of Consumer Society,” 195–96; Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*, 197, 198, 250, 254.

⁷²⁸ Findlen, *Early Modern Things*, 10.

growth of the individual through the attachment to material possessions and a ‘dynamic world of goods’ that in return shaped their identity.⁷²⁹

The court culture was an example to follow for the upper middle-classes, which existed since the fifteenth century and became a significant social group by the sixteenth. Through the sixteenth century, the upper-middle classes gained economic and political power, which led the aristocracy to develop a distaste for this sector.⁷³⁰ Urban society became more complex and dynamic. Individuals in cities were able to climb the social ladder through business, education, or religious enterprises.⁷³¹ As James Haar has mentioned, there was a large sector of amateur musicians who would practice music as a social and domestic activity present in almost all areas of life and hitherto unseen.⁷³² During the last two decades of the fifteenth century, the noble and upper middle-class amateur was a consumer of music and was vividly involved in the actual development of instrumental music.⁷³³ As Iain Fenlon pointed out, the books of madrigals became a sought-after commodities for the ‘bourgeoise.’⁷³⁴

The rise of wealth and travel fostered the collection of musical instruments initially in Italy and later north of the Alps. Instruments were a very popular item for collecting for both the musical and the visual artistic features they could have.⁷³⁵ Musical instruments were part of a whole range of objects collected during the Renaissance as courts competed with each other in search of exotic objects along with artisans, artists, pets and further animals. The development of idiomatic instrumental music at this time meant that instruments became even more popular.

The appearance of an Italianate cittern in Nuremberg is not a coincidence but a product of a socio-economic tendency to imitate the humanist courtly culture of the Italian Peninsula, which further increases the understanding of the Germanic cittern as an adaptation of the Italian tradition.⁷³⁶ At the turn of the sixteenth century, the German-speaking cities imported Italian art, including music and musical instruments, to augment their role in cultural and economic exchanges, as well as to determine

⁷²⁹ Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*, 255.

⁷³⁰ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 35.

⁷³¹ Sider, *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*, 2.

⁷³² Haar, “The Concept of the Renaissance,” 42.

⁷³³ Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instruments,” 228.

⁷³⁴ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

⁷³⁵ Libin, “Instruments, Collections Of.”

⁷³⁶ Patala, “Nuremberg Merchants in Breslau (1440-1520) Commemoration as Assimilation,” 49,51; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 20,21,37,38; Sider, *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*, 2.

the span of their economic and political power.⁷³⁷ At the same time Europe's economic growth led privileged merchants that were eager to emulate the avant-garde culture of the Italian courts to expand instrumental music as a social requirement for expressing intellectual status.⁷³⁸

It was not only instrumental music performance of the Italian Peninsula that permeated the German-speaking countries in the early sixteenth century, but also the export of music prints and musicians. The printing presses of Antwerp, Nuremberg and Munich reprinted popular Italian repertoires.⁷³⁹ Following standard trade routes,⁷⁴⁰ the music of the Italian Peninsula spread across central Europe⁷⁴¹, where plucked stringed instruments such as the lute played a pivotal role in artistic networks.⁷⁴² For example, the artistic and commercial exchange between Nuremberg and the Northern Italian cities such as Venice was an ideal scenario for the Italian early cittern, probably among many objects and goods, to be part of a wider transalpine trading.⁷⁴³ Early citterns or late *cetre*, like the one depicted in Figure 98 played by Venetian artists such as Giulio Campagnola,⁷⁴⁴ could have served as an influence for the Germanic cittern,⁷⁴⁵ especially when considering the tight connections between him and the work of Germanic artists such as Albrecht Durer (1471 -1528).⁷⁴⁶ Moreover, there is evidence of Germanic instrumentalists employed by the Dresden court playing instruments brought from the Italian Peninsula.⁷⁴⁷ To this mixture of social conditions it is important to add the role of the nobility in music

⁷³⁷ There is a vast amount of literature on the imitation of Italian music by the Germanic courts, specifically Nuremberg. The following works are an example of the body of scholarship sustaining the importation of music and instruments from the Italian Peninsula, such as the viol, which according to scholar Ian Woodfield was acquired by the Northern Italian courts from Spain and was later brought to the Germanic citterns before that the cittern appeared in these Transalpine contexts. Woodfield explained how the viol was already being played in the first two decades of the sixteenth century while evidence of the cittern in Germany is from 1534-1544, which is the iconographical example of the Hirschvogel cittern. Interestingly, as pointed by Woodfield, the Germanic writer Sebastian Virdung in 1511, already mentioned the viol in his treatise. 'Muchembled, Roodenburg, and Monter, *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, 178; Campbell, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Renaissance*, 224,245; Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World*, 2; Finscher, "Lied and Madrigal," 188; Edwards, "Songs without Words by Josquin and His Contemporaries," 285; Haar, *Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600*, 130; Kreitner, "Voices and Instruments: Soloists and Ensembles in the 15th Century," 243; Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 99; Virdung, *Musica Getuscht*, Plate 23 II.

⁷³⁸ Scammell, "England, Portugal and the Estado Da India c. 1500-1635," 178; Goldthwaite, "The Economy of Renaissance Italy," 15; Frankopan, *Silk Roads*, 201; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 35.

⁷³⁹ Haar, "The Concept of the Renaissance," 44.

⁷⁴⁰ Minamino, "The Dissemination of Lute Music in Renaissance Society," 50.

⁷⁴¹ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

⁷⁴² Minamino, "The Dissemination of Lute Music in Renaissance Society," 52.

⁷⁴³ Samuel, "Nuremberg."

⁷⁴⁴ Landau, *The Renaissance Print 1470-1550 / David Landau and Peter Parshall.*, 100.

⁷⁴⁵ 'Muchembled, Roodenburg, and Monter, *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, 178; Ravasio, "Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano."

⁷⁴⁶ "Campagnola, Giulio."

⁷⁴⁷ Fontana, "Musical Instruments for the Electoral Kunstkammer in Dresden around 1600 / Eszter Fontana," 18–19.

making that was not only in vogue in Germanic cities, but widespread in Western Europe in the early sixteenth century.⁷⁴⁸

In 1534 Lienhard Hirschvogel III (1504-1549) married Sabine Welser from the Augsburg dynasty, and to commemorate the union, he built the Hirschvogel Hall as a gift for his new bride.⁷⁴⁹ In the early sixteenth century, the Hirschvogels were among Nuremberg's richest patrician families, which constituted the Council that ruled the city's economic and social behaviour. The Hirschvogel family built up a significant trading business concentrating in fine spices, clothing, and metals, and enjoyed success on an international scale.⁷⁵⁰

Lienhard had direct commercial contact with the Italian Peninsula and was one of the many courtiers that was influenced by the Italian culture.⁷⁵¹ Moreover, the Germanic ruler, like all the young members of his family, was schooled in several trading centres of the Italian Peninsula such as Florence.⁷⁵² Additionally, he was educated under the Italian aesthetic ideals, which had an immediate effect on his patronage of the arts.⁷⁵³ Therefore, it is not a surprise to find that the Hirschvogel Hall was based on Italian urban noble architecture, as well as to learn that its decorator was the sculptor, medallist, cabinetmaker, woodcutter and designer Peter Flötner (1490-1546), who was famous for the Italianate style used in his designs.⁷⁵⁴

Lienhard Hirschvogel III's love for art was part of a general trend among the Germanic rulers.⁷⁵⁵ Emperor Maximilian I, King of the Romans from 1486 and Holy Roman Emperor-elect from 1493 until his death in 1519, was a 'devoted patron of the arts and learning.'⁷⁵⁶ Maximilian, through political marriage, was in close contact with the cultural hubs of the Italian Peninsula, which played a

⁷⁴⁸ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

⁷⁴⁹ Schaper, *Die Hirschvogel von Nürnberg Und Ihr Handelshaus*, 39.

⁷⁵⁰ Weissen, "Ci Scrive in Tedesco! The Florentine Merchant-Banker Tommaso Spinelli and His German-Speaking Clients (1435-72)," 121; Malekandathil, *The Germans, the Portuguese and India*, 20,49, 64; Gattuso, "16th-Century Nuremberg," 286, 287; Museum Tucherschloss und Hirsvogelsaal Museen der Stadt Nürnberg, "The Tucher Merchant Dynasty."

⁷⁵¹ Museen, "Hirsvogel Hall."

⁷⁵² Weissen, "Ci Scrive in Tedesco! The Florentine Merchant-Banker Tommaso Spinelli and His German-Speaking Clients (1435-72)," 121; Malekandathil, *The Germans, the Portuguese and India*, 20,49, 64; Gattuso, "16th-Century Nuremberg," 286, 287; Museum Tucherschloss und Hirsvogelsaal Museen der Stadt Nürnberg, "The Tucher Merchant Dynasty."

⁷⁵³ Kahsnitz, *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg, 1300-1550*, 18.

⁷⁵⁴ Schaper, *Die Hirschvogel von Nürnberg Und Ihr Handelshaus*, 39.

⁷⁵⁵ Hogwood, *Music at Court*, 25,26.

⁷⁵⁶ Schaal et al., "Habsburg."

fundamental role for shaping his court. The emperor made sure his love of arts was well displayed through a range of publications, that were part real and part fictional accounts of his patronage for music. Figure 99 shows a famous engraving of the emperor witnessing the musical endeavours of his court musicians and the instrumental arsenal at their hands. While Maximilian stands in the centre looking at the musicians play their instruments, behind him there are three men working over a desk that has a book, paper and tools of some sort. The men are not playing music but seem to be engaged in some sort of discussion, perhaps composing, designing or adjusting some of their instruments. This image exemplifies the busy and invigorating musical workshops of the Germanic renaissance that could have been the precise ‘cradles’ that saw the birth of new musical instruments to satisfy the court’s demand for avant-garde music.

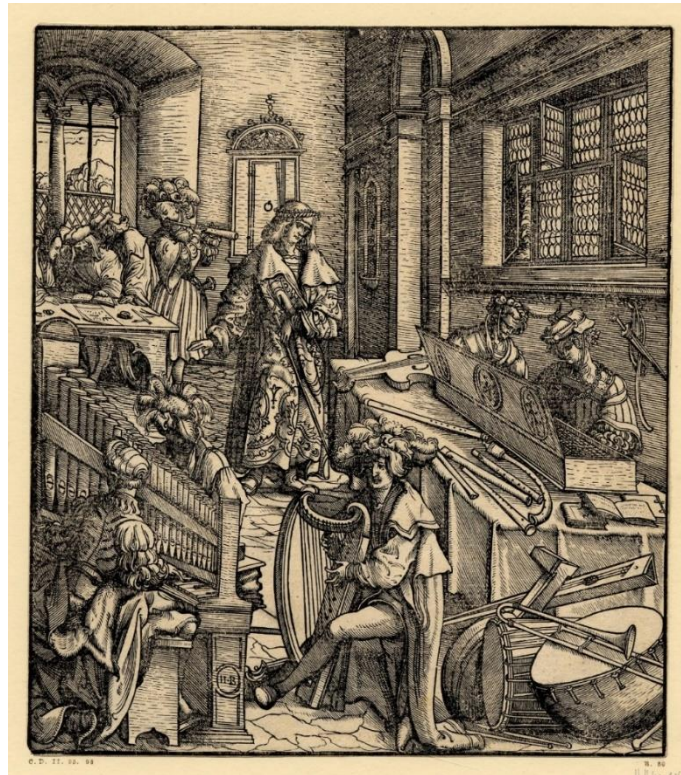


Figure 99. Musical Instruments in Maximilian’s Court. Hans Burgkmair the Elder, print, *How the Young Weisskunig Learned to Know Music and Stringed Instruments*, 1514-1516, Habsburg. Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

There is also the possibility that a form of early Italian cittern or *cetra* was taken from its Peninsula to the southern Low Countries and later to Nuremberg somewhere around the last decade of the fifteenth century. After all, the German-Speaking countries had a very close contact with the Low Countries; for example, Maximilian's marriages of state also involved the Burgundian court.⁷⁵⁷ Johannes Tinctoris, who described the Italian *cetula* or *cetra*, travelled to Naples in the early 1470s under the service of King Ferdinand I (1424 -1494) as a singer-chaplain, legal adviser and court tutor in the theory and practice of music. By the end of this first twenty-year Italian tenure, he travelled to northern Europe, possibly including France, the Habsburg court in Burgundy, Bruges, L Liège and Nivelles, and thus he could easily have introduced his *cetula* or *cetra* to central Europe somewhere around the end of the fifteenth century.⁷⁵⁸

As Peter Forrester mentioned, the modification of a late *cetra* or an early cittern are related to the iron and steel industrial areas of the Germanic cities.⁷⁵⁹ The sudden appearance of a new type of cittern in Nuremberg is also due to the technological conditions of this trade centre. The city's social and economic structures made it a hub of crafts and technology, which were ideal circumstances for the Italian early cittern to be cultivated and transformed into a new instrument. Since the Medieval period, Nuremberg had a prominent industry and craft specialisation, and by the fourteenth century, the city had a strong tradition of metal work, leather, and textile industry.⁷⁶⁰ Moreover, this cultural metropolis was famous for publishing books and music, and for manufacturing musical, astronomical, and nautical instruments.⁷⁶¹ In addition, Nuremberg was a significant centre for brass and iron wire drawing,⁷⁶² which was produced for a number of uses, notably including the harpsichord market, which saw its major early development at the same time as the cittern.⁷⁶³

Is very difficult to know if it was the *cetra* or the early Italian cittern that served as the major influence for the creation of the transalpine cittern. It is hard to say if all transalpine citterns came out of one single model exemplified by the Hirschvogel example in Figure 97, since the commercial and

⁷⁵⁷ Schaal et al.

⁷⁵⁸ Woodley, "Tinctoris, Johannes."

⁷⁵⁹ Forrester, "The Cittern," 152.

⁷⁶⁰ Kahsnitz, *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg, 1300-1550*, 20.

⁷⁶¹ Gattuso, "16th-Century Nuremberg," 286; Samuel, "Nuremberg."

⁷⁶² Koster, "Strings and Theories of Stringing in the Times of the Citole and Early Cittern," 88.

⁷⁶³ Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, 26.

musical exchange between the Italian Peninsula and the rest of Europe certainly did not stop in the middle of the sixteenth century but intensified in the following decades and well into the seventeenth century. It is also not clear if the Italian influence came directly from the Peninsula or through other regions such as the Low Countries and other western territories.⁷⁶⁴ There is questionable evidence that suggests *cetra* could have been introduced to transalpine Europe in an early date. Possible early evidence of the use of the *cetra* outside Italy comes from a report by Garcia de Resende (1470 – 1536), who was a Portuguese singer, lutenist, poet, politician, and author of royal chronicles mentioned a *citra* being carried to the royal ship, together with three viols to entertain the princess Beatriz per Saboya (1504–1538) during her journey to meet her future husband, Charles III of Savoy (1486–1553) in 1521. The use of the word *citra*, reminiscent of *cetra*, suggests the presence of the Italian plucked string, however, this fact is not accompanied by a physical description of the instrument and caution should be taken in its interpretation. The evidence gathered so far, however, suggests that the German speaking countries were one of the earliest places that saw the birth of the transalpine cittern, which is an undeniable renovation of the Italian *cetra* craft.

⁷⁶⁴ Caldeira Cabral, “The History of the Guitarra Portuguesa,” 398.

4.1.2 Tinctoris' *Cetula* Tuning as the Foundation of the Transalpine Cittern

As Winternitz has shown, the *cetra* features dating back to the fifteenth century⁷⁶⁵ can be found on several extant historical examples from transalpine regions, which shows how these instruments were based or at least inspired in early Italian examples. The first feature to consider is the tuning, which can be thought of as the foundation of the standard transalpine cittern tuning of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.⁷⁶⁶ Virtually all tunings of the cittern in their first three courses follow Johannes Tinctoris's *cetula* intervallic disposition, which is a major second between the first and second and a major second between the third and fourth.⁷⁶⁷ In cittern practice and repertoire, this tuning had two variants, known as the 'French Tuning' (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-aa'a'*) and 'Italian Tuning' (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-bb*).⁷⁶⁸ The first is essentially used on cittern musical sources occurring in France and the Low Countries, while the latter is found in English repertoire (Figure 100).

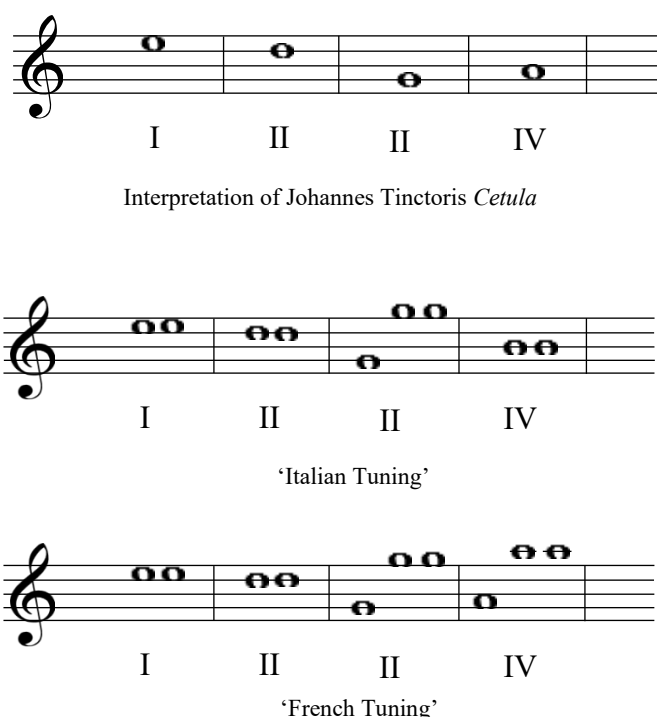


Figure 100. Transalpine Tunings and Tinctoris' *Cetula*. Above, Interpretation of Johannes Tinctoris Early Cittern Tuning, circa 1487; middle, 'Italian Tuning'; below, 'French Tuning'. Source: Diagram by Esteban Mariño based on Ivan Francis Waldbauer, 'The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries' (Ph.D., Ann Arbor, Harvard University, 1964); Anthony Baines, 'Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*', *The Galpin Society Journal* 3 (1950): 19–26.

⁷⁶⁵ See Chapter 2: The Re-birth.

⁷⁶⁶ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 587; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 42; Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 90.

⁷⁶⁷ See Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings.

⁷⁶⁸ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60, 61.

The basic variation between the two tunings is that in the Italian system the fourth course is a *b* while in the ‘French’ is an *a*. While Michael Praetorius in 1620 was the first in coining the terms ‘French’ and ‘Italian’ tuning, he specified the latter as the ‘ordinary Italian’ and he also showed other tunings for five course instruments.⁷⁶⁹ Most importantly, Praetorius mentioned how the hexachord tuning belonged to the old Italian practice, possibly referring to the practice of the traditional Italian cittern and its *cetra* heritage.

Concurrently, Athanasius Kircher described Praetorius’ French and German tuning as the ‘*accordatio Cytharae ultramontanae*’, while in contrast, the Italian version had the hexachordal tuning (Figure 101).⁷⁷⁰ As in this dissertation, for Kircher the many variations of the cittern outside Italy were categorised as transalpine or ‘*ultramontanae*.’



Figure 101. Athanasius Kircher ‘Ultramontanae’ and Italian Cittern. Athanasius Kircher, print, *Musurgia universalis*, 1650, Rome. Source: Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta* (Rome: Haeredum Pranscisci Corbelletti, 1650), Plate VII, 476. Public Domain.

In the same manner, Marin Mersenne simply distinguished the ‘four course cittern’ from the Italian counterpart, which had an hexachordal tuning and a six-string course set up.⁷⁷¹ Mersenne shows a depiction of a transalpine type of cittern with four courses, having the first triple, the second double and the following two triple, emphasizing that the ‘Italians’ added two other courses (Figure 102).⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁹ Praetorius, 41, 42.

⁷⁷⁰ Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, Book IV, 479.

⁷⁷¹ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, the Books on Instruments*, 140.

⁷⁷² Mersenne, 141.

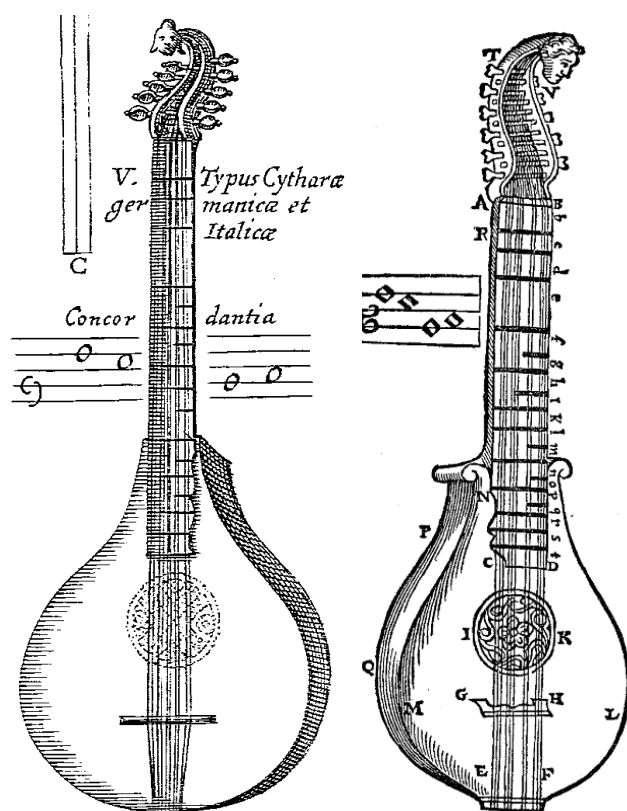


Figure 102. Transalpine Citterns by Kircher and Mersenne. Left, Athanasius Kircher, print, *Musurgia Universalis*, 1650, Rome; right, Marin Mersenne, print, *Harmonie Universelle*, 1636-7, Paris. Sources: Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta* (Rome: Haeredum Pranscisci Corbelletti, 1650), Plate VII, 476; Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1636), Book IV, 32. Public Domain.

4.1.3 The Scrolls, Fingerboard, Resonator and Neck

Besides the tuning, there are many other *cetra* or Italian features that remained in the transalpine instruments. These are the scrolls on the shoulders, reminiscent of the *cetra* lyre ‘wings,’ the cutaway fingerboard, tapering resonator from heel to bottom, and narrow neck with thumb stop, which are virtually found in all transalpine citterns (Figure 103-104).⁷⁷³



Figure 103. Transalpine Citterns I. a and f, Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, 17th century, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500); b and c, anonymous, cittern, 17th century Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (inv. nr. 1524); d, anonymous, cittern replica, Freiburg Dome, Germany, reconstructed; e, anonymous, cittern replica, 1619, Nederlandse Instituut voor Sheeps- en onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries (inv. nr. OB 71-265 a/b). Sources: National Music Museum, “Cittern Labelled Petrus Rautta,” National Music Museum, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern;jsessionid=00767E3D0FF5F758A4ED5E04AC1B1D00>, Courtesy of the National Music Museum, Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH/KMKG, Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History.; “Zister - Detail,” accessed September 22, 2023, https://mimo-international.com/MIMO/doc/IFD/OAI_ULEI_M0005262; Courtesy of Sebastian Núñez.

⁷⁷³ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Table 3.



Figure 104. Transalpine Citterns II. a, anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv.nr. D.AD.32026); b, anonymous, cittern replica, 1619, Nederlandse Instituut voor Sheeps- en onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries (inv. nr. OB 71-265 a/b); c, anonymous, cittern, 17th century, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (inv. nr. 1524); d, anonymous, cittern, circa 1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. nr. 35-1867); e, Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, 17th century, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500). Note that the instruments are approximately sized according to original dimensions to portray the variety of sizes of historical examples. Sources: Anonyme, ‘Cistre guiterne’, accessed 21 September 2023, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne>, Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.; Victoria and Albert Museum, ‘Cittern’, ca 1700, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58888/cittern-unknown/>. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Courtesy of Sebastian Núñez; Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH/KMKG, Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels; : “Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum,” accessed April 19, 2023, <https://www.csr.v.usd.edu/objects/17874/cittern;jsessionid=8A732D729A62B0D6CF17F7C9A378D42A>

The transalpine cittern, just as the Italian traditional craft, inherited the fingerboard cutaway, which is located at the lower end of the fingerboard at the upper part of the soundboard. Such feature indicates how the bass and middle strings in the *cetra* were not played so often as the treble, which was a characteristic kept in all citterns made after the middle of the sixteenth century. The thumb stop also comes from the traditional manufacture of the *cetra*, where the fret-blocks of the Medieval musical instrument were placed over a narrow neck built out of a carved structure. In relation to the cutaway fingerboard, this feature was kept because the higher courses were played much more than the lower ones, and therefore the neck was mainly necessary for the higher courses. Figure 105 shows very early evidence of a fingerboard or block frets attached to a narrow neck on a late sixteenth century *cetra*, which is contrasted with an x-ray image of an extant traditional cittern, possible from France, which shows how the narrow neck is attached to the fingerboard.

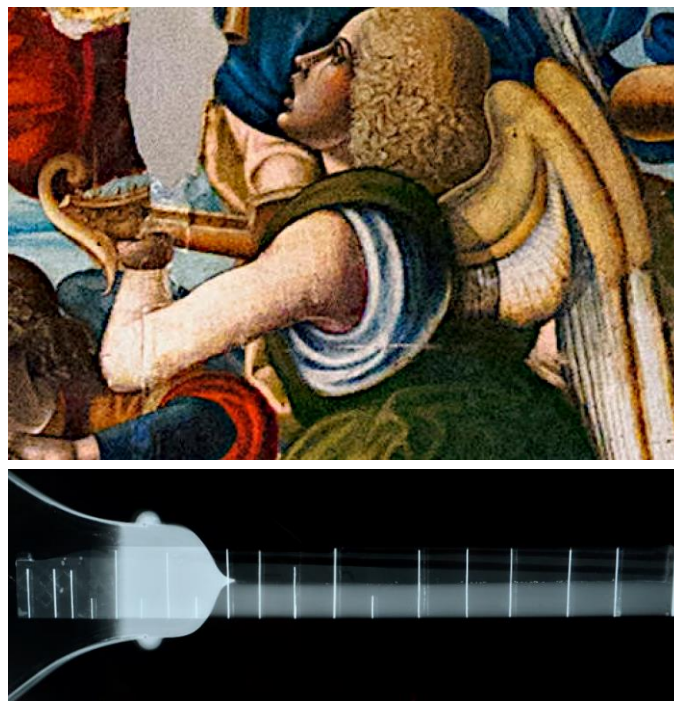


Figure 105. Narrow Neck and Thumb Stop in Cetra and Transalpine Cittern. Above, Girolamo di Benvenuto, oil on canvas, 1500-1510, Convento della Santissima Trinità alla Selva, Fiora, ; below, Italy; anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv.nr. D.AD.32026). Sources: Purchased License ®. Alamy Limited, “Girolamo Di Benvenuto Assunzione Di Maria al Cielo Tra Santi (Assumption of Mary into Heaven with Saints Senese School Oil on Wooden Board Second Half 15th Century - Pitigliano, Italy Stock Photo - Alamy,” accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-girolamo-di-benvenuto-assunzione-di-maria-al-cielo-tra-santi-assumption-171388511.html>.; Courtesy of Musée de la Musique, Internal Curatorial Files.; Courtesy of Musée de la Musique, Internal Curatorial Files.

Transalpine iconography has images in which is possible to see citterns with the narrow neck and fingerboard attached to it.⁷⁷⁴ A fine example is the self portrait of Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635-1681), that shows the back of a cittern having the neck set into the pegbox, showing the thumb stop created by the wider fingerboard (Figure 106). One feature that was found obsolete for transalpine cittern builders was the hook placed behind the peghead,⁷⁷⁵ which was at some point an important iconological element of the *cetra* as it allowed it to be played in an upright position.⁷⁷⁶



Figure 106. Narrow Neck and Thumb Stop in Transalpine Cittern. Frans van Mieris the Elder, Self-portrait of the Artist with Cittern, oil on canvas, The National Gallery, London (inv. nr. NG1874). Sources: National Gallery, 'Frans van Mieris the Elder (1635 - 1681) | National Gallery, London', accessed 19 June 2018, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/frans-van-mieris-the-elder>. CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. National Gallery ®.

Transalpine citterns and Italian traditional citterns started to be built almost simultaneously, therefore it is very difficult to say that the diatonic fretting of the transalpine instruments was inherited from the traditional Italian citterns of the 1530s (Figure 107). However, their similarities clearly show that they were rooted in a common approach to placing partial frets in the higher strings. The transalpine citterns show a very similar pattern to the Italian cittern disposition, which is based on having the fourth

⁷⁷⁴ See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography. Images, 43, 48 52.

⁷⁷⁵ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 40.

⁷⁷⁶ See chapter 2. 'The Re-birth'. Section 2.2. 'The Lyre Culture of the Cetra'.

fret absent, while the sixth, eighth, eleventh, thirteenth, fifteenth and the rest are partial frets, and the eighteenth fret is usually absent.⁷⁷⁷



Figure 107. Italian Early Citterns and the Hirschvogel Cittern. a, Gaudenzio Ferrari, fresco, 1535-36, Dome of the Santuario Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Saronno, Milan; b, Franciscus Plebanus, cittern, 1536, Musée de la Musique, Paris, (inv. nr. E.1131); c, Giulio Campagnola, oil on canvas, Young Faun Playing the Syrinx, circa 1513-15, Mantua, Alte Pinakothek, (inv. nr. 76); d, A. Rossi, cittern, probably 1530, Urbino, unknown location; e, Girolamo dai Libri, Virgin with Two Saints, altar painting, 1526, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona; d; Peter Flötner, wood carving, 1534-1544, Nuremberg, Hirschvogelsaal Hall. Sources: Alte Pinakothek, “Sammlung | Daphnis,” accessed June 2, 2024, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/de/artwork/7yxYbq6LYm/jacopo-negretti-gen-palma-il-vecchio/daphnis#&gid=1&pid=1>, CC BY-SA 4.0; Photograph by Esteban Mariño; Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, ‘Pilasterabfolge Im Hirschvogelsaal | Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst’, Virtuelles Museum Nürnberger Kunst, accessed 13 June 2019, <https://museum-nuernberger-kunst.de/projects/show/775-pilasterabfolge-hirschvogelsaal>. Courtesy of Theo Noll © / www.nuernberg.museum ; Courtesy of the National Music Museum.

⁷⁷⁷ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Table 3. Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 83.

A very early image of the cittern or late *cetra* using partial frets in a similar way to the transalpine cittern fret disposition is the 1526 painting by Girolamo dai Libri. Although some features of this image appear ‘ultra-realistic’, such as the peghead and tuning pegs,⁷⁷⁸ the fretting layout does not correspond to historical transalpine or Italian citterns, probably because of some artistic license.⁷⁷⁹ Nevertheless, this image, which is the earliest evidence on partial fretting, clearly shows the Italian influence on transalpine diatonic fret disposition. Figure 108 shows the fretting diagrams of two Italian citterns⁷⁸⁰ and one transalpine, showing how the partial frets are almost always on the same fret number.

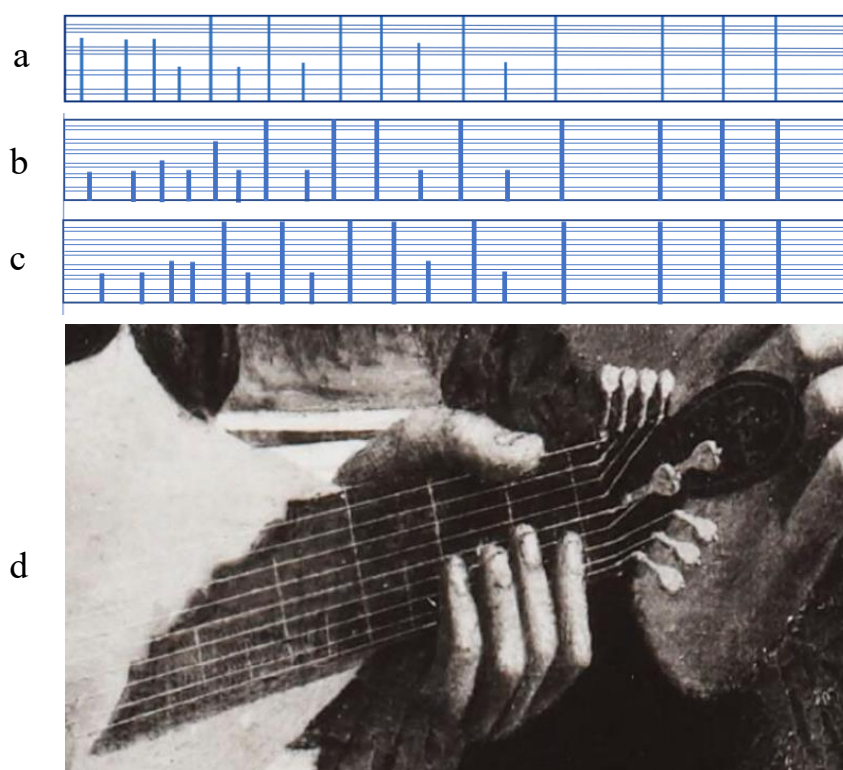


Figure 108. Partial Fretting. a, anonymous, 17th century, Brussels Musical Instrument Museum (inv. nr. 1524); b, Girolamo Campi, 1580, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCMOO48); c, anonymous, 16th century, International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna (inv. nr. 1746); d, Girolamo dai Libri, altar painting, 1526, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona. Not to scale.

Sources: a, adapted from high resolution photographs courtesy of the Musical Instrument Museum. BY–MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH/KMKG. Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels; b, adapted from photographs taken by the author insitu inspection; c, adapted from photographs taken by the author, insitu inspection; d, ‘Angeli Musicanti / Girolamo Dai Libri’, image, Gallica, 1985 1945, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8429437t>, Public Domain.

⁷⁷⁸ Young, “La Cetra Cornuta,” 490–91.

⁷⁷⁹ See chapter 2. ‘The Re-birth’. Section 2.4. ‘From Block Frets to a Wedged Fingerboard’. Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 64.

⁷⁸⁰ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 15 and 16, Table 1.

4.1.4 String Holders

Makers could have applied Italian features to make their instruments more appealing, or simply because of the inherited tradition from Italian citterns or late *cetre*. Transalpine citterns almost always feature a string holder made of a hard material, that is ebony, bone, or ivory, and is usually inserted along the edge of the soundboard. However, a Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish cittern preserved at the Musée de la Musique⁷⁸¹ presents a comb or string holder, which is very similar to the ones found in the traditional carved Italian citterns. Interestingly, Italian instruments presented structural problems due to the string tension and also because the string holder was part of the whole carved structure. The maker of the Franco-Flemish cittern, however, preserved this Italian traditional feature by inserting the component inside the structural end block (Figure 109). In this way, the string holder is not part of any large piece, that could potentially have cracks or breakage due to the natural, hygroscopic nature of wood, combined with the string tension. As a general rule of musical instrument making, the expansion and contraction of wood is much more well distributed when assembling structures made from separated pieces.

The only surviving English cittern, signed by Petrus Rautta or Raitta, preserved at the National Music Museum in South Dakota,⁷⁸² presents a rather large string holder, which is similar to the ones used in traditional Italian citterns (Figure 110). Peter Forrester has reported that this element might not be original or was altered because, firstly, the slots between the teeth of the comb are not sufficiently deep to sustain the traditional way of stringing Italian citterns. Usually, traditional combs have deep slots between the teeth so the strings could be looped around a metal rod placed beneath them.⁷⁸³

Another reason to suggest that the comb of the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern is not original, according to Forrester, is the lack of wear between the teeth, meaning that an actual use of the cittern in performance is not believed to have happened using the present comb. Moreover, the general craftsmanship of the comb does not follow a close similarity to the design of traditional string holders from Italian citterns,

⁷⁸¹ [See appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 9, Table 3.](#)

⁷⁸² [See appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 1, Table 3.](#)

⁷⁸³ See the following [image](#) in Hartig, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: Cittern, 34cm Mensur, Possibly English, circa 1600.” For an [example](#) of the stringing method using the rod, see illustration 1 in Forrester, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: Wood and Wire [On-Line Edition: Corrected and Amended.]”

at least not in the way the cittern of the Musée de la Musique does. In fact, it is possible to say that the latter's maker followed closely the Italian way of crafting this element. Furthermore, the comb of the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern is inserted in such a crude way into the lower ribs that it could well be an alteration, which seems at least to be very old.⁷⁸⁴ The internal catalogue of the National Music Museum of the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern, however, with a wood identification made by John Koster, revealed that the comb is made from plum (*Prunus* sp.), which is the same wood as the four alternating pieces used at the back.⁷⁸⁵ Moreover, a lack of wear in the comb, or lack of use in general, is not enough evidence to determine the authenticity of elements of musical instruments, as they could have been simply not heavily played or used mainly for display.⁷⁸⁶ These arguments could weaken the theory of considering the string holder as an alteration; however, further research is needed to reach a conclusion regarding the authenticity of this element.

Whether original or not, the imitation of the Italian craft in the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern is remarkable, especially the comb which is similar in size to the combs of the *cetre* of the fifteenth century. As elements such as the scrolls or 'wings' and hooks at the back of the peghead were iconological features meant to represent an idealised form of the Greek lyre,⁷⁸⁷ this comb could represent the desire of displaying a classical heritage, as well as making this cittern much more visually attractive.

⁷⁸⁴ See the following [image](#) in Hartig, "The Renaissance Cittern Site: Cittern, 34cm Mensur, Possibly English, circa 1600."

⁷⁸⁵ The sides overlap outer edges of back in upper bouts but not lower bouts. National Music Museum, "Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum." National Music Museum internal catalogue files.

⁷⁸⁶ The Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern shows little string marks on the frets. The instrument was inspected *In Situ* in 2014 by the author.

⁷⁸⁷ [See chapter 2. 'The Re-birth', Section 2.2. 'The Lyre Culture of the Cetra'](#). Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 526.



Figure 109. Cittern String Holders. Above left, Augustinus Citaraedus, cittern, 1582, Urbino, Victoria, and Albert Museum, currently at loan at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871); right and below, anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026. Source: Photographs by Esteban Mariño; Musée de la Musique, ‘Cistre guiterne’, Cité de la Musique Philharmonie de Paris, accessed 15 March 2024, https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/doc/MUSEE/0156699?_ga=2.226683677.1047202884.1682098592-553807280.1680943969#description. © Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès Musée de la Musique.; Courtesy of the Musée de la Musique.



Figure 110. Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] Comb. Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, 17th century, England, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. 13500). Sources: National Music Museum, "Cittern Labelled Petrus Rautta," National Music Museum, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern;jsessionid=00767E3D0FF5F758A4ED5E04AC1B1D00>. Courtesy of the National Music Museum.

The absence of a Germanic cittern craft before the middle of the sixteenth century, the commercial and social relations with Italy and ultimately the Italian features, all strongly suggest that the transalpine cittern was based on Italian models. Because this instrument was made so early, there is the possibility that it was based on a late *cetra* model. The birth of the transalpine cittern speaks of the dramatic technological jump that musical instruments took when instrumental music flourished in the sixteenth century due to a social, mostly domestic demand within the privileged sectors of society for art and economic wealth.

4.2 The German Speaking Countries

4.2.1 The Higher Spheres

Between the early cittern depiction in Nuremberg at the hall of the courtier Lienhard Hirschvogel III between 1534 to 1544 and the seventeenth century, the German-speaking countries had a flourishing cittern culture that went on even further than the time scope of this present work.

The nobility was experiencing an urban independence in several towns of Saxony that turned them quickly into ‘burgher’ centres that were soon going to compete with the aristocratic political and cultural power. Through art, both spheres of power waged a war that brought an upswing in artistic achievements, which often glorified the rise of the upper middle classes.⁷⁸⁸ Music and musical instruments were part of the artistic milieu that was cultivated in both ‘popular’ and higher sectors for example, the lower classes had a prolific musical practice that nourished the court music.⁷⁸⁹ As stated by Herbert Heyde, ‘there is no other case in the history of instrument making that makes the interplay between musical instrument making, economic policy and the law of the market so transparent.’ Instrument making contributed to a rich musical culture ‘not only on the level of the aristocratic music business, but on the level of the lower and middle social classes.’⁷⁹⁰

The cittern was part of the musical ensembles that combined court and chapel musicians, professionals, and amateurs alike. For example, student Johan Michael Weckherlin (1579-1631) kept a *Stambuch*, books often reserved by universities students, nobles and merchants, who collected emblems of friendship from colleagues and teachers, frequently in the form of bywords, signatures and/or illustrations.⁷⁹¹ The *Stambuch* was a personal document but also a way of demonstrating social status and wealth. Weckherlin, contemporary of the famous composer and theoretician Michael Praetorius, was a former student of the University of Tübingen at Stuttgart and held an administrative job at the court of Württemberg.⁷⁹² As a young man of only twenty-four years old, Weckherlin was proud to

⁷⁸⁸ Kessler, “Leipziger Teilung, Wurzen Fehde und die Schlacht bei Mühlberg,” 12.

⁷⁸⁹ Steude, “Die historischen Musikinstrumente in der kurfürstlichen Begräbnis Kapelle Doms als Reflex der Musikpflege ihrer Zeit,” 46.

⁷⁹⁰ Heyde, “Der Geigenbau in Randeck im 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert,” 56.

⁷⁹¹ Owens, “Pictorial Depictions of Musicians, Musical Instruments and Music-Making in the Stammbücher of Paul Jenisch (1558–1647) and Johann Michael Weckherlin (1579–1631),” 160.

⁷⁹² Owens, 162.

illustrate in his *Stambuch* a music gathering that happened in the streets of Stuttgart where he played alongside his brother, the son of the former Württemberg *Kapellmeister*, members of the local chapel or *Hofkapelle* and an Italian lutenist named Thiberio Balamano.⁷⁹³ In the depiction it is possible to see one anonymous cittern player and Weckherlin; the latter gives his back to the spectator, and is possibly playing the cittern for a rich ensemble consisting of violins, lutes, virginal, trombones and possibly viols, one of them played by his brother Georg. It is quite interesting that although the musical ensemble is playing on the street, it seems to be protected probably by Weckherlin's personal bodyguards who create a perimeter around him (Figure 111).



Figure 111. Johan Michael Weckherlin's *Stambuch*. Weckherlin Johann Michael, book illumination, *Stambuch*, 1594, Tübingen. Source: Weckherlin Johann Michael, *Stambuch* Johann Michael Weckherlin - Cod.Hist.Oct.218 (Tübingen, 1594), https://digital.wlb-stuttgart.de/sammlungen/sammlungsliste/werksansicht?tx_dlf%5Bdouble%5D=0&tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=12690&tx_dlf%5Border%5D=title&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=532&cHash=e9dcb810e7537c0c209f37e05a018769; 532 – f. 256r. Public Domain - Württembergische Landesbibliothek ©.

⁷⁹³ Owens, 163.

Is hard to know if the cittern is played by a professional player, a member of the family or any other sort of guest. The historical reality is that because of its accessibility it could have been played by any of these people. The cittern was a social and musical necessity for both amateurs and professionals, all of whom mingled with each other in Germanic courts. Andreas Michel, quoting Cyriacus Spangenberg (1528 -1604), a theologian, Protestant reformer and fellow of Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), described in his *Adelsspiegel* or *The Mirror of Nobility*, how the privileged classes would have many servants, personal tailors, barbers, horsemen, and musicians who played lutes, citterns, and bagpipes.⁷⁹⁴

A glimpse of the rich instrumentation in a busy courtly environment can be seen in the work of the Germanic organist and keyboard arranger Elias Nikolaus Ammerbach (1530-1597). The front page of his *Ein new künstlich Tabulaturbuch*, published in 1575, has a vivid depiction of an instrumental ensemble divided in two groups. On the left, around a large round table with music books there is a lute, cittern, viol, a pochette and a virginal, as well as singers and a triangle player. On the right, there is an organist playing a positive organ placed on the table, as well as trumpets, trombones and even bagpipes; possibly, the organ player might be the town piper (Figure 112).⁷⁹⁵

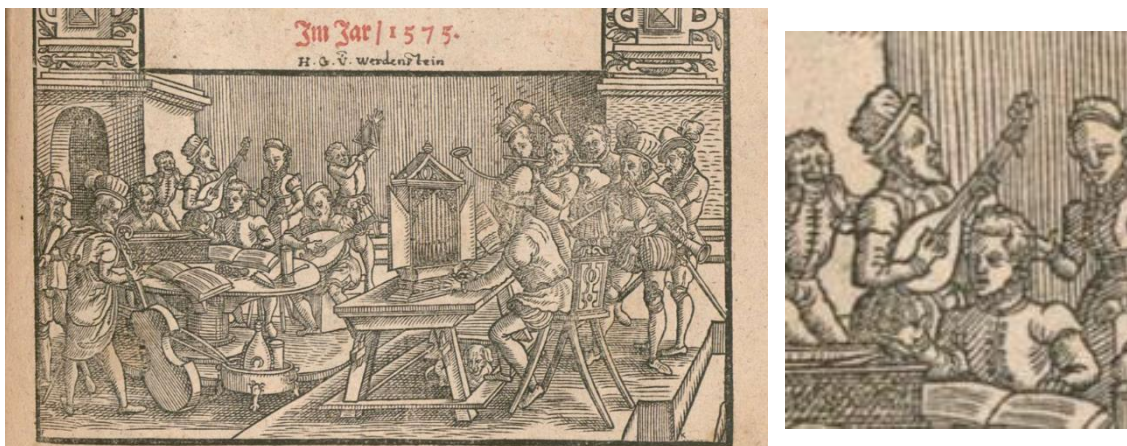


Figure 112. The Cittern in Germanic Ensembles. Elias Nikolaus, print, Ammerbach, 1575, Leipzig. Source: Elias Nikolaus Ammerbach, *Ein new Kunstlich Tabulaturbuch, darin sehen gute Moneten und liebliche Deutsche Tenores* ([Leipzig], Nürnberg: Gedruckt zu Leipzig durch Johan[n] Beyer; Im Verlegung Dietrich Gerlachs, 1575). Public Domain.

⁷⁹⁴ Watanabe-O'Kelly, "'Meine Liebe Mutter.' Cyriacus Spangenberg and His Treatise on 'Weiberadel' (1591," 191; Crossley and Skrine, "Review of The Goths and the Concept of Gothic in Germany from 1500 to 1750," 511.

⁷⁹⁵ Ammerbach, *Ein new Kunstlich Tabulaturbuch, darin sehen gute Moneten und liebliche Deutsche Tenores*; Michel, "Zistern."

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the Germanic cittern's life was a busy one, forming part of festivities and courtly performances. On the 2nd of March of 1584 there were festivities to celebrate the marriage of two courtiers of the Duke Christian I of Saxony (1560 – 1591). The celebration of Balthasar Wurm and Anton von Sahlhausen was said to include eight musicians dressed as women playing the lute, cittern, treble viol, bass recorder, tenor viol, transverse flute, clavichord, and trombone.⁷⁹⁶ In a similar way, the wedding celebrations in the city of Württemberg in the region of Stuttgart for Archduke Johann Friedrich (1608-1628) included lavish receptions, theatrical performances and a rich programme inspired in classic antiquity. The revels lasted several days and encompassed processions of pagan themes commissioned by noble guests, such as Markgraf Christian of Brandenburg (1581-1655), whose entourage had marching musicians with lutes, citterns, bowed strings, wind instruments and trombones.⁷⁹⁷ In the same city, the baptism of an inheritor, Ulrich, to the rule of Duke Friedrich and the marriage of Ludwig Friedrich von Wurttemberg (1586-1631) with Elisabeth Magdalena of Hesse-Darmstadt (1600-1624), included processions like Count Philip of Leiningen's (1588 – 1643) who arranged the walk of lavishly dressed trios of cittern players wearing tall hats and dark masks (Figure 113).⁷⁹⁸

Associations with the cittern and jesters in the German-speaking countries can be found in Michael Praetorius' *Syntagma Musicum*, in which there is a depiction of a large six course transalpine cittern with a peghead ornamented with a possible comic character, which also has a nobility ruff (Figure 114).⁷⁹⁹ In addition, German painter, draughtsman, and woodcutter Anton Möller (1565 – 1611) was renowned for a 'fresh realism' in his genre painting and drawings, which were scenes of everyday life.⁸⁰⁰ As he painted banquets and parties he could well have spotted a jester playing a cittern in a play or in any sort of courtly entertainment. Figure 115 shows a comical character wearing the typical jester's cap, fitted with feather-like ornaments, donkey ears and bells attached to his clothes and shoes. The artist is

⁷⁹⁶ Bowles, *Musical Ensembles in Festival Books, 1500-1800*, 105,106.

⁷⁹⁷ Bowles, 105,106.

⁷⁹⁸ Bowles, 40.

⁷⁹⁹ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, II:Plate XV.

⁸⁰⁰ Georg Gmelin, "Möller, Anton, I."

playing the cittern while standing or hopping, perhaps even dancing on one foot while a little dog bites one of his hanging bells.⁸⁰¹



Figure 113. Section of the Processional Scene with a trio of Cittern Players. Anonymous, print, *Défilé de Philippe de Leinnigen: en tête trois joueurs de cistre* / Merian, 1578. *Défilé de Philippe de Leinnigen: en tête trois joueurs de cistre*, [Fonds Albert Pomme de Mirimonde. Collection de documents iconographiques. Boîte 12, accessed January 9, 2024, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84307573>. Source: Public Domain - National Library of France ©.

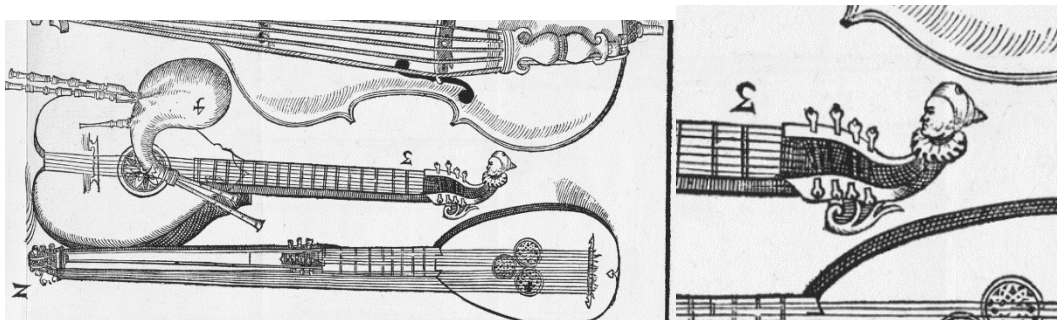


Figure 114. Jester's Peghead. Micheal Praetorius, print, *Syntagma Musicum*. Source: Micheal Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, vol. II (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), Plate XV. Public Domain.

⁸⁰¹ The cittern of Anton Möller presents the bridge over the soundboard of the instrument, which is a historical inaccuracy considering the way all citterns are built. Moreover, the peghead appears Italian, meaning that is not a pegbox and that the pegs are inserted in satellite fashion. Möller's peghead also has a scroll as many Italian citterns also present. Nevertheless, the peghead presents some historical inaccuracies, for example, the number of pegs in relation to the strings. It seems to have only three pegs for a four double course. In addition, sixteenth century Italian citterns usually have six courses and not four. Still, the shape of the plucked string, having the typical scrolls by the end of the body, allows it to be identified as a cittern, and the peghead with all its inaccuracies also belongs to a cittern. Perhaps Möller witnessed a transalpine cittern with much more Italian features than usual.



Figure 115. Jester with a Cittern. Anton Möller (The Elder), Jester with a Cittern, 1605, Print Room of the State Museums in Berlin - Prussian Cultural Heritage, (inv. nr. KdZ 12509). Source: 'Laute spielender Narr mit Hund', accessed 26 January 2024, <https://id.smb.museum/object/1038131/laute-spielender-narr-mit-hund>. Public Domain Mark 1.0.

4.2.2 The Remnants of the Revival of Antiquity

Between 1580 and 1630 the Dresden court had an extremely rich instrumentation, and the cittern was an important element. Since the middle of the sixteenth century, it already had three organists, who also played stringed keyboards, as well as hunting horns and cornets. However, by the following decades the instrumentation grew, having sixty woodwinds, twenty-five bowed instruments, drums, lutes and citterns.⁸⁰² For example, in February 1574, during the carnival season, the Dresden's court arranged for bright processions in the courtyard with an eclectic combination of classical mythology and Old Testament narratives, exotic and foreign elements, animal fables and folktales. The musical arrangement included kettledrums, trumpets, and ensembles of five musicians disguised with female masks and playing lutes and citterns.⁸⁰³

More classical elements mixing the cittern and the revival of classical antiquity appeared also in lavish decorations with rich iconographic programs such as the work of Cristoph Walther II (1534-1548) who created a magnificent marble positive organ and altar bearing precious, local stone inlays,

⁸⁰² Fontana, "Musical Instruments for the Electoral Kunstkammer in Dresden around 1600," 8-11, 12, 18.

⁸⁰³ Bowles, *Musical Ensembles in Festival Books, 1500-1800*, 73.

and wood carvings depicting female characters holding a four-course chromatic cittern. This sculptural work was added to the Electoral Saxonian *Kunstammer* in 1584,⁸⁰⁴ a private collection started in the 1570's by Elector August (c.1553-1586) inside the Freiburg Cathedral in Saxony (Figure 116).⁸⁰⁵ This astonishing piece of work was unfortunately lost in 1945, when the Historical Museum of Dresden fell to the atrocities of the Second World War. Luckily a photograph and a catalogue entry was preserved, which also reveals that the work was made together with organ builder Johan Lange (1543-1616).⁸⁰⁶ The stonework had different functions, such as hiding a positive organ and the keyboard under a writing desk that opened up, yet more importantly it was an altar and an amazing display piece that exhibited a great number of architectural elements combining pagan and sacred motifs, all enriched with marvellous grotesques.

The marble altar-desk luckily survives in a design made by the same artist in 1583 which is one year before the altar was erected (Figure 117).⁸⁰⁷ The photograph of the original does not allow for an accurate iconographic identification of the theme of the composition; however, by following the design there emerges a much clearer picture. The altar is dedicated to the birth of Christ, specifically following Luke I, which is the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. This is possible to say because in the design, just below the top composition, there are two inscriptions that read 'Luke: I, And therefore also that which shall be born of thee holy shall be called the Son of God', and 'Luke I, Behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you will call his name Jesus.'⁸⁰⁸ Walther's work, both in paper and in marble, is crowned by Jesus on the cross, and three scenes. At the top, there is possibly God or Jesus reigning in the heavens; in the middle, along with the Gospel inscriptions, there is an angel visiting the virgin Mary; and at the bottom, the birth of

⁸⁰⁴ Fontana and Heller, "Die Musikinstrumente Aus Der Begräbniskapelle Des Freiburger Domes: Ein Forschungsprojekt Zu Sächsischen Musikinstrumenten Des 16. Jahrhunderts Und Seine Geschichte," 18.

⁸⁰⁵ Fontana, "Musical Instruments for the Electoral *Kunstammer* in Dresden around 1600," 12.

⁸⁰⁶ Andreas Michel kindly provided the author with a copy of the catalogue entry, which was also published by Eszter Fontana. Fontana, 12.

⁸⁰⁷ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Images 59 and 60.

⁸⁰⁸ The inscriptions in the design are originally in Latin and they read: 'LVC: I ET QVOD NAS CETVR SANCTV VOCABITVR FILIVS DEI', and 'LVC: I, ECCE CONCIPIES IN VTERO, ETPA RIES FILIVM, ET VOCABIS NO ME EIVS IESVM'.

Christ, probably a scene of the nativity such as *The Adoration of the Shepherds*.⁸⁰⁹ At the bottom of the altar, there are two female characters, one playing the cittern and singing, while the other is playing a cornett and kettle drum. In the middle there is a large grotesque that presents floral and vegetative motifs. Interestingly, the cittern player has her full clothing, while the wind and percussion player has one breast exposed. What is also remarkable is the fact that both female figures embody the two architectural columns crowned with ionic capitals, which are undoubtedly related to Vitruvian ideals. Vitruvius' work was significantly disseminated and augmented in the fifteenth century in the Italian Peninsula. For example, by 1548 Vitruvius' writings were edited, translated, and commented in the German language and dedicated to several cities, including Nuremberg.⁸¹⁰ For Vitruvius, the Hellenistic and Roman architectural style of the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns, also known as the three Greek orders, was related to the human body. These notions were proposed by Italian humanists of the fifteenth century and later on by the painter and architect John Shute (died 1563), in his *First and Chief Grounds of Architecture*.⁸¹¹ The ionic column resembles the proportions of a woman 'slenderness', and the capital, which is the head of the figure, would have draped volutes on either side to represent 'curled locks'.⁸¹² Vitruvius goes on to say that the Corinthian order 'imitates the slenderness of a young girl, because young girls, on account of the tenderness of their age, can be seen to have even more slender limbs and obtain more charming effects when they adorn themselves.'⁸¹³

Cristopher Walther's cittern player could also be identified as Aphrodite. This is possible to say when considering the other female player in the marble work that plays the cornett and kettle drum. The fact that in the composition there is one clothed character and one partially naked⁸¹⁴ is a reminder of the

⁸⁰⁹ See Helene E. Roberts on *Devotion/Piety, Night*. A work by Anthonie Blocklandt at the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam presents a similar compositional arrangement of characters. 1560-1572, Anthonie Blocklandt, [Adoration of the Shepherds](#), Anthonie Blocklandt, painting over panel, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. nr SK-A-4849). Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography*, 823.

⁸¹⁰ Kruff, *A History of Architectural Theory*, 39,71.

⁸¹¹ Kruff, 230; Shute and Marshe, *The First and Chief Groundes of Architecture Used in All the Auncient and Famous Monymentes with a Farther & More Ample Discourse Uppon the Same than Hiterto Hath Been Set out by Any Other*, Folio vii-xi.

⁸¹² Vitruvius Pollio, *Ten Books on Architecture*, 55.

⁸¹³ Vitruvius Pollio, 55.

⁸¹⁴ Interestingly, in the design the female character playing the cornett and the kettle drum appears clothed as the cittern player.

concept of earthly and worldly Aphrodite, which was extremely in vogue all over the artistic ethos of the Renaissance.⁸¹⁵



Figure 116. Altar-desk and Positive Organ Case. Cristopher Walther II, Altar, 1583-1584, carved wood with marble and precious stones, Dresden Rüstammer, lost in World War II (inv. nr. Neg. Nr FD 141 004). Source: Rüstammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Photo: Volker Dietzel.

Plato indicated that the first nature, named Urania or Heavenly Aphrodite is the motherless daughter created out of the testicles of Uranus, and the other, named Pandemos or Common Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. These two natures of Aphrodite render into two types of love; a Heavenly love that seeks for the good and righteous, and Common love, a young, immature, and sexual desire.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁵ Compton, *Venus and the Arts of Love in Renaissance Florence*, 4.

⁸¹⁶ Plato, *Plato's Symposium*, 180c–85, 39; Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 192–93.



Figure 117. Altar-desk and Positive Organ Case Design. Cristopher Walther II, drawing, design, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (inv. nr H 0141.01). Source: Rüstammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Photo: Volker Dietzel.

The reinterpretation of the Platonic notion of the two Aphrodites became more complex during the Renaissance, in which on the one hand the naked Aphrodite ‘personifying Earthly Love, is the generative force that creates all tangible beauty,’ the clothed one, symbolized Heavenly Love, which is the elevated state that enables the mind to know the everlasting beauty of God.⁸¹⁷ At the same time, it could also be aligned with certain Medieval mentalities recovered in the sixteenth century that saw a more literal connection with Plato’s vision on considering the Heavenly Aphrodite as a ‘positive, procreative aspect of marital sex, and the Earthly Aphrodite leading to a ‘negative connotation of carnal desire.’⁸¹⁸ Interestingly, the cittern in Walther’s depiction seems to belong to Heavenly Aphrodite, while the cornett and drums are for Earthly Aphrodite. In this case, then, both cittern players, Germanic, and Italian, seem to have a similar meaning, namely conceiving the cittern as an attribute of Heavenly Aphrodisiac poetry. However, it is quite striking to find how contrasting both compositions are in terms of hierarchy.

It is instructive to compare Walther’s work with the 1504 *Triumph of Poetry* or *Isabella d’Este nel regno di Armonia*, which depicts a female figure holding a cittern (Figure 118).⁸¹⁹ Firstly, the cittern player in the Italian source is not only related to poetry but could well be the poet Sappho, whose lyric poems are famous for being associated with love, harmony, Aphrodite and Eros.⁸²⁰ Secondly, Stephen Campbell has identified that the clothed character crowning Isabella d’ Este is Aphrodite’s motherly and heavenly love nature.

The Triumph of Poetry, shows a circular gathering of historical characters such as Pythagoras, Aphrodite, Eros, and a couple of poets, including Sappho and her renovated lyre, the Italian traditional cittern or late form of the *cetra*. They all participate in the celebration of the Marchese of Mantua and humanist patron, who is crowned by Eros, held by a clothed Aphrodite.⁸²¹ In *The Triumph of Poetry*, the cittern is at the same compositional level as Isabella herself, surrounded by royalty and goddesses. In contrast, the Germanic cittern player plays and sings at the bottom of the altar, as if belonging to an

⁸¹⁷ Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, 239,240.

⁸¹⁸ Bayer, 239,240.

⁸¹⁹ [See chapter 3. ‘The Transformation of the Italian Cittern’. Section 3.1.3.](#)

⁸²⁰ Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 190–95, 200–206.

⁸²¹ Campbell, 192–93.

underworld, beneath the desk, beneath the birth of Christ, and beneath the glory and tragedy of the crucifixion.

The grotesques found next to the cittern's player are also worthy of mention because they could also suggest meanings of sensuality and marginality. The whole composition presents grotesques all over, however, as usual for the style, the motifs only participate in the periphery of the object and never become actual protagonists in the composition.⁸²² Being the open, fundamental, undeveloped, crude and protuberantly natural, makes the grotesque a fundamental antagonist of the continuous, monotonous, sealed, flawless and finished classical embodiment.⁸²³ In the case of the altar-desk, it is possible to denote how the grotesques contrast the many architectural classical elements, such as the many columns. In particular, the vegetative and floral design placed next to the cittern is predominantly larger than the other bizarre motifs that are marginal to the structure of Walther's altar, which could suggest that the place for such elements, along with the Aphrodisiac characters and their respective musical instruments, belong to some sort of natural world of love and desire.

A strange similar case is a depiction of a cittern being played by a monkey found in the Harley *Splendor Solis*, which is an alchemical work with twenty-two painted illustrations, characterised by a sense of the fantastic.⁸²⁴ *Splendor Solis*'s treatise on alchemy is extant in many sources, however, the Harley. MS. 3469, preserved at the British Library is widely renowned due to its beautiful illustrations.⁸²⁵ The text explains the art of alchemy which is not only the craft of making gold but the 'sublimation and thus the liberation of matter from its base and sickly existence through the process of transmutation.'⁸²⁶ Although the book is signed by Salomon Trismosin, a legendary character said to have supernatural powers, to own the philosopher's stone and to have lived for over one hundred and fifty years, the authorship remains uncertain, as the original author probably used a symbolic pseudonym.⁸²⁷

⁸²² Riccardi-Cubitt, "Grotesque."

⁸²³ Riccardi-Cubitt.

⁸²⁴ Feinstein, "Horsing Around," 673.

⁸²⁵ Völlnagel, "Harley MS. 3469," 3.

⁸²⁶ Völlnagel, 3.

⁸²⁷ Henderson and Sherwood, *Transformation of the Psyche*, 21.

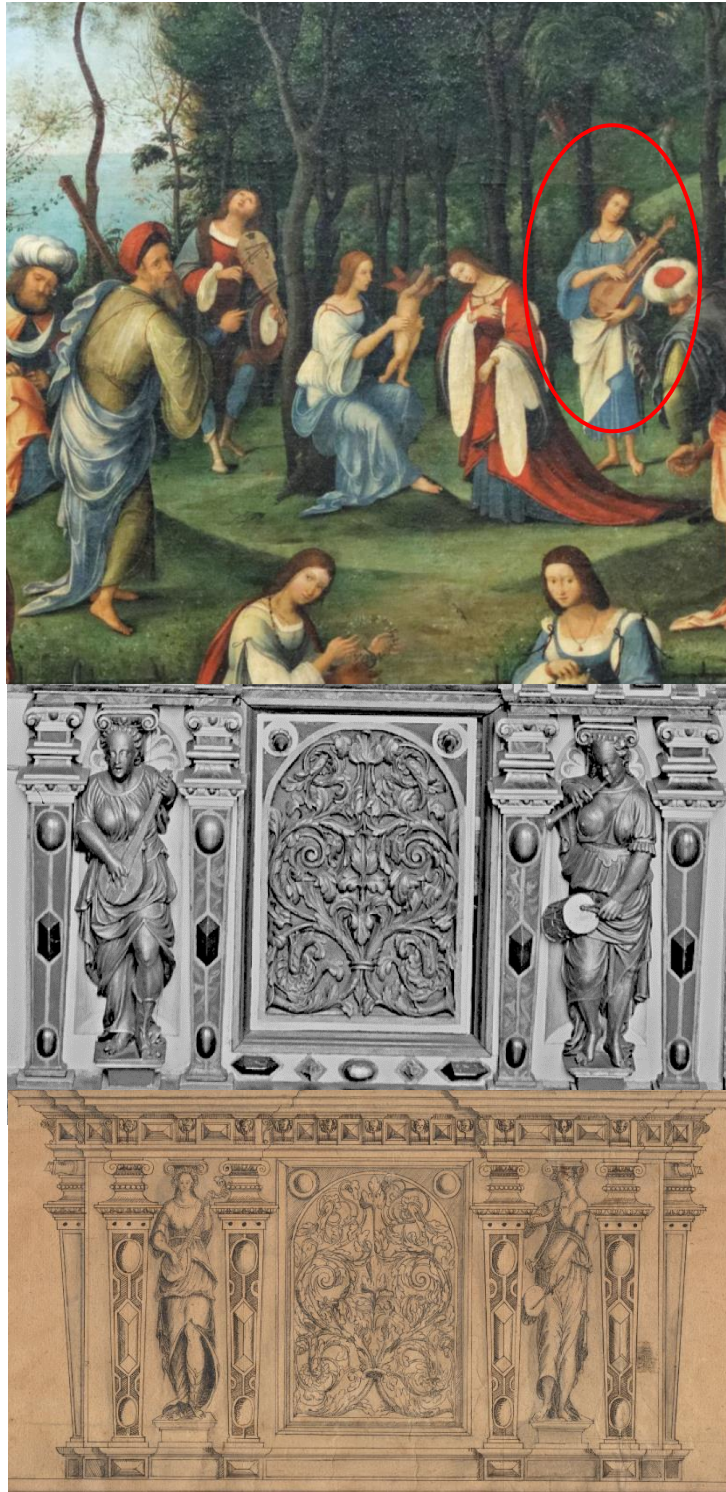


Figure 118. Walther's Cittern vs Isabella d' Este's Triumph of Poetry. Above, Lorenzo Costa, oil on canvas, 1504-1506, Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia, Museum of Louvre, Paris (inv. nr. 255); Middle; Cristopher Walther II, carved wood with marble and precious stones, altar, 1583-1584, Dresden Rüstammer, lost in World War II (inv. nr. Neg. Nr FD 141 004); Below, Cristopher Walther II, drawing, design, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen (inv. nr H 0141.01). Source: Top) Louvre "Allegorie de la Cour d' Isabelle d' Este." Accessed June 2, 2024. <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010059310>. © 2005 GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Thierry Le Mage; Courtesy of Andreas Michel; Bottom) Rüstammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Photo: Volker Dietzel;

The first illustration, before the preface and entitled *Arma Artis*, shows a framed composition which in the centre depicts two gentlemen having a conversation in the fields surrounded by the gates of a city that is actually seen in the far distance. In the front there is a hanged crimson banner with a sun and a disintegrating coat of arms. This scene is framed by flowers, plants, and birds, and at the bottom there are two monkeys, one feeding a fish to a heron and one playing a four-course diatonic cittern (Figure 119). Joseph L. Henderson has proposed an interpretation of the symbolism of the illustration which is well worth considering in the present context.⁸²⁸



Figure 119. Monkey Playing Cittern. Attributed to Solom Trismosin, illumination, *Splendor Solis*, 1582, South-eastern Germany, British Library. Source: Solomon Trismosin, *Splendor Solis* (Germany, 1582), Harley (3469, f.2). © British Library. Public Domain.

Henderson stated that the whole composition speaks of unexpected and paradoxical meanings, since a coat of arms, usually a symbol of power, appears to be disintegrating, while the framed animals are playing instruments and showing kindness to other species, something that goes against their nature.⁸²⁹ Moreover, Henderson stated that there is a ‘new attitude to the natural’, where the Medieval perception

⁸²⁸ Henderson, *Transformation of the Psyche*, 32,33; Henderson and Sherwood, *Transformation of the Psyche*, 32,33.

⁸²⁹ Henderson and Sherwood, *Transformation of the Psyche*, 34.

of anarchy and the damaging attributes of nature are now beautiful, since they offer a rich world where animals are conscious of themselves and behave as having human qualities. The monkey playing the cittern, according to Henderson, symbolizes the belief in the doctrine of the music of the spheres and the Pythagorean values of nature's relationship with ratios, planets, and musical scales, which was something common in the alchemist's ideology.⁸³⁰

On the one hand, it is possible to connect the idea of the cittern being an instrument as part of nature's beauty, something well expressed in its grotesque decoration, especially considering the Italian traditional instruments. It is worth then, to question if the *Splendor Solis*' monkey is part of a similar natural world as depicted in the grotesque decoration of the Aphrodisiac cittern of Walther's carved marble artwork, or if perhaps there is another meaning for the instrument to be in the hands of these two contrasting characters that praise the natural as philosophically valuable. If the *Splendor Solis*'s image is related to a revolutionary world where the old values are replaced by new ones, when the Medieval order is being rattled by the shifting economic and social circumstances of the second half of the sixteenth century, then the cittern in the hands of the monkey could play an interesting role.

The ancient doctrine of the music of the spheres has been represented in iconography as a celestial proclamation of the divine orders of the heavens and human soul through musical scales and musical instruments, essentially all represented by the mythological lyre of antiquity.⁸³¹ The doctrine of the spheres influenced authors across the Italian Peninsula, such as Marin Mersenne and Athanasius Kircher, as they were popular ideas on human and worldly harmony in Renaissance culture.⁸³² A good example is in the writings of Robert Fludd's 1617 *Utriusque cosmi... metaphysica, physica atque technica histories* where he postulated that the universe was a divine monochord.⁸³³

⁸³⁰ Henderson and Sherwood, 38.

⁸³¹ Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen, *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres*, 30; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 161–67.

⁸³² Haar, "Music of the Spheres."

⁸³³ Ammann, "The Musical Theory and Philosophy of Robert Fludd"; Godwin, *Robert Fludd*; Guariento, "From the Divine Monochord to the Weather-Glass."

The question then arises of how the music of the spheres, representing a higher, celestial and influential belief in the role of music and musical instruments for humanity, gets to be in the hands of a monkey? And how come the cittern that once was in the noble realm of cosmological poetry, singing to the aphrodisiac entourage of Isabella d' Este's coronation, is now consigned to the realm of nature?

As Henderson has pointed out, 'a symbol by its very nature cannot be interpreted definitively, and it will evoke different associations and meanings in each person and in the same person at different times.'⁸³⁴ In light of this consideration the author proposes that the cittern in the *Splendor Solis* is the perfect instrument to be played by a monkey because it is accessible and relatively easy to play. It is a practical plucked string with a loud, percussive sound and can be strummed away with a simple fingering. The transalpine cittern along with the guitar is one of the easiest instruments to play of all Renaissance plucked stringed instruments, and at the time of the treatise's publication in 1582 it was very popular all-over western Europe, precisely because it allowed complex music to be played straightforwardly.

This interpretation is by no means derogatory but on the contrary suggests how this allegorical image reminds the audience that music is part of nature, plants, flowers and birds, and that even monkeys can perform it. In this way, the *Splendor Solis'* cittern is very much related to the doctrine of the music of the spheres, for the cosmos and the soul of the world not only include the heavens and the higher realms of human minds but the very down-to-earth, underground territories of the natural world. From a sociological perspective, the historical reality is that in the Germanic society, the cittern was quickly becoming part of all layers, high, middle, and low.

4.2.3 Freiberg and Everywhere

The Germanic cittern was engrained into the deepest fabric of society, increasingly becoming entangled with the modest classes. Winfried Schrammek, for example, asked whether the cittern belonged more to a 'folk' or an art music tradition, mainly due to the fact that since the first decades of the middle of the sixteenth century, the instrument had a significant presence in the lower classes especially in Thuringia.⁸³⁵ Other regions that embraced the cittern into their social identity were Saxony,

⁸³⁴ Henderson and Sherwood, *Transformation of the Psyche*, 30.

⁸⁹¹ Schrammek, "Musikinstrumente in Ungebrochener Tradition: Über Cistern Und Zithern."

which had an ‘unbroken tradition of producing and playing citterns’ that expanded well into the eighteenth century.⁸³⁶ Moreover in central regions such as Switzerland the cittern soon became an autochthonous instrument and its use persisted through the early modern period and beyond when it was transformed into distinctive types.⁸³⁷

There is no need to look very far to show how deeply the cittern had penetrated into the early modern working class, as early modern organologist Michael Praetorius categorized the four-course cittern, in both its ‘French’ and ‘Italian Tuning’, as an instrument having the ‘vilest of associations’, ‘fit only for beggars and bargees,’ as translated by David Crookes. The latter terms are outdated forms used for the operators of small seagoing vessels; however, when Praetorius said *Sutoribus atque sartoribus*, he meant to indicate repairers and tailors.⁸³⁸

It is worth reflecting upon Praetorius’ view that the cittern was predominantly used by people of unprivileged classes, which again is a testimony to the social ubiquity of this instrument in the German-speaking countries by the early seventeenth century. This would only increase with time, as for example in Saxony, where the constant practice of the cittern by the miners turned the instrument into a symbol of identity.⁸³⁹ Moreover, the cittern in Switzerland, having already enjoyed over a hundred years of practice, was established as a traditional instrument known as the *halszither*, which was used by the peasants and amateurs in the late seventeenth century and beyond into the eighteenth.⁸⁴⁰

Freiberg Cathedral contains an electoral burial chapel that among its many astonishing decorations presents gilded musical instruments held by sculptural angels. Although the instruments are covered in gold paint, they have almost all their functional features as they were manufactured by a luthier. Among cornetts, shawms, percussion instruments, trumpets, and trombones there are four gilded citterns. Such rich instrumentation is a mirror of the musical cultivation of the ensembles of sacred and secular contexts.⁸⁴¹ At the same time, Hans T. Kessler, highlighted that the presence of the citterns in the

⁸³⁶ Michel, “Quellen Zur Geschichte Der Zister in Sachsen Vom 16. Bis 19. Jahrhundert,” 87.

⁸³⁷ Michel, “Zistern.”

⁸³⁸ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 61,98.

⁸³⁹ Michel, “Zistern”; Marx and Baerthold, *Bergbau und Kunst in Sachsen*, 60.

⁸⁴⁰ Bachmann-Geiser, “Die Hanottiere Und Ihre Vorgängerin, Die Cister, in Bildquellen Der Schweiz,” 211; Michel, “Zistern.”

⁸⁴¹ Steude, “Die historischen Musikinstrumente in der kurfürstlichen Begräbnis Kapelle Doms als Reflex der Musikpflege ihrer Zeit,” 39–40.

Freiberg cathedral show how quickly and deeply the cittern had penetrated in a complex society where the upper-middle class was developing social, political, and consequently artistic independence (Figure 120).⁸⁴²

These citterns, as virtually all the instruments in the sculptural work, are real and reflect the craftsmanship of an everyday musical instrument used for all kinds of purposes, from courtly entertainment to lower class domestic and urban settings.⁸⁴³ Just as with Schrammek's work, there is a tendency to perceive the cittern as a 'folk instrument,' as if it originated as part of a vernacular tradition of the Germanic regions. As previously shown, the Germanic cittern was not originated from an autochthonous tradition but was most likely a sudden renovation of the *cetra* or early Italian cittern tradition, that because of the shifting economic and cultural changes of the time quickly spread among all social layers since the 1530s.



Figure 120. Angels Holding Musical Instruments. Carlo di Cesare, gold-copper leaf and varnish over casted stucco, 1594, Freiberg, Germany. Note the angel holding the cittern highlighted with an oval. Source: Courtesy of Janos Stekovics ©.

⁸⁴² Kessler, "Leipziger Teilung, Wurzen Fehde und die Schlacht bei Mühlberg," 12.

⁸⁴³ Fontana and Heller, "Musikinstrumente in Engleshand," 90,78.

According to Eszter Fontana and Viet Heller, the citterns⁸⁴⁴ at the Freiberg cathedral probably came from places such as Randeck and Heibigsdorf in Freiberg, where there was a musical instrument building centre that was popular even beyond Saxony.⁸⁴⁵ Through a study of the building techniques of the instruments, the authors concluded that the citterns were an example of a simple but solid craftsmanship, indicating that they were made for real use and not simply for courtly treasury. In fact, it is even possible that the citterns were already in the stock of a local luthier, and they were bought and later gilded to fit the angelic sculptures.

‘It could have been easy to buy from the manufacturers already existing more or less ready-made instruments for the design of the chapel.’⁸⁴⁶

The authors also stressed the fact that there was an ‘economical use of materials and a certain division of labour, where old parchment with previous used inscriptions was used to fix the roses on the soundboards and the heads were carved separately and then placed on top.’⁸⁴⁷ Other basic features are the use of one bar close to the position of the bridge, and one bar above the rose to support the soundboard; the back presents one bar below the bridge and one bar below the rose (Figure 121).



Figure 121. X-Ray Image of one of the Freiberg Citterns. Anonymous, cittern, 1594, Freiberg Dome, Germany. Source: Courtesy of Janos Stekovics ©.

⁸⁴⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments in number 8, Table 3.](#)

⁸⁴⁵ Fontana and Heller, “Die Musikinstrumente Aus Der Begräbniskapelle Des Freiburger Domes: Ein Forschungsprojekt Zu Sächsischen Musikinstrumenten Des 16. Jahrhunderts Und Seine Geschichte,” 77.

⁸⁴⁶ Fontana and Heller, 77.

⁸⁴⁷ Fontana and Heller, 77.

The Freiberg citterns, along with the other musical instruments played by the golden angels, are an example of the combination between musical traditions of different social contexts, such as urban taverns, court processions, minstrel practice and the rural music of Saxony. Paraphrasing Eszter Fontana, citterns, harps, drums, and triangles were part of the street ensembles that were joined by mountain singers chanting loudly. With their instruments, the Freiberg golden angels portray the music as it could have been heard from the town tower when it was played in the churches, festivities and weddings.⁸⁴⁸ Examples of such urban hybrid music are the testimonies of the town musicians of Wernigerode, in Saxony, who expressed that the shepherds and carpenters should be playing not in their country homes but in the town festivals.⁸⁴⁹ More city music is found in the 1655 *Chronicon Lipsiense*,⁸⁵⁰ written by Zacharias Schneider (died 1699), who protested against Leipzig students for drinking wine, seeking beautiful women, wondering the streets, howling like dogs and cats while playing several musical instruments including lutes, violins, harps and citterns.⁸⁵¹ Even at night the music in the streets seemed unstoppable, for Andreas Michel, quoting the work of G. Kraft, wrote that in the Nordhausen regulations of 1583, students were not allowed to ‘walk the streets in the foggy night with lutes and citterns and other instruments.’⁸⁵²

The Freiberg cathedral placed divine angels at the top of a metaphorical heaven that was only in reality a mixture between the popular and higher Germanic traditions of the sixteenth century. As in *Splendor Solis* or in an aphrodisiac grotesque, a popular instrument like the cittern can still be a symbol of the high heavens and of the noblest of the noblest characters, because as a musical instrument it is first and foremost an enabler of beauty, joy, harmony, and cultural identity.

⁸⁴⁸ Fontana and Heller, 90.

⁸⁴⁹ Michel, “Zistern”; Kiehl, *Volksmusik im Harz und im Harzvorland*, 12; Kiehl, *Die Volksmusik im Harz und im Harzvorland*, 19.

⁸⁵⁰ The main subject of the *Chronicon Lipsiense*, was a description of Saxony, specifically in Leipzig and discussed their commercial activities, inhabitants, control, government, religion among other matters. Schneider, *Chronicon Lipsiense*.

⁸⁵¹ The original text as quoted by scholar Andreas Michel reads; ‘diejenigen, welche, nachdem sie Wein gefaßt, nur nach schönen Frauen trachten, von einer Mitternacht zur andern mit großen welschen Violen, Lauten, Geigen, Harpfen, Zittern, Fiedlen, Zinken und Pfeifen auf der Gassen herumblauen, vagiren, löflen, ein Hofierliedlein singen und ein Geplärr und Geheul treiben wie die Hund und Katzen, auf Meinung, ihrem allerliebsten Elßle, das am Fenster ligt (unangesehem es eben so bald eine weiße Katz ist) dadurch ein Ehr zu erweisen und ihre Huld und Gnad zu erwerben.’ Michel, “Zistern”; Schneider, *Chronicon Lipsiense*, S.29.

⁸⁵² Michel, “Zistern”; Kraft, *Die Grundlagen der thüringischen Musikkultur um 1600*, 171.

In a way, a large sector of humanity is indebted to the popularity of the cittern in the Germanic lands, for it was indeed the musical instrument that founded the dynasty that gave birth to one of the tallest giants of western music, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Vitus Bach (1551-1619), great-great-grandfather of Johann Sebastian, was said to have amused himself playing a small type of cittern. Vitus was a baker and miller, and his ancestors were not professional musicians, which indicates not only the start of the musical life of his descendants, but also that the cittern was an instrument accessible to amateurs.⁸⁵³

Cittern making was the business of violin makers as well as lute makers. Andreas Michel, quoting Bernhard Zoebisch, pointed out that in 1677, the town of Markneukirchen of Saxony, had a violin maker's guild, which had a specific set of regulations for the master's examination. According to such rules, the individual under scrutiny had to make an instrument within three weeks, and the options were: a tenor violin made with a 'pure inlaid' neck, a viola da gamba and a cittern of 'beautiful wood.'⁸⁵⁴

Furthermore, the inventory of the lute maker Peter Hackenbroich, included several citterns, as well as cittern frets. Michel, according to the work of Rudolf Wustmann and Herbert Heyde, reported that in Hackenbroich's workshop there were citterns coming from Erfurt a city of Thuringia. It seems that there were Erfurt models of two different qualitative designs, meaning common and 'bad', the latter being half the price of the former.⁸⁵⁵

It is difficult to know exactly what a Germanic cittern building workshop would look like; however, as the instrument was being made by luthiers in general, it is very possible that the cittern was just another piece of work among violins, viols, lutes and guitars. For example, the Swiss draughtsman, woodcutter, engraver, etcher, and painter Jost Amman (1539-1591) who worked in Nuremberg from 1561 probably until his death in 1591, gives a realistic glimpse into a sixteenth century workshop where a cittern is hung (Figure 122).⁸⁵⁶

⁸⁵³ Wolff et al., "Bach Family."

⁸⁵⁴ Michel, "Zistern"; Zoebisch, *Vogtländischer Geigenbau*, 42.

⁸⁵⁵ Michel, "Zistern"; Wustmann, *Musikgeschichte Leipzigs*, 155f,203; Heyde, "Produktionsformen Und Gewerbeorganisation Im Leipziger Musikinstrumentenbau Des 16. Bis 18. Jahrhunderts," 222–23.

⁸⁵⁶ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 310.



Figure 122. Luthier's Workshop in the German Speaking Countries. Jost Amman, drawing, *Music Workshop*, 1564-1591, British Museum (inv. nr.1997,0712.90). Note the cittern hanged next to a guitar. Source: The British Museum Trustees © CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

The German-speaking countries absorbed quickly their early version of the transalpine cittern and embraced it into their daily culture. Students, nobles, merchants, miners, professional players, and countrymen, one of them Vitus Bach, played the cittern. Lute and violin makers built citterns as they became more and more popular for the Germanic cities. This wide social spectrum was not dissimilar from the Italian cittern context: nevertheless, the humanist meaning was barely present. The Germanic territory had sufficient innovating markets and entrepreneurs, backed by a prominent industrial wealth, to foster the production of innovative musical instruments such as the transalpine cittern.⁸⁵⁷ However, it was the French musical printing industry that disseminated the transalpine cittern and its music all over western Europe.

⁸⁵⁷ Kahsnitz, *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg, 1300-1550*, 20–21.

4.3 The Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish Enterprise

The following section describes the successful globalisation of the cittern through the commodification of its music in pivotal places of *free* European musical trade. This moment of the cittern's social trajectory is fundamental, because it was through the French, Flemish and Netherlandish enterprise, that the cittern acquired a new musical identity that was going to mark the rest of its story. While the German-speaking countries absorbed the cittern practice into their social fabric, the Franco-Flemish publishers embraced it as a business that allowed the music of more complicated instruments, such as the lute, to be played on a cheaper and more accessible plucked stringed instrument, and this had important consequences for the cittern's meanings and associations.

4.3.1 The Printing Entrepreneurship

While before 1530 the cittern did not exist outside the Italian Peninsula, by circa 1535 a new version of the Italian *cetra* had been created, and in less than ten years the first publication of a heavily influential series of cittern music was launched.⁸⁵⁸ From 1550 to 1600 the transalpine cittern had over thirty printed publications of both complex and accessible music.⁸⁵⁹

France was indeed a mighty political kingdom that dramatically amassed territorial power during the fifteenth and seventeenth century. For example, in 1400 the kingdom of France possessed less than half the area it had by 1600.⁸⁶⁰ Besides Navarre in 1477, Burgundy, with all its cultural strength,⁸⁶¹ was annexed to France in 1532, as well as Brittany, followed by Bresse in 1536.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁸ The cittern and guitar book by Guillaume Morlaye published in 1552, Sebastian Vreedman's printed tablature published in 1563 (now lost and contents probably the same as his publication in 1569) and Adrian Le Roy's second cittern book of 1564 are the earliest works for the transalpine cittern. James Tyler, based on Howard Mayer Brown suggested a book by Adrian Le Roy in 1551, although it seems to be lost as there is no evidence of it, probably Tyler suggested this as the 1564 Le Roy publication is entitled as the second book, implying there was a first one. Scholarship suggests that since 1545 Adrian Le Roy was already publishing cittern music, as his output usually takes material form previous publications. Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharae (1582)," 66–78; Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern," 27; Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*; Brown, 137–38, 206, 213; Forrester, "The Cittern," 152; Morlaye, *Quatriesme livre contenant plusieurs fantasies, chansons, gaillardes, paduanes, bransles, reduictes en tabulature de guyterne. Et au jeu de la cistre*; Vredeman, *Carminum quae cythara pulsantur liber secundus*; Le Roy and Ballard, *Second livre de cistre, contenant les commandemens de Dieu*.

⁸⁵⁹ Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern."

⁸⁶⁰ Sider, *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*, xv.

⁸⁶¹ By the first half of the fifteenth century, the court of Burgundy, Flanders, achieved a cultural dominance, which was close and even supersede the courts of France and England. Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 16,17,20.

⁸⁶² Sider, *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*, xv.

The court had a rich cultural life that consisted of the acquisition and manufacture of art and knowledge of all kinds. At the same time the urban spaces of these cities and others from the North had a sort of independence from their court. It was the local merchant enterprises that offered patronage to the artists, and the court used the local artistic resources too when needed.⁸⁶³

The demand of art created by the consumer classes, both from nobility and the burgeoning elite classes such as officials, lawyers, merchants, and rentiers, contributed to a ‘panoply of luxury goods’ that directly placed craftsmen in the spotlight.⁸⁶⁴ Artists and artisans were going to satisfy the thirst for their desired products and in return formed part of an accelerating commercial exchange.

During the sixteenth century France experienced more production on all small handicraft business. Guilds and restrictions could operate in a certain level; however, the growing autonomy of successful masters could not stop the proliferation of small monopolies of art workshops. Many artisans grew to become entrepreneurs, often involved in commerce and finance, where great amounts of profit were to be made.⁸⁶⁵ As Clair Dolan has stated, early modern France was characterised by associations of artisans working in specific trades, often related by blood but mostly by commercial activities in cities that formed a constant innovation and influence among trades inside and outside their national contexts.⁸⁶⁶

Although the French polymath Marin Mersenne mentioned that the cittern was more used in Italy than in France,⁸⁶⁷ there is no doubt that this instrument was quite significant for the kingdom. In general, Paris thrived between 1540 and 1576, seeing about one hundred collections of printed music,⁸⁶⁸ and for the cittern, the kingdom produced five publications that were going to be very influential for the rest of the continent.⁸⁶⁹ In general, it was the growing demand for instrumental music since the beginning of the century that characterised a continental tendency to adapt vocal music into instrumental ensembles,

⁸⁶³ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 16,17,20.

⁸⁶⁴ R. Farr, “Consumers, Commerce, and the Craftsmen of Dijon: The Changing Social and Economic Structure of a Provincial Capital, 1450–1750,” 132.

⁸⁶⁵ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 163-165,167,175.

⁸⁶⁶ Dolan, “The Artisans of Aix-En-Provence in the Sixteenth Century: A Microanalysis of Social Relationships,” 186.

⁸⁶⁷ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, the Books on Instruments*, 140.

⁸⁶⁸ Lesure, “France.”

⁸⁶⁹ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 168; Tyler, “A Checklist for the Cittern,” 27.

mainly for keyboards and lute.⁸⁷⁰ It was the spread of that kind of musical enthusiasm that supported the earliest *free* musical trade.⁸⁷¹

Composers of polyphonic vocal pieces, often arranged for harpsichord and lute, also adapted them for the guitar and cittern.⁸⁷² An early Italian cittern or a *cetra* may already have been present in French territory, or conceivably a transalpine Germanic prototype was being tested in the experimental musical ensembles. What is clear is that through an invigorating context of commercial music printing, the transalpine cittern took a definitive musical identity, which was completely different from the one inherited from the Italian Peninsula. Such transformation reflected the conflicting and yet productive commercial relationships among musicians that characterised the early capitalistic entrepreneurship involving instrumental music in France.⁸⁷³

Examples of artist-entrepreneurs that played a key role in the dissemination of the cittern were Adrian Le Roy and his cousin Robert Ballard who printed several books of cittern and guitar music. From 1551 these French publishers enjoyed a Royal privilege to print and sell all kinds of music books.⁸⁷⁴ Le Roy came from a wealthy merchant family in northern France and created a profitable network around the court and artists' circles where he introduced the new transalpine cittern in its French version. Le Roy and Ballard's 1565 influential cittern book *Breve et Facile Instruction Pour Apprendre La Tablature, A bien Accorder, Conduire, Et Disposer La Main Sur Le Cistre* was possibly based on an earlier version, now lost, published in 1545.⁸⁷⁵

Another big cittern entrepreneur was Guillaume Morlaye (1510-1558), who besides a lutenist, editor and eventually printer of music of the guitar and cittern was involved in the slave trade.⁸⁷⁶ Morlaye's guitar and cittern book the 1552 *Quatriesme Livre Contenant Plusieurs Fantasies* and his 1565 *Breve et Facile Instruction Pour Apprendre La Tablature, A bien Accorder, Conduire, Et Disposer La Main*

⁸⁷⁰ Fitch, "The Renaissance," 60.

⁸⁷¹ It was brought out in 1501 by Ottaviano Petrucci, the same enterprising Venetian printer who the next year brought out the volume of Josquin masses. Taruskin, "Music Becomes a Business."

⁸⁷² Goldobin, "Обработка Вокальной Полифонии Для Гитары и Для Цистры в XVI Веке," 86–88.

⁸⁷³ Parker, *Class and State in Early Modern France*, 112, 113, 280.

⁸⁷⁴ Pogue and Dobbins, "Le Roy, Adrian."

⁸⁷⁵ Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharae (1582)," 66–78.

⁸⁷⁶ Dobbins, "Morlaye, Guillaume."

Sur Le Cistre influenced further publications of Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard in Paris and Pierre Phalese as well Jean Bellere from Antwerp.⁸⁷⁷

Among the many famous names of music printers and arrangers such as Morlaye, Le Roy and Ballard, there was Simon Gorlier (1550-1584), a music printer, bookseller, composer, and instrumentalist.⁸⁷⁸ Permitted privilege for printing music in 1558, he published several volumes of music arranged, composed, and adapted by himself, including a cittern book now lost.⁸⁷⁹ As Daniel Hertz candidly stated, most of these printers not only knew each other but also ‘could not avoid one another’ as they entered into fierce competition.⁸⁸⁰

Michel Fezandat (1538–1566) and Robert Granjon (1513 – 1589) created a partnership in 1550, contracting both for ten years of music publishing.⁸⁸¹ By 1551, however, their association was dissolved and Granjon was entangled in a series of litigations involving piracy, one of them concerning Simon Gorlier. The latter was also later trapped in pamphlet battles with the theorist and composer Louis Bourgeois of Geneva (1510-1559).⁸⁸²

4.3.2 For the Privileged and the Modest Citizen

Together with the significant presence of printed music for the cittern came the manufacture of citterns, which were part of a fruitful market of musical instruments,⁸⁸³ creating a professional association between instrumentalists, luthiers, and craftsmen of other professions such as carpenters, turners, painters, and goldsmiths.⁸⁸⁴

The instrument maker, as any other artisan, occupied a moment where they and their associates could perfect their technical skills and develop a flexible system of production that would eventually allow them to respond fast to the changes in demand.⁸⁸⁵ The rising demand for musical instruments brought

⁸⁷⁷ Tyler and Sparks, *The Guitar and Its Music*, 6–13.

⁸⁷⁸ Fitch, “The Renaissance,” 60.

⁸⁷⁹ Entitled as *Livre de tabulature de cistre*, possibly printed by Gorlier in 1558 in Lyon. Hertz, “Parisian Music Publishing under Henry II,” 448; Verdier, *La Bibliothèque d’Antoine du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprius, contenant le Catalogue de tous ceux qui ont écrit, ou traduit en françois ... Aussi y sont contenus les liures dont les auteurs sont incertains ... et a la fin vn supplement de l’epitome de la Bibliothèque de Gesner*, 1136.

⁸⁸⁰ Hertz, “Parisian Music Publishing under Henry II,” 454.

⁸⁸¹ Dobbins, “Fezandat [Faisandat], Michel.”

⁸⁸² Hertz, “Parisian Music Publishing under Henry II,” 454, 455.

⁸⁸³ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 11.

⁸⁸⁴ Lesure, 14.

⁸⁸⁵ Benedict, “French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: An Overview,” 28–30.

regulations characterised by the desire to clarify the rights of luthiers compared with other trades. For example, by the end of the fifteenth century in Strasbourg there were corporations made between carpenters and organ builders, and later on by 1568 there were associations of carpenters, violin makers, spinets, and organs.⁸⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Guilds were not effective enough to prevent some makers creating their own enterprises, allowing some of them, such as Jehan Brissart (1550 – after 1607) to seek new social status or become ‘bourgeois de Paris.’ Brissart, as many other distinguished makers, could operate somewhat freely outside the guilds.⁸⁸⁷

A very important study of inventories and notarial acts from 1556 and 1650 made by François Lesure, revealed that the cittern was the third most used plucked string instrument, even more so than the mandora and the theorbo.⁸⁸⁸ Cities with important international connections such as Paris and Lyon acted as a ‘crossroads of Europe’, enjoying connections with the Italian Peninsula, Lorraine, Flanders, and Bourgogne, and were characterised by their commercial activity and manufacture of musical instruments.⁸⁸⁹ A significant quantity of citterns, viols, violins, guitars, lutes, recorders, oboes and bagpipes were made in Lyon during the sixteenth century.⁸⁹⁰ Instrument maker Robert Denis (died 1589) had to his name seventy-one lutes, one hundred and nine bowed strings, thirty-seven guitars and twenty-six citterns. Claude Denis, son of Robert, (1544 - 1587) produced sixty-seven lutes, eighty-eight bowed strings, thirty-one guitars, thirteen citterns and sixty-two mandoras. Claude had a considerable business since his inventory shows more than two hundred completed instruments and over four hundred unfinished ones.⁸⁹¹ There is also evidence that the French maker Paul Belamy, who also made harpsichords, had a successful musical instrument workshop with two hundred finished and unfinished instruments including, lutes, mandoras, gitterns, citterns, pandoras, pochettes, violins, bows and cases.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸⁶ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 12.

⁸⁸⁷ Lesure, 12.

⁸⁸⁸ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle”; Charnassé, “Les recueils pour cistre d’Adrian Le Roy 1564-1565,” 234–35.

⁸⁸⁹ Gétreau, “Instrument Making in Lyon and Paris around 1600,” 6.

⁸⁹⁰ Gétreau, 6.

⁸⁹¹ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 14,38. Lesure quotes a 1587 inventory of Claude Denis after his death (*Minutier central*, III,194, *Notaires au Paris*, National Archives).

⁸⁹² Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 300.

There were probably different sizes and qualities of citterns, since an inventory of 1557 mentioned ‘two citterns one large and one small’ priced for eleven *écu* the set, while ‘two other small citterns’ were priced for thirty *écu*.⁸⁹³ An additional inventory of 1570 stated a cittern and guitar both priced forty *écu*, while ‘another cittern’ made by Jacques De la Motte was priced as hundred and ten *écu*. De la Motte was a Parisian maker of lutes and other instruments and brother-in-law of Gaspar Tieffenbrucker, who was the son of the famous Germanic instrument maker Gaspar the Elder, (c.1514 –1570) from Bavaria, who settled in Lyon and was naturalized French.⁸⁹⁴ It seems that Tieffenbrucker the Elder, among the several plucked and bowed stringed instruments he made, also built citterns as his portrait can attest. Figure 123 shows a rather hidden tapered small cittern just beneath one of the many lutes depicted in the print. Interestingly, the cittern shows a protruding string holder as in the traditional Italian citterns and *cetre*.



Figure 123. A Cittern in Tieffenbrucker’s Output. Pierre II Woeiriot de Bongey, print, Portrait de Gaspar Tieffenbrucker, 1565, Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. nr. VM PHOT MIRI-2-80). Source: Gallica. “Portrait de Gaspar Duiffoprugear / Pierre II Woeiriot de Bongey.” Image, 1985 1945. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84184874>. Public Domain.

⁸⁹³ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 25.

⁸⁹⁴ Lesure, 20–26; Harwood and Ongaro, “Tieffenbrucker.”

Lavishly decorated citterns were also produced: an inventory of 1557 indicates ‘two citterns one large and one small’ priced for eleven *écu* the set, while ‘two other small citterns’ were priced for thirty *écu*.⁸⁹⁵ There is also evidence of a wired plucked instrument with marquetry work, which was priced as high as forty *écu* in 1589.⁸⁹⁶

The cittern, together with the lute and guitar, were in such an invigorating market that they reached all social layers. François Lesure emphasized that instrumentalists were one of the biggest consumers; however, the rise of amateur playing brought customers from different economic backgrounds.⁸⁹⁷ For example, citterns could be as half as cheap as a wooden sideboard of approximately one and a half meter long, which was forty *sous tournois*.⁸⁹⁸

Unfortunately, the popularity of the cittern in French lower classes is not represented by a vast amount of evidence, while in contrast there is much more testimony of the use of the cittern by the French privileged classes. An early French depiction of the cittern can be seen in a richly carved Burgundian *dressoir* made in the middle of the sixteenth century or possibly before (Figure 124). Among the many fantastic grotesque characters represented, there is a scene of a woman playing the lute, while a cittern lies at her feet. The composition is enriched with a background of grapes and other musical instruments such as woodwinds, bowed strings and children playing the harp and the lute. This musical carving constitutes the door of a cupboard of the cabinet, that according to John L. Severance, is typical of the reign of Henry II (1547-1559).⁸⁹⁹ The French *dressoir*, usually destined to display tableware, could be more than luxurious furniture for the privileged classes since they functioned as symbols to display desired values of political hierarchy, identity and ‘political and cultural intentions.’⁹⁰⁰ A *dressoir* when placed in the bedchamber of a lady who was newly confined in a state of marriage, displayed the family’s status. This meaning was expressed through the number of shelves

⁸⁹⁵ Lesure, “La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle,” 25.

⁸⁹⁶ Lesure, 40.

⁸⁹⁷ Lesure, 16.

⁸⁹⁸ Zecher, *Sounding Objects*, 14; Lesure, *Musique et musiciens français du XVIe siècle*, 68; Vaccaro and Martin, *La musique de luth en France au XVIe siècle*, 59.

⁸⁹⁹ Severance, *Catalogue of the John L. Severance Collection*, 36.

⁹⁰⁰ Karaskova, ““Ung Dressoir de Cinq Degrez”: Mary of Burgundy and the Construction of the Image of the Female Ruler,” 319–20.

that would indicate whether the owner was a mere townswoman, a noble or a Queen, the latter having four and the first only one shelf.⁹⁰¹



Figure 124. The Cittern in a French Dressoir. Style of Huges Sambin, Dressoir, middle of the sixteenth century, Burgundy, The Cleveland Museum of Art, (inv. nr. 1942.606). Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art, “Dressoir,” accessed January 19, 2024, <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1942.606#>. Creative Commons.

Good King Henry (1553 -1610), ruler of the Kingdom of Navarra and France from 1589 to 1610, married to Marie de Medici (1575 -1642) in 1600. The official celebrations took place in the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, and on their way back to Paris the newly-weds made a triumphal entry to the papal city of Avignon where King Henry’s life was celebrated as the ‘French Hercules.’ They rode on a chariot adapted with six arcades, double staircases, and a stand for the royal couple, and the wagon, pulled by horses disguised as elephants, had an instrumental ensemble with singers, one cittern, lutes, plucked or bowed stringed instruments and woodwinds, among them a serpent (Figure 125).⁹⁰²

⁹⁰¹ Karaskova, 319–20.

⁹⁰² Bowles, *Musical Ensembles in Festival Books, 1500-1800*, 152; Valladier, *Labyrinthe royal de l’Hercule gaulois triomphant*, Plate 17.



Figure 125. Royal Chariot of King Henry IV and Marie de Medici. André Valladier, print, *Labyrinthe royal de l'Hercule gaulois triomphant*, 1601, Avignon. Note the cittern player in the centre, near the serpent. Source: André Valladier, *Labyrinthe royal de l'Hercule gaulois triomphant: sur le sujet des fortunes, batailles, victoires, trophées, triomphes, mariage & autres faicts heroiques & memorables de tres-auguste & tres-chrestien prince Henry IIII roy de France & de Navarre: representé à l'entrée trimphante de la royne en la cité d'Avignon, le 19 novembre l'an MDC, ou sont contenues les magnificences et triomphes dressez à cet effect par ladicte ville* (Avignon: Chez Iaques Bramereau, imprimeur en Auignon, 1601)., Plate 17. Open Licence 2.0 Institut National d' Histoire de l' art, Digital Collections ®.

Regarding evidence of the cittern in French private libraries is possible to consider Antoin du Verdier (1544-1600), lord of Vauprivas, was a noble French scholar and politician employed as the king's advisor, courtier and general administrator in Lyon. Known for a 'variety of miscellaneous' written works, he had an impressive library, which according to him, contained the work of Simon Gorlier.⁹⁰³ Du Verdier cites four tablatures by Gorlier, including the aforementioned *Livre de tabulature de cistre* [cittern] which was printed by Gorlier in 1558 in Lyon.

Although bibliographers can cite books that only exist in title, some books mentioned by du Verdier, were in fact found in the 1960s.⁹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, Gorlier's cittern book was not found, and Howard Mayer Brown registered the title as lost.⁹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, given the fact that many of Du Verdier's titles concerning the guitar and lute exist today, there is no reason to doubt that this early modern scholar was familiar with the cittern as part of the musical instruments not only popular at the time, but part of the social *arsenal* necessary for the ideal sixteenth century courtier.⁹⁰⁶ The ethos of Du Verdier is well expressed in his portrait made by Barthélemy Honorat in 1581, which depicts the writer enclosed by an ornamental cartouche wearing a ruff, holding a helmet with his left hand and placing his right hand on a book. Du Verdier is framed by the god of war Mars and Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom. Minerva appears pointing a harp with one hand and raising a book with the other one. Beneath her, a collection of musical instruments symbolizes the goddess's attributes and the significance Du Verdier assigned to music as part of the humanist education to his bellicose chivalry (Figure 126).

The passion of collecting artworks, inspired by the famous *Wunderkammen* of the noble households, sought not only social status and power display but curiosity and musical interest as well. Physician Rasse des Neux (circa 1552 - 1587) owned seven guitars, one cittern, one viol and six lutes.⁹⁰⁷ Rasse was an eminent Paris surgeon and a perfect example of the upper middle-class citizen who displayed his rising status through collecting all kinds of artifacts and artworks. Rasse's collection was admired

⁹⁰³ Verdier, *La Bibliothèque d'Antoine du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprivas, contenant le Catalogue de tous ceux qui ont écrit, ou traduit en françois ... Aussi y sont contenus les liures dont les auteurs sont incertains ... et a la fin vn supplement de l'epitome de la Bibliothèque de Gesner*, 1136.

⁹⁰⁴ Hertz, "Parisian Music Publishing under Henry II," 448.

⁹⁰⁵ Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*, 242; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 216.

⁹⁰⁶ Martines, "Peter Burke. The Fortunes of the Courtier," 1148; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 10–13.

⁹⁰⁷ Zecher, "Ronsard's Guitar," 15; Fontaine, "Le concert des voix et des instruments chez Jodelle, Aneau et quelques autres," 465.

in his circle of friends and colleagues, among them poets, courtiers, secretaries and administrative officers of the nobility.⁹⁰⁸

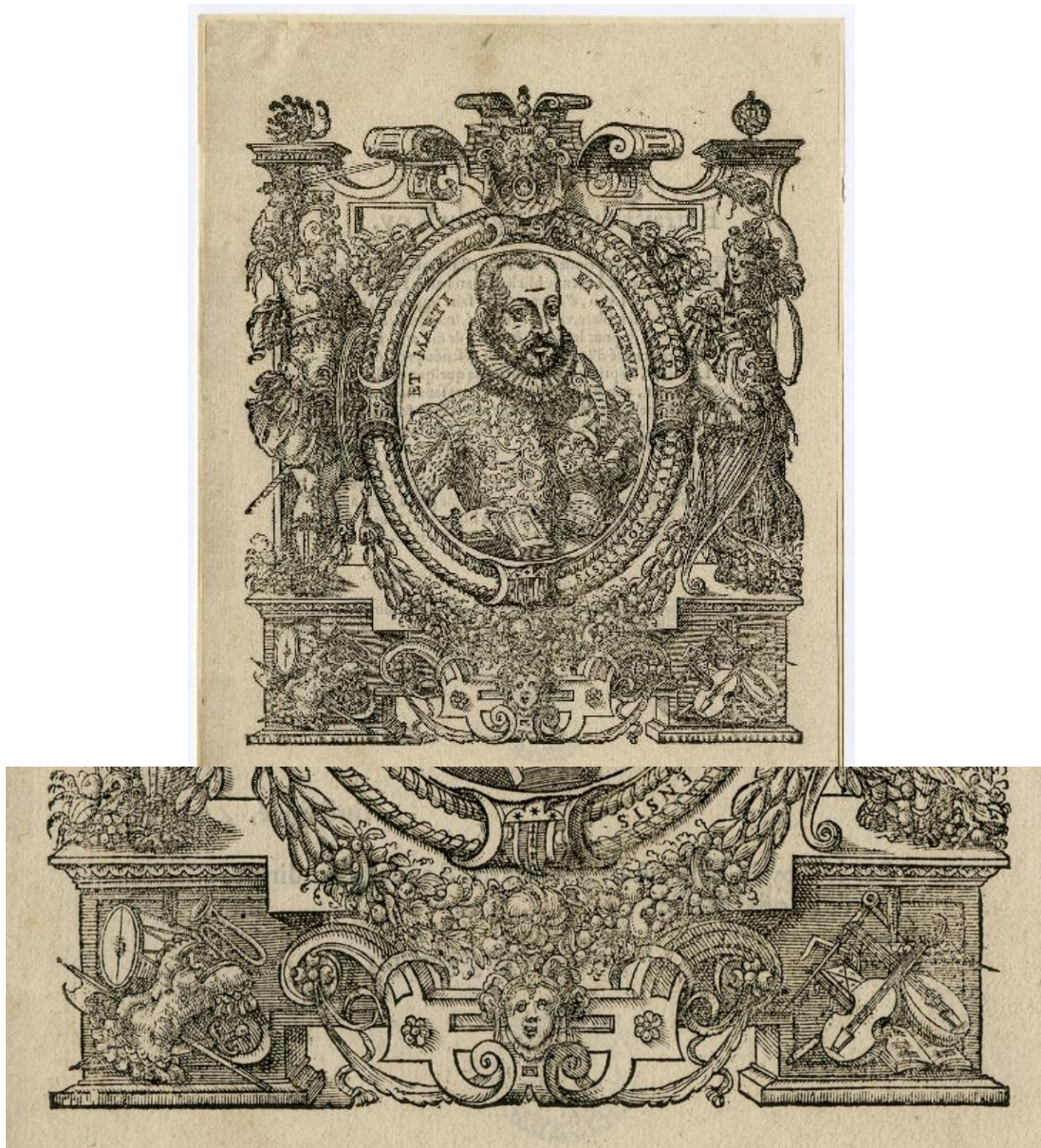


Figure 126. Portrait of Antoine du Verdier. Anonymous, print, Antoine du Verdier, 1581, Lyon. Note the god Mars and goddess Minerva and their attributes beneath them. Source: The Trustees of the British Museum ©, Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

⁹⁰⁸ Greengrass, "Outspoken Opinions as Collectable Items?," 69,70.

According to Carla Zecher, French poets used musical instruments as ‘indicators of social status and tools of their trade.’⁹⁰⁹ For example, Rémy Belleau (1528-1577) owned a lute and a cittern, which were part of the objects of his study. Since they were without cases, Zecher suggested that the French poet did not ‘carry them about like a minstrel but used them to sound out his verses when writing’, an exercise recommended by the famous poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524 – 1585). The latter led *La Pleiade*, a group of seven poets active from 1549 to 1589, which had Rémy Belleau as a member.⁹¹⁰ For this poetic school, musical instruments, in particular plucked stringed instruments, were inspirational sources in their artistic quest for the creation of a poetic language that could bridge classical antiquity with the French national character.⁹¹¹ Such an aesthetic attitude was undoubtedly inspired by Baldassarre Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano*; interestingly, Belleau owned a copy of this book translated into French.⁹¹² Since the transalpine cittern imitated the traditional Italian cittern or early *cetra*, the traits of antiquity were probably sought in the form of aspiring poets and courtiers that desired to emulate Castiglione’s preference for singing poetry against a plucked stringed instrument.⁹¹³

The success of *Il Cortegiano* across Europe disseminated the musical ideals for the perfect gentlemen and courtier, which included the practice of music for its value in humanist education and for being socially desirable.⁹¹⁴ *Il Cortegiano* became widely read, copied, translated, and imitated across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By 1600, the book became a bestseller, reaching one hundred and fifteen editions, being popular in England and France.⁹¹⁵ By 1699 the book had reached one hundred and thirty editions, with Venice as the leading city with forty-eight editions, Paris with seventeenth, Lyon with nine, and Antwerp with six. The book was translated into Latin and spread in this language successfully in Dillingen, Frankfurt, Munich Strasbourg, and Wittenberg.⁹¹⁶ Plucked stringed instruments, especially fretted as the lute, were Castiglione’s preference for courtly ensembles;

⁹⁰⁹ Zecher quoted the work of Madeleine Jurgens and Ronsard’s *Abbrégé de l’Art poétique François*. Zecher, *Sounding Objects*, 4; Jurgens, *Ronsard et ses amis*, 219,232; Ronsard, *Abbrégé de l’art Poétique François . À Alphonse Delbene, Abbé de Hautecombe En Savoye*, 14:28.

⁹¹⁰ Quainton, “Belleau, Rémy.”

⁹¹¹ Zecher, “Ronsard’s Guitar,” 552.

⁹¹² Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, 2007, 85–89.

⁹¹³ Hélène Charnassé quoted Pierre Trichete’s 1640 *Traité des instruments de musique*, which stated that the cittern had ‘shadows’ or was made to appear as having traits of classical antiquity. Charnassé, “Les recueils pour cistre d’Adrian Le Roy 1564-1565,” 233.

⁹¹⁴ Nelson, “Thomas Whythorne and Tudor Musicians,” 100.

⁹¹⁵ Martines, “Peter Burke. The Fortunes of the Courtier,” 1148.

⁹¹⁶ Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, 1995, 139–40.

however, the recitation of poetry against the *viola* was also significantly important for the courtier. The term *Viola* could have meant either *lira da braccio*, *viola da mano*, vihuela or even a lute.⁹¹⁷ Nevertheless, by the second half of the sixteenth century, the many plucked stringed instruments available, such as the cittern and guitar, expanded the possibilities of Castiglione's desire to recite poetry to a musical instrument. In fact, the cittern's accessible nature, already being tempered with fixed frets, and enjoying loud and resonant wire strings that were excellent for sustaining the voice, placed it as a formidable platform for showcasing the artistic standards of the early modern gentlemen poet.⁹¹⁸

4.3.3 The Cittern in the First Modern Economy: The Low Countries

Scholarship has always linked the cittern of the Low Countries with France, as 'these countries have a long history of changing boundaries and political organizations.'⁹¹⁹ Indeed, the Low Countries, encompassing the modern Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg were culturally and politically intertwined with the kingdom of France.⁹²⁰ However, there was a cultural unity formed by the Netherlands as a whole, which contrasted the southern Burgundian and Franco-Flemish affinity.

By the sixteenth century the Low Countries reached an unrivalled degree of urbanization and education which brought a groundbreaking and sophisticated political, religious, and artistic culture derived from major economic success.⁹²¹ Such financial realization was based on an increasing dominance of international trade, through cheap transportation, large commercial intelligence networks and their linked financial credit services. This particular free economy placed their local industry in a privileged spot, which had access to markets throughout Europe and afar.⁹²² Within this context the artistic culture blossomed, and both the nobility and rising merchant class had an endless demand for exotic goods, art and luxury.⁹²³

⁹¹⁷ Poulton, "Vihuela"; Minamino, "The Spanish Plucked Viola in Renaissance Italy, 1480–1530," 177; Wright, "Gittern"; Baines, "Fifteenth-Century Instruments in Tinctoris's *De Inventione et Usu Musicae*," 20–26; Cypess, "Evidence about the 'Lira Da Braccio' from Two Seventeenth-Century Violin Sources," 148.

⁹¹⁸ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 81. Second Book. E-book.

⁹¹⁸ Young, "La Cetra Cornuta," 168; Michel, *Zistern*, 1999; Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 98.

⁹¹⁹ Dunning et al., "Low Countries."

⁹²⁰ Sider, *Handbook to Life in Renaissance Europe*, xv.

⁹²¹ Tracy, *The Low Countries in the Sixteenth Century*, 11.

⁹²² DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 159.

⁹²³ Adams and Jennings, "'Middle-Class' Men Who Would Be Nobles in Fifteenth-Century Castile, Flanders, and Burgundy," 163.

From the fifteenth and well into the sixteenth century, there was an increasing industrialization in the southern and northern Netherlands, yet the first overshadowed the latter. These regions had a vast commercial output of importation of raw materials and exportation of all kinds of commodities.⁹²⁴ The Low Countries had major industries of wool, beer, linen, silk weaving and dyeing, diamond cutting, printing, glass blowing, leather working, food processing and sugar refining. In a place with unstoppable demographic growth between the 1500s to 1760, the townspeople became prosperous and numerous. The diversity of goods came from a manufacture born out of networks of artisans, workers, merchants, financiers, and entrepreneurs.⁹²⁵

Since the mid sixteenth century, the cittern along with the lute and the guitar became extremely popular, especially in the Southern Low Countries.⁹²⁶ From a very early moment in the cittern's history, the influence of French publishers reached the musical network of Flemish printers such as Pierre Phalese (1545 -1573) and Jean Bellere (1526-1595) in Antwerp.⁹²⁷

Phalese published in his collections of instrumental pieces a selection of works of other publishers, and he borrowed vast material from the French Le Roy and Robert Ballard's cittern and lute books.⁹²⁸ The work of the French publishers was so successful that even non-professional musicians copied such work, in order to profit just by recycling their material and reselling it.⁹²⁹ For example, Phalese himself was not a trained musician but a bookseller who in 1552 received a privilege to print music. In 1570 he made an association with the Antwerp printer Jean Bellère (1526 – 1595) and built an international network of printed music for lute and cittern around France and the Low Countries, mostly Leuven and Antwerp.⁹³⁰ Even Marin Mersenne reproduced the same Le Roy and Ballard cittern drawing in his *Harmonie Universelle* of 1636-1637, this time modified for a chromatic fretting.⁹³¹ Louis Peter Grijp

⁹²⁴ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 158.

⁹²⁵ DuPlessis, 159.

⁹²⁶ Burgers, *The Lute in the Dutch Golden Age*, 26.

⁹²⁷ Tyler and Sparks, *The Guitar and Its Music*, 6–13.

⁹²⁸ Vanhulst, "Les Emprunts Aux Éditions Perdues de Le Roy et Ballard Identifiables Dans Le Répertoire Pour Instruments à Cordes Pincées Publié à Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse."

⁹²⁹ Vanhulst, "Édition Comparative Des Instructions Pour Le Luth, Le Cistre et La Guitare Publiées a Louvain Par Pierre Phalèse (1545-1570)," 34–35.

⁹³⁰ Bain, "Phalèse, Pierre (Ii)."

⁹³¹ Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharae (1582)," 75; Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle, the Books on Instruments*, 144; Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 93.

has demonstrated how Phalèse in his published books of 1570⁹³² and 1582⁹³³ reproduced the same cittern engraving all taken from Le Roy's 1565 cittern works.⁹³⁴

By the seventeenth century, there was a large art market in the Low Countries, especially in Antwerp, which distributed commodities imported from southern Europe.⁹³⁵ The 'national' commodities made in the Low Countries were sought after in other European regions, where workshops operated as small factories with a marked division of labour.⁹³⁶ During the 1580s to the 1670s, the so-called 'Golden Age', the Low Countries, specifically the Dutch Republic became 'the greatest industrial power in Europe.'⁹³⁷ This was the context that allowed for cittern production to become even more successful as it kept reaching different types of public that were not necessarily musically trained.

The cittern was so popular that makers migrated from the south towards the north to avoid competition, sometimes even with family members. Cittern maker Michael Vredeman (1564-1629) was the son of Sebastian Vredeman (1542 – circa 1600), a specialist in cittern playing and instrument maker based in Leiden.⁹³⁸ Sebastian was already well established as a talented music figure, having published two printed books for the cittern in partnership with Pierre Phalèse by 1568.⁹³⁹ As his father before him, Michael established an industrious workshop that soon entered in competition with his father, and therefore had to be moved from Leiden to Utrecht.⁹⁴⁰ Michael was famous for his *Der viole cyther met vijf snaren en nieuwe sorte melodieuze inventie, twe naturen hebbende, vier parthijen spelende* (Arnheim, 1612), whose full title translates to 'The violin cittern with five strings, a new kind of musical invention, having two characteristics able to play four parts, easy to learn, half violin, half cittern, as its name tells us, to play all kinds of music, without being able to read a single note of music, for violins

⁹³² Phalèse and Bellère, *Hortulus Cytharæ in Duos Distinctus Libros, Quorum Prior Cant I Ones Musicas Longe Pulcherrimas*.

⁹³³ Phalèse and Lasso, *Hortulus citharæ vulgaris continens optimas fantasias, cantiones que musicas pulcherrimas, et passomezos in varios tonos concinné variatos atq; deductos*.

⁹³⁴ Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharæ (1582)," 66–78.

⁹³⁵ Goldthwaite, "The Economy of Renaissance Italy," 19.

⁹³⁶ Bermingham and Brewer, *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800*, 1–3.

⁹³⁷ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 138.

⁹³⁸ Spiessens, "Michiel Vredeman: Een Utrechtse Cistercomponist En -Bouwer van Mechelse Komaf (ca. 1558–1629)."

⁹³⁹ Mayer Brown, "Vredeman"; Vredeman, *Carminum quæ cythara pulsantur liber secundus*; Vredeman, *Nova longeque elegantissima cithara ludenda carmina, cum gallica tum etiam germanica ...*

⁹⁴⁰ Spiessens, "Michiel Vredeman: Een Utrechtse Cistercomponist En -Bouwer van Mechelse Komaf (ca. 1558–1629)."

as well as for citterns, several pieces written out, and set in tablature.’⁹⁴¹ Unfortunately, there is no copy of this book and no half-cittern. half-violin has ever been found.⁹⁴²

4.3.4 The Cittern Exchange

Louis Peter Grijp did significant work regarding the cittern in the Netherlands, in particular by establishing through archival work the existence of an important presence in Antwerp and Amsterdam.⁹⁴³ Grijp mentioned how in the Netherlands, specifically Amsterdam, there were makers for the cittern called *citer maker*.⁹⁴⁴ For example, Aert Borlon (ca. 1538–ca. 1620) was registered as a maker of citterns in the corporation of Saint-Luc in Antwerp. Borlon, who also made lutes, became a successful maker, obtaining a monopoly for the use of enduring colourfast varnishes in 1613.⁹⁴⁵

Other *citer makers* such as Lenaert Pels went to Amsterdam to refine their craftsmanship with other masters and then relocated to other prosperous commercial cities.⁹⁴⁶ Concurrently, Grijp mentioned that citterns in Amsterdam were produced in large numbers during the first decades of the seventeenth century; between 1620 and 1630 there were at least ten different *citer makers* in cities such as Antwerp, Utrecht and Amsterdam.⁹⁴⁷ By the second half of the seventeenth century the *citer maker* was a term applied to builders of all string instruments.⁹⁴⁸

The successful cittern making business indicates that the cittern reached far beyond social layers, both low, middle and high. For example, the Duke of Anjou and Berry, Hercule François of Anjou and Alençon (1555 -1584), when recognized as the sovereign lord of the seven United Provinces in 1581 had a celebration of his new role, involving a triumphal entry into Antwerp as the saviour of Dutch and Flemish liberty. The revels included two spectacular processions involving an allegorical setting of a carriage decorated as Mount Parnassus with a character dressed as Apollo and the Sun, nine musicians

⁹⁴¹ Burgers, *The Lute in the Dutch Golden Age*, 18,19.

⁹⁴² Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 4.

⁹⁴³ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern”; Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns.”

⁹⁴⁴ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 83.

⁹⁴⁵ Spiessens, “De Antwerpse Citer- En Luitbouwers Aert, Hans En Thomas Borlon (16de–17de Eeuw),” 9–12.

⁹⁴⁶ Spiessens, “De Antwerpse Citerbouwer Lenaert Pels Jeremiaszoon (°ca. 1588–†Antwerpen 1626).”

⁹⁴⁷ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 83.

⁹⁴⁸ Burgers, *The Lute in the Dutch Golden Age*, 18,19.

dressed as muses playing several musical instruments and singing together, one of them carrying a cittern.⁹⁴⁹

A clerk from Leeuwarden, a royal city from Frisia in the northern Netherlands whose name was Pibo Gualthieri (died in 1618) was a typical member of the wealthy upper-middle class whose interest in music led to the ownership of several musical instruments, including not only citterns but cittern books. Clerks or *smalle burgerij*, meaning burgers of slim means, were a small number of well-educated employees of the public sector. As one of them, Gualthieri managed to own two six course citterns, and well as two five course and one four course cittern.⁹⁵⁰

The cittern in the Low Countries had ‘a strong appeal for a middle-class population with means to satisfy its cultural needs in a modestly luxurious way.’⁹⁵¹ For example, Louis Peter Grijp showed how a six-course cittern was seven and a half *guilders*, the five course was five and the four-course three *guilders*, which was the currency used in the Netherlands since the fifteenth century. To compare prices Grijp documented that a seven-course lute with luxurious materials such as ivory and ebony was estimated in six *guilders* and a virginal or harpsichord was sixty *guilders*.⁹⁵² A four course cittern, an extremely common instrument in the Low Countries was as cheap as three *guilders*, which attests to their high accessibility in Dutch social layers.⁹⁵³ A *smalle burgerij* household, that is the bourgeoisie of ‘slim means’, earned between five hundred and six hundred guilders per year.⁹⁵⁴ Household workers below this economic level would annually earn around three hundred guilders and could spend at least half of its yearly income solely on food by the middle of the seventeenth century, which would mean that they could spend around twelve guilders a month for food.⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁴⁹ Bowles, *Musical Ensembles in Festival Books, 1500-1800*, 97,98.

⁹⁵⁰ Vries and Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 563,564.

⁹⁵¹ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 177–80.

⁹⁵² Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,”

79.

⁹⁵³ A clerk could be the recipient of annual salaries ranging between five hundred and six hundred *guilders*, while a senior clerk could reach one thousand per year. Vries and Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 563,564.

⁹⁵⁴ Vries and Woude, 628.

⁹⁵⁵ Vries and Woude, 625.

The cittern in the Netherlands became part of the national identity as expressed by the 1626 Adrian Valerius's *Neder-Landsche Gedenck-Clanck* (1570-1625),⁹⁵⁶ which is a collection of seventy-six songs with lute and cittern tablature accompanied with the history of the wars between the Netherlands and Spain.⁹⁵⁷ There is also a significant collection of paintings made by Dutch artists where the cittern is portrayed in the hands of all kinds of social layers. Dutch painters, particularly in the northern Netherlands, worked for the upper middle class, including city magistrates, boards of governors, shooting clubs and wealthy merchants. Such social strata consumed instrumental music to the point of turning to it as one of the key ingredients of the Dutch citizen's way of life during the Golden Age.⁹⁵⁸ While the lute was the most often depicted plucked string instrument, the cittern had a significant presence.⁹⁵⁹ Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) made several paintings where the cittern is a protagonist, and other artists such as Pieter de Hooch (1629–1684), Gabriel Metsu (1629–1667), Cesar van Everdingen (1616/17–1678), and Jan Steen (circa 1626 – 1679) among many others included the cittern in their paintings.⁹⁶⁰

Although the cittern was used by both men and women throughout the social class spectrum, it was predominantly associated with women in upper-middle class contexts, which can be attested through its iconography. While several depictions present general subjects of courtship, amorous or erotic scenarios.⁹⁶¹

⁹⁵⁶ Valerius, *Neder-landsche gedenck-clanck. Kortelick openbarende de voornaemste geschiedenissen van de seventhien Neder-Landsche Provinciën, 't sedert den aenvang der inlandsche beroerten ende troublen, tot den iare 1625, verciert emt verscheydene aerdtige figuerlicke platen, ende stichtelijcke rimen ende liedekens, met aenwijsingen, soo uyt de H. Schrifte, als uyt de boecken van geleerde mannen, tot verklaringe der uytgefallen saecken dienende.*

⁹⁵⁷ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuiderzee Citterns," 81.

⁹⁵⁸ Finlay, "Musical Instruments in 17th-Century Dutch Paintings," 64.

⁹⁵⁹ Burgers, *The Lute in the Dutch Golden Age*, 19.

⁹⁶⁰ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography.](#)

⁹⁶¹ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography.](#) Numbers 1, 9, 18, 20, 25, 26, 28, 29, 32, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 47. Image number 20 for example is essentially a portrait of a girl of tender age playing the cittern with her breasts exposed, image number 28 shows a man drinking and lustfully looking at a girl tuning a cittern, image 37 is the famous *Love Letter* painting by Jan Steen, which shows a young woman receiving a letter and holding a cittern symbolizing love. Moreover, image 41, *Lazarus and the Rich Man or 'In Luxury beware'* by Jan Steen, shows a Dutch Bacchanalian party with a young woman with grape vines encircling her head while she strums the cittern and gazes out evocatively at the audience, as if she was inviting the viewer to join the sensual party. Image 38, for example depicts a flirtatious situation between a woman and a man tuning a cittern, the latter functioning as an allegory of a possible sexual tension between the couple as in the background there is another painting depicting a figure with naked legs, implying sensual overtones to the composition. Moreover, the gaze of the young woman appears as reacting in disturbance to the audience's eyes as if she was taking part of an intimate situation. Image 40, entitled *The Oyster Eaters*, depicts three characters grouped around a table. A man plays the cittern while a woman brings a dish of oysters to the table where another lady holds a glass of possibly white wine. The shellfish had strong erotic associations, which together with the music of the cittern form a seductive force and amorous atmosphere in the scene that could have been taking in place in an actual brothel. British Museum, "Adolescentia

Perhaps, one of the most striking cittern depictions involving women, sex and economical exchange is Vermeer's *Procuress* (Figure 127).⁹⁶² Made in 1656, the scene shows a procuring scene with four characters. In one of the compositional units, placed behind a table covered with luxurious carpet-covered balustrade, there is an old woman, a suitor dressed in red and a girl who is most likely a prostitute.⁹⁶³ The man is clinching the girl from behind placing his left hand on her left breast, while his right-hand places a coin in the girl's open right hand. The girl seems comfortable in taking the coin and she even seems to be drunk as she not only shows red cheeks but holds a drink in her right hand. The old lady behind the man in red, most likely the procuress, is looking at the couple with excitement as she grins while the payment is taking place.

In another compositional unit, that is closer to the spectator and separated from the scene, there is a man wearing a beret and looking at the viewer. He holds a beer in his left hand and seems to be cheering at the occasion. In his right hand he holds a cittern by the neck, which is almost completely covered by the carpet-covered balustrade. This young man could be Vermeer himself, portrayed perhaps as an old-fashioned musician as he wears a typical slitted jacket, which was common in Italian musicians or Burgundian players.⁹⁶⁴ The way the character is distanced from the sexual and economical exchange, his gaze into the spectator and the old-fashioned attire, suggests that the young man in black is separated from the contemporary world and functioning as a storyteller. Interestingly, successful painters such as Vermeer commonly had hobbies, such as reading and playing musical instruments, including the cittern.⁹⁶⁵ Therefore, it could be that the Dutch master was very fond of the instrument portrayed in his *Procuress*.

With this painting Vermeer broke into the style known as genre painting,⁹⁶⁶ which was known for depicting a wide range of social activities and places, in this case 'bordeeltjes' or little brothels, known

Amori"; National Gallery, London, "Jan Miense Molenaer | A Young Man and Woman Making Music | NG1293 | National Gallery, London"; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Jan Steen | Merry Company on a Terrace"; "Jan Steen, Woman Playing the Cittern, c. 1662"; "The Love Letter, Johannes Vermeer, c. 1669 - c. 1670 - Rijksmuseum"; The Leiden Collection, "Lazarus and the Rich Man or 'In Luxury Beware'"; The Royal Collection Trust, "Pieter de Hooch (Rotterdam 1629-Amsterdam 1684) - The Music Party." National Gallery, "Godfried Schalcken | A Woman Singing and a Man with a Cittern | NG998 | National Gallery, London"; "Oyster Eaters."

⁹⁶² [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Image number 25.

⁹⁶³ Neidhardt, "The Procuress."

⁹⁶⁴ Montias, *Vermeer and His Milieu*, 147.

⁹⁶⁵ Montias, 139.

⁹⁶⁶ Montias, 146.

for prostitution.⁹⁶⁷ Between 1654 and 1670, Vermeer became a protagonist in what was a booming moment for domestic genre painting in Delft and his works are now known to be ‘a celebration of middle-class domesticity.’⁹⁶⁸



Figure 127. The Cittern in Vermeer's Procuress. Johannes Vermeer, oil on canvas, The Procuress, 1656, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden (inv. nr. 1335). Source: Google Arts & Culture, 'The Procuress', accessed 23 May 2024, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-procuress/HQJS1gyNEcirIg>. © Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden. Photo: Herbert Boswank.

⁹⁶⁷ Franits, "Vermeer, Johannes."

⁹⁶⁸ Langdon, "Genre."

The cittern in *The Procuress*, plays a very significant role by being hidden behind the carpet-covered balustrade and by being positioned below the waist of both the girl and the young man in black. On the one hand the man holds the cittern in such a position that the instrument can be considered an allusion to him holding his erect phallus. On the other, the body of the cittern covered by the carpet can be symbolically involved in some sort of sexual exchange that is not possible to see but only to imagine. Wayne Franits describes the mischievous look in Vermeer's face while he cheers and smiles as character and a narrator in the sexual exchange.

Vermeer's miscreant persona in this possible self-portrait, is emphasized by his boisterous demeanour, toasting gesture, and the phallic allusions of his stringed instrument's neck, positioned in the approximate place where his genitalia would be, behind the balcony. Furthermore, he is dressed in a striking slashed doublet with a stiff, white collar, fashions approximately 20 years out-of-date when this canvas was executed. This attire distances him ever so slightly from his fellow dramatis personae in their contemporary attire, suggesting his role as 'narrator' to introduce us to the dissolute goings-on unfolding before our eyes.⁹⁶⁹

It is the author's opinion that the cittern became very commodified, vastly popular and highly accessible, up to the point that Vermeer portrayed it as a symbol of prostitution and an emblem of sexual and economical trade, simply because it was a highly exchangeable object in the Dutch market.

The iconography listed in this research rarely has the cittern in the hands of male characters; however, this list is not definitive and by no means suggests that the cittern was not popular for men as it was simply popular for everyone.⁹⁷⁰ For example, the Dutch print-maker, Jacob Gole (1660-1737), produced engravings of all genres after artists such as Adriaen Brouwer (circa 1605- 1638); in his print entitled the *Singing Man*, Gole depicted a rather common man singing holding a music book over a table while a cittern and a violin are hanging in the wall (Figure 128). Such print was influenced by a painting by Jan Steen (1626-1679) entitled the *Singer and Violin Player*, which also presents a sitting man singing, although this time playing a violin or perhaps a viola.⁹⁷¹

Both characters in Gole's and Steen's work do not seem noble or part of the upper middle class, and they simply seem to be drinking and enjoying their musicality in the comfort of their homes. Another

⁹⁶⁹ Franits, "Vermeer, Johannes."

⁹⁷⁰ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Images 17, 24, 23, 34, 46, 48, 51, 54, 53, 55. 48.

⁹⁷¹ 1636-1679. [Singing Violin Player](#), Jan Steen, drawing, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv.nr. RP-T-1878-1-8).

work by Jacob Gole is his print made after Jan Steen's self-portrait playing a lute, which portrays a similar character with music books and possibly an alcoholic drink by the table, smiling in response to the music he is enjoying. This *Self-portrait of Jan Steen as a Lute Player* does not imply a noble or wealthy set-up either (Figure 128).⁹⁷² The two faces are distinguished for appearing distorted, perhaps by music's pleasure or maybe by the alcoholic intoxication. Jan Steen's face has a distinctive mischievous look as he looks directly to the audience and the meaning of such expression is very difficult to decipher as in many of his paintings, he altered his characters even when portraying himself.⁹⁷³ One thing for certain is Jan Steen's economic situation: although he was a gifted, prolific painter of genre scenes, he had financial difficulties as a result of an unsuccessful brewery business and a challenging art market that often set his paintings at low prices.



Figure 128. The Cittern on the Wall on Gole's Singing Man and Jan Steen as a Lute Player. Left, Jacob Gole, Self-portrait of Jan Steen as a Lute Player, print, after Jan Steen's Self Portrait, 1670-1724, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-P-1906-3169); right, Jacob Gole, print, The Singing Man, 1670-1724, after design by Jan Havicksz Steen, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-P-1906-3204). Source: 'Het Gehoor: zingende man, Jacob Gole, naar Jan Havicksz. Steen, 1670 - 1724', Rijksmuseum, accessed 3 February 2024, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-1906-3204>; Rijksmuseum, 'Zelfportret van Jan Steen als luitspeler, Jacob Gole, naar Jan Havicksz. Steen, 1670 - 1724', Rijksmuseum, accessed 3 February 2024, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/RP-P-1906-3169>. Public Domain.

⁹⁷² 1670-1724. [Self-portrait of Jan Steen as a Lute Player](#), Jacob Gole, engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (in.nr. RP-P-1906-3169).

⁹⁷³ de Vries, "Steen, Jan."

4.3.5 The Surviving Instruments

There are several citterns attributed to the Low Countries that are similar to each other, and although further technical research is required, they could comprise a specific style inside the transalpine niche. The seventeenth-century cittern preserved at the Brussels Musical Instrument Museum⁹⁷⁴ is a fine example, as it presents the distinctive tapering resonator with a back made of strips slightly radiating (Figures 129-130). According to Peter Forrester, the back is made in one piece and presents applied veneer, that is strips of ebony (*Diospyrus*, sp) and maple (*Acer* sp.).⁹⁷⁵ Moreover, the soundboard is made with a coniferous wood, possibly pine (*Pinus* sp).⁹⁷⁶

One of its most interesting features is that the sides overlap the back, as found in the Brescian citterns, which indicates a building connection between the two types (Figure 130).⁹⁷⁷ Possibly, the Italian tradition influenced the Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish type, as overlapping sides are found as early as 1570.⁹⁷⁸



Figure 129. Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern I. Anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524). Source: Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH.

⁹⁷⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 3.](#)

⁹⁷⁵ Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 41.

⁹⁷⁶ Forrester, 41.

⁹⁷⁷ [See Chapter 3. ‘The Transformation of the Italian Cittern’ Section 3.3. ‘The Brescian School’.](#)

⁹⁷⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 1 and 2, Table 2.](#)



Figure 130. Overlapping Sides on Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern I. Anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524). Note the overlapping sides highlighted with red oval. Source: Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Creative Commons BY–MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH.

These reasons do not exclude the possibility of an exchange between Germanic or Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish transalpine types in the workshops of Girolamo Virchi, Paolo Maggini or Gasparo da Salo. By the time the Brescian instruments developed, the cittern was already present north of the Alps, and the Brescian school could have been influenced at some moment by the transalpine models, especially by the English types, which were known to Vincenzo Galilei in 1581. Galilei mentioned that

the use of the cittern took place first in England, which was known for having ‘excellent’ examples, yet not as ‘famous’ as the Brescian one.

The English, before other nations, first used the cittern. On their island, they made excellent ones, although today the most famous are made in Brescia. It is used and appreciated by the nobility. It was called “cittern [cetera]” by its inventors perhaps to recall the ancient kithara.⁹⁷⁹

It is also possible that closer regions to the Italian Peninsula, such as the Germanic states, could have had transalpine types that reached Brescia as early as in the 1530s. Indeed, both types of instruments, transalpine and Brescian, share the distinctive characteristic of being built in separate pieces, which is a contrasting feature to the traditional carved method. At the same time Brescian instruments were exported towards England and Germany,⁹⁸⁰ and there is iconographic evidence that potentially indicates that the Brescian citterns, having a full chromatic fingerboard, were present in Antwerp in 1560.⁹⁸¹

Evidence on the manufacture of Brescian citterns, indicates that the school was founded on preserving and extending the tradition of the *cetra* and the traditional carved type.⁹⁸² Contrastingly, surviving Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish types show a decrease in fine craftsmanship in comparison to the Brescian instruments, and certainly, a very scarce trace, if any, of the humanist meaning.⁹⁸³ A similar instrument to the Brussels cittern is the anonymous cittern preserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum,⁹⁸⁴ which, according to Anthony Baines, has a back made in one piece with applied veneer, meaning eleven strips of ebony (*Diospyrus*, sp.) and maple (*Acer* sp.) (Figure 131).⁹⁸⁵ Similarly with the Brussels cittern, the soundboard is made with coniferous wood, possibly pine (*Pinus* sp).⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁷⁹ Galilei and Palisca, *Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music*, 369.

⁹⁸⁰ Evan, “Cremona’s Elder Brother,” 39.

⁹⁸¹ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Image 3.

⁹⁸² [See Chapter 3. ‘The Transformation of the Italian Cittern’ Section 3.3. ‘The Brescian School’](#).

⁹⁸³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 5, Table 3.](#)

⁹⁸⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 2, Table 3.](#)

⁹⁸⁵ Baines et al., *Catalogue of Musical Instruments in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 45.

⁹⁸⁶ Baines et al., 45. A confirmation of the wood identification require further research, which for matters of space must be delegated to a future project specifically based on the technical study of the transalpine cittern.



Figure 131. Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern II. Anonymous, cittern, circa 1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Inv. nr. 35-1867). Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Cittern', ca 1700, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58888/cittern-unknown/>. Victoria and Albert Museum ©.

A much more modest instrument, documented by Florence Gétreau and Joël Dugot,⁹⁸⁷ is preserved at the Musée de la Musique in Paris, which shows a type of cittern that must have been a type of austere instrument perfectly suited for amateur players. Without a doubt one of the most interesting aspects of this cittern is the stringing and its fingerboard. The owner of the instrument was not satisfied with the

⁹⁸⁷ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 9, Table 3.](#)

original set of strings and decided to add two more even if the instrument had no space for them.⁹⁸⁸ Thanks to the Museum's x-ray images it is possible to confirm that there are two tunnels drilled along the fingerboard in order to accommodate two strings, possibly used as drones. The extra strings would be fastened in additional pegholes, run through the conduits bored in the fingerboard, mounted on the bridge, and finally secured at the comb. It is difficult to know if the drones would be vibrating entirely free through the bores and it is also hard to imagine what sort of bridge would be necessary to have in order to accommodate all the strings. However, the string holder or comb has two of the bass side notches broken, indicating the presence of excessive tension and thus, the possible use of extra drone strings.

This cittern presents written letters placed to the left of each fret, indicating the names of the notes that are used in French tablature as shown by Marin Mersenne (Figure 132). There are gilded numbers indicating the names of the notes, based on a five-course disposition, which is possible to conceive considering the number of notches present in the string holder.⁹⁸⁹ Andrew Hartig has mentioned how this disposition is similar to Mersenne's entry on the cittern, which shows eleven strings for five courses, three triples and one double (Figure 133).

⁹⁸⁸ Hartig, "Anonymous Cittern - Low Countries or France(?), End of the 17th Century(?)."

⁹⁸⁹ Hartig; Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," 2004, 10.



Figure 132. String Conduits. Anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026). Note the exit hole of the bored drone conduits highlighted with and arrow. Source: Musée de la Musique, “Cistre guiterne,” accessed March 6, 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne>. Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès.

Drilling holes in the fingerboard to accommodate more strings is an alteration that is practically never seen in historic musical instruments. If the drones were that necessary for the player, why did he not buy a six-course cittern, which was available in the market or request a luthier’s service to extend the range properly as an arch cittern?⁹⁹⁰ Perhaps, because they could not afford it and it was cheaper for them to make this strange type of alteration than to buy another cittern with more strings, such as a six-course, which could be priced as seven and a half *guilders*.⁹⁹¹ The use of drones, passing through the fingerboard, seems to be an alteration an amateur player would make, such as the use of letters and

⁹⁹⁰ Vries and Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 563,564.

⁹⁹¹ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,”

numerals to indicate the tablature and note names, which is something already pointed out by Gétreau and Dugot.⁹⁹²

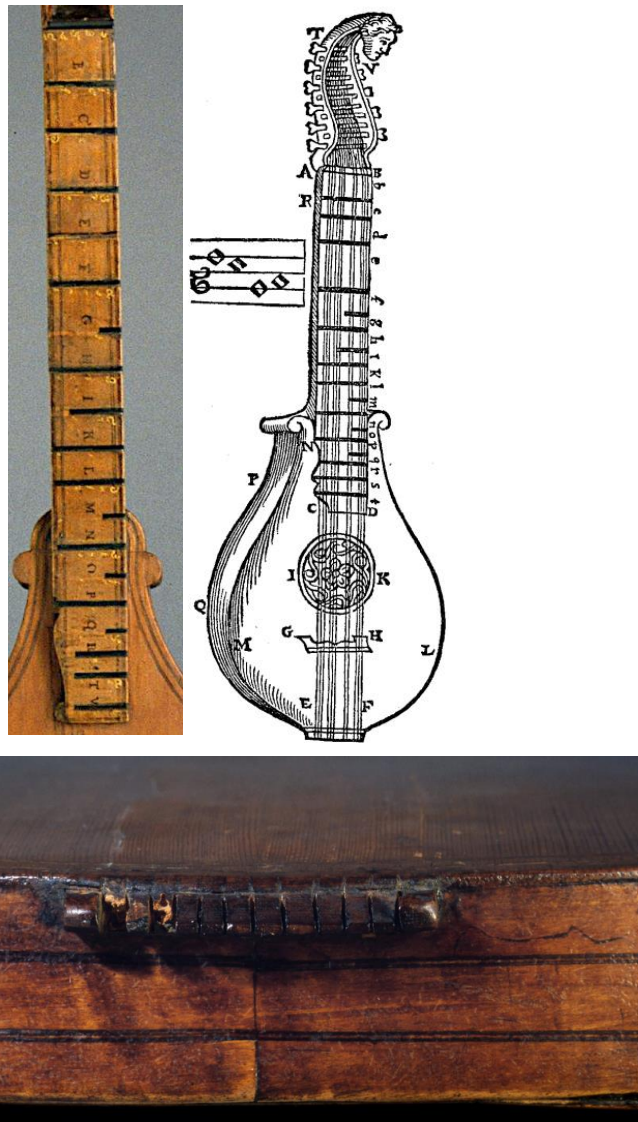


Figure 133. Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern and Mersenne's Depiction. Anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026); Marin Mersenne, print, *Harmonie Universelle*, 1636-7, Paris. Source: Musée de la Musique, "Cistre guiterne," accessed March 6, 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne> Collections Musée de la Musique/ Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès; Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1636), Book IV, 31. Public Domain.

⁹⁹²For further information such as alterations to the fingerboard see Hartig, "Anonymous Cittern - Low Countries or France(?), End of the 17th Century(?)" ; Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," 2004, 10.

The authors mentioned how this cittern, in general, presents a less fine quality than the Brescian types, which is evident in the overall craftsmanship but most importantly in the lack of back reinforcements,⁹⁹³ which have led to considerable distortion.

This construction is much less delicate than in Brescia, even if there is a purfling decoration on the back, the ribs and the soundboard. The rose is note very elaborate and could be not original... The carved head, even if interesting, cannot be in competition with the three first citterns [Italians].⁹⁹³

Thanks to the x-ray photographs archived at the Musée de la Musique the author confirmed that indeed the back is without supports which, based on the popularity and cheapness of the cittern in France and the Low Countries and the austere craftsmanship of this instrument, suggests that the maker did not bother in applying reinforcements as a way of spending less materials and thus speeding production and keeping prices accessible (Figure 134).



Figure 134. Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern at the Musée de la Musique. Anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026). Source: Collections Musée de la Musique.

⁹⁹³ Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” 2004, 10.

The instruments held at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Musical Instrument Museum at Brussels⁹⁹⁴ are quite close in style, while the cittern at the Musée de la Musique is not only different in size, but in quality, shape, and general workmanship.⁹⁹⁵ Most evident similarities between the V&A and Brussels citterns are the veneer strips arranged in a fan-like manner, alternating dark wood and light wood, possibly ebony (*Diospyrus*, sp) and maple (*Acer* sp.), and also the way the fingerboard wood reaches up to the pegbox to the first two pegs (Figure 135).



Figure 135. Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Cittern's Compared. Left, Anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524); right, Anonymous, cittern, circa 1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Inv. nr. 35-1867). Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Cittern', ca 1700, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58888/cittern-unknown/>. Victoria and Albert Museum ©; Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH.

The Musée de la Musique, cittern, however, does present some similarities with the last two instruments, indicating a similar provenance. These include the purfling placed in the sides similar to the veneers applied to the ribs, which in the V&A cittern are light in colour and in the Brussels instrument are dark. Veneered or back stripped Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish citterns are represented in Vermeer's well-known paintings *The Glass of Wine*⁹⁹⁶ and *Girl Interrupted at Her Music*;⁹⁹⁷ however, other lesser-known works are Pieter van Slingelandt's (1640 – 1691) *Woman with*

⁹⁹⁴ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 2 and 6, Table 3.

⁹⁹⁵ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 9, Table 3.

⁹⁹⁶ See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography. Image 26

⁹⁹⁷ See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography. Image 27.

Cittern,⁹⁹⁸ and Jan Van Kessel the Elder (1626-1679) *Ecclesia Surrounded by the Symbols of Transience*.⁹⁹⁹ *Still Life*, by Johann Friedrich Grueber (circa 1620 – 1681) shows a similar instrument to the Musée de la Musique cittern, specifically in the way the purfling is done on the sides and back (Figure 136).



Figure 136. Extant Franco-Flemish Cittern and Iconographic Example. Left, Anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026); right and below, Johann Friedrich Grueber, *Still Life*, 1662, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv.nr. SK-A-2564). Source: Rijksmuseum, ‘Stilleven, Johann Friedrich Grueber, 1662 - 1681’, Rijksmuseum, accessed 6 March 2024, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/SK-A-2564>. Public Domain; : Musée de la Musique, “Cistre guiterne,” accessed March 6, 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne>. Photograph by Jean-Marc Anglès, Musée de la Musique

⁹⁹⁸ See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography. Image 49.

⁹⁹⁹ See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography. Image 56.

There is an exceptional work that involved the reconstruction of two identical instruments from a 1619 shipwreck of a boat that transported merchandise most likely, from Amsterdam to north Netherlands in Zuyderzee. These cittern types were probably made not as luxurious commodities but more as instruments accessible to the diverse social layers of Netherlandish society.¹⁰⁰⁰ Sebastian Núñez and Verónica Estevez reported that the cargo, including five hundred objects, was well preserved even underwater, and the citterns were only missing the rose, bridge, upper blocks connecting with the neck, the bars of the back, string holder protector, and some other minor parts such as two drilled pieces glued on the sides covering the joint between the sides and the neck. The authors managed to create a replica of the instrument after a study that involved the Instituut Collectie Nederland in Amsterdam, which identified several materials such as the spruce (*Picea abies*) for the soundboard and maple for the back (*Acer* sp.) and the alloys of the remaining brass string and frets strings.¹⁰⁰¹

The methods of Netherlandish luthiers to economize the costs and increase speed of production while keeping a standard quality are evident in these two instruments. There is only one bar to support the back and one bar to support the soundboard, when usually citterns have two bars for each section. The maker, instead of having a usual quarter sawn cut wood for the soundboard, joined two planks with the grain in an acute angle in relation to the joint (Figure 137). Cutting the soundboard in this way allows for natural arching, providing a vault-like structure, which is more resistant to the applied pressure of the strings and leaves out the necessity of having two reinforcement bars. Moreover, the instrument would possibly be more resonant since the soundboard vibrates more freely having just one bar, instead of two. What is more striking is the burning marks that Núñez and Estevez found in the back of one of the soundboards, which according to the authors were intentionally made to increase the arching of the soundboards. This method could indicate the necessity of the maker to ‘speed-up’ the process of production, as he might have used wood that was too fresh to be arched naturally.¹⁰⁰²

79. ¹⁰⁰⁰ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,”

¹⁰⁰¹

The percentages reported are 70% copper, 25% zinc and 5% of unknown metals. Núñez and Estevez, “Two Dutch Citterns from a 17th Century Shipwreck: Description of the Remains and of the Reconstruction,” 79–85.

¹⁰⁰²

Núñez and Estevez, 79–85.

As opposed to the cittern at the Brussels Musical Instrument Museum¹⁰⁰³ and the Musée de la Musique in Paris,¹⁰⁰⁴ the ribs of the Netherlandish cittern, probably built in Amsterdam, are set on the back, meaning that the back overlaps the walls of the instrument. According to authors Joël Dugot, Florence Dugot and Ugo Ravasio, overlapping sides around the back is a method that liberates the necessity of having moulds, as the back behaves as the mould.¹⁰⁰⁵ While Núñez and Estevez built the replicas with the aids of these devices and the use of moulds has been Peter Forrester usual ‘method for more than forty years,’ further research is needed to confirm if historical remaining transalpine citterns were built this way.¹⁰⁰⁶ A mould is particularly practical because it allows to standardize production and makes crafting the back easier and more practical, as opposed to carving it. For example, the slight vault in some citterns is also facilitated by the use of moulds that are shaped with the necessary curves. More evidence that indicates that moulds were used for building Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish citterns comes from the Amsterdam cittern and violin maker Gerrit Menslage (1607-1661), who had moulds for both lutes and citterns, and French maker Paule Belamy, who moulds for making lutes, mandoras and possibly citterns.¹⁰⁰⁷

Forrester, quoting Louis Peter Grijp also mentioned how moulds could have been twice as expensive as citterns, as they were important infrastructure to accelerate the rate of production of these highly demanded instruments.¹⁰⁰⁸ In fact, makers stole from each other wooden parts, most likely moulds, to make instruments. For example, in 1610, Franchois Lupo, *citer maker* in Amsterdam was accused of stealing ‘parts to make citterns’ from his colleague Gerart Cop, who gathered his apprentices as witnesses for the court trial.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰³ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 6, Table 3.](#)

¹⁰⁰⁴ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 9, Table 3.](#)

¹⁰⁰⁵ Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” n.d.; Ravasio, “Il Fenomeno Cetera in Ambito Bresciano.”

¹⁰⁰⁶ Forrester, “Comm. 2076.”

¹⁰⁰⁷ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 300.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns”; Forrester, “Comm. 2076.”

¹⁰⁰⁹ Spiessens, “De Antwerpse Citerbouwer Lenaert Pels Jeremiaszoon (°ca. 1588–†Antwerpen 1626).”

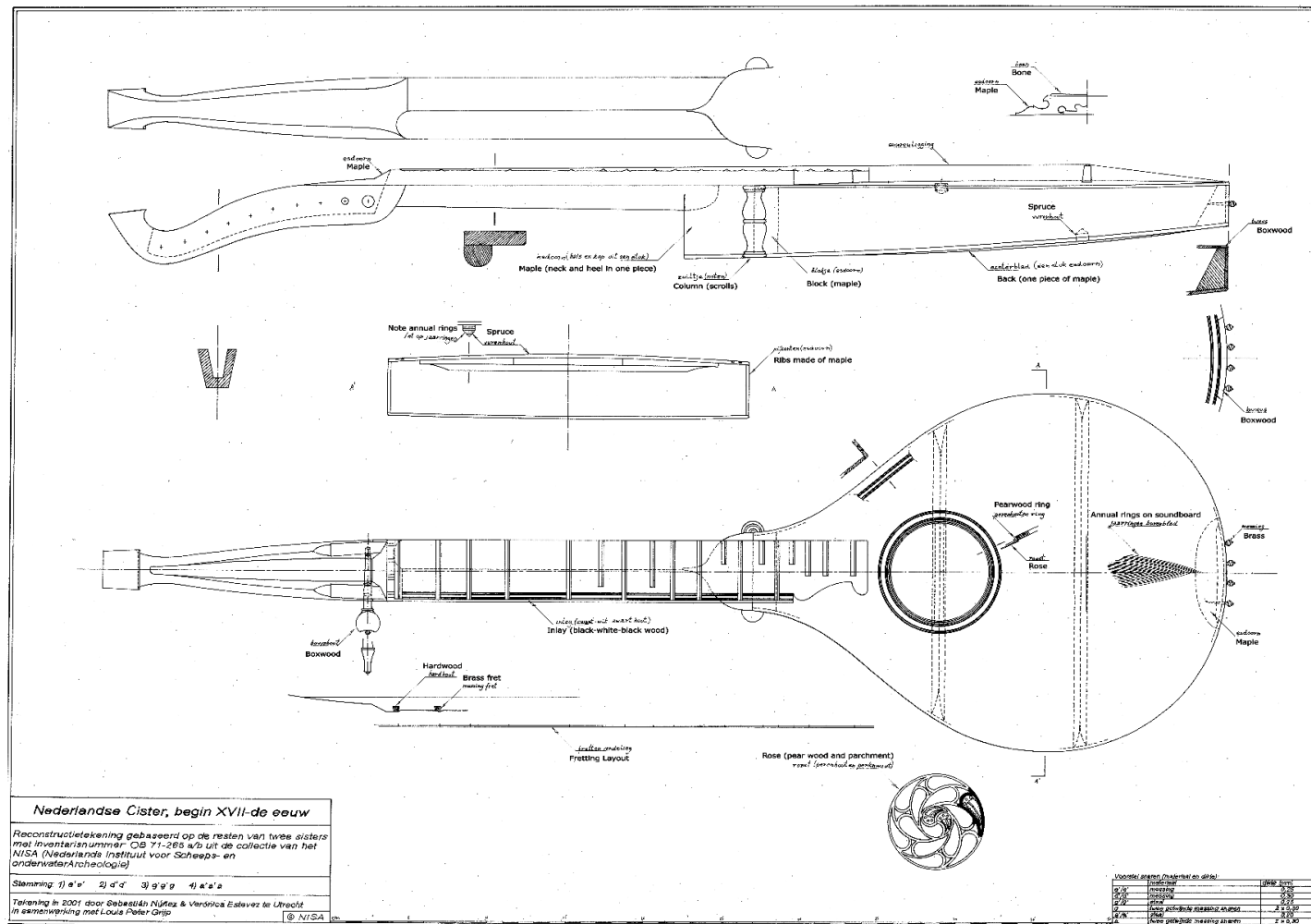


Figure 137. Reconstruction of a Netherlandish Cittern. Anonymous, cittern replica, 1619, Nederlandse Instituut voor Scheeps- en onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries (inv. nr. OB 71-265 a/b). Source: Sebastián Núñez and Verónica Estevez, Nederlandse Cister, Begin XVII-de Eeuw. Reconstructed Remains, Nederlandse Instituut Voor Scheeps- En Onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries (Inv. Nr. OB 71-265 a/b)., 2010 2009, Technical Drawing, 2010 2009. Courtesy of Sebastián Núñez.

The Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish cittern enterprise was characterised by the high demand of for these wired plucked stringed instruments and the growth of autonomous workshops and printing competitive partnerships that took the Franco-Flemish cittern culture to an international level. Citterns were available to a wide social spectrum and different economic backgrounds as the competition among makers brought prices down, not only for citterns but for more expensive instruments such as the lute. Poets, courtiers, secretaries, and court administrators would be acquainted with the cittern as one of the ideal instruments for the leisure artistic practices of the middle-classes who followed Baldassarre's style of the fine musical gentlemen.

The Netherlands, the first modern economy brought a high exchange rate of all kinds of goods and artworks for an unstoppable demographic growth both in towns in cities. Among these commodities, the cittern thrived obliging makers to migrate from south to north to avoid competition and to be solely dedicated to the production of citterns. The representation of citterns in iconography, although needing further research, predominantly puts the instrument in erotic and harlotry-related scenarios; Vermeer's *Procuress* crowns these associations and symbolizes the cittern's high commodification.

Franco-Flemish citterns could have a very fine craftsmanship, yet could be also very austere, reflecting the wide range of economic backgrounds they could reach. Some surviving examples, though, show a high degree of commodification that even left the instruments with minimum barring and unorthodox soundboard joints and craft techniques. A very common type of cittern was the back with dark and light wood strips arranged in a fan-like style with overlapping sides; a possible second Dutch type was made with the bottom covering the ribs. Little if anything of the humanist meaning was materialised in these wired strung plucked stringed instruments and there are few pieces of evidence that can indicate a use that was intrinsically linked with the revival of antiquity.

4.4 England

4.4.1 The Arrival to the British Isles

The cittern was not commonly known in England before 1547, for example, Henry VIII (1491-1509) after ascending the throne in 1509 placed music in a prominent place at court. The English ruler had about fifty-eight musicians, many from the Italian Peninsula and the Low Countries.¹⁰¹⁰ However, in his inventory compiled in 1547 there is only evidence of guitars and no citterns.¹⁰¹¹ In the words of Frances Palmer, ‘we may suppose that instruments which were a fashionable novelty in London in 1548 could well have been introduced at court a few years earlier.’¹⁰¹²

Indeed by 1547, the English lute tutor Thomas Whythorne in his autobiography wrote that the cittern, along with the guitar were ‘new’ and ‘strange’ and ‘steemed by the best sort’.¹⁰¹³ Thomas Whythorne was an apprentice of John Heywood (1497- 1577), lute and virginal player and poet, and he acquired important tenures as tutor, such as his employment by Jane Dudley Duchess of Northumberland.¹⁰¹⁴ Whythorne probably felt the need to learn both the guitar and the cittern because it was a fashionable novelty, or as writer Robert S. Du Plessis explained, they were new commodities that excited the demand of consumers.¹⁰¹⁵

The Italian influence on the English cittern culture is undeniable. Most importantly, the English repertoire, besides being influenced by Italian ground basses,¹⁰¹⁶ requires what Michael Praetorius called ‘Italian Tuning’ (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-bb*), which is slightly different than the Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish disposition (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-aa'a'*).¹⁰¹⁷ The ‘Italian tuning’ is closer to the Italian hexachord *e'- d'd'- gg'- b- c'- a*, as reported by theorists Michael Praetorius, Marin Mersenne and Athanasius Kircher.¹⁰¹⁸ Therefore, it is possible that the English knew the *cetra*, or perhaps a very early

¹⁰¹⁰ Greer, “Henry VIII, King of England.”

¹⁰¹¹ Palmer, “Musical Instruments at the Court of Henry VIII,” 105.

¹⁰¹² Palmer, 105.

¹⁰¹³ Whythorne, *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne. Edited by James M. Osborn. [With a Portrait.]*.

¹⁰¹⁴ Nelson, “Thomas Whythorne and Tudor Musicians,” 36, 136–40.

¹⁰¹⁵ DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*, 136.

¹⁰¹⁶ Byler, “The Music for Cittern and Gittern in the Mulliner Book’.”

¹⁰¹⁷ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60, 61.

¹⁰¹⁸ Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, IV, 32; Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive ars magna consoni et dissoni in X libros digesta*, 479.

Italian traditional cittern and at some point modified its tuning to a simpler version and adapted to it.¹⁰¹⁹

The Italian traditional cittern influence could have come somewhere around the 1530s directly to the British Isles, via musicians from the Peninsula who travelled to the English courts. For example, the Venetian Bassano family of musicians, instrument makers and composers, were not only active in England but gave a ‘fair cittern’ to Queen Mary I of Scotland (1517–1558) in 1556.¹⁰²⁰

Nevertheless, the cittern in England was significantly influenced by the Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish and Netherlandish enterprise.¹⁰²¹ For example, the term ‘cittern’ with derivations such as *cithren*, *cittharn* and *citharen* are English in nature and they seem to be derived from the word *cistre*, which was the most common term for the cittern in sixteenth-century France.¹⁰²² Moreover, the vast number of tablatures for the cittern in England use French tablature.¹⁰²³

As reported by Francis Waldbauer, the now lost earliest English cittern book *The Breffe and playne instruction to learne to play the Gyttron and also de cetterne* by James Rowbotham is possibly a translation of the prints of Adrian Le Roy, Robert Ballard and Guillaume Morlaye.¹⁰²⁴ However, these French works can be dated to 1551 and not necessarily to 1565 as Howard Mayer Brown mentioned.¹⁰²⁵ In fact, the tablature system in the English repertoire followed a popular line brought by the French printed music.¹⁰²⁶ It is no surprise to find Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish influence in the English cittern enterprise; after all, during the sixteenth century there were tight political and economic relations between England and the Low Countries.¹⁰²⁷

¹⁰¹⁹ Lanfranco, *Scintille di musica di Giouan Maria Lanfranco da Terentio parmegiano, che mostrano a leggere il canto fermo, & figurato, gli accidenti delle note misurate, le proportioni, i tuoni, il contrapunto, et la diuisione del monochordo* ..., 139, 140.

¹⁰²⁰ Lasocki, *The Bassanos*, 163; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 16–19; Edwards, “Consort | Grove Music.”

¹⁰²¹ For influences between the German speaking countries and England regarding a particular type of small cittern with a different tuning mentioned by Praetorius as the *klein English Zitterlein* see the works of Forrester and Michel. The latter established the connection between this treble cittern, which was present in a seventeenth century musical source by Elias Walther from Thuringia published circa 1660. Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 41; Michel, “Zistern”; Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, Plate XVI. 61, 99.

¹⁰²² Page, *The Guitar in Tudor England*, 176; Tyler, “Cittern.”

¹⁰²³ Tyler, “Cittern”; Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*, 427, 434, 475.

¹⁰²⁴ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 188; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 16.

¹⁰²⁵ Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*, 238.

¹⁰²⁶ Weigand, “The Cittern Repertoire”; Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 189.

¹⁰²⁷ Spiessens, “De Antwerpse Citerbouwer Lenaert Pels Jeremiaszoon (°ca. 1588–†Antwerpen 1626).”

The cittern was joined by the arrival of the guitar to the British Isles; both instruments were imported together as part of the textile trade between Antwerp and England.¹⁰²⁸ John Ward reported a cittern importation from Antwerp, including the mention of ‘slight’ citterns, probably meaning small.¹⁰²⁹ John White, a draper or cloth merchant, made extensive importations of plucked stringed instruments, including citterns, lutes and guitars, as if the musical instruments were part of the ornamental fashion of the early modern English consumers.¹⁰³⁰ Foreign citterns, mostly from the Low Countries, intensely pervaded the English market all the way up to the first years of the seventeenth century.¹⁰³¹ The Draper’s Company was a trade association of wool and cloth merchants founded in the twelfth century, which became one of the most powerful companies in London, acquiring important political privileges from the Crown; interestingly, James Rowbotham was a member.¹⁰³²

The likes of Rowbotham represent the English social sector that had constant interchange with the Low Countries in the late 1570s and early 1580s. Poets, scholars, printers, and ambassadors such as playwright George Gascoigne, who used both the cittern and bandora for his plays, gathered among Dutch literary men, especially from the University of Leiden.¹⁰³³ At the same time, the many English gentlemen and courtiers that travelled constantly to Paris and the Low Countries probably brought back many printed music volumes, citterns and other instruments with them.¹⁰³⁴ Most likely, such endeavour soon placed the novelties in a very popular spot, inciting their further commercial adaptation.

For example, Thomas Mulliner (flourished in 1563) was an organist based in London, who compiled a commonplace book which had the function of encompassing the work of contemporary composers, including popular pieces. It was mostly an eclectic collection of keyboard music; however, he also included music for the guitar and cittern in French tablature,¹⁰³⁵ as he probably copied Rowbotham’s

¹⁰²⁸ There is evidence of a mercer, meaning a dealer of fabrics, keeper of the Privy Council chamber in 1572, who played the cittern and the guitar. Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 142.

¹⁰²⁹ Ward, “A Dowland Miscellany,” 116.

¹⁰³⁰ Ward, 116.

¹⁰³¹ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 137.

¹⁰³² Fleming and Page, 100.

¹⁰³³ Whetstone, *A Critical Edition of George Whetstone’s 1582 An Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, CRITICAL INTRODUCTION. Whetstone’s Life and Works. E-book.

¹⁰³⁴ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 141.

¹⁰³⁵ Byler et al., “Abstracts,” 142–49.

Breffe and playne instruction.¹⁰³⁶ Interestingly, Mulliner assembled his manuscript in London between 1558 and 1564 as a student of John Heywood, the same teacher of Thomas Whythorne.¹⁰³⁷

It was these types of social and commercial networks of musicians, traders, tutors and printers that probably brought the cittern to foreign markets, noble circles and the upper middle-class' domestic entertainment.¹⁰³⁸

4.4.2 The Social Consort

The cittern was already a part of the English society when entering the rule of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), a period commonly known as the 'Golden Age of English music.'¹⁰³⁹ A rich musical heritage was being forged by instrumental and vocal music performed by native and foreign musicians, both in professional and amateur settings, such as halls, streets, alehouses and inside the English home.

As early as 1562 the cittern was integrated to the English nobility, upper middle class and political and economic entrepreneurs. An early reference is found in Sir Humphrey Gilbert's *Achademy in London for education of her Maiestes Wardes, and others the youth of nobility and gentlemen*, which incorporated the cittern among other musical instruments to be imparted.¹⁰⁴⁰

Also there shalbe one who shall keepe a dawncing and vawting schole; and
shalbe yearly allowed for the same,

Also, there shalbe one Teacher of Musick, and to play on the Lute, the
Bandora, and Cytterne, etc; who shalbe yearely allowed for the same.¹⁰⁴¹

Gilbert was not only an adventurer, explorer, member of parliament and soldier who served during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, but also a pioneer in the exploitation and colonisation of North America and plantations in Ireland.¹⁰⁴²

By the late 1560s the Eglantine Table,¹⁰⁴³ made for the family of Elizabeth of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury (1527-1608),¹⁰⁴⁴ commemorated the union of three noble English families of Hardwick,

¹⁰³⁶ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 7.

¹⁰³⁷ Caldwell, "Mulliner, Thomas."

¹⁰³⁸ Nelson, "Thomas Whythorne and Tudor Musicians," 36, 136–40.

¹⁰³⁹ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 101.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 22.

¹⁰⁴¹ Furnivall et al., *Queene Elizabethes Achademy (by Sir Humphrey Gilbert) A Booke of Precedence, the Ordering of a Funerall, &c. Varying Versions of The Good Wife, the Wise Man, &c. Maxims Lydgate's Order of Fools, A Poem on Heraldry, Occleve On Lords' Men, &c. Ed. By F.J. Furnivall ...*; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 22.

¹⁰⁴² Hayes, *Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Voyage to Newfoundland*, 3.

¹⁰⁴³ See [Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Image 70

¹⁰⁴⁴ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 3.

Shrewsbury, and Talbot.¹⁰⁴⁵ Among depictions of roses, plants, and numerous musical instruments there is the ‘earliest British image’ of the cittern.¹⁰⁴⁶ Both Micheal Fleming and Cristopher Page have established the fact that the instruments depicted in the table well could have been imported and not necessarily English.¹⁰⁴⁷ Peter Forrester, however, claims that the cittern’s third triple course ‘was unique to English citterns,’¹⁰⁴⁸ being different to the only surviving cittern attributed to England, which was probably designed for four double courses.¹⁰⁴⁹ Forrester also mentioned that the Eglantine table is the earliest depiction of a transalpine cittern with a chromatic fingerboard, something already noticed by Francis Waldbauer.¹⁰⁵⁰ Both Forrester and Waldbauer mentioned that the early English chromatic fretting was praised by Vincenzo Galilei who not only claimed that the instrument was first used in the isle but made to a high degree of excellence.¹⁰⁵¹

The Eglantine table is a monument to the musical interests of the privileged English families, specifically in their country homes. Besides the cittern, there are numerous marquetry depictions of Elizabethan musical instruments, such as lute guitar, shawms, bagpipes, harps and viols. There is also written religious and secular music, board games of chance, briar roses and other plants. Such rich decoration presents important social meanings, mainly meant to display the ‘accomplished mind’ of an English noble family in the pinnacle of the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁵² Interestingly, Edward Wilson-Lee explained that the cittern and the lute were the typical instruments that a noble would play, which was not the case with the violin, bagpipe and shawm.¹⁰⁵³

As Peter Forrester has explained, certain instruments might have been reserved for the household musicians due to the level of skill required; however, there was also the possibility of gifted amateurs and family members playing complicated music or instruments, such as the lute.¹⁰⁵⁴ Concurrently, Cristopher Page mentioned that both the guitar and the cittern could be considered as diminutives of

¹⁰⁴⁵ Collins, “A 16th-Century Manuscript in Wood: The Eglantine Table,” 275–79.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Forrester, “The Cittern,” 149.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 13.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Forrester, “The Cittern,” 156.

¹⁰⁴⁹ National Music Museum, “Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum.” Internal catalogues and technical drawing of the National Music Museum in South Dakota consulted. See table *

¹⁰⁵⁰ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 193.

¹⁰⁵¹ The text in Italian reads: ‘Fu la Cetera usata prima tragli Inglesi che da altre nationi, nella quale isola si lavoravano già in eccellenza. Galilei, *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei ... della musica antica, et della moderna*, 147.

¹⁰⁵² Wilson-Lee, “Tables of the Mind,” 220,221.

¹⁰⁵³ Wilson-Lee, 227.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Forrester, “Comm. 931,” 46.

the lute, as the latter's counterpoint music was fitted into their acoustical possibilities. In fact, professional musicians probably had the lute as one of their predominant instruments for practice, while the guitar and cittern were most likely secondary, yet important due to their capacity to play music of 'considerable diversity and social range.'¹⁰⁵⁵

While it is very difficult to say who played the lute and who played the cittern in the Hardwick, Shrewsbury, and Talbot family, it is possible to assume that Sir Henry Unton (c.1558-1596) played the lute in his family concerts. In his biographical portrait, commissioned by his widow Dorothy née Wroughton there is an ensemble consisting of one violin, flute, cittern, lute and viol among other plucked stringed instruments (Figure 138).¹⁰⁵⁶ The family is seated at the table with open music books and they are playing music while a masque is taking place; the latter seems to be an entertainment preceding a banquet shown above the consort room.¹⁰⁵⁷ The lute is played by a man, probably Unton himself, while the cittern is played by a woman who could have been his wife, Dorothy.¹⁰⁵⁸ This particular scene in the painting is said to represent his life in Wadley House, a country house with fifty-nine rooms in Farringdon, England.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Page, "The Gittern or Guitar," 140–42.

¹⁰⁵⁶ [See Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography](#). Image 69. The identification of the cittern was confirmed in a high detail photography published by Micheal Fleming and John Bryan. Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 117.

¹⁰⁵⁷ National Portrait Gallery, "The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 - 1596)."

¹⁰⁵⁸ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 117.

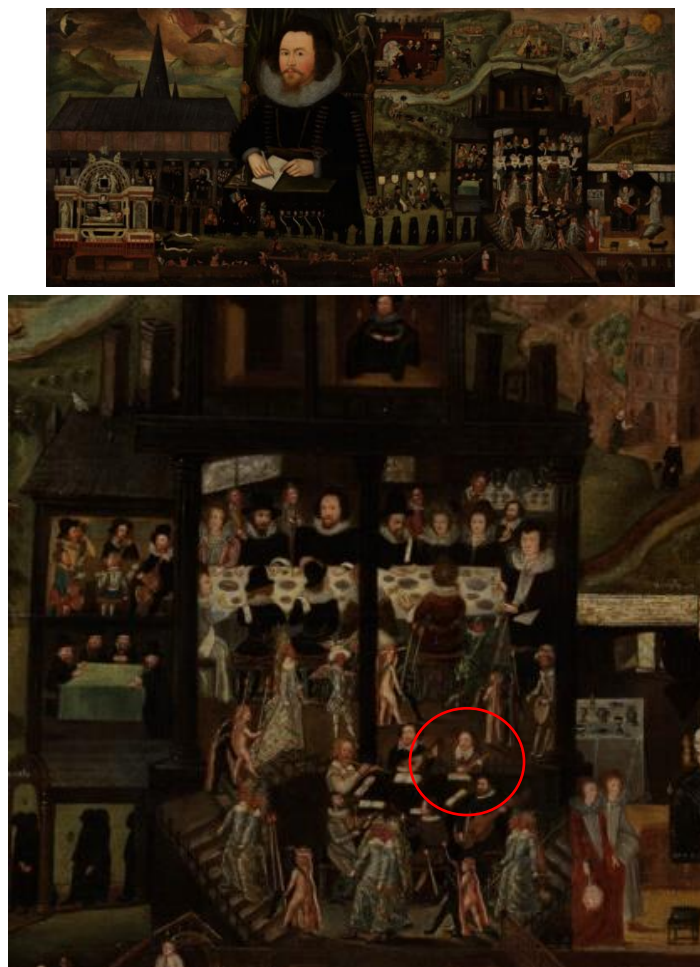


Figure 138. The Henry Unton Portrait. Anonymous, oil on panel, The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton, The National Portrait Gallery, London (inv. nr. NPG 710). Note the cittern highlighted with a red circle. Sources: National Portrait Gallery, 'The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton (c. 1558 - 1596)', accessed 2 August 2023, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/case-studies/the-portrait-of-sir-henry-unt-on-c.-1558-1596>. Creative Commons (CC). © National Portrait Gallery, London.

There is evidence that the duties of the musicians of the noble houses and musical ensembles of viols, violins and 'other broken musicke' included playing during supper time.¹⁰⁵⁹ Somewhere after the first decade of the seventeenth century Robert Brathwaite (1588-c.1673) might have been a member of the household of the third Earl of Huntington, which is a noble title dating back to the eleventh century and associated with the ruling house of Scotland. Brathwaite specified how the lord's musicians should

¹⁰⁵⁹

Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana, 44; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 24.

practice music, including the cittern, in the noble household, as they should be ‘Skillfull in that commendable sweet science.’¹⁰⁶⁰

At greate feastes, when the Earle’s service is going to the table, they are to play upon Shagbutte, Cornetts, Shalmes, and such other instruments going with winde. In meale times to play upon Violls, Violins, or other broken musicke. They are to teach the Earle’s children to singe and play upon the Base Violl, the Virginalls, Lute, Bandora, or Citerne. In some howses they are allowed a messe of meate into their chambers, in other howses they are allowed a messe of meate into their chambers, in other howses they eate with the waiters.’¹⁰⁶¹

The cittern in England almost immediately became a standard member of the English consort, a term that simply denotes ensembles of voices or instruments.¹⁰⁶² With its unusual tuning, the capacity to be strummed, and the particular brilliant sound of the wire string, the cittern provide a rhythmic and chordal accompanist, in which the wire strings gave a completely different sonority and texture.¹⁰⁶³ While the cittern was polyphonically limited, other instruments, such as the lute and viol took care of the variations and complex improvisational divisions.¹⁰⁶⁴ In fact, the success of the sound of the wire plucked cittern led to the creation of metal strung instruments with wider ranges and sounds.¹⁰⁶⁵ One of them was the bandora, which was said to be created in 1562 in England by the celebrated viol maker John Rose (flourished between 1552–61). A very early reference to the bandora in a ‘consort’ was its use in English drama in the play *Jocasta*, translated in 1566 by George Gascoigne (1535 - 1577), from the Italian language, since it was originally written by writer Lodovico Dolce (1508/10–1568).

The play was presented at Gray’s Inn, which under the reign of Elizabeth I was a prominent professional association for lawyers and judges in London, particularly known for its parties, festivals and plays. The cittern, viols and bandora, originally spelled *bandurion*, were directed to sound before the ‘dumme show’, a short piece before the first act.¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana*, 44; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 24.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana*, 44; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 24.

¹⁰⁶² Edwards, “Consort.”

¹⁰⁶³ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music”; Edwards, “The Performance of Ensemble Music in Elizabethan England”; Hadaway, “The Cittern”; Weigand, “The Cittern Repertoire,” 82.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 2 ‘Choice consorts...(rare chests of viols)’: The evidence of the repertory. Viols in ‘broken consort’ music. E-book.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Abbott and Segerman, “The Cittern in England before 1700,” 26.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 2 ‘Choice consorts...(rare chests of viols)’: The evidence of the repertory. Viols in ‘broken consort’ music; Gascoigne, *The Vvhole Woorkes of George Gascoigne Esquire*, 71.

The bandora combines features of the cittern with features of the lute, such as a fixed bridge and a flat soundboard, instead of the cittern's movable bridge and slightly curved belly.¹⁰⁶⁷ In the following three decades the orpharion was created, which was probably modelled after the bandora, as its main differences with the latter¹⁰⁶⁸ are that its frets and bridge are placed obliquely to provide a progressive rise of length from treble to bass.¹⁰⁶⁹ The orpharion, even more so than the bandora, emulated the lute having at least seven courses and an identical tuning.¹⁰⁷⁰

The English consort, besides being a musical ensemble, was a way for the English well-to do family to actively participate in their own amusement and distraction.¹⁰⁷¹ Such entertainment was meant to reflect the higher standards of courtly etiquette, where novel instruments as the cittern, acted as desirable commodities in avant-garde musical practices. For example, Sir Frances Walsingham (1532 – 1590), principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth I, employed Daniel Bachelier (1572-1619) and John Johnson (died 1594) who provided the music of the four Walsingham Consort Books, one of them dedicated to the cittern.

The music of the Walsingham consort books was meant to be played by both professional musicians but also by the family members.¹⁰⁷² In fact, judging from the titles, eight pieces of the Walsingham cittern consort book were specifically written for Sir Francis' daughter, the Lady Frances Sidney (1561–1631).¹⁰⁷³ Interestingly, one of the consort pieces copied from Matthew Holmes (died 1597), a precentor and singer at Christ Church in Oxford, is entitled 'Nutmegs and Ginger'; these spices, like the cittern, were exotic commodities at the table of the wealthy English family.¹⁰⁷⁴ As Peter Forrester has suggested, consort music was largely a domestic endeavour where the immediate family, friends and relatives were the main performers and audience too.¹⁰⁷⁵ In fact, the mixed consort, that is the combination of wind instruments and plucked stringed instruments, was socially ubiquitous, appearing in several contexts

¹⁰⁶⁷ Harwood and Nordstrom, "Bandora."

¹⁰⁶⁸ The bandora, at some point was made with angled frets and bridge. Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 46.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Harwood and Nordstrom, "Bandora."

¹⁰⁷⁰ Harwood, "Orpharion."

¹⁰⁷¹ Edwards, "The Walsingham Consort Books," 213.

¹⁰⁷² Edwards, 213.

¹⁰⁷³ Edwards, 213; Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 55–57.

¹⁰⁷⁴

McCants, "Exotic Goods, Popular Consumption, and the Standard of Living," 441; Edwards, *Music for mixed consort*, xi; Smith, "Demystifying a Change in Taste," 247.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Forrester, "Comm. 931."

such as playhouses, private houses of the gentry and outdoor royal entertainment.¹⁰⁷⁶ For example, Paula Findlen established that making music with family and friends was an important ingredient and new type of social activity.¹⁰⁷⁷

The success of the consort brought other composers to release music books to the market; for example, Thomas Morley (1557-8 – 1602), who was also an editor, theorist, publisher, and organist, adapted Italian music to his madrigals and consort pieces.¹⁰⁷⁸ Morley tailored the lighter Italian pieces to the brief but conspicuous popularity of the English madrigal in the libraries of the nobility and upper middle class.¹⁰⁷⁹

In 1599 Thomas Morley published *The First Booke of Consort Lessons*, containing works for an ensemble of viols, lute, bandora and cittern. By this time, Morley was concentrating on expanding his output and creating a monopoly of printed music.¹⁰⁸⁰ Like many composers wanting to sell their music, his publications were specially focused on lighter Italian madrigals, *canzonettas* and *ballatas* that were popular in London at the time.¹⁰⁸¹ Like the Walsingham's consort book, it is very likely that Morley's consort lessons were intended for the everyday domestic life of wealthy families, who would play the music themselves or have their employed musicians to play it in different occasions such as for dinner or welcoming guests.¹⁰⁸²

While there is no evidence that Queen Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603) played the cittern, she probably encountered them many times during her courtly consorts. For example, when she paid a visit to the earl of Hertford Edward Seymour (1539 – 1621), she enjoyed a great number of festivities during her three-day stay in his mansion at Elvetham, Hampshire. Among the many amazing celebrations for the Queen, there was one that took place in the garden where a theatrical character named the 'Fayerie Queene' danced with her maids around Elizabeth. After a poetic speech, the characters made another

¹⁰⁷⁶ Robinson, "'A Perfect-Full Harmonie': Pitch, Tuning and Instruments in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Mixed Consort," 199,200.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Findlen, *Early Modern Things*, 10.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Haar, "The Concept of the Renaissance," 44.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Brett Tessa Murray, "Morley, Thomas."

¹⁰⁸¹ Haar, "The Concept of the Renaissance," 44.

¹⁰⁸² Dart, "Morley's Consort Lessons of 1599," 8.

dance and sang a song of six parts with the music of ‘an exquisite consort, wherein was the Lute, Bandora, Base-violl, Cittern, Treble-viol, and Flute, and this was the Fairies song.’¹⁰⁸³

That the cittern remained in favour of the Royal Family is well attested by a significant piece of evidence brought by John Ward. A portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria (1609- 1669) by English painter Cornelius Johnson (1593- 1661) shows her playing a cittern surrounded by a magnificent castle and accompanied by her dog.¹⁰⁸⁴ Born in France, she was Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1625 to 1649, which was the date when her husband King Charles I was executed during the English Civil War. Queen Henrietta had nine French musicians apart from the king, who produced music for instrumental ensembles played in banquets and masques, and she even performed in some of them.¹⁰⁸⁵ More evidence of the cittern in the hands of noble women comes from Gilling Castle, which depicts a scene of wealthy men and women playing viols and citterns together (Figure 139). The two couples are dressed in higher class clothing, and they are seated on a bench, which also has open music books. The citterns are played by the presumably noble women, while the viols are played by the two gentlemen. The frieze bears more instrument players holding lutes, suggesting thus a consort ensemble.¹⁰⁸⁶



Figure 139. Two Ladies playing Citterns at the Gilling Castle. Anonymous, oil on panel, Gilling Castle Frieze, 1571, Gilling East, North Yorkshire. Source: ‘Collection: Yorkshire North Riding: Historical Background’, REED Online, accessed 4 February 2024, <https://reed.org/collections/yksnr/background/>. Photo: David Klausner. Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

¹⁰⁸³ Anonymous, “The Honorable Entertainment Given to the Queenes Maiestie in Progresse, at Eluetham in Hampshire, by the Right Honorable the Earle of Hertford.”

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, Plate 1. The portrait is currently in an unknown private collection.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Spink, “The Musicians of Queen Henrietta-Maria,” 178.

¹⁰⁸⁶ See the work of Micheal Fleming and John Bryan for further English cittern depictions. Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 90, 139.

Gilling Castle is a fortified manor house inherited by Sir Nicholas Fairfax (1498 – 1571), who became a prominent member of the Council of the North. His son Sir William Fairfax (circa 1531-1597) rebuilt the castle in 1571 adding the frieze above an oak panelling. It is quite possible that the players were the household musicians or the family members. Although it is possible to be certain of the identification of the instruments, some of the details of the painting have been altered, and thus, remain tentative.¹⁰⁸⁷

The cittern was among a great variety of commodities that were increasingly accessible for many layers of a society that was swiftly changing. Early modern English well-to do society had nobles, citizens and ‘burgesses’, the latter being upper middle-class merchants who mingled among nobles. There was also the so-called yeomen, successful landowners coming from past generations of Medieval peasants who rose in social status due to a long class struggle on the fourteenth and fifteenth century.¹⁰⁸⁸

As Margaret Jane Kidnie stated, social classes in the Elizabethan period were considered an ‘immutable aspect of identity’ and when these boundaries were blurred by economic changes in the continent and a vast and complex commodity market of accessible luxuries, the upper-middle classes could mimic the nobility to a point where it was not possible to distinguish them. As pamphleteer Phillip Stubbes wrote:

There is such a confuse mingle mangle of apparel in England, and such horrible excesse thereof, as everyone is permitted to flaunt it out, in what apparel he listeth himself, or can get by any meanes. So that it is very hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a Gentleman, who is not: for you shall have those, which are neither of the Nobilitie, Gentilitie, nor Yeomanrie, no, nor yet Magistrate or officer in the common wealth, go daylie in silks, Veluettes, Satens, Damaskes, Taffaties, and such like: notwithstanding, that they both base by birth, meane by estate, and servile by calling. And I accompt a great confusion, and a generall disorder in a Christian commonwealth.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸⁷ Fleming and Bryan, 113,114.

¹⁰⁸⁸ During the fourteenth century, English peasants achieved concessions over the lords and had enough surplus to accumulate, invest and expand. This economic boom created richer and independent commodity producers and consumers that acted as proto capitalists. The yeoman became landlords and to ensure their profits exploited their peasant workers. By the 16th century, the yeomen managed to fit their needs into the political arena, thus securing political liberties that allowed them to be a privileged class that mingled with the nobility and soon will challenge it in the seventeenth century. McNally, *Political Economy and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1-4,6-9.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Stubbes and Kidnie, *Philip Stubbes, the Anatomie of Abuses*, 71.

As in France, the English courtier was well acquainted with the cittern as part of the cultural etiquette the hoped to display to their colleagues, friends, professional contacts and even to the Queen herself. A letter written by Robert Langham or Laneham (1535 -1580), a textile dealer, specialised in silks and a keeper of the privy council chamber in the 1570s describes the cittern and guitar being used in court life at Kenilworth Castle in Warwickshire.¹⁰⁹⁰ The Castle was occupied by the Earl of Leicester in 1563, who restored it to attract royal attention and woo the queen Elizabeth I into marriage. The major festivities for the Queen's visit happened in 1575 and lasted for nineteen days, having music, fireworks, plays, hunting and great banquets. Langham, an aspiring courtier with enough wealth to get the Queen's attention, was said to be a fine gentleman, knowledgeable in French, Spanish, Dutch and Latin, and keeping the company of great men such as ambassadors and councilmen. Always seeming to lead a life of leisure, he spent afternoons and nights accompanied by gentlemen and gentlewomen where he could be a lively entertainer, sometimes dancing, sometimes playing the guitar or the cittern:

And sometime, at my good Lady Sidney's chamber, a noble-woman that I am as much bound unto as any poor man may be unto so gracious a lady; and sometime in some other place. But always among the gentlewomen by my good will; (O, you know that comes always of a gentle spirit:) And when I see company according, then can I be as lively too: Sometimes I foot it with my dancing: now with my gittern, or else with my cittern, then at the virginals: You know nothing comes amiss to me: Then carol I up a song withal; that by and by they come flocking about me like bees to honey; And ever they cry, "Another, good Laneham, another!"¹⁰⁹¹

George Whetstone (1544-1587), member of a wealthy family, became a writer, aspiring courtier and soldier who fought against Spanish rule of the Low Countries. His writing inspired other men of letters such as William Shakespeare (1564 -1616), Robert Greene (1558 – 1592) and John Marston (1576 – 1634). In his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, Whetstone devised an oration expressed in fictional debates that dealt mainly with marriage and prospective spouses. This work has the intention to provide a sort of conduct book or marriage manual for fine gentlemen. The *Heptameron* lays out an ideal of the

¹⁰⁹⁰

Laneham, *Laneham's Letter Describing the Magnificent Pageants Presented Before Queen Elizabeth, at Kenilworth Castle*, 90.

¹⁰⁹¹ Laneham, 90.

urban life of an upper middle-class gentleman, who should keep at all times to the codes of behaviour of an educated citizen.¹⁰⁹²

In the *Heptameron* the cittern is used as an instrument for the courtier amateur and for reciting poetry. Whetstone's main character *Ismarito*, the author's fictional self, is a melancholic, solitary traveller who is invited to a stately palace that 'symbolizes the beauty and order of the civil life.'¹⁰⁹³ *Ismarito*, dazzled by the beauty of the Great Chamber of the Palace sang a sonnet to his 'citterne,' 'to recomfort his throbbing hart.'¹⁰⁹⁴ The melancholic traveller claimed that he composed the sonnet after a 'quiet thought' when he read *The Consolations of Philosophy by Boethius*.¹⁰⁹⁵ The *Heptameron* was heavily influenced by Baldassarre Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*,¹⁰⁹⁶ which by the end of the seventeenth century had twelve editions in London.¹⁰⁹⁷ In England, *Il Cortegiano* was translated by Thomas Hoby (1533-1560), and although in the work there is no mention of the cittern, English gentlemen did relate both *Il Cortegiano* to the instrument.¹⁰⁹⁸ For example, Thomas Nashe (1567 -1601), pamphleteer, poet and playwright mentioned how, according to Baldassarre Castiglione, it was important to have musical talents among others.

I feare, right worshipfull, least the affection of my phrase present mee as a foe to your important affaires, whose hart, exalted with the eye fight of such soveraigntie as soares above human fight, coulde not but methodize this admiration in this digression of distinction. But from such entercourse of excuse, let my unschooled indignities convert themselves to your courtesie, and acquaint you with the counsaile of my rude dedication.

So it was that, not long fince lighting in company with manie extraordinarie gentlemen of most excellent parts, it was my chance (amongst other talke which was generally traversed amongst us) to move diverse questions, as touching the several qualities required in Castalions Courtier: one came in with that of Ovid, *Semper amabilis esto*; another stood more strictly on the necessitie of that affability, which our Latinists entitle *facetious*, and we more familiarlie describe by the name of discoursing; the third came in with his carpet devises, and tolde what it was to tickle a citterne, or have a sweet stroke on the lute, to daunce more delicatlie, and revell it bravelie; the fourth, as an enemy to their faction, confuted all these as effeminate follies, and would need maintain that the only adjuncts of a courtier were schollership and

¹⁰⁹² Whetstone, *A Critical Edition of George Whetstone's 1582 An Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, Critical Introduction. Whetstone's Life and Works. 2. The Ideal of Civility. Ebook.; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 23.

¹⁰⁹³ Whetstone, *A Critical Edition of George Whetstone's 1582 An Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, Critical Introduction. Whetstone's Life and Works. 2. The Ideal of Civility. Ebook.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Beauregard, "A Critical Edition of George Whetstones' an Heptameron of Civil Discourses," 96.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Beauregard, 96.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Whetstone, *A Critical Edition of George Whetstone's 1582 An Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, Critical Introduction. Whetstone's Life and Works. 2. The Ideal of Civility. Ebook.; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 23.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, 1995, 139.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Castiglione, *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio*, 51 B-52. Second Book.

courage, returning picked curiositie to paultry feriveners and such like; affability to Aristippus and his crue; citterning and luting to the birthright of everie fixe pennie slave: and, to conclude, dauncing and revelling to everie taylors holie day humour.¹⁰⁹⁹

Nashe read Baldassarre Castiglione as recommending the use of the cittern and lute as important instruments for the courtiers; however, in the original *Il Cortegiano*, Castiglione referred to the improvised recitation of poetry against the *viole*, which could have been a lute, *viola da mano* or *vihuela*.¹¹⁰⁰ For an English gentlemen such as Nashe, either the cittern or the lute were the instruments recommended for the musical practices of Baldassarre's courtier, although Nashe personally preferred the playwright's wit as the means to impress his noble patrons.¹¹⁰¹ In contrast, Hoby's 1561 translation of the *Il Cortegiano* mentions only the lute for the singing practices or poetic recitations of the courtier.¹¹⁰² Most likely, by the time Hoby was working on his translation of Baldassarre's work, the cittern was, perhaps still considered as an exchangeable instrument for the English *cortegiano*.

4.4.3 'Common to All Men'

By the seventeenth century the cittern's popularity in English society reached its peak. Since the 1560's the instrument had high levels of importation. For example, there is evidence in the London Port Book of 1567-1568 of an importation of eighty-six lutes, fourteen guitars, eighteen citterns and thirteen thousand, eight hundred and forty-eight lute strings in a period of only ten months.¹¹⁰³ Christopher Page and Michel Fleming stated that local English makers probably faced a strong competition from the foreign market, resulting after 1608 in a rate for duty for imported instruments as a probable attempt to protect the internal economy.¹¹⁰⁴

While the musical life of early modern England was thriving in the most urbanized areas, people leaving outside cities such as London also had an intense use of musical instruments. Michael Fleming studied documents referring to two hundred and twenty-five people who died in between 1570-1680. Interestingly, Fleming directed the study towards the classes below the high society, that is 'apprentices,

¹⁰⁹⁹

Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, iv.

¹¹⁰⁰ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 153-154. E-book.

¹¹⁰¹

Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, iv; Nash and Steane, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, 2,3.

¹¹⁰² Castiglione, *The Courtyer ... Done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby*. B.L., 51.

¹¹⁰² Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 81. Second Book. E-book.

¹¹⁰³ Ward, "A Dowland Miscellany," 116.

¹¹⁰⁴ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 137.

freemen, craftsmen, merchants, yeomen, clerics, university men, widows, and people in a range of musical occupations.’¹¹⁰⁵ The results show a great number of wired strung instruments as possessions of the people under scrutiny, meaning thirty-eight citterns, sixteen bandoras and six orpharions.¹¹⁰⁶ Fleming demonstrates that music in sixteenth and seventeenth century England was not reserved for the higher classes and privileged households in the country and the city, but was part of the ‘provincial people of modest wealth,’ and the cittern family of musical instruments was very popular among them.¹¹⁰⁷

By the seventeenth century the cittern became such a commonplace in England that it was referred to in books of botanic and natural science and medicine. In his 1657 translation of the *Medicinal Dictionary* originally written by Jean Renou (1568-1620) also known as *Renodaeus*, Richard Tomlinson describes types of plants such as Dodder and *Epithymus* or *Epythamia*, which according to him are very similar yet different from each other. Additional similar species from the genus *Cuscuta*, according to the *Dictionary*, are leafless, ‘only hairy, putting forth slender capillaments, like Cittern strings, out of which issues forth small flowers like glitterins stars, gravitated with small seeds.’¹¹⁰⁸

A translation of *Natural Magick*, by polymath, playwright, and scholar Giambattista della Porta (1535 -1615), discusses the causes of wonderful things, the generation of animals, production of new plants, increasing ‘household-stuff’, changing metals, counterfeiting gold, strange cures and beautiful women. While explaining how to distil using the heat of the sun, he mentioned the use of cittern strings wound into big threads of wire to prevent herbs passing down to the filtered liquids:

Gather your Herbs before Sunrise, pick them and cleanse them from dust and durt of mens feet, from the urine and ordure of Worms and other Creatures, and such kind of filth and pollutions. Then, lest they should foul and soil the Water, shake them, and wipe them with clothes; and lastly, wash your hands, and then, them, and dry them in the shade: when they are dried, put them into the Glasses, take some wire-Cittern strings, and winde them into round clues: so that being let go, they may untwine themselves again: put one of these, into the mouth of each Glass, to hinder the Herbs from falling out, when the Glasses are turned downwards.¹¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰⁵ Fleming, “An ‘Old Old Violl’ and ‘Other Lumber,’” 90–91.

¹¹⁰⁶ Fleming, 95.

¹¹⁰⁷ Fleming, 95, 99.

¹¹⁰⁸ Renou, *A Medicinal Dispensatory, Containing the Whole Body of Physick*, 237.

¹¹⁰⁹ Porta, *Natural Magick*, 258.

John Brown (1642 -1700), while discussing wounds to the chest, described the cittern as an intricate part of the heart and one of the ‘Wheels of Music’ where the human voice makes it music.

Its Figure [The Thorax] is beautiful and capacious, partly boney, partly fleshy; boney, for the strengthening of its most noble vessel the Heart; fleshy, for the more easie motion of its Diastole and Sytoke. It obtains a Cavity between the upper and lower middle Region, for the more equal diffusion of its native heat into all the simple parts. It’s framed of parts containing and contained; the containing parts are some of them Proper, others Common: the Common are 5, *Cuticula*, Cutis, Membrana Carnosa, Adeps, and Nervosus Panniculus. The Proper are brought under these 3 heads or distinctions, as some being soft and fleshy, other boney and Cartilaginous, and the third Membranous. In this are locked up the vital Instruments and Wheels of Life, the rare Organs of Music, whereby the Voice is so diversified, called by Hippocrates χέλος, a cittern, making here its Musick. Here may we see the Heart display and communicate its vital spirits; how these do quicken and strengthen the natural heat of the whole Body; how the Lungs as fresh Fans do cool its heat, and by their motions as Bellows blow it up again, if occasion requires.¹¹¹⁰

The popularity of the cittern turned it into a common instrument for English society well embedded in the social fabric of the island and part of everyday life as everyone seemed to have a cittern at hand.¹¹¹¹

4.4.4 Barbers, Grotesque and Gender

The cittern was one of the first musical instruments to bring the musical vogue developed by the mainstream high classes to the masses, which created a volatile set of social meanings. While used by virtually all types of social classes, it was often regarded as instrument of the lowest sort, with negative connections often found in the seventeenth century.¹¹¹² These associations, along with the grotesque head of citterns and their use in English drama were present in early cittern scholarship.¹¹¹³ Thurston Dart, goes on to say that most music historians considered the cittern to be an unimportant musical instrument, often played by courtesans.¹¹¹⁴ Even twenty years after Dart’s article, Robert Hadaway complained about unjust connotations made by modern scholarship, such as the constant association with barber shops and the lack of acknowledgement of the cittern’s important place among Renaissance

¹¹¹⁰ Browne, *A Compleat Discourse of Wounds, Both in General and Particular*, 252.

¹¹¹¹ Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), naval administrator of the Royal Navy and Member of Parliament, mostly famous for keeping one of the most known historic diaries of the British eighteenth century history mentioned the cittern in his writings. The instrument was used by his privileged sort as well as a ‘pretty lady’ who played it in ‘Post-house’, meaning an inn that kept horses. Pepys, “Tuesday 5 June 1660”; Pepys, “Thursday 17 January 1660/61.”

¹¹¹² Page, *The Guitar in Tudor England*, 161.

¹¹¹³ Galpin and Dart, *Old English Instruments of Music*, 22.

¹¹¹⁴ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music,” 46.

plucked stringed instruments.¹¹¹⁵ Moreover, Ephraim Segerman brought to our attention that many scholars often thought that the grotesque head of the cittern was one of the root factors of the derogatory remarks, which are often found in English early seventeenth century drama.¹¹¹⁶

Although Thurston Dart presented the cittern as a popular, cheaper, easy to play and louder instrument in comparison to the lute, he also used a wide range of literary evidence showing the relevance of the cittern for the English upper classes in the second half of sixteenth century.¹¹¹⁷ He also revealed the important social roles of the cittern when used in consort ensembles.¹¹¹⁸ The previous pages have shown how esteemed the cittern was for the higher classes, roughly from the 1550s to well beyond the seventeenth century.

The historical reality, however, shows that the cittern never ceased to be popular for all social layers, and because of its capacity to navigate across the social strata and being highly commercially exchangeable, it was frequently categorized as a common instrument of foolish, comical and usually female characters involved in some sort of sexual exchange.

It was common for English drama to use musical terms as metaphors, which were often sexual in nature and commonly using musical instruments as erogenous parts of the human body. Plucked stringed instruments, such as the lute and the cittern were often used as innuendos of sexually available women, meaning that the instruments were equated with women that would be *touched* and *played* often by male characters.¹¹¹⁹

For instance, William Shakespeare¹¹²⁰ and his contemporary playwrights made derogatory jests about the cittern peghead, often insulting people by comparing them to the carved piece.¹¹²¹ Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, an early comedy, was written circa 1595 and presented to Queen Elizabeth I, and in general it can be said that the play was directed to an educated audience.¹¹²² In act 5,

¹¹¹⁵ Hadaway, "The Cittern," 77.

¹¹¹⁶ Abbott and Segerman, "The Cittern in England before 1700," 40.

¹¹¹⁷ Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music," 49.

¹¹¹⁸ Dart, "Morley's Consort Lessons of 1599," 2–9.

¹¹¹⁹ E. Maguire, "Cultural Control in the Shrew," 85–90.

¹¹²⁰ Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 610.

¹¹²¹ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher: In Fourteen Volumes: With an Introduction and Explanatory Notes* (London: Printed by J. Ballantyne and Company for F.C. and J. Rivington [etc.], 1812), 416.; John Ford, *The Fancies, Chaste and Noble*, ed. Dominic J. Hart (London: Routledge, 2019), 40.

¹¹²² Dover Wilson and Shakespeare, *Love's Labours Lost*, xxviii.

scene 2, the characters perform a play to romantically woo each other. The mock act includes characters from antiquity such as Hector of Troy, Pompey the Great, Alexander the Great, Hercules and Judas Maccabeus, the latter a priest important for defending the Jewish religion during the third century before Christ. The character playing Judas, Holofernes, is supposed to portray his part seriously as he attempts to display a gallant speech; however, the rest of the mock actors and audience interrupted him, making him lose his facial composure by comparing his face to foolish things, including the grotesque head of a cittern.¹¹²³ A more in-depth analysis by Frankie Rubenstein shows how complex the meaning of the dialogue is. Holofernes, by saying ‘you have put me out of countenance’, and ‘you have out-faced them all’ implies punning on ‘put’ which is in fact alluding to ‘put coitally’ and ‘out-faced’, originally *fesse*, meaning prostitutes. On top of that meaning, since the audience refers to him as an ass, he then is described as ‘the ultimate degradation’, a prostitute’s behind (Figure 140).¹¹²⁴

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST. 533

Hol. Begin, fir; you are my elder.
Biron. Well follow'd; Judas was hang'd on an elder.
Hol. I will not be put out of countenance.
Biron. Because thou hast no face.
Hol. What is this?
Boyet. A cittern head.
Dum. The head of a bodkin.
Biron. A death's face in a ring.
Long. The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.
Boyet. The pommel of Cæsar's faultchion.
Dum. The carv'd-bone face on a flask.
Biron. St. George's half-cheek in a brooch.
Dum. Ay, and in a brooch of lead.
Biron. Ay, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer:
 And now, forward: for we have put thee in countenance.
Hol. You have put me out of countenance.
Biron. False; we have given thee faces.
Hol. But you have out-fac'd them all.
Biron. An thou wert a lion, we would do so.
Boyet. Therefore, as he is, an ass, let him go.
 And so adieu, sweet Jude! nay, why dost thou stay?
Dum. For the latter end of his name.

Figure 140. Extract from Love's Labour Lost. William Shakespeare, print, 1595, London. Note the mention of the cittern in the dialogue. William Shakespeare, The Plays of William Shakspeare. Volume the Second. Containing Measure for Measure. Comedy of Errors. Much Ado About Nothing. Love's Labour Lost., vol. 2 (London: printed for C. Bathurst, J. Rivington and Sons, T. Payne and Son, L. Davis, W. Owen and 25 others in London, 1785), Act 5, Scene 2, 533. Public Domain.

¹¹²³ Dover Wilson and Shakespeare, 193; Shakespeare, *The Plays of William Shakspeare. Volume the Second. Containing Measure for Measure. Comedy of Errors. Much Ado About Nothing. Love's Labour Lost.*, 2:5.2.608; *Love's Labour's Lost*.

¹¹²⁴ Rubenstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance*, xvi, xvii.

Another example is John Fletcher's (1579-1625) *Love's Cure*, published in 1622, which could well have been performed in the famous Globe or Blackfriars theatres in London, which were the most important playhouses of the city.¹¹²⁵ *Love's Cure* presented a narrative based on gender and transvestism, where the main characters, brother and sister, have been deliberately raised as if they were really members of the opposite sex, and throughout the play, they are violently indoctrinated into assuming their natural birth-sex gender rather than their original upbringing.¹¹²⁶ In scene 2, the siblings, Lucio and Clara complain about having to adjust to the vicissitudes of their gender. Later on, Clara insults a steward named Bobadilla, who is attempting to enforce both characters into assuming their gender roles, by calling him 'Dog-skin faced Rogue', 'Pilcher,' and 'cittern-head'.¹¹²⁷

The associations between barbers, prostitutes and comedic characters have been also explored by a number of scholars. Laurie E. Macguire, for example, wrote how the cittern is strongly associated with the female body, in her analysis of the 1590-2 play *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare (1564-1616), when the instrument functioned as a symbol of 'female pliability and passivity from an exclusively masculine environment.' Moreover, in the 1609 *Epicoene* by Ben Jonson (1572-1637) the loud cittern barber's playing is compared to a talkative wife, for 'the equation of silence with chastity and speech with promiscuity was a Renaissance commonplace.'¹¹²⁸

What is interesting to note is that barbershops did not only use citterns but also several other musical instruments such as trumpets, viols, and lutes. On an international scale and since the fifteenth century, barbershops would be fitted with musical instruments, especially plucked stringed instruments.¹¹²⁹ Moreover, in early modern England barbershops were strongly associated with music,¹¹³⁰ but also with leisure activities such as drinking ale and playing games,¹¹³¹ while waiting for the actual dentistry and medical services.¹¹³² Barbers were working class people, belonging to the same social stratum as

¹¹²⁵ Robertson, *Entertaining Uncertainty in the Early Modern Theater*, 161.

¹¹²⁶ Griffiths, "Trans* Historical Drama," 202.

¹¹²⁷ Beaumont and Fletcher, *Love's Cure*, Act 2, Scene 1, 22.

¹¹²⁸ E. Maguire, "Cultural Control in the Shrew," 93.

¹¹²⁹ Marcuse, "Cittern," 440-45.

¹¹³⁰ Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England*, 68.

¹¹³¹ E. Maguire, "Cultural Control in the Shrew," 93.

¹¹³² Stebbins, *The Barbershop Singer*, 21.

artisans, tradesmen, shoemakers and bar owners, many of them involved in musical activities, even instrument building.¹¹³³ W.L. Goodman, for example, mentioned that the will of Nicholas Holden describes him as a trumpeter and also a part-time barber-surgeon.¹¹³⁴ The derogatory association between barbers and citterns should be placed into a class context, meaning that the instrument's accessibility and popularity lend themselves to be easily dramatized. In the play script, it is possible to see a social discrimination that is most likely an expression of the contempt that some privileged classes had for the musical activities of modest sectors of the population.

Frankie Rubinstein has mentioned how the use of the phrase 'cittern head' was usually related to its grotesque decoration, which was both used to express a character's particular characteristics, often sexual or related to comedy or stupidity.¹¹³⁵ Important examples that he used are the use of the cittern as a *dunce*, meaning an ass in John Marston's Prologue *The Source of Villanie*. Rubinstein mentions also a famous example by playwright Ben Jonson in his *Silent Woman*, scene three, act five, where the character Morose says of his wife, whom his barber had recommended, 'I have married his cittern that is common to all men'. Interestingly, Rubinstein notes that the word 'common' is used to denote a synonym of prostitute.¹¹³⁶

Cristopher Wilson and Michela Calore relate the actual grotesque head of the cittern as a feature that lends itself to be associated with eroticism; however, such sexual associations were also equated with the barbershop. The authors rely on Thomas Dekker's (1572-1632) and Thomas Middleton's (1580-1627) play *The Honest Whore, Part 2*, when a character named Matheo denounces Bellafront as a prostitute by saying '*A Barbers Citterne for every Servingman to play upon; (5.2.151)*'.¹¹³⁷

At this point it is important to clarify exactly how grotesque was an English cittern; however, because of the scarcity of English cittern depictions with grotesques, it is necessary to use some continental examples. The Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] at the National Music Museum in South Dakota¹¹³⁸

¹¹³³ Goodman, "Musical Instruments and Their Makers in Bristol Apprentice Register, 1536-1643," 11-12.

¹¹³⁴ Goodman, 11-12.

¹¹³⁵ Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance*, xvi.

¹¹³⁶ Rubinstein, xvi.

¹¹³⁷ Wilson, *Music in Shakespeare*, Entry Cittern.

¹¹³⁸ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 1, Table 3.](#)

presents a pegbox carving in hardwood terminating in what it seems to be a dog's head (Figure 141).¹¹³⁹ Another very similar example is an oversized zoomorphic carved head in the pegbox of a late sixteenth century anonymous maker at the Museu da Musica in Lisbon.¹¹⁴⁰



Figure 141. Dog-Like Creature in English Cittern. Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, circa 1620, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500). Source: National Music Museum, 'Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum', accessed 31 October 2018, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern?ctx=9594f07b-c416-4b9b-b988-6c01aa5d95e2&idx=3>

Considering iconographic depictions, the list of grotesque cittern pegboxes is not numerous but it is significant, especially when compared to the Italian counterparts as they are not characters from classical antiquity or the typical combination of humanoid, vegetative, floral, and animal elements carved in numerous surfaces of the pegheads. Instead, the transalpine grotesques have a single creature at the top, which can be described as a hybrid between animal and human, sometimes close to a canine sort of beast (Figure 142).

¹¹³⁹ As noted by Darryl Martin, the cittern's finial is strikingly similar to an ornament depicted in a portrait of Lady Frances Sidney, Countess of Sussex (1531-1589). The painting depicts her holding a pelt that finishes with the creature's head. E-mail message to the author, December 3, 2018.

¹¹⁴⁰ See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 7, Table 3. This cittern's technical data and photographs can be accessed at the Matriz Net database of museums in Portugal. "MatrizNet."

Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83; "MatrizNet."

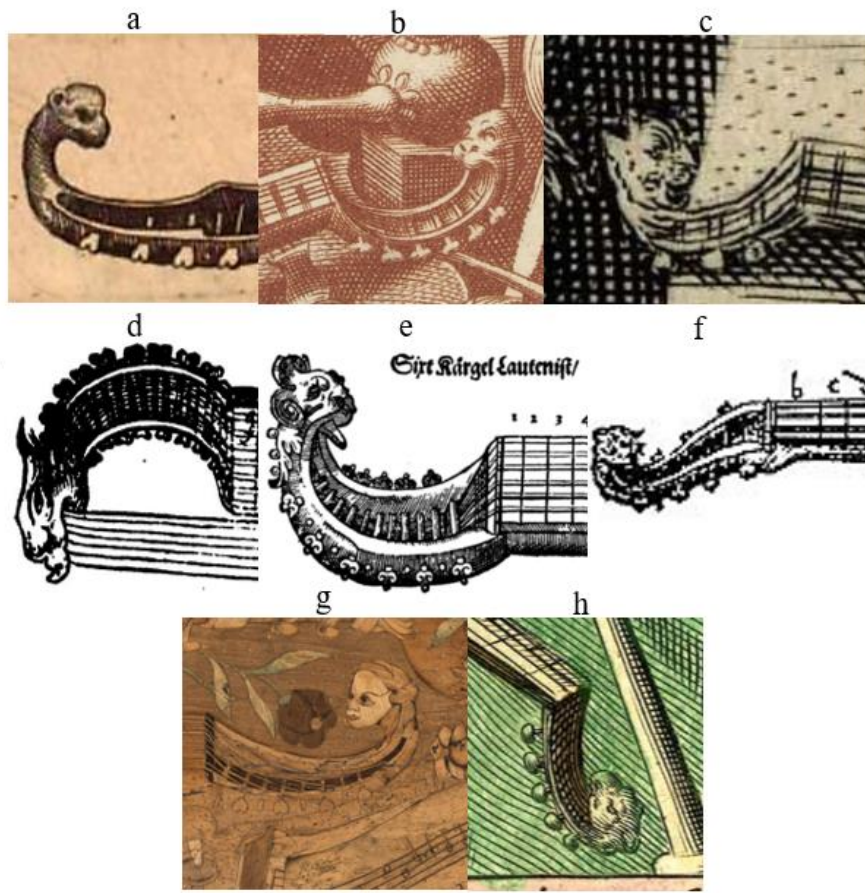


Figure 142. Grotesque Designs in Transalpine Citterns. a, Robert Fludd, print, *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet...* 1617, England; b, Cornelis Cort, after design by Frans Floris, print, *Musica* (De Zeven Vrije Kunsten Series), 1565, Antwerp, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. nr RP-P-BI-6398); c, Crispijn de Passe the Elder, print, *Terra, Series: The Elements*, 1600, Low Countries, The British Museum, London (1868,0612.2079); d, Thomas Robinson, print, *New Citharen Lessons*, London, e, Sixt Kargel and Johann Dominikus Lais, print, *Toppel Cythar*, 1578; f, Adrian Le Roy, print, *Breve et facile instruction...*, 1565, Paris; g, Anonymous, intarsia, *Eglantine Table*, circa 1567, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (inv. nr. NT 1127774); h, Crispijn de Passe the Elder and Martin de Vos, print, *Adolescentia Amori, Series the Four Ages of Man*, 1596, Low Countries, The British Museum, London (inv. nr 1850,0726.5). Source: Robert Fludd, *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris metaphysica, physica atqve technica historia*, in duo volumina secundum cosmi differentiam diuisa: *Tractatus secundus De natvrae simia seu technica macrocosmi historia*, in partes undecim divisa. - Editio secunda (Frankfurt am Main: Johan-Theodori de Bry, typis Hieronymi Galleri, 1617), 240. Public Domain.; Rijksmuseum, 'Musica (Muziek)', Cornelis Cort, after Frans Floris (I), 1565', Rijksmuseum, accessed 29 January 2024, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-BI-6398>. Public Domain; © The Trustees of the British Museum; Thomas Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons* (London: William Barley, 1609), front title; Sixt Kargel, Johann Dominikus Lais, and Lautenist Lais, *Toppel Cythar. Nova eaque artificiosa ratio ludendae cytharae*, (Strasbourg: B. Jobin, 1578), Public Domain, front title; Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard, *Breve et Facile Instruction Pour Aprendere La Tablature, a Bien Accorder, Conduire, et Disposer Lamain Sur Le Cistre* (Paris: Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard, 1565). Public Domain; front title, National Trust, 'Hardwick Hall's so-Called "Aeglentyne" [or Eglantine] Table - circa 1568', accessed 29 July 2018, <https://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/image/1191895>. CC BY-SA 4.0. ©National Trust Images/John Hammond; © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The comical associations of the cittern are also linked with its social ubiquity, which is used as a reason for equating the instrument as an emblem of prostitution. For example, Shakespeare's 1601 *Twelfth Night* was performed at the Globe the 2nd of February of 1602 with a band of flute or recorder, violin, lute, cittern, bandora and bass viol, an ensemble that provided a variation of both melodic divisions and rhythmic compositions for the dances. Before the show the musicians played in the middle of the hall as the audience approached the stage, and by the time the play was going to start, the band went up to the gallery to take its place. Music is very significant for the narrative of *Twelfth Night*, and author Clair van Kampen opened the possibility of the character of the fool singing while accompanying himself with the cittern, which could have represented the world of 'the people' as opposed to the aristocracy, which would be represented by the lute.¹¹⁴¹

The fool in the folk drama tradition was a character dressed in a miscellaneous costume with hoods and bells secured to his ankles and sometimes horns or donkey ears. They could be also jesters and involved in courtly contexts, although the roots are popular. The main function of the fool was to make fun of everyone; however, the meaning behind such a character could reflect wisdom and philosophical understanding, as it often spoke the truth and had more 'wit and perceptiveness' than its relatives the clowns and jesters.¹¹⁴² In early modern art jesters usually have their faces masked or decorated, their costume is brightly coloured, they wear a zoomorphic cap and carry a bauble or marotte, which is a short stick decorated at the tip with the likeness of the jester's head or with a puppet.¹¹⁴³

Remarkably, English lutenist and cittern player Thomas Robinson (circa 1589-1609), in his 1609 *New Citharen Lessons*, depicted a cittern with a peghead carved in the shape of a character wearing a jester cap (Figure 143).¹¹⁴⁴ Michael Praetorius also shows a jester decorating the peghead of a cittern in his famous work *Syntagma Musicum*.¹¹⁴⁵

¹¹⁴¹

van Kampen, "In Practice I," 45.

¹¹⁹³ Shrimpton, "Beautiful Idiots," 10–12; Grantley, *Historical Dictionary of British Theatre*, Clowns, Fool.

¹¹⁴³ Examples of grotesque jesters and their *marotte* are: [The Portrait of a Jester](#), possibly by Frans Vereeck, circa 1550, European private collection, inv. no. D.2010.5.1/ [The Jester](#), Marx Reichlich, circa 1519-20, Yale University Art Gallery, inv. no. 2020.37.6/ [Fool Holding a Staff](#), Jan Pietersz Saenredam, circa 1595, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, inv. no. 2011.1014. Vicki K. Janik, *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 415.

¹¹⁴⁴ Thomas Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*, with perfect Tunings of the same, from Foure course of Strings to Fourteene course, euen to trie the sharpest teeth of Enuie, with Lessons of all sortes, and methodicall Instructions for all Professors and Practitioners of the Citharen. (London: William Barley, 1609)

¹¹⁴⁵ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, II:Plate XV.

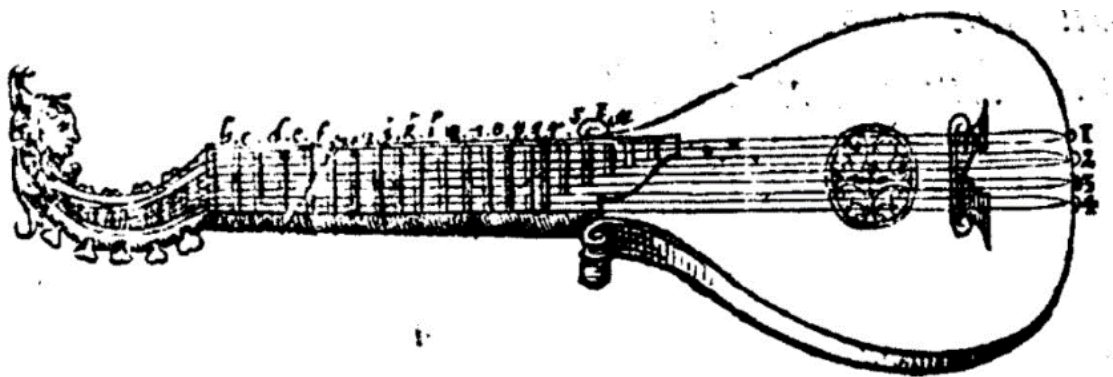


Figure 143. Jester Peghead in Robinson's Cittern Book. Thomas Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*, 1609, London. Source: Thomas Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons* (London: William Barley, 1609), 4. Public Domain.

Further comic and sexual associations are found in Shakespeare's character Dol Common, who plays the cittern. In their analysis, Roger Clegg and Lucie Skeaping suggest that 'Dol' is short for Dorothy and 'Common' refers to 'everyone's', for the character is a prostitute who engages in casual sexual relationships.¹¹⁴⁶ Similarly, in the play *the Dutch Courtesan* by John Marston (1576-1634), circa 1604, the character Franceschina 'sings and dances to the cittern'.¹¹⁴⁷ Franceschina together with Colombina, where two female stock characters of *commedia dell'arte*.¹¹⁴⁸ Both played harlot women; however, Colombina was young and credulous, flirtatious yet innocent with a heavy Dutch accent, while Franceschina usually had seniority and more experience.¹¹⁴⁹

The high commodification of the cittern in England combined with the hierarchal, power dynamics of early modern society turned this instrument into a dramatic symbol of gender and social discrimination.¹¹⁵⁰

¹¹⁴⁶ Clegg, Skeaping, and Daye, *Singing Simpkin and Other Bawdy Jigs*, 275.

¹¹⁴⁷ Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*, 215.

¹¹⁴⁸ The *commedia dell'arte* was a significant oral artistic manifestation of early modern Italy that influenced later European theatre performances, whose actors and actresses were famous for their abilities to sing and play a variety of musical instruments. MacNeil, "Commedia Dell'arte."

¹¹⁴⁹ Wharton, *The Drama of John Marston*, 139; Chaffee and Crick, *The Routledge Companion to Commedia Dell'Arte*.

¹¹⁵⁰ For more on the modes of power, self-definition and social order using musical culture in early modern Europe see Leppert, "Music, Representation, and Social Order in Early-Modern Europe."

4.4.5 The Cittern Signed by Petrus Rau[i]tt[a]

The only extant cittern that can be attributed to England is an example of the influence between the Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish cittern culture. Preserved at the National Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota,¹¹⁵¹ this instrument has been significantly documented and examined, and a great part of the catalogue information undertaken by the Museum is available online.¹¹⁵² Andrew Hartig reported further documentation, mostly done before the examination by the curatorial and conservation team at South Dakota, which includes a technical drawing done by Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet.¹¹⁵³ Benjamin Hebbert presented a brief, yet convincing comparison between the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] and other English instruments,¹¹⁵⁴ although this was also evaluated early on by Ian Harwood.¹¹⁵⁵ Further comparisons between English viols and one of the extant orpharions,¹¹⁵⁶ made by Francis Palmer, were carried out by Michael Fleming and John Bryan.¹¹⁵⁷ It seems clear that the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern is very similar to English instruments, in particular when considering the backs of the alternating strips of dark wood and light wood in the Palmer orpharion,¹¹⁵⁸ and the pressed circular decorations found on the heel of the cittern compared with viol pegheads,¹¹⁵⁹ as well the style shared by Rau[i]tt[a]’s and Palmer’s roses.¹¹⁶⁰

To add to the comparison, two of the surviving citterns from the Low Countries¹¹⁶¹ are similar to the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern as the three present backs made from strips of dark and light wood. The cittern preserved at the Brussels Musical Instrument Museum, however, is documented to have thirteen strips of ebony (*Diospyrus*, sp) and maple (*Acer* sp.),¹¹⁶² and the instrument at the Victoria and Albert Museum is reported to have eleven strips made out of the same type of woods.¹¹⁶³ The English cittern, in contrast

¹¹⁵¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instrument 1, Table 3.](#)

¹¹⁵² See published references in National Music Museum, “Cittern Labelled Petrus Rautta.”

¹¹⁵³ The author is grateful to Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet for kindly sharing his work. Hartig, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: Cittern, 34cm Mensur, Possibly English, circa 1600.”

¹¹⁵⁴ Hebbert, “The Forensic Challenges of a Renaissance Cittern.”

¹¹⁵⁵ Harwood, “A 16th-Century English Cittern at Last?”

¹¹⁵⁶ 1617, [Francis Palmer, Orpharion](#), The Danish Music Museum – Musikhistorisk Museum and The Carl Claudius Collection (inv. nr. CL 139).

¹¹⁵⁷ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 81.

¹¹⁵⁸ Hebbert, “The Forensic Challenges of a Renaissance Cittern.”

¹¹⁵⁹ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 81.

¹¹⁶⁰ Hebbert, “The Forensic Challenges of a Renaissance Cittern.”

¹¹⁶¹ [See Appendix 2. Historical Citterns. Instruments 6 and 2, Table 3.](#)

¹¹⁶² Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 41.

¹¹⁶³ Forrester, 41.

has seven alternating strips of plum (*Prunus* sp.) and maple (*Acer* sp.);¹¹⁶⁴ both woods, in particular plum, are used in English viol making of the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Figure 144-145).¹¹⁶⁵

It would not be a surprise to think that the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] was made by a viol maker since English luthiers are documented to have built citterns, lutes and viols. For example Andrew Markes (1575 - 1604), an accomplished lutenist and son of a fiddle maker, was possibly involved in making instruments and dealing with repairs of lutes and citterns.¹¹⁶⁶ Michael Fleming and John Bryan documented a person named George Masseter, who provided viol strings, fixed musical instruments, made a cittern and also tuned organs.¹¹⁶⁷ Robert Mallet (died 1612), a manciple in charge of Edmund Hall, Oxford University, seems to be the only documented maker to have specialized in making wire strung musical instruments.¹¹⁶⁸

English viol makers were influenced by the instrumental culture of the Low Countries and vice versa,¹¹⁶⁹ and the case of cittern making was no different. For example, the purfling of several English viols¹¹⁷⁰ has strikingly similar patterns to the ones found in Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish citterns (Figure 146). The style of the rose of the English cittern is also similar to the Francis Palmer Orpharion, which is also very close to the style of the cittern at the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels (Figure 147). Even a similar canine finial of the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern, rarely seen in plucked or bowed strings is similar to the carved creature in Johan Friedrich Grueber's *Still Life*, a painting probably inspired by the rich objects of Leiden's upper-middle class homes, which also presents similar peghead decorations (Figure 148). As noted by Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet something intriguing about the Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] cittern is the fact that roughly from the bridge down a portion of the back sits over the sides, while the upper section has the sides overlapping the back. Interestingly, it seems as if the craftsmanship was influenced by both Netherlandish and Brescian techniques of joining sides and back.

¹¹⁶⁴ National Music Museum, "Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum." National Music Museum internal catalogue files. The cittern was also inspected by the author in 2016 while doing his master's dissertation.

¹¹⁶⁵ Fleming and Bryan, *Early English Viols*, 263.

¹¹⁶⁶ Fleming and Bryan, 162-64.

¹¹⁶⁷ Fleming and Bryan, 243.

¹¹⁶⁸ Fleming and Bryan, 231.

¹¹⁶⁹ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 66, 179, 322.

¹¹⁷⁰ 1677, Richard Meares, bass viol, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. nr. 170-1882); Circa 1680, Richard Meares, bass viol, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0936); 1640-65, anonymous, bass viol, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. nr. 2009.42).



Figure 144. English and Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish Citterns. Left, Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, circa 1620, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500); middle, anonymous, cittern, circa 1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Inv. nr. 35-1867); right, anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524). Sources: National Music Museum, 'Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rau[i]tt[a] , England, 1579, at the National Music Museum', accessed 31 October 2018, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern?ctx=9594f07b-c416-4b9b-b988-6c01aa5d95e2&idx=3>; Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH; Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Cittern', ca 1700, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58888/cittern-unknown/>. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Courtesy of the National Music Museum.



Figure 145. Technical Drawings of English and Franco-Flemish- Netherlandish Cittern. Above, Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, circa 1620, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500); below, anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524). Sources: Ondine Cantineau, Bouwplan Cister: 17 de Eews Anonim Nederlanden, 2010 2009, Technical Drawing, 2010 2009, European Stringed Instruments, Musical Instrument Museum Brussels; Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet, Cittern NMM.13500 PETRUS RAUTTA, 2010, Technical Drawing, 2010, National Music Museum - University. Courtesy of Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet.



Figure 146. English viols and Franco-Flemish or Netherlandish Citterns. Above left, Richard Meares, bass viol, circa 1680, Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr RCM0936); Above middle, Richard Meares, bass viol, 1677, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. nr. 170-1882); Above right, anonymous, bass viol, 1640-65, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. nr. 2009.42); below left, Anonymous, cittern, 16th century, Musée de la Musique, Paris (Inv. nr.D.AD.32026); below right, Anonymous, cittern, Musical Instrument Museum, Brussels (Inv. nr 1524). Source: Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Bass Viol', Victoria and Albert Museum: Explore the Collections, 1677, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58970/bass-viol-meares-richard/>; Royal College of Music, 'Bass Viol, Richard Meares, London, c. 1680', Royal College of Music, accessed 14 March 2024, <https://museumcollections.rcm.ac.uk/collection/Details/collect/1979>; 'Labelled Richard Meares Division Viol British', The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 14 March 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/503219>; Musée de la Musique, "Cistre guiterne," accessed 6 March 2024, <https://collectionsdumusee.philharmoniedeparis.fr/collectionsdumusee/doc/MUSEE/0156699/cistre-guiterne>. Public Domain. Image Studio © Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels. Creative Commons BY– MRAH/KMKG or CC BY – MRAH; © Victoria and Albert Museum, London; © Courtesy of the Royal College of Music.

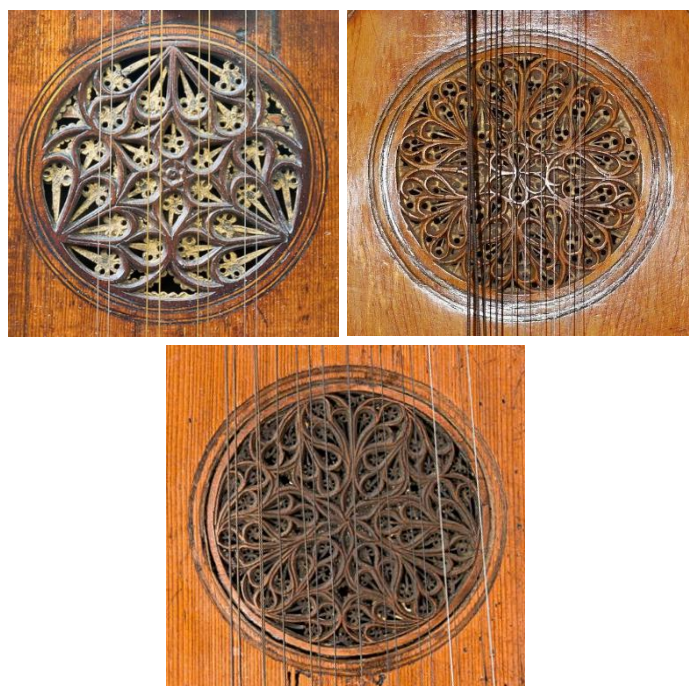


Figure 147. English and Franco-Flemish-Netherlandish Roses. Above left, Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], cittern, circa 1620, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500); above right, anonymous, cittern, circa 1700, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Inv. nr. 35-1867); below, 1617, Francis Palmer, Orpharion, The Danish Music Museum – Musikhistorisk Museum and The Carl Claudius Collection (inv. nr. CL 139). Source: National Music Museum, 'Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum', accessed 31 October 2018, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern?ctx=9594f07b-c416-4b9b-b988-6c01aa5d95e2&idx=3>; Victoria and Albert Museum, 'Cittern', ca 1700, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O58888/cittern-unknown/> Victoria and Albert Museum ©; The Danish Music Museum – Musikhistorisk Museum and The Carl Claudius Collection, 'Orpharion', Nationalmuseets Samlinger Online, accessed 15 March 2024, <https://samlinger.natmus.dk/mum/asset/2750>. CC BY-SA 4.0.

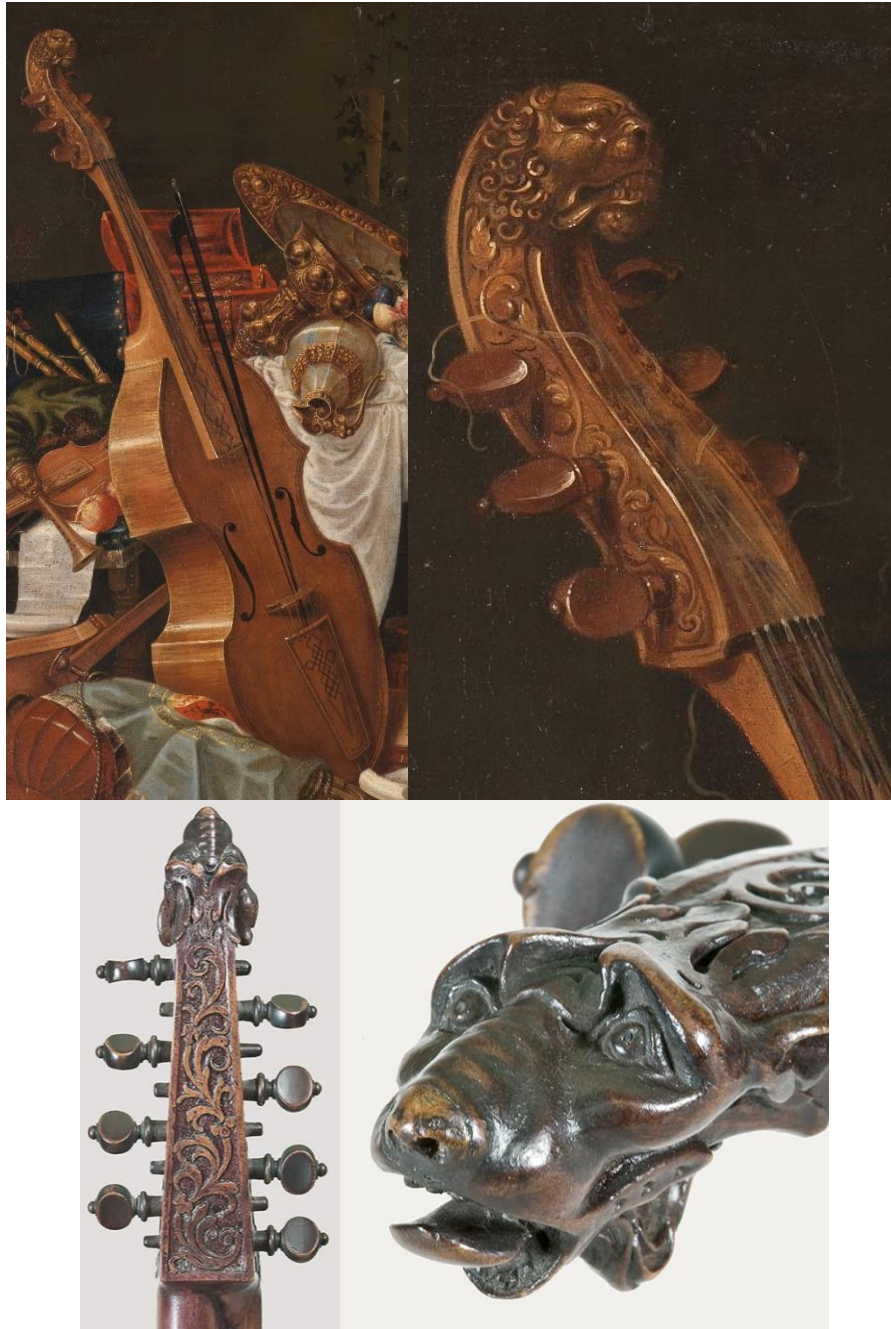


Figure 148. English Cittern and Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish Viol. Above, Johann Friedrich Grueber, *Still Life*, 1662, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv.nr. SK-A-2564); below, Petrus Rau[j]tt[a], cittern, circa 1620, National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500). Source: Above, Rijksmuseum, "Stilleven, Johann Friedrich Grueber, 1662 - 1681," Rijksmuseum, accessed March 6, 2024, <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/SK-A-2564>. Public Domain; National Music Museum, "Cittern Labelled Petrus Rautta", National Music Museum, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://emuseum.nmmusd.org/objects/17874/cittern;jsessionid=00767E3D0FF5F758A4ED5E04AC1B1D00>. National Music Museum, "Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum."

The cittern arrived in England to stay. Historical reality shows that the cittern in was esteemed by everybody as the instrument was rapidly and deeply imbedded in the British social fabric. The English cittern is a combination of Italian and Franco-Flemish citterns; however, the latter was the predominant influence. Nobles, courtiers professional musicians and tutors, bureaucrats, wealthy merchants, countrymen, actors, ambassadors and the well-to do English family reserved a place at their table for the cittern, just as they did for other popular commodities such as the nutmegs and ginger enjoyed at supper time.

The cittern, alongside the lute and guitar, was the musical tool that helped gentlemen to impress noble patrons and gained social status as fine courtiers, yet by the seventeenth century it had become common to all men. Initially regarded as new and strange and esteemed by the best sort, later, due to its accessibility and popularity, it was dramatized into harlotry, foolish and comic characters, and often into a symbol of misogyny and the early modern English working class.

4.5 The Music of the Transalpine Cittern

...the history of all instruments and the music written for them is inseparable from the [social] use that is made of them.¹¹⁷¹

Mostly because of the characteristics of the Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish printing output, scholars have considered the publications of Morlaye, Gorlier, Le Roy, Vreedman and Phalese as a homogeneous popular practice,¹¹⁷² meaning that the usual traits of the music are generally undemanding and schematic.¹¹⁷³ Ivan Francis Waldbauer, who takes the quality of contrapuntal writing of the lute repertoire as the best examples of this sort of artistic practices, categorised other sources such as Sixt Kargel's *Toppel Cythar*¹¹⁷⁴ as an 'advanced practice'.¹¹⁷⁵ He goes on to group certain English repertoire as having an 'ambitious character' based on adapting the contemporary lute practice to the cittern.¹¹⁷⁶ Examples of this category are Holborne's *Cittharn Schoole*,¹¹⁷⁷ and Thomas Robinson's *New Citharen*

¹¹⁷¹ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 72.

¹¹⁷² Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 210.

¹¹⁷³ Waldbauer, 210–11.

¹¹⁷⁴ Kargel and Lais, *Toppel Cythar. Nova eaque artificiosa ratio ludendae cytharae, quam compilatores duplam cytharam vocant.*

¹¹⁷⁵ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 210.

¹¹⁷⁶ Waldbauer, 210.

¹¹⁷⁷ Holborne, *The Cittharn Schoole*.

Lessons.¹¹⁷⁸ Another important element of the music of the cittern is its presence in the instrumental ensembles as a harmonising device and member of continuo playing, which has proved to be the niche where the instrument is found to be more successful. In the following sections, these categories will be kept for practical purposes; however, there will be a contextualisation into their social and economic use, which were the fundamental factors of their nature.

4.5.1 The ‘Pop’ Cittern

John Ward offered an effective summary of the musical nature of the early transalpine cittern.¹¹⁷⁹ Characterised mostly by the use of the plectrum to activate the strings, the instrument can either produce a single melody line, chords, or a combination of the two.¹¹⁸⁰ Such possibilities are limited to a small musical range that favours the use of fingering not in the higher frets but mostly in the first position closer to the nut, while keeping the first course for producing melodies. To this it is important to add that the tuning of the cittern is characterised by having an interval of a second between the first course of strings and the second, while the latter courses remained having fourths and fifths. Such an arrangement, as noted by Andreas Michel, reflects the Medieval nature of the instrument, which means a simple use of drone music where the melody is played usually on the outer, highest string while the other strings functioned as sustaining harmonic notes.¹¹⁸¹ Interestingly, Michel stressed that the metal strings provided a typical timbre, which in the early history of the cittern lead a specific rhythmic and chordal function. According to Michel, because of the cittern metal strings, the cittern was not developed as a polyphonic instrument, since in its early phases it was meant to be played as a chordal support to other plucked and bowed strings. Furthermore, Michel considers the cittern’s most typical tunings, the so-called ‘French Tuning’ (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-aa'a'*) and ‘Italian Tuning’ (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-bb*),¹¹⁸² as ‘relics’ of the style of drone playing.¹¹⁸³ It was this basic tuning identity that collided with the polyphonic practices of other instruments such as the lute and the guitar as John Ward stated:

Producing two or more independent voice parts with a plectrum on a four-course, wire-strung instrument with re-entrant tuning goes against the nature

¹¹⁷⁸ Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 46.

¹¹⁸⁰ Ward, 52.

¹¹⁸¹ Michel, “Zistern.”

¹¹⁸² Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 60, 61.

¹¹⁸³ Michel, “Zistern.”

of that instrument and its playing technique, and the style appears to have been little attempted.¹¹⁸⁴

Having this framework to work with, the Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish repertoire became an amalgam of features characterised by an attempt to adapt the cittern to the polyphonic practice. James Tyler emphasized that the music of the cittern in Morlaye's *Quatriesme Livre* and Le Roy's 1565 *Breve et Facile Instruction* were the earliest sources that exemplified how the cittern was adapted to the music of the lute. Examples of this music were the edition of *chansons*, *gaillardes* and *pavannes*, which were intabulations usually made for the amateur market, eagerly sought after by the publishers.¹¹⁸⁵

Essentially, the cittern was paired with a musical performance intimately linked to a harmonic-melodic tradition of the sixteenth century, namely the continuous succession of a ground bass or *basso ostinato*, which in the case of the cittern was a set of repetitive harmonies set to a variation of different dances such as *passamezzo antico* and *moderno*, *romanesca*, *folia* and the *Bergamasca*.¹¹⁸⁶ These melodic- and harmonic formulas could be used as vehicles for singing poetry and instrumental variations.¹¹⁸⁷ The *folia* was a framework used for songs, dances and variations based on chord progressions, metric patterns, rhythmic and melodic figures and a strong gravitational cadence.¹¹⁸⁸ This tradition can be traced back to the late fifteenth-century Italian Peninsula and was part of the 'stock in trade of the multi-skilled instrumentalists and poet-singers'.¹¹⁸⁹ This musical background was placed into collision with the in-vogue polyphonic practices of instruments such as stringed keyboards and lute, which because of their range and tuning possibilities directed the development of instrumental music, which was essentially based on idiomatic, contrapuntal practice.¹¹⁹⁰

The Italian cittern experienced a similar instrumental revolution; however, the humanist background and its traditional manufacture were much more valued and preserved as continuations of a modernized

¹¹⁸⁴ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 54.

¹¹⁸⁵ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 225. Waldbauer quoting Hartz, "Parisian", p. 466 in English translation from the preface of Gorlier, *Le Troysieme livre de guiterne* (Paris: Fezandat, 1551).

¹¹⁸⁶ Waldbauer, 333.

¹¹⁸⁷ Gerbino, "Romanesca."

¹¹⁸⁸ Gerbino and Silbiger, "Folia."

¹¹⁸⁹ [See chapter 3. 'The Transformation of the Italian Cittern'. Section 3.1.1 'The Cittern and the Singing Poet'.](#)

¹¹⁹⁰ Polk and Coelho, "Prologue," 1–2; Magrini et al., "Italy"; Polk, "Instrumental Performance in the Renaissance," 345; Goldthwaite, "The Economy of Renaissance Italy," 19; Burke, *The Italian Renaissance*, E-book, 1.; Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*, 11; Trivellato, "Renaissance Florence and the Origins of Capitalism," 236; Motture and O'Malley, *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects*, 22; Frankopan, *Silk Roads*, 201; Palisca, *Humanism in Italian Renaissance Musical Thought*, 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 16,17,20.

practice with roots in the revival of classical antiquity. With its immediate past as the *cetra* of the fifteenth-century poetic tradition, the Italian cittern was transformed by the instrumental practice of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century and was fitted with the humanist hexachord tuning, while preserving the iconological features of the idealised ancient lyre of modern times.¹¹⁹¹ In contrast, the humanist background was practically absent in the development of the transalpine cittern, as it was launched through a range of publications that early on seemed not to understand the strength of its musical characteristics and most importantly its artistic ethos. Probably, the French publishers of cittern music saw the potential for the cittern to act as a lighter version of the lute and possibly a musical instrument that could mimic polyphonic practices without much success, simply, because of acoustic reasons. Ivan Francis Waldbauer explained how the cittern's short discant range clashed with the desire of modulation and movement towards tonal harmony. Waldbauer mentioned how the cittern was made to emulate polyphonic plucked stringed instruments with a much longer history of contrapuntal music, and thus, was 'engaged in a valiant but hopeless battle for survival'.¹¹⁹²

From the very beginning of its transalpine birth, the cittern was associated with the guitar, which was a connection historically and artistically absent when considering its Italian background.¹¹⁹³ While the guitar developed in a way that brought modest compromise to the quality of the polyphonic writing, the cittern's tuning and narrowness of compass meant that publishers had to arrange polyphonic material in such a way that the contrapuntal writing was far less well preserved than in the guitar repertoire.¹¹⁹⁴ It is possible to suggest that because of this, the early French cittern repertoire was predestined to have a popular character,¹¹⁹⁵ and some scholars even believe that the French and Low Countries cittern music output has an inferior quality compared to other polyphonic instruments.¹¹⁹⁶

Composers such as Guillaume Morlaye indeed placed the music of the cittern as secondary in comparison to the guitar. In his *Quatriesme Livre*, Morlaye placed nine pieces of cittern music against

¹¹⁹¹ [See Chapter 3. 'The Transformation of the Italian Cittern'. Section 3.1 'The Survival of the Humanist Heritage'.](#)

¹¹⁹² Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 334.

¹¹⁹³ Tyler and Sparks, *The Guitar and Its Music*, 17.

¹¹⁹⁴ Goldobin, "Обработка Вокальной Полифонии Для Гитары и Для Цистры в XVI Веке," 86–88.

¹¹⁹⁵ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 169.

¹¹⁹⁶ Segerman, "Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century," 395.

one hundred composed for the guitar.¹¹⁹⁷ Even some pieces, such as *Contreclaire*, has the cittern part as a short harmonic ground, considered as a bare skeleton of harmonies, while the guitar presents eleven and six variations.¹¹⁹⁸ It seems that the lack of bass, being such a fundamental feature of the polyphonic arrangements, meant that their harmonies did not allow for a thorough treatment of the pieces, and that is why they remain schematic.¹¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the presence of a discant melody, meaning a phrase played in counterpoint above the plainsong, was very difficult to place on the cittern, when treated as a solo instrument.¹²⁰⁰ At the same time, the cittern was well suited for playing chordal progressions that could be sustained by other instruments, such as grounds framed on *ostinato* bass and *passamezzo* combination; in other words, the cittern by nature seemed to favour either chordal progressions, single melody or plainchant performance.¹²⁰¹

John Ward observed that composers such as Vreedman, Viaera, Kargel and Le Roy, mostly anthologized by Phalese and Bellere and present too in Sixt Kargel's *Renovata Cythara* in the German-speaking countries, were 'musical mechanics' when composing so-called undemanding cittern music.¹²⁰² This however overlooks that Kargel's cittern output, unlike Viaera, Le Roy and Ballard, Vreedman and Phalèse's books, has a fast Italian style diminutions in some of the pieces.¹²⁰³

It seems that even certain musicians, coming from polyphonic practices of the lute, vihuela and keyboard instruments, such as Simon Gorlier, did not respect either the guitar or the cittern. This music printer and instrumentalist who published several works of cittern music, felt the need to apologize to the reader for spending so much time on the undeserving task of making intabulations of precious pieces in instruments so inadequate as the cittern and guitar.¹²⁰⁴ Even Le Roy's cittern output, which represents a considerable advance in the quality of cittern printed music, is not considered to have significance

¹¹⁹⁷ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 227.

¹¹⁹⁸ Morlaye, *Quatriesme Livre Contenant Plusieurs Fantasies, Chansons, Gaillardes, Paduanes, Bransles, Reduictes En Tabulature de Guyterne & Au Jeu de La Cistre, Par Maistre Guillaume Morlaye, & Autres Bons Autheurs.*, 227.

¹¹⁹⁹ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 234.

¹²⁰⁰ Waldbauer, 234.

¹²⁰¹ Waldbauer, 244.

¹²⁰² Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 60.

¹²⁰³ Boetticher and Radke, "Kargel [Kärgel, Kargl, Kärgl], Sixt."

¹²⁰⁴ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 226; Gorlier and Janequin, *Le troysième livre contenant plusieurs Duos et trios avec la bataille de Janequin à trois, nouvellement mis en tablature de guiterne par Simon Gorlier ...*, Preface.

when compared to the guitar, as it seemed that the French publishers were dealing with musical materials that went beyond the possibilities of the instrument.¹²⁰⁵

It is not easy to find on the cittern (a) the appropriate octave species which has (b) all the chords within the key as well as the necessary secondary dominants; and which is (c) high enough to leave room for chords underneath even the lower notes, yet not so high as to necessitate the use of extreme positions.¹²⁰⁶

James Tyler, when discussing Guillaume Morlaye's 1552 *Quatriesme Livre*, mentioned how unlike the guitar music, the pieces of cittern are of 'no musical import.'¹²⁰⁷ Indeed Ivan Francis Waldbauer stated how Morlaye presented a 'primitive skeletal style' not worth the money or the time of a prospective user of the tablature.¹²⁰⁸

Indeed, later repertoire, mostly from the Low Countries, introduced new playing styles that tried hard to adapt the cittern to the polyphonic practices. For example, Fredericus Viaera (flourished circa 1563), with his *Nova et elegantissima in cythara ludenda*,¹²⁰⁹ increased the use of diminutions, which meant that he favoured the improvised embellishment of melodic figures.¹²¹⁰ Moreover, he included the melodic material into the third and fourth courses, which were often triple strung in octaves.¹²¹¹ Still, it seems as if Viaera's music is treated as a very simplistic approach to the polyphonic practices, as its characteristic use of the two lowest positions of the instrument has led to it being considered as an amateur practice.¹²¹² A similar technique was used by Sebastian Vreedman, who often idiomatically intabulated the melodic lines into the inner courses.¹²¹³ Moreover, Flemish printers such as Pierre Phalese, in his *Hortulus Cytharae*, used the repertoire of previous cittern publications, mainly Le Roy's, thus creating compilations of what at that moment were popular Flemish and French tunes.¹²¹⁴

The Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish printing enterprise influenced all cittern culture in Europe. For example, with such a magnificent presence in the Germanic society, it would seem strange to find

¹²⁰⁵ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 262.

¹²⁰⁶ Waldbauer, 264.

¹²⁰⁷ Tyler and Sparks, *The Guitar and Its Music*, 18.

¹²⁰⁸ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 228.

¹²⁰⁹ Vredeman, *Nova longeque elegantissima cithara ludenda carmina, cum gallica tum etiam germanica ...*

¹²¹⁰ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 286.

¹²¹¹ Tyler, "Cittern."

¹²¹² Waldbauer, "Viaera, Fredericus."

¹²¹³ Weigand, "The Cittern Repertoire," 82.

¹²¹⁴ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 216; Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharae (1582)," 70–72.

so few published sources of music in the German-speaking countries. Besides the lost *Cythare Germanice Tabulature* of 1525, which might have been published music for the cittern,¹²¹⁵ most of Germanic published sources seem to gravitate around Sixt Kargel (1540 -1593), lutenist and composer who was also an editor of Bernhard Jobin at Strasbourg.¹²¹⁶

Kargel published in 1575 a now lost cittern book entitled *Renovata Cythara*; however, a book with the same title and most likely with the same content printed in 1578 encompasses fifty folios of tablature for the four-course cittern tuned to Praetorius' French Tuning' (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-aa'a'*).¹²¹⁷ As noted by Francis Waldbauer, the repertoire is heavily influenced by the Franco-Flemish cittern output, with a few differences such as the use of ciphers instead of letters.¹²¹⁸ While Waldbauer stated that many of the musical sources used by Kargel are found in Phalese's *Hortuls Cytharae*,¹²¹⁹ Henri Vanhulst considered that Phalese used part of the content of Kargel in his 1582 edition, which clearly shows how all these publishers borrowed material from each other.¹²²⁰

4.5.2 Commodities vs. the Cittern's True Practice

Why edit and compose music for an unsuitable and limited musical instrument? To answer this question, one of the first facts to consider is the commercial nature of the Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish printed cittern music. In general, in continental Europe, musician employment was limited to performing and teaching, and a way of improving economic conditions was through publishing.¹²²¹ Tessa Murray explained how the major chances for distributing printed music were secular polyphony for domestic recreation, which was a very strong enterprise in the Low Countries and happened to be the main purpose of their cittern musical output.¹²²²

Waldbauer, for example, suggested that the simplicity of notation was not part of a development of the cittern, but a reflection of a sixteenth-century tendency to make music printing a financial

¹²¹⁵ Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern," 28.

¹²¹⁶ Boetticher and Radke, "Kargel [Kärgel, Kargl, Kärgl], Sixt."

¹²¹⁷ Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600*, 294.

¹²¹⁸ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 215,218.

¹²¹⁹ Waldbauer, 301.

¹²²⁰ Vanhulst, "L'instruction Pour Le Cistre Parue Dans La Version Anversoise de l'Hortulus Citharae (1582)," 67.

¹²²¹

Murray, "Introduction," 1.

¹²²²

Murray, 2.

success.¹²²³ Commodifying the cittern, that is placing its capacity to be a highly monetary exchangeable merchandise, meant placing its value as a musical instrument in a secondary position. As noted by Keith Polk and Victor Coelho, the demand for instrumental music by non-professional players led the nature of the transformation of much music and its instruments, which changed not necessarily to be improved or become more complex, but rather to get simpler.¹²²⁴ Echoing this notion Waldbauer, for instance, indicated that a characteristic of the transalpine cittern as a ‘Mediterranean import’ was ‘not to be improved or modernized.’¹²²⁵

John M. Ward goes on to say that most of the cittern output was directed to the amateur market, which were the largest consumers of cittern culture, which according to him, is ‘mostly anonymous, poor to middling stuff, little of it first class.’¹²²⁶ Ephraim Segerman attempted to encourage Ward to think that although some tablatures suggest a simplification of more complex artistic pieces, they do not represent the music as it was played, for they are indicators of a lost performance practice that should be object of experimentation. Segerman mentioned the need to have inventive players that can have a much fresh approach to what he considered the ‘serious’ musicians in today’s climate of almost exclusive veneration of the composer’s contribution to what music sounds like.¹²²⁷

Ward, nevertheless, refined his point stating that there is the need to separate notated music from the performance. Still is true that Ward seemed to consider that only ‘popular’ music is made in performance, while ‘fine music’ is best expressed in notated writing.

Popular music, more than fine art music, is made – I am tempted to say created- in performance. One has but to compare the piano/vocal score ‘with guitar chord frames’ of a song by Lennon and McCartney with a recording of the same by the members of their group for an example from our time.¹²²⁸

Ward seemed to have had a rather pessimistic view regarding the performance of the cittern according to historical sources. According to Segerman, Ward stated that the music of the cittern

¹²²³ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 225. Quoting Hertz, “Parisian”, p. 466 in English translation from the preface of Gorlier, *Le Troisième livre de guiterne* (Paris: Fezandat, 1551).

¹²²⁴ Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instruments,” 228; Polk and Coelho, “Renaissance Instrumental Music and Its Patrons,” 17; Fenlon, *The Renaissance*, 39.

¹²²⁵ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 283.

¹²²⁶ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

¹²²⁷ Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century,” 395.

¹²²⁸ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983.

remains unknown and ‘attempting to perform it would be only an exercise in fruitless speculation.’¹²²⁹ Segerman considered that it was up to early modern performers of the late twentieth century to take cittern performance seriously, which should only treat tablatures as a rough structure of what could be an amazing instrumental experience.¹²³⁰

Musician Paul O’Dette presented a much more optimistic view of the place of the cittern in early music performance when he said that it was used for its peculiar musical advantages, which have always been rooted in the sound of the wire strings and its capacity to be a great chordal and rhythmic instrument. More importantly, the performer encourages the thought that is not advisable to place instruments in competition to one another as if some are better than others, but rather approach them as diverse mediums that change the characters of the music that is played on them. O’Dette mentioned the acoustical qualities of the cittern and how its ‘own personality’ and ‘spectrum of colours’ made it a promising member of the lute family.¹²³¹

Considerations come when revising the cittern’s history so far presented, which shows that the cittern’s musical identity, after 1550 was deliberately created. This means that the nature of the instrument was completely different and through its adaptation to the instrumental in vogue practice, was decontextualized and placed into a different artistic tradition. From this perspective, the cittern was never meant to be considered a member of the lute family and unlike the guitar, in a solo fashion, it poorly served the functions of polyphonic music.

Although music changes depending on what instrument is played, and this can lead to interesting aural results, the music of the lute was conceived for the lute, while the cittern, with its Medieval, humanist past, was not conceived for such contrapuntal music but mostly for simple chordal accompaniment mainly directed to the recitation of poetry, features that were all linked to a very strong iconological heritage of the instrument being considered in fifteenth-century Italy as a re-creation of the Greek lyre. In this way, the cittern already had a distinct ‘own personality’, its own ‘spectrum of

¹²²⁹ Segerman, “Reviewed Work: Sprightly and Cheerful Musick: Notes on the Cittern, Gittern & Guitar in 16th- & 17th-Century,” 395.

¹²³⁰ Segerman, 395.

¹²³¹ Raskauskas, “Everything You Always Wanted to Know about the Lute but Were Afraid to Ask – with Paul O’Dette.”

colours', which were dramatically changed throughout its commodification and decontextualization from the Italian Peninsula.

4.5.3 The Cittern in Consort

The large *cither*, *ceterone* in Italian, as well as *cetera ordinaria*, or common cither, is supposed to be used as other instruments, *schertzando* and *contraponteggiando sopra la parte* [*Jesting and making counterpoint on the part, that is one should bring into play all kinds of merry tricks with turn, skips and counterpoint. In as much as every instrument has its own limitations, the person performing on it should be aware of them and play accordingly, so that he may achieve good results.*¹²³²

Even though the identity of the cittern was compromised throughout its commodification, its natural musical features turned it into a successful member of the early baroque instrumental ensembles. In this case, is possible to say that its modified musical identity found a much more comfortable artistic niche. Some scholars, such as John M. Ward considered that the cittern's 'chief use' was to be a supporting member of the consort for sources such as the Walsingham Consort Books.¹²³³ Thurston Dart indeed mentioned that the cittern's position in sixteenth and seventeenth-century music rests on its harmonic possibilities in ensemble playing rather than on its use as a solo instrument.¹²³⁴ Concurrently, Waldbauer mentioned that the cittern's real importance lies when used as a 'backbone of the broken consort.'¹²³⁵

Even the futile efforts to make the transalpine cittern a polyphonic instrument only resulted in making it an excellent harmonic option for the basso continuo part of ensembles.¹²³⁶ The attempts to make the cittern a contrapuntal instrument by adding discant phrases were not efficient in the solo context because of the lack of bass. Nevertheless, by performing in such way, the cittern became an excellent supporting part, making the consort's harmony exceptionally rich.¹²³⁷ While three melody instruments such as the treble viol, lute, and flute carried the main and discant phrases, along with the common divisions, harmony instruments such as the cittern, bandora would provide a continuous

¹²³² Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum III*, 152; Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra 'l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell'uso Loro Nel Consorto*; Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 429. Praetorius quoting Agazzari.

¹²³³ Edwards, "The Walsingham Consort Books," 213.

¹²³⁴ Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music," 55.

¹²³⁵ Dart, 60.

¹²³⁶ Waldbauer, "The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries," 295.

¹²³⁷ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 52.

rhythmic and rich background.¹²³⁸ Although both the solo music of the accessible repertoire provided by the French, Flemish and Netherlandish publishers, and the cittern pieces found in the mixed consort sources were relatively simple, especially if compared to other instrumental parts, the cittern in consort had a much more significant role.

For example, Richard Allison (1560–70–1610), famous for his mixed consorts, used it in the Walsingham consort books.¹²³⁹ Thomas Morley *First Booke of Consort Lessons* used the violin and flute divisions to complement the ones carried out by the lute, while the required four-course cittern tuned to the ‘Italian’ fashion (*e'e'-d'd'-gg'g'-bb*), mostly appears as an essential harmonic framework.¹²⁴⁰

The plaine Song beeing the common tunne to be sung and plaide upon the Lute, Orpharyon, Citterne or Base Violl, severally or all together, the singing part to be either Tenor or Treble to the Instrument, according to the nature of the voyce, or for fower voyces: With tenne short Tunnes in the end, to which for the most part all the Psalmes may be usually sung, for the use of such as are of mean skill, and whose leisure least serveth to practize.¹²⁴¹

Moreover, John M. Ward explained how the cittern in the works of Philip Rosetter (1567/8 – 1623) provides a combination of single lines and chords with ‘fully realized harmonizations’.¹²⁴² However, in some cases, however, the cittern parts remained schematic, accessible and with almost no decoration, which probably meant that almost anyone with a degree of musical knowledge and practice could play it.¹²⁴³

In his *Lessons*, Thomas Morely indicates the necessity to have ‘diverse instruments: to the end that whose skill or liking regardeth not the one, may attempt some other,’¹²⁴⁴ as during the late sixteenth century there was not a rigid choice of performing medium.¹²⁴⁵ However, depending on the skills, certain instruments might be favoured over others. As Morley’s consort lessons had a mixture of complex and lighter sections, for example, complex divisions could have been interpreted by the household musicians or perhaps gifted non-professionals played them as well. Warwick Edwards

¹²³⁸ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music,” 56.

¹²³⁹ Poulton, “Allison [Alison, Allysonn, Aloyson], Richard.”

¹²⁴⁰ Poulton.

¹²⁴¹ Alison et al., *The Psalmes of David in Meter (1599)*, Frontispiece.

¹²⁴² Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 51, 52.

¹²⁴³ Forrester, “Comm. 931,” 46.

¹²⁴⁴ Morley, *The first booke of consort lessons*, Preface.

¹²⁴⁵ Edwards, “Consort.”

explained that the social position of the performers could play an important role in the instrumentation of the consorts, where the resources of musical amateurs were not the same as professionals, who would mainly use violins and wind instruments while amateurs played viols and most likely citterns.¹²⁴⁶ In fact, as in Morley's consort lessons, the Walsingham consort books have a mixture of light and complex passages meant to be played by both amateurs and professionals.¹²⁴⁷

Whether having a simple or rich harmonization expressed in print, the performance of the cittern in consort depends largely on the creativity and skill of the performer and the nature of the instrument, as early baroque ensembles are characterized for the freedom of improvising provided by the basso continuo culture.

The most important type of improvisation for the keyboard player in the Baroque was basso continuo realization. In chamber and church music, the role of the continuo player was crucial in supplying the harmonic foundation for the ensemble.¹²⁴⁸

The cittern can, to a certain limited extent, perform the functions of a harpsichord, especially through the sound of its brilliant wire stings, but also functioning as an expressive device for providing numerous types of fuller or simpler chords, or as the continuo practice demanded, an improvised melody over the bass.¹²⁴⁹ To this it would be important to add that, once assuring a bass note, possibly provided by the bass viols, the cittern with its re-entrant tuning and octave stringing can deliver chord inversions that can sound particularly attractive when playing them altogether with the ensemble.¹²⁵⁰ The re-entrant tuning allows the playing of a great variety of chords, while staying on the first position of the instrument and thus not complicating too much the left hand fingering or the necessity of playing bar chords, which, thus freed up the possibility of players to improvise and harmonise with phrases as well as rhythm.¹²⁵¹ Moreover, having open chords gives a rich sonority of all ten or eleven strings in their usual four courses, which sound expressively echoing and appealing, and on top of these, the octave strings created, probably, a much brighter sound.¹²⁵²

¹²⁴⁶ Edwards.

¹²⁴⁷ Edwards, "The Walsingham Consort Books," 213.

¹²⁴⁸ Mattax Moersch, "Keyboard Improvisation in the Baroque Period," 164.

¹²⁴⁹ Mattax Moersch, 164.

¹²⁵⁰ Hartig, "'Do What Thou Wilt': An Interview with Pantagruel's Mark Wheeler," 14.

¹²⁵¹ Hartig, "The Wire Connection: Who Is Afraid of the Diatonic Cittern?," 47.

¹²⁵² Hartig, 47.

Because of the possibilities of the transalpine cittern and its past rooted in the Italian early tradition, it does not come as a surprise that the *cetera* or Italian traditional cittern shared a place in the instrumental ensembles of continuo playing as expressed by Italian composer Agostino Agazzari. In Chapter VI of *Syntagma Musicum*, when discussing the *Thoroughbass or continuo*, Michael Praetorius, largely based on Agostino Agazzari's treatise *Del Sonare sopra'l basso*, pointed out that each instrument should be used according to its character.¹²⁵³ At the same time he mentioned that the bassus *generalis* or *continuo* has an essential foundational function of continuing from the beginning of the piece to the end.¹²⁵⁴ One of the fundamental instruments for the *continuo* is the organ; however, the lutes, harps and theorbos could well be used to provide a solid, reliable, sonorous and continuous harmony, 'that supports the voices by playing softly and subdued, now loud and lively, according to the quality and number of voices and the disposition of the location and the kind of concerto.'¹²⁵⁵

Praetorius categorizes the cittern in his treatise mainly as an addition to large ensembles of instruments such as the harpsichord, lutes, theorbos, bandoras, bass viols, recorders, trombones, and violins, always specifying its popularity in English consort music.¹²⁵⁶ Moreover, when classifying instruments, Praetorius distinguishes musical instruments in two categories: one of many or total voices, and another of simple and specific ones. The first ones are meant to play 'all voices of a composition, producing the entire body and complete harmony of all inner and lower parts,' with the keyboard instruments as the best example; however, lutes, harps and large citterns, such as *ceterone* are included.¹²⁵⁷ The second group, the one he referred to as simple and ornamental, is characterised by 'applying a sweeter and more euphonious sound, with humorous turns and counterpoints, as well as to adorn and embellish the music.'¹²⁵⁸ Interestingly, plucked stringed instruments such as lutes and theorbos, 'when not used as fundamental instruments,' can be used solely for ornamental purposes, which seems to be a special function of the cittern besides being a fundamental instrument.¹²⁵⁹ In particular, Praetorius places the cittern as an instrument meant to be used for 'jesting and making

¹²⁵³ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, *Syntagma Musicum III*, 133.

¹²⁵⁴ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 133.

¹²⁵⁵ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 153.

¹²⁵⁶ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 127.

¹²⁵⁷ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 129.

¹²⁵⁸ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 129.

¹²⁵⁹ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 130.

counterpoint on the part, that is one should bring into play all kinds of merry tricks with turn, skips and counterpoint. In as much as every instrument has its own limitations, the person performing on it should be aware of them and play accordingly, so that he may achieve good results.’¹²⁶⁰

Agazzari, however, is much clearer on the functions of the cittern in the *continuo* practice, which are based on classifying the cittern as an ‘imperfect’ instrument, which probably means essentially that it is limited, as a ‘perfect’ instrument should contain the ‘whole body of the voices and instruments of the consort’.¹²⁶¹ Although the lute, harp, theorbo and harpsichord can perform both ornamental and foundational roles, the cittern, whether the *ceterone* or the common *cetera*, should be used ‘in a playful way, making counterpoints upon the part.’¹²⁶²

4.5.4 The ‘Advanced’ and Late Cittern

On the one hand the transalpine cittern was mostly known in its four-course modality and its diatonic fretting. Most likely, this model was the most economically successful for makers to sell since it offered several advantages over other instruments, all of them in one way or another related to making the performance of music of high standard an approachable and easy task, and if the cittern student reached a high level of creativity and skill, they would want to try instruments with more possibilities.

More importantly, as noted by John M. Ward, the economic situation of the early modern performer determined the necessity of staying in vogue as much as possible, using instruments as best suited for a practice that could ensure them a living and social status.¹²⁶³ Common opinions of the cittern as drastically stated by Michael Praetorius when he said that the four course instrument has the worst of associations, fitted only for unprivileged, working class people,¹²⁶⁴ reflect a social hatred that went as deep as equating the cittern with prostitution and foolishness.

Such associations probably placed a weight on those who played the cittern and wanted to establish themselves as socially acceptable and financially stable musicians. After all, the cittern was initially picked up by professional lute tutors in the 1540s, because it was a rare novelty, esteemed by ‘the best

¹²⁶⁰ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, 152.

¹²⁶¹ Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 424–29.

¹²⁶² Strunk, 424–29.

¹²⁶³ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 72.

¹²⁶⁴ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 61,98.

sort.’¹²⁶⁵ After fifty years of successful integration to early modern society, the cittern was exploited and commodified as much as it was possible.

The demands of the development of instrumental music placed it on quite a radical path of transformation, and this led to further changes and eventually the complete loss of its original musical identity. The best examples of the cittern’s advanced practice are Sixt Kargel’s and Johan Dominikus Lais *Toppel Cythar*,¹²⁶⁶ Anthony’s Holborne’s *Cittharn Schoole*,¹²⁶⁷ and Thomas Robinson’s *New Citharen Lessons*.¹²⁶⁸ There are other sources of music that are worthy of consideration, but for reasons of space they are not discussed in this section.¹²⁶⁹

Sixt Kargel had a successful career as a musician; with his chief instrument, the lute, he achieved wide fame as a performer in Alsace, a Germanic region in eastern France on the west bank of the upper Rhine and was also editor of the printer Bernhard Jobin at Strasbourg (Figure 149). Moreover, he was at the service of the Prince-Bishop Johan of Manderscheid-Blankenheim, Landgrave of Alsace (1538-1592), as well as of the Cardinal Charles of Lorraine (1524-1574).¹²⁷⁰

Kargel had already published the more accessible repertoire of the four-course cittern in his *Renovata Cythara*, and it is possible to say that because of the presence of rapid Italianate diminutions, that is embellishments made out to decorate the transitions from one note of a melody to the next passage, this lutenist wanted to make the cittern behave, musically, as a lute.¹²⁷¹ This intention was made clear with his 1578 ambitious cittern programme for a six-course instrument with an expanded open string range that required an entire complete chromatic fingerboard.

¹²⁶⁵ Whythorne, *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*. Edited by James M. Osborn. [With a Portrait.].

¹²⁶⁶ Kargel and Lais, *Toppel Cythar*. *Nova eaque artificiosa ratio ludendae cytharae, quam compilatores duplam cytharam vocant*.

¹²⁶⁷ Holborne, *The Cittharn Schoole*.

¹²⁶⁸ Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*.

¹²⁶⁹ Waldbauer, “The Cittern in the Sixteenth Century and Its Music in France and the Low Countries,” 210.

¹²⁷⁰ Boetticher and Radke, “Kargel [Kärgel, Kargl, Kärgl], Sixt.”

¹²⁷¹ Boetticher and Radke.



Figure 149. Sixt Kargel Portrait Playing his Lute. Sixt Kargel, print, *Novae, elegantissimae, gallicae, item et italicae cantilenae*, 1574, Strasbourg. Source: Kargel, Sixt, *Novae, elegantissimae, gallicae, item et italicae cantilenae, Mutetae & Passomezo, adiunctis suis Saltarellis, mira dulcedine in Testudine canendae: in Tabulaturam per M. Sixtum Kaergel Lautenistam, in nobilissimae huius artis Amatoribus gratiam, translatae, & typis excusae* (Strasbourg: Bernhard Jobin, 1574), second to last page. Public Domain.

According to Kargel and Lais, the *Toppel Cythar* encompassed a new, artistic, and comfortable playing method for the cittern, with musical pieces coming from the Italian Peninsula, the Germanic-speaking countries and France. Interestingly, the arrangers also mentioned that their publication, although new, presented the usual Italian tablature.¹²⁷² To achieve the music of his ‘new, double cittern’, Kargel had to change the tuning to *e’-d’d’-gg-dd’-Gg-bb*, and in this way, he eliminated the typical re-entrant pattern of the first four courses.¹²⁷³ As Tyler indicated, the music is of high quality and holds a compilation of Germanic and Italian pieces as well as high standard content of Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish composers such as Orlando di Lassus (circa 1530-1594), Jacques Arcadelt (1507 – 1568)

¹²⁷² Kargel and Lais, *Toppel Cythar. Nova eaque artificiosa ratio ludendae cytharae, quam compilatores duplam cytharam vocant.*

¹²⁷³ Tyler, “Cittern.”

and Cipriano de Rore (circa 1515 – 1565).¹²⁷⁴ The pieces range from first, fantasias, then a main section of intabulations, followed by passamezzo arrangements and ending with a collection of dances.

Kargel produced an arrangement of the intabulation composed by Orlando di Lasso (circa 1530-1594) entitled *La Cortesia* for his six-course cittern, although he also did the same for the four-course wire plucked instrument¹²⁷⁵ and the lute.¹²⁷⁶ *La Cortesia* was originally composed as a four-voice polyphonic arrangement with a *superius*, *contratenor*, *tenor* and *bassus* and Kargel managed to adapt all four voices, first in the four-course cittern, having constant second inversion triads, all these avoided with the six-course cittern, which also embellish more some cadences of Lasso's work using thick chords.¹²⁷⁷ However, perhaps because of the major possibilities of the lute, Kargel added many more decorations to his lute arrangements of *La Cortesia*. Julia Craig-McFeely considers Kargel's *Toppel Cythar* as a typical book for music for plucked instruments at the second half of the sixteenth century, yet she believed it to be 'uninspiring' compared to the lute repertoire.¹²⁷⁸

Anthony Holborne was an English composer said to be a 'gentleman and servant of her most excellent Majestie', namely Elizabeth I. While it is not clear if he paid direct services to the Queen, or if he was a member of the Chapel Royal,¹²⁷⁹ he had plenty of noble and privileged patrons as he was a technically accomplished composer who often arranged consort pieces for solo plucked stringed instruments, and probably since a very early moment of his musical career he became a specialist in wired-plucked instruments, as his bandora pieces¹²⁸⁰ were specially requested from Antwerp.¹²⁸¹ In his thorough study of the life of Holborne, Brian Jeffery stated not only that the latter was held in respect by famous peers such as John Dowland (1563- 1626), but that he was 'one of the most prolific of Elizabethan composers ... indeed at the height of his reputation and of his musical activity, with two

¹²⁷⁴ Tyler.

¹²⁷⁵ Kargel, *Renovata cythara*.

¹²⁷⁶ Slim, "Lasso's La Cortesia Voi, Donne, Predicate: A Villanesca Printed, Penned, Plucked and Depicted," 245.

¹²⁷⁷

Slim, "Lasso's La Cortesia Voi, Donne, Predicate: A Villanesca Printed, Penned, Plucked and Depicted," 245; Lasso, *La cortesia*.

¹²⁷⁸ Craig-McFeely, "Reviewed Works: Toppel Cythar. Nova Eaque Artificiosa et Valde Commoda Ratio Ludendae Cytharae (1575) by Sixt Kargel, Johan Dominico Lais; Il Primo Libro D'Intavolatura Di Liuto (1620) by Michelagnolo Galilei; Albrecht Werl's Lutebook (c.1625-55) by Albrecht Werl, Robert Spencer."

¹²⁷⁹ Jeffery, "Anthony Holborne," 133.

¹²⁸⁰ See Jeffery, 133.

¹²⁸¹ Warwick, "Holborne, Antony."

lengthy publications and numbers of other pieces to his credit.¹²⁸² The *Cittharn Schoole*, dedicated to Sir Thomas Burgh (died 1597), 5th Baron of Gainsborough and Lord Deputy of Ireland, contains fifty-eight pieces of cittern music, many of which, according to the composer, were pirated before his publication.¹²⁸³ Full editions and assessments of the cittern book by Holborne are available elsewhere;¹²⁸⁴ however, the intention to ‘upgrade’ the cittern’s practice, as seen also in Kargel, is probably one of the most interesting features of Holborne’s *Schoole*, which is considered by some scholars to be the best written music for the cittern.¹²⁸⁵

The English composer kept the first thirty-three pieces as a didactic set aimed at the *lover of the Cittharn*, which according to him meant writing ‘things short and not hard’ and with the ‘most usuall and familiar grounds of these our times.’¹²⁸⁶ By the end of the didactic section, Holborne made sure to place pieces that are much more difficult as they use frequent chords, sustained polyphony and complex rhythms as well as high frets.¹²⁸⁷ When reaching the second part of the book, it is clear that the next twenty-five pieces, including pavans, galliards, almaines and two fantasias, are of the highest sort since they cease to be for the solo cittern and require a bass viol, because as shown before, ‘the cittern, as a solo instrument, was of restricted resources.’¹²⁸⁸ Masakata Kanazawa indicated that having the bass viol allowed the avoidance of unusual chords in the middle of the polyphonic arrangements, something typical of cittern music.¹²⁸⁹ With Anthony Holborne, as with Kargel it is possible to see the incompatibility of the cittern when thought of as a polyphonic, solo instrument. The Germanic lutenist had to change the tuning and add bass strings while the English composer relied on another instrument to accomplish his ambitious cittern program.¹²⁹⁰

Thomas Robinson (1589-1609) was a composer, teacher, and cittern player who enjoyed the patronage of statesman and chief adviser to Queen Elizabeth I, William Cecil First Baron Burghley (1520 – 1598). In 1609 Robinson published the *New Citharen Lessons*, and dedicated his work to Sir

¹²⁸² Jeffery, “Antony Holborne,” 129.

¹²⁸³ Holborne, *The Cittharn Schoole*, Preface; Jeffery, “Antony Holborne,” 153.

¹²⁸⁴ Jeffery, “Antony Holborne”; Anthony Holborne and Masakata Kanazawa, *Music for Cittern*.

¹²⁸⁵ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music,” 52.

¹²⁸⁶ Holborne, *The Cittharn Schoole*, Preface.

¹²⁸⁷ Jeffery, “Antony Holborne,” 154.

¹²⁸⁸ Jeffery, 157.

¹²⁸⁹ Anthony Holborne and Masakata Kanazawa, *Music for Cittern*, 7.

¹²⁹⁰ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

William Cecil II (1591-1668), expressing in his dedication how grateful he was to the noble family for employing him and his father as musicians.

To the Right Honourable,
Sir William Cecil,
Vicount Cranborne, Sonne and Heire
to the Right Honourable the Earle of Salisbury,
and Knight of the Honourable order of the Bathe,
Thomas Robinson wisheth all happinesse,
with the increase of all true Honour
and Vertue.¹²⁹¹

The *New Citharen Lessons* are a collection of music including pavans, galliards, almaines, grounds, fantasia, instrumental psalms, and editions of popular pieces for the common four-course and a fourteen-course arch-cittern, the latter claimed to be invented by himself (Figure 150).¹²⁹² There are forty-seven compositions for the four-course cittern, and six pieces (that is a passamezzo antico with variations and four fantasias) for his claimed invention, which has a form of ‘Italian’ tuning in the first four courses, followed by ten courses (*e'– d'– g– bb– f– d– G– F– E– D– C – BBb–AA– GG*).¹²⁹³ The seventh course is placed passing the fingerboard, and the last six courses are tuned diatonically and meant to be played as open bass strings – Robinson’s ‘solution’ to the lack of bass of the four-course cittern,¹²⁹⁴ which is in fact seldomly used in his *Citharen Lessons*.¹²⁹⁵

¹²⁹¹ Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*, Preface.

¹²⁹² Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons*.

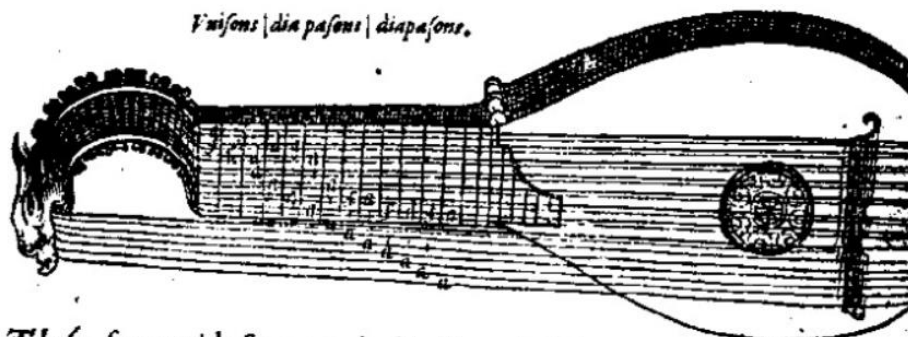
¹²⁹³ Robinson.

¹²⁹⁴ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

¹²⁹⁵ Robinson, *New citharen lessons*, xxv.

By THOMAS ROBINSON, Student in all the
seven liberall Sciences.
The tuning of the Citharen with fourteene course of strings.

Frisons | dia pasens | diapa sons.



These seven with frets are double strung | al the other single | twisted.

LONDON

Printed by William Barley, and are to be sold at his
 Shop in Gracious-street. 1609.
Cum Privilegio.

Figure 150. Robinson's Arch-Cittern. Thomas Robinson, print, *New Citharen Lessons*, 1609, London.
 Source: Thomas Robinson, *New Citharen Lessons* (London: William Barley, 1609), 4. Public Domain.

John M. Ward and George A. Weigand considered the music of Robinson, along with Holborne's the finest of the English cittern output, Wiegand noting how the *Citharen Lessons* presents true fantasias 'in the lute sense.'¹²⁹⁶ However, Ward stated that 'they cannot compare with the music each wrote for the lute.'¹²⁹⁷ The musicologist introduced an interesting idea that the solitary publications of high-standard music for a modified cittern intended as attempts to 'refine' and 'improve' it was possibly more of social endeavour than a musical one.¹²⁹⁸ 'Elevating' the cittern to the lute's level would, perhaps, influence the patron's thoughts on their favourite wired-plucked instruments and consider them as 'noble' as the lute, and at the same time improve the chances of Robinson and Holborne to secure their status and employment. Ward rightly suggested that no matter how interesting and complex cittern music could get, the market and social status was directly in favour of the lute, therefore, any accomplished citternist 'could easily have made a name and even a living for himself as a lutenist.'¹²⁹⁹

¹²⁹⁶ Weigand, "The Cittern Repertoire," 82.

¹²⁹⁷ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 40.

¹²⁹⁸ Tyler, "Cittern."

¹²⁹⁹ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 72.

As both Holborne and Robinson dedicated their cittern works to their noble patrons, therein lies the possibility that these elite gentlemen were citternists. Interestingly, Lord Burghley, Robinson's patron, decorated his mansion with a beautiful staircase depicting citterns and bandoras, suggesting possibly that in his great house these instruments were played for the entertainment and recreation of important visitors and family members.¹³⁰⁰ The staircase was originally a part of the Theobalds House in Hertfordshire, bought in 1563 by the fruits of the lucrative wool trade of Lord Burghley's family. Nevertheless, the building was destroyed during the English Civil War and the staircase saved in Herstmonceux Castle.¹³⁰¹

One of the latest sources of cittern music was *Musick's Delight on the Cithren*¹³⁰² published in 1666 by John Playford (1623-1687), who was an English publisher, bookseller, and vicar-choral of St. Paul's Cathedral. Playford, once called 'the greatest musical entrepreneur of Stuart England,'¹³⁰³ held a publishing monopoly during almost the entire second half of the sixteenth century; enjoying a musical education and vocation, he was more of a businessman than a musician, yet he was widely respected by high standard musicians and poets.¹³⁰⁴

As the cittern continued to be a popular instrument well into the first half of the seventeenth century, Playford published his cittern book probably having in mind a public with a 'taste for simple arrangements of ballad and dance tunes,'¹³⁰⁵ as he was known for printing music intended for beginners, which are almost always relatively simple.¹³⁰⁶ However, it seems as if the use of the four-course cittern was heading to a decline, as his cittern book is considered an example of a 'declining sympathy with Playford's nostalgia for these instruments.'¹³⁰⁷ In his preface, Playford indeed wrote how the guitar had

¹³⁰⁰ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 46; Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 113.

¹³⁰¹ Fleming and Page, *Music and Instruments of the Elizabethan Age*, 113.

¹³⁰² Playford also published several cittern books since the 1650's, for a more in depth discussion of Playford's output see John M. Ward's and Dean-Smith's work. Playford, *Musick's Delight on the Cithren*; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 83-93; Munstedt, "John Playford, Music Publisher," 148,243.

¹³⁰³ Page, *The Guitar in Stuart England*, 119.

¹³⁰⁴ Dean-Smith, "Playford, John (i)."

¹³⁰⁵ See Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 23-26.

¹³⁰⁶ Munstedt, "John Playford, Music Publisher," 87.

¹³⁰⁷ Dean-Smith, "Playford, John (i)."

taken the place of the cittern,¹³⁰⁸ and that he sought to ‘revive and restore this Harmonious Instrument.’¹³⁰⁹

Playford sought to mimic the guitar’s technique by advising young players to leave plectrum playing and adopt the use of fingers, while at the same time he mocked female guitar players that, according to him, were gentlewomen reduced to prostitutes,¹³¹⁰ which is an interesting comment as the citterns’ associations were not flattering at all. Considering Playford’s business mentality, he was probably just criticizing the competition and upholding his product as the best option when it came to plucked stringed instruments, while at the same time borrowing the guitar’s technique, since he knew its success and popularity.

Seventeen years after Playford’s publication, in an assessment of the ‘Manufactures of England’ writer Edward Chamberlayne (1616–1703) discussed the state of art and technology in the British Isles. When it came to music, he explained that many old instruments, including the cittern, are laid aside, many of them because of the violin’s popularity:¹³¹¹

In Musick, it would be too tedious to determine, whether the Improvement or Alteration hath been greater. Certain it is, that several old English Instruments are laid aside; as the Orpharian, the Polyphone, an Instrument surely not to be despised, considering its rare Structure, ad the Esteem had of it by learned and therefore most judiciously Musical Persons of this Age, Sir Francis Prujean, and Dr. Rugely. The Stump, whereon about and Age ago Andrew Mark was famous for his rare performance. The Bandore, the Ghittern, Cittern, etc. The treble Viol also is much out of doors since the Violin came so much in request.¹³¹²

The music of Playford in the *Musick’s Delight on the Cithren*, with familiar grounds, pavans, and other popular songs, is considered by some scholars as the lowest example of cittern music.¹³¹³ Some scholars, however, have recognized their value as popular expressions of Stuart England, having a beautiful freshness and charm,¹³¹⁴ since, for example, some are in fact, tunes related to the English Civil

¹³⁰⁸ For a study of the guitar in Britain during the seventeenth century see Page, *The Guitar in Stuart England*.

¹³⁰⁹ Playford, *Musick’s Delight on the Cithren*, Preface; Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 2.

¹³¹⁰ Playford, *Musick’s Delight on the Cithren*, Preface; Page, *The Guitar in Stuart England*, 120–21.

¹³¹¹ For citterns in late seventeenth centuries inventories see Page, *The Guitar in Stuart England*, 139–40.

¹³¹² Chamberlayne, *The Present State of England*, 87.

¹³¹³ Dart, “The Cittern and Its English Music,” 60.

¹³¹⁴ Munstedt, “John Playford, Music Publisher,” 92.

War.¹³¹⁵ Still certain noble minds of the time, such as Peter Leycester, thought that Playford's was contrastingly low in quality compared to the work of Holborne or Robinson.¹³¹⁶

The cittern was perhaps declining in popularity in some elite circles; however, the fact is that, as aforementioned,¹³¹⁷ by the second half of the seventeenth century, the instrument was well imbedded in English society. The lack of printed sources in these periods make Playford's a rarity; however, the popular nature of his tunes and his keen nature for business, could only mean that there was a large sector of people playing and making citterns, perhaps, now more as part of a 'folk' expression. Nevertheless, by this time, the cittern was now completely a domestic instrument and had undergone a dramatic transformation in its use and repertoire. From a rare, imported novelty, to being adapted for polyphonic arrangements, becoming a successful continuo instrument and part of the English early modern home, changing its tuning and range to suit the lute's music, to be again a simple four-course wired plucked string helping both common and the nobleman to express their humanity through music.

4.6 Summary: The Transformation of the Transalpine Cittern

The earliest depiction of the transalpine cittern at the Hirschvogel hall in Nuremberg suggests that the German-speaking countries developed the standard type of transalpine cittern, which is very similar to the large number of instruments found in the Low Countries, France and England.

The Hirschvogel cittern represents a dramatic technical transformation, rooted in the Italian *cetra* or early cittern of the early sixteenth century. This metamorphosis is as technical as social because it is aligned with Europe's transition towards capitalism and therefore, the birth of a consumerist society not only of nobles but also a growing bourgeoisie, who both found music and musical instruments important not only for leisure but for the expression of dynamics of power and social stratification. Such social upheaval produced a large market of amateur musicians and with the growth of instrumental music and the adaptation of the music of mainstream instruments such as the lute, the cittern practice became either a supporting instrument for ensembles or an imitation of the lute music.

¹³¹⁵ Dart, "The Cittern and Its English Music," 59.

¹³¹⁶ Ward, *Sprightly and Cheerful Musick*, 1983, 72.

¹³¹⁷ Renou, *A Medicinal Dispensatory, Containing the Whole Body of Physick*, 237.

Transalpine citterns are a dramatic transformation of the early Italian cittern culture of the late fifteenth century. This is evident when considering their tuning, but also several morphological features such as the shape of the body and the way it tapers its width, the scrolls on shoulders, some of the string holders, the fingerboard cutaway, the fretting layouts, and narrow neck.

The cittern in the German speaking countries was part of all social layers, spreading rapidly into the social fabric of Dresden, Leipzig, Bavaria and Thuringia. The cittern was used in all kinds of performances, such as street concerts, courtly festivals, receptions, and theatrical performances. The cittern's Germanic iconography represents a fragile but present humanist meaning combined with a growing popularisation of the instrument and, thus, a social marginalisation best represented by Michael Praetorius's comment of the four-course as having the 'vilest of associations.'¹³¹⁸

The Freiberg citterns are the best examples of how the Germanic cittern presented elements of high commodification, such as the economic use of materials and the use of only two support bars for the entire instrument. The commodification of the cittern, however, is best explained by the Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish enterprise, which through an adapted repertoire launched music to an amateur market, to essentially allow complex polyphonic lute music to be more accessible for everyone. Music printers and makers entered into a network of conflicting and innovative interactions eager to meet the demand of the 'bourgeois de Paris',¹³¹⁹ a city in which the cittern, between 1556 and 1650, was the third most mentioned plucked string in that city.¹³²⁰ The cittern was a perfect instrument for the amateur player, especially the early modern courtier and poet, who followed the ideals spread by Baldassarre's Castiglione *Il Cortegiano*, widely read and imitated by French poets.

The growing capitalism of the Low Countries, specifically the Dutch Republic, turned it into the first modern economy,¹³²¹ which quickly developed a significant artistic output that enriched the culture of the rest of the continent and the cittern, through its printed music and manufacture, became a standard commodity to be imported to other countries, while still becoming an instrument deeply imbedded in

¹³¹⁸ Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia Parts I and II*, 61,98.

¹³¹⁹ Lesure, "La Facture Instrumentale à Paris Au Seizième Siècle," 12.

¹³²⁰ Data gathered from a study of several French inventories and notarial acts dated between 1556 and 1650. Lesure, 12.

¹³²¹ Gelderblom and Jonker, "The Low Countries," 314.

all social layers of nobles and small towns and city people, also called *smalle burgerij*. Cittern manufacture became such a financially successful business for luthery, that Dutch makers could dedicate solely to the production of these type of instruments, calling themselves *citer makers*,¹³²² and selling this instrument as cheap as three *guilders*. Citterns, however, could be made of different qualities and some of them could be ostentatious having delicate marquetry work.

Surviving citterns from the Low Countries show little trace from the humanist context, that once characterised their Italian predecessors. Some still bared some of the lyre-like features, such as some string holders, the resonator shape, and the famous scrolls on the shoulders, which however, seemed to function as product labels more than signifying their Medieval heritage based in the revival of antiquity. Extant instruments show lesser quality in craftsmanship than the Italian traditional cittern and Brescian types, and some elements reflect a high commodification, such as economizing bar supports and modifying traditional methods for new ones to speed up the process of production.

Through direct exposure to Italian citterns and through a heavy importation of Franco-Flemish cittern culture, the cittern quickly became a novelty in England since the 1540s, which stirred up the networks of makers, musicians, publishers, and traders of diverse kinds of commodities. As with the rest of the other regions, English society absorbed the cittern deep into their social fabric, as it was popular for everyone noble, ‘burguesses’ and working class. The cittern became a fundamental element for consort music, which besides an instrumental practice, became a part of the English family as attested by the Eglantine Table and the Walsingham consort books, which together with Thomas Morley’s consort lessons place the music of the cittern as something meant essentially for someone with little musical training. The music of the cittern in consort can however be much more than what the tablatures suggests and as member of the continuo ensemble of the early baroque culture, its possibilities to harmonize consorts are still waiting to be discovered.

The high commodification of the cittern in England brought it to be commonly referred in books of botanic, natural science and medicine. Among the lute and the viol, the cittern was present in the barber-surgery shops; however, probably because of its high accessibility, it was an easier instrument to play

83. ¹³²² Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,”

than the others and, perhaps that turned out to be the reason of its constant appearance in English drama as an instrument of barbers. By the seventeenth century, both in the Low Countries and England, the cittern became the most accessible musical device for the general population and with such condition, an instrument used by all social layers. English drama and Dutch iconography depicted the cittern as a foolish and comical instrument, associated also with women of low social standing, as a way of expressing social discrimination.

As opposed to the Italian Peninsula, the transalpine cittern was much more exposed to a process of commodification inside of contexts of economic wealth where the nobility and new social layers such as the upper-middle classes steered the transformation of the instrument towards a domestic use. The cittern played an important role in the development of the instrumental ensembles of the sixteenth century and in some cases its repertoire matched the advanced polyphonic practice of the lute; however, in a broad sense the cittern's 'archaic' elements, mainly the tuning and stringing, were in contradiction to the advances in the vanguardist instrumental music. This phenomenon happened because the cittern's transformation across time was driven mostly for economic profit, rooted in its social function of being an accessible instrument for all social layers and important symbol for social status.

The musical identity of the cittern was based on a tuning rooted in a Medieval humanist practice, which was no longer relevant in the transalpine contexts that dramatically adapted the cittern to different musical culture. In the early stages of this process, the cittern had an important presence in instrumental ensembles; nevertheless, as its musical features were further stretched the cittern became less and less relevant for the mainstream transformations of instrumental music. At the same time by the end of the sixteenth century, the transalpine cittern in very specific contexts served as influence for the creation of in vogue attempts to adapt the sound of the wire strings with the music of the lute. Moreover, there were also individual endeavours to adapt the music of the cittern to the lute, which in Thomas Robinson's case led to the creation of arch-citterns. Still, the cittern's musical identity served more within the instrumental ensembles, playing a supporting role in comparison with other musical instruments. The preference of instruments such as the lute, harpsichord, viols and violin, and their role as part of the configuration of the modern orchestra, left the cittern of the second half of the seventeenth century mostly in the domestic scene where it became more associated with undemanding popular music

5. The Cultural Significance: Conclusion

5.1. The Italian Significance

This dissertation has examined the life cycle of the cittern to provide a wider understanding of its largely neglected cultural significance. The second chapter, ‘The Re-birth: The Cittern’s Heritage’, dealt with the origins of the cittern and disclosed its heritage. The cittern is the only sixteenth-century musical instrument with a Medieval past characterised for embodying, through five centuries of tradition, the idealised features of the *kithara* of the Greek world that fascinated the Renaissance. Furthermore, although many other plucked stringed instruments were associated with the lyre of antiquity, only the cittern was specifically ‘re-discovered’ by new waves of sixteenth-century humanist thinkers, who redesigned it in order to make sense of their musical reality without losing their identity. Consequently, the second chapter expanded the work of Crawford Young and Emanuel Winternitz, and in the case of Winternitz, corrected it, as the cittern’s classical heritage can only safely be traced back as far as the *cetra*.

And yet this cultural significance, along with the role of the Italian cittern as one of the plucked stringed instruments used in the poetic practice of *cantare ad lyram*, has hitherto been largely overlooked, as chapter 3, ‘The Transformation of the Italian Cittern’, has established. Through improvisation and memory, the eternal words of the gods, the tales of the Greek heroes, and the wisdom and values of antiquity, all flowed via the strings of the re-incarnated lyre as the performing poet entered into a state of divine inspiration. The sound heard by Dante in his *Divina Commedia* came from a *cetra* whose eagle sound formed the voice and words that the celebrated Florentine wrote down.¹³²³ The appreciation of such a rich tradition is possible through the traditional, carved manufacture of the Italian cittern and the preservation of the shoulder scrolls, the hook at the back of the peghead, and the tapering body and string holder.

Most importantly, the humanist values of the cittern are manifested in its symbolic, hexachordal tuning, which as a theoretical and practical device, represents the syncretism between antiquity and Medieval musical thought and the doctrine of the music of the spheres, and invokes the authority of the monochord. The influence of Pythagoras and Plato established the concept of human and cosmic

¹³²³ Alighieri, *Dante’s Paradise*, Introduction, Canto XX, Lines 9-27, EPUB Reader.

balance represented by the *kithara*, resurrected in the cittern. Body and soul attuned themselves just as the scales that formed its intervals secured the revolving structure of the universe in a series of nested spheres all founded in musical scales. The expansion of these ideals and their re-interpretation by Boethius into his *musica mundana* turned the humanist cittern into an iconological device that represented the music of the heavens, being, thus, an excellent example of the *musica instrumentalis*, a material reflection of the ethereal *musica mundana*. Then, with its hexachordal tuning, the cittern's symbolism was consolidated as reflecting the wisdom and morality of the ancient Greek modes and the *rightness* of the *musica recta* of Guido d' Arezzo.

And yet, this wire plucked stringed instrument meant something else for Lorenzo Costa and Isabella d' Este and the *Regno di Armonia*. In this case, the lyre is represented by both the *lira da braccio* and the cittern, but the latter is held by a rather feminine character, Sappho, and bears the unmistakable influence of Aphrodite and Eros who crowns the Italian ruler in her reign of harmony. Consequently, it seems as if the cittern is yet another *face* of the mythological lyre, perhaps with another meaning, one of love as a concept to be added to the Platonic and Pythagorean ideals of harmony. With this comes the rich grotesque decoration, reflecting the naturalistic and animalistic features of a world of sirens, nymphs and satyrs. Always placed at the back of the instruments, in discrete places and behind functional elements, the grotesques suggest an air of another world, an *otherness*, the counterpart to the classical geometrical elements of the round numbers that rule the universe.

However, the noble humanist meaning of the cittern clashed with an evolving world. Renaissance music was never truly bounded to an orthodox sense of classical antiquity, especially when it was clear that the music of the Greeks could not be reconciled with the music of the *modern* era, no matter how strong the will of humanism was. The ancient myths passed from being an authority to an inspiration and later to a mere suggestion for the composer, who as Monteverdi said, was left to his own creativity and the musical forces of the time. The stream of independent development was not as strong as the social function of music and musical instruments, which shaped the identities of Italian society. Instrumental music was in demand in the sixteenth century, promoting a social ritual of accomplishment for the rising amateur player, who, thus, helped shaped musical development. The polyphonic influence of stringed instruments such as the lute and the harpsichord led the way for an unstoppable, experimental

phase of musical creation that further shaped the humanist cittern. The longer neck, full fingerboard, metal frets, additional strings and larger body speak of only one thing: innovation, and with an inevitable compromise to existing traditions and established forms of cultural significance. In the musical hierarchy of ensembles of the early seventeenth century, the cittern, now placed as a member of the lute family, became Agazzari's ornamental and playful harmonious companion to the fundamental, polyphonic musical instruments. It was this type of categorization that radically expressed a social hierarchy, where lute players had a different status from cittern players; the latter, if they were to be respected equally as the gut string performers, had to bring the cittern to the lute's level. It was at this moment, where the cittern already was losing its sense of identity, that its traditional and iconological manufacture blended increasingly with the lute culture, to later become a sort of lute with wire strings.

A rather magnificent expression of the syncretism between the old and the new was the Brescian cittern school. As traditional *citaredi* and fine craftsmen, the Virchi family understood how the cittern's heritage and its obscure practice had to be changed to match the social expectations of what was considered fine solo music. Paolo Virchi then compared the cittern to a small satellite that revolves around the stellar instruments: the lute and the harpsichord. There is no better example than this to explain the socio-economic *gravitational forces* that influence the movement of musical traditions and force them into transformation and innovation, and in the case of the cittern into a loss of identity and its intrinsic values that were always related to a rather orthodox tradition of the revival of classical antiquity.

Zarlino was very clear about how the simple music of an instrumental accompaniment against a beautiful recited, bardic poem was enough to move the human soul. Pietro Paolini, following a rather Platonic notion of how complex music corrupts the soul and human behaviour, places the cittern alongside the chastity and authority of the Petrarchan poetic culture. This reflected how the partnership between poetry and music involved literarily turning away from the polyphonic progress of the multi-string baroque lute. In such a way, then, the cittern turns its back on modernity, as illustrated also by Giovanni Serodine in *Allegoria della Scienza*, showing how the muse, the humanist inspiration is not able anymore to inspire music. The transformation of the cittern inside the Italian Peninsula is thus a reflection of this loss of intrinsic values and of a musical practice that was on the verge of extinction.

The *cetra* heritage was finally reaching the limits: as the lyre-like iconological features decreased in size with time, so did its humanist value.

And, yet many questions must now be asked. What was the traditional playing technique of the sixteenth-century Italian cittern? How did the hexachord work? Was it mainly a symbolic device with the two last strings used as drones? The fact that the authentic music of the Italian cittern is hidden in a lost oral practice only makes it more fascinating, placing the extant citterns as the main sources for a rich experimentation and future research in performance practice. This musical tradition has rarely been considered and remains to be discovered.

Other important future research questions to ask are: Why a musical instrument with such a rich heritage did not have the significance it should have had in its time? Was the cittern a member of a countercultural niche that was overshadowed by mainstream musical culture and its corresponding social and economic status? Could the popular and autochthonous nature of the cittern be a factor for its neglect?

And this is when another aspect should be brought to an inquiry that can be well stated now but can only be fully answered later. The autochthonous nature of the Italian cittern and the evidence so far presented suggests that the instrument was always an element of the identity of the popular culture, which during the sixteenth century and a large part of the seventeenth reached a high cultivation in mainstream practices, higher classes and courtly environments. Yet, it seems like its nature was always rooted with the people and with tradition, and, possibly, because of this popular status it was placed in a certain social and even gender hierarchy. This dissertation opened with a quote by James Tyler, who said that although the cittern was an invention of the humanist and Neoplatonic court context of the early fifteenth century in Italy, intended as a recreation of the Greek *kithara*, the last periods of its history belong to more popular contexts.¹³²⁴ It rather seems, though, that the cittern always had a popular background, yet at the same time it had this rich, idealised classical heritage, which was in fact, the reason for its *discovery* and Renaissance's *re-birth* that happened not only in the fifteenth but also in the following centuries.

¹³²⁴ Tyler, "A Checklist for the Cittern," 25.

5.2. The Transalpine Significance

The cultural significance of the transalpine cittern is as fascinating as the Italian one. First, the early appearance and technological prowess of this model, and the way it seemed to appear suddenly in the middle of the sixteenth century, is a phenomenon that reflects the abrupt social and economic changes of early capitalist Europe. Arguably no other musical instrument reflects these changes with such efficacy, as no other instrument was altered in such way and drastically resituated in a different context and social use.

As chapter four has shown, the rise of the transalpine cittern was undoubtedly influenced by the Italian cittern or late *cetra*, and although it is not crystal clear which one was the main source of inspiration, it is now safely possible to say that both sixteenth-century versions are rooted in the *cetra* and Tinctoris' tuning. Then comes the intriguing side of the transalpine history. How should we consider the values of this version of the cittern? As a copy of the Italian tradition? Or as a new instrument altogether? As a valuable artwork or as a mere commodity born out of the social need for consuming Italianate culture to indicate rising social status? On the one hand, it is possible to suggest that the economic factor was certainly the major force of change that brought the transalpine cittern to its different English, Germanic, Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish contexts. This influence was at the same time linked with the novel social need of practising instrumental music with humanist traits, as shown by Baldassarre's *Il Cortegiano* and its continental success.

What is fascinating is that while the accessibility of the cittern was advantageous for both musical and economic purposes, it is the latter that was the main reason why it was widely globalised across Europe through a highly commodified music. The transalpine cittern was one of the first musical instruments to be widely commercialised and globalised through a level of commodification hitherto unseen in other instruments. It was at this point that the values of the Italian cittern were swiftly changed and turned on their head, because now the humanist meaning, so central to the cittern's cultural significance, was stripped away. Instead, the purpose now was to create what Virchi referred to as a *small star* or a *satellite* revolving around the mainstream culture and the omnipresent lute tradition. These are the forces of a socio-economic system that was driving polyphonic music, creating a collision

of traditions, innovations and commodifications that in return speak of class conflict. In the doctrine of the music of the spheres of Boethius, the *musica mundana*, that is the music of the universe, governs the *instrumentalis*, the music of the earth. And so, the higher economic orbs and market forces are as influential as the *musica mundana*, when they demand power, hierarchy and class definition by music, which in return, as the *musica instrumentalis*, can only move accordingly.

And this is where an important dimension of the social function of the transalpine cittern is revealed, namely, its use as an imitation of a higher-class type of Italian music with a rich humanist heritage, albeit as a façade which although preserving many lyre-like features carried very different significance. As said before, a value might be lost but another one is gained.

Vitus Bach, the grandfather of Johann Sebastian, picked up the cittern after a long a day of work at the mill to relax, celebrate, forget or *paint* whatever colour of his emotional pallet he decided to express, just as Achilles the great warrior played the *kithara* to calm his spirit after battle. And so the Freiberg citterns are a testimony of everyday music reaching the high altitudes of the heavens, reminding us that both high and low cultures are in debt to one another for making musical wonders that reached all social layers. With their Royal privilege, Le Roy and Ballard placed music for the cittern in the hands of both modest and privileged French citizen, from where it soon reached the workshops of distinguished makers such as Gaspar Tieffenbrucker, since they knew it was now a sought-after musical instrument. The cittern was part of the most lavish courtly festivals, such as Good King Henry's wedding celebrations. Scholars such as Antoin du Verdier held the cittern and its music in their respected libraries and collections, as did physician and upper-middle class citizen Rasse des Neux and the poet Rémy Belleau, who most likely used it a source of inspiration for his poems. The Dutch 'Golden Age' placed the cittern as a successful commodity that for the first time in its transalpine history made makers not only specialise in cittern making but engage in fierce competition for the large middle-class market so well depicted by Johannes Vermeer and his *Procuress*. The Low Countries quickly absorbed the novel cittern culture and placed it inside its social fabric as their vast iconographic collection can attest, counterpointing musical examples such as Adrian Valerius' *Neder-Landsche Gedenck-Clanck*, which uses the instrument as the musical background for stories of national independence.

As in the Low Countries, the English quickly and deeply absorbed cittern culture as it spread among privileged households in the manner of exotic commodities from other parts of the continent. Indeed, the ‘Golden Age of English Music’ could not be the same without the cittern, as this instrument became an intrinsic part of early modern British instrumental ensembles. Besides musical, these were social consorts where nobles, professional musicians, courtiers, guests, family members, ambassadors and officials sat at the table and mingled with music. As an instrument ‘for every man to play upon’, the cittern took a drastic new significance, completely the opposite from its humanist origins, reflecting the need to socially classify and consequently a favoured device for English drama’s expressions of social and gender discrimination.

As a *musical satellite* of mainstream polyphony, the cittern served as a sort of early modern *radio player*, bringing lute music translated into the special *frequency* of its wire strings and a unique tuning. Perhaps this is where the heyday of the cittern was reached, meaning at the moment of the English consort, focused upon the second quarter of the sixteenth century. In this case, as opposed to the Italian cittern, the transalpine instrument has much written musical evidence to draw from, as a large quantity of tablatures are available. However, given the commercial nature of some of this music, and the fact that such publications might not represent cittern practice at its best, the ideal way forward is through experimentation with the essential features of the cittern inside the early baroque instrumental practice. As a famous and apparently misattributed quote to Sigmund Freud said, ‘a cigar is sometimes just a cigar’, meaning that aside from social categories and symbolisms, things can only do what they are capable of doing within their own time and context. From this perspective, a musical instrument is sometimes just a musical instrument. That is why the chordal, drone-like nature of the cittern and its percussive brilliant sound, accompanied with an unsuited tuning for complex polyphony, could only be used in its context as Praetorius and Agazzari intended, that is for supporting the main parts.¹³²⁵ From this perspective, Paul O’Dette’s and Ephraim Segerman’s insights gain resonance if we consider the improvisational nature of the early baroque style and how each instrument should offer the best of its

¹³²⁵ Praetorius and Kite-Powell, *Syntagma Musicum III*, 152; Agazzari, *Del Sonare Sopra ’l Basso Con Tutti Li Stromenti e Dell’uso Loro Nel Conserto*; Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity Through the Romantic Era*, 429. Praetorius quoting Agazzari.

‘personality’ and ‘spectrum of colours’ to the ensemble. After all, even if music is bound to the capabilities of technology, it is also bound to the creative capabilities of human beings, where mesmerizing performances can happen with the simplest of musical instruments.

5.3. The Cittern’s Cultural Significance into the Future

The cultural significance of the cittern is not static but underwent transformation, a facet of the instrument’s development that before this dissertation has been relatively neglected. In its Italian context it represented the insatiable need of humanity to connect with one of the greatest civilizations of the Western world. The need to connect music with the immemorial, bardic chants, and music of the spheres was embodied in a material culture that speaks of linking the past with the present, all through an intense syncretism of traditions and innovations. As the Greek musical antiquity could not be reconciled with European Renaissance practice, one of the few if not the only surviving musical relic of such idealised past was the cittern. This significance then saw an abrupt change through a high commodification that saw the *kithara* features reduced in size and their substitution with new identities, reflecting the transformation of the cittern into a continental plucked stringed instrument for people of all social classes and a symbol for early modern hegemonic, social and economic practices. As a fixture of early baroque ensembles, the cittern secured its place in the history of early music and European early modern society. Even though it was despised by certain high class minded opinions, such as Praetorius’, this only further reveals its social importance. From an autochthonous traditional instrument with a rich classical Medieval heritage, to becoming a copy of itself through a wide globalisation across the German-speaking countries, France, England and the Low Countries, the cittern reflects the transition between the old and modern world, between Medieval and capitalist modern Europe.

As if making a film documentary, there are too many edits and *deleted scenes, characters, plots* and *micro stories* one would wish to include but for matters of space and narrative it has not proved possible in the present context. The eagerness to do so is very much present as there is material for much further research and artistic experimentation. The cittern deserves much more. Regarding its *musical voice*, there is a distinct gap in early music performance as, compared to the early music revival of the 1970s,

the instrument is today seldom used. It is to be hoped that this dissertation can inspire future experimental practices on this wire strung instrument, which could only enrich our understanding of early music ensembles. Considering the cittern as a musical instrument that represents an open medium for cultural reflection and inquiry, there is room for re-discovering both the Italian and transalpine musical practices using fresh approaches to performance that would build upon closer study of the musical instruments and the potential for creative performance.

Moreover, a full technical study of all surviving citterns is needed, along with a much more detailed iconographic analysis of both the decorations and the appearance of citterns in visual arts. These could easily fill one or two books, given the quantity of available evidence. At the same time, the cittern is very present in English literature, especially in drama, offering the basis for another full study of the specific and detailed way it was used by the playwrights and the meaning it had overall in early modern society. There is also a considerable presence of the cittern in Iberia, which could not be considered in this work for matters of space.

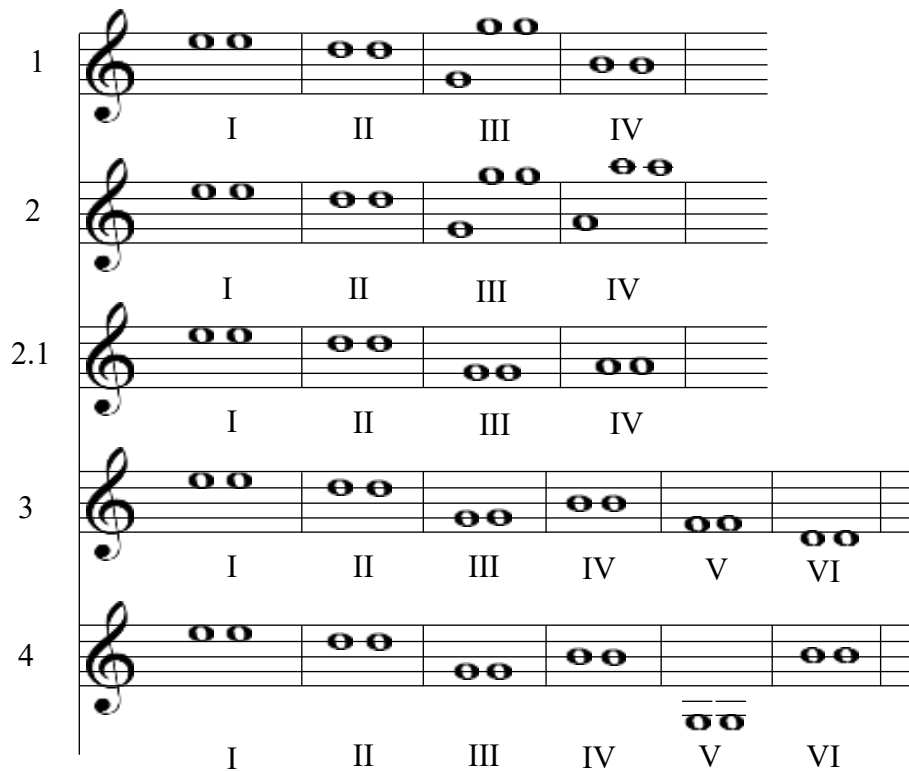
Variations of cittern practice that belong more to the eighteenth century could be further explored in relation to the cittern, such as the many Germanic hybrids of lute-like plucked stringed instruments, the Swiss *halszither* and the *Citrinchen*. In general, early modern wire strung instruments such as the orpharion and bandora deserve much more attention, and their relation to the cittern should be the subject of future inquiry. Regarding Italian citterns, there is a fascinating fertile ground for ethno-organological research that can explore the connection between the early modern *cetera* with the traditional instrument now made in Corsica, which is extremely similar, and there is a general opinion that the latter is in fact a continuation of the Renaissance cittern.

This dissertation is the first work to offer a fresh approach to the cittern's history with a wider look at its cultural values, technology, music and symbolic associations. It not only condenses and expands extant cittern scholarship but uses a wide range of sources to reflect upon how we have viewed this instrument in the past and how we can view it and study it in the future. Moreover, this is the first work to propose a precise theory of the origins of the cittern and to link its transformation between the Italian and transalpine contexts while making a critical assessment of its musical and social potential. From a methodological point of view, this dissertation demonstrates how organological theory can operate

when researching the material culture of musical instruments, showing how these artefacts are part of a wide range of cultural systems that follow specific social functions, intrinsically linked with economic systems, which are always under transformation. These are largely responsible for *setting the stage* for not only musical but all kinds of artistic revolutions on a wider scale in society. Music and instruments are inevitably and symbiotically linked, since one cannot be produced without the other; however, their microsphere of artistic development is largely dependent on the social use they are given, which is often related to social identity. In this case, then, the musical function is secondary to the social one, which is also related and co-dependent on large economic – and thus ideological – changes.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Cittern Tunings



1 'Italian Tuning'

1597. *The Citharn Schoole*, Anthony Holborne, London.
 1599. *The Psalms of David in meter*, Richard Alison, London.
 1599. *The First Booke of Consort Lessons*, Thomas Morley, London.
 1609. *New Citharen Lessons*, Thomas Robinson, London.
 1609. *Consort Lessons*, Philip Rosseter, London
 1652. *A Booke of New Lessons for the Cithern and Gittern*, London.

2 'French Tuning'

1552. *Quatriesme Livre Contenant Plusieurs Fantasies...*, Guillaume Morlaye, Paris.
 1564. *Second Livre de Cistre*, Adrian Le Roy, Paris.
 1564. *Nova et elegantissima in cythara ludenda carmina quae videlicet in sola cythata vel etiam cum*, Frederic Viaera, Leuven
 1565. *Breve et facile instruction pour apprendre la tablature*, Adrian Le Roy and Robert Ballard, Paris.
 1568. *Nova longueque elegantissima cithara ludenda carmina, cum gallina tum etiam germanica: fantasia item*, Sebastian Vreedman, Leuven
 1569. *Carmina Quae Cythara Pulsantur*, Sebastian Vreedman, Leuven.
 1570. *Hortulus cytharae, in dus distinctus libros, quorum, passomezo*, Pierre Phalèse and Jean Bellère, Leuven.
 1582. *Hortulus Citharae Vulgaris*, Pierre Phalèse and Jean Bellère, Antwerp.
 1626. *Neder-Landsche Gedenck-Clanck*, Adrian Valerius, Haerlem.

2.1

1636. *Harmonie Universelle*, Marin Mersenne, Paris.

3

1574. *Il Primo Libro di Tabolatura di Cithara*, Paolo Virchi, Venice.

4

1575. *Toppel Cythar*, Sixt Kargel, German-Speaking Countries.

Appendix 2. Historical Citterns

Table 1. Italian Traditional Citterns¹³²⁶

	Instrument	String length ¹³²⁷	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Decoration
1	Circa 1600, Girolamo Campi , Museo Bardini, Florence (Inv. MCF-MB 1922-362). Cittern with extended bass strings in a <i>chitarrone</i> fashion. ¹³²⁸	680 1230 (bass strings).	14 courses. Probable first set of 7 double courses.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Built in separate pieces imitating carved construction.	Hardwood (possibly maple). 17 brass frets. Chromatic.	Probable coniferous softwood. Barring not examined.	Carved scroll and floral motives in the back of neck near peghead. Inlaid purfling in soundboard, sides and back a concentric pattern to the rose. Carved heel with floral motives. Geometrical interlacing in the lower back.
2	Late 16th century, uncertain attribution to the Amati family , Museo Bardini, Florence (inv. Nr. 152). ¹³²⁹	620	Six double courses and triple stringing on the third and fourth set (Original arrangement is uncertain).	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) and Walnut (<i>Genus</i>) staves in the back. Sides, neck, and head in maple. Built in separate pieces imitating carved construction.	Maple 16 brass frets. Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Tenoned soundbars.	Carved scroll peghead. Painted purfling and a concentric pattern to the rose. Rose in hardwood and parchment.

¹³²⁶ A new cittern was sold recently at [Christies](#). The body seems to present several alterations: in particular, the soundboard seems unoriginal, and the relief carved at the back also seems unusual. The potentially carved structure seems original, notably the naïve, autochthonous decoration of the heel, which is reminiscent of the cittern signed by Franciscus Plebanus (Instrument 10). The fingerboard of a cittern survived the shipwreck of the *Trinidad Valencera*, one of the ships of the Spanish Armada chartered by Phillip II to conquer England in 1588. The remains of the instrument are preserved in the Ulster Museum in Belfast, Ireland. The *Trinidad Valencera* had many Italians on board, which would explain the presence of the cittern. Christies, “A SIX-COURSE DOUBLE STRUNG CITTERN, PROBABLY URBINO SCHOOL, MID-16TH CENTURY, THE SOUNDBOARD PROBABLY REPLACED IN THE EARLY 18TH CENTURY | Christie’s”; Woodfield, *English Musicians in the Age of Exploration*, 83.

¹³²⁷ The citterns are ordered in a decreasing string length in millimetres.

¹³²⁸ Photographed and briefly examined by late Stephen Gottlieb in June 1974. Andrew Hartig made Gottlieb’s notes public in his [website](#). Hartig, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: [Http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com](http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com).”

¹³²⁹ Photographed and briefly examined by late Stephen Gottlieb in June 1974. This instrument damaged in a museum flood and separated in several pieces. The condition is so fragile that the curators of the Bardini it cannot be examined. Andrew Hartig made Gottlieb’s notes public in his [website](#). Hartig.

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Decoration
3	Circa 1600, Unknown maker, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, (inv.nr. SAM 59). ¹³³⁰	617	Seven double courses (Original arrangement is uncertain).	Hardwood (possibly maple). ¹³³¹ Carved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce.	Carved scroll peghead. Painted purfling and a concentric pattern to the rose. Rose in hardwood and parchment.
4	Mid-16th century. Unknown maker , Musikinstrumentenmuseum der Universität Leipzig (inv. nr. 612). ¹³³²	614	Six double courses.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) Carved.	Maple 18 brass frets. Diatonic. Bass cutaway.	Spruce (<i>Picea excelsis</i>). Tenoned. soundbars. ¹³³³	Painted purfling. No carved decoration, sober ornamentation. Peghead with a simple circular carving.
5	1550. Raffaello da Urbino , National Music Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 3386). ¹³³⁴	612	Six or seven double courses. Severely altered. Includes lateral peg hole.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) Carved.	Maple 18 brass frets. Chromatic (Not original).	Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) or fir (<i>Abies</i>). Tenoned soundbar.	Grotesque carvings. Carved scroll peghead. Carved coat of arms. Painted purfling. Rose in hardwood and parchment.
6	1582. Augustinus Citaraedus , Horniman Museum and Gardens, London (inv. nr. 392-1871). ¹³³⁵	612	Stringing changed from a triple set on the third course to a six double course.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) Carved.	Maple 18 brass frets. Diatonic.	Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) or fir (<i>Abies</i>) Tenoned soundbars.	Carved heel and sides with disc motives. Carved scroll peghead. Carved coat of arms (Initials A.C). Inlaid purfling with geometrical pattern near string holder. Rose in hardwood (added in restoration).
7	1574-1584. Franciscus Citaraedus , Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. ¹³³⁶	612	Stringing severely altered. The current arrangement is for a six double string set.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Carved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). 18 brass frets. Diatonic. Straight (no bass cutaway).	Coniferous softwood. Tenoned soundbar. Because of its similarities with the Augustinus cittern (number 6), is possible that there is a second soundbar.	Grotesque carvings. Carved scroll head. Carved and painted coat of arms (Initials G.A). Rose in hardwood.

¹³³⁰ Internal catalogue sheets of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and information provided by Kunsthistorisches Museum curator Beatrix Darmstaedter.

¹³³¹ String holder or comb, body, narrow neck and peghead all made from one single piece of hardwood.

¹³³² Extensive information on materials and manufacture in his [website](#) *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Museum* of the University of Leipzig. Michel, *Zistern*, 1999.

¹³³³ The soundbar below the rose is placed through the walls and slightly protrudes from the sides. The soundbar above the rose does not protrudes from the sides.

¹³³⁴ Examined by the author in 2016 in his master's dissertation.. Mariño, "Two Sixteenth-Century Citterns Made in Urbino, Italy: A Comparative Study."

¹³³⁵ Examined by the author in 2016 in his master's dissertation. Mariño.

¹³³⁶ The observations registered are based on a behind the case examination *in situ* done by the author in 2018 and direct communication with former conservator of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Alfons Huber, and conservator Metropolitan Museum of Art Conservator Manu Frederickx. The auction house Christie's [online catalogue](#) corroborates the carved construction. -Franciscus Citaraedus Cittern: This instrument underwent dendrochronological examination, which revealed that the last tree ring dates from 1574. Christies Live Auction 6179, The Collection of Barons Nathaniel and Albert von Rothschild, "A Cittern."

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Decoration
8	Late 16th century. Unknown maker, Unknown location (Hipkins catalogue). ¹³³⁷	---	Probable six double courses with a triple third course and lateral pegs.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Carved.	Possibly 19 frets. Diatonic.	Possibly coniferous softwood.	Grotesque carvings. Carved female head.
9	Circa 1590. Unknown maker , Musikinstrumentenmuseum der Universität Leipzig (inv. nr. 613). ¹³³⁸	545	Six double courses.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Carved.	Maple. 18 brass frets. Diatonic. Bass cutaway.	Spruce (<i>Picea excelsis</i>). Tenoned soundbar.	Painted purfling. No carved decoration, sober ornamentation. Peghead with elemental peak shape carving.
10	1536. Franciscus Plebanus , uncertain attribution, Musée de la Musique, Paris, (inv. nr. E.1131). ¹³³⁹	545	Six double courses.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Carved.	Maple. 17 brass frets. Diatonic. Bass cutaway.	Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). Rebated soundbar.	Grotesque carving in peghead and heel. Inlaid geometric decoration in soundboard concentric to the rose. Painted symbolic decoration on the back depicting vases filled with flowers. Ivory or bone decorated string holder (not original). Rose in hardwood.
11	Circa 1600, Unknown maker, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, (SAM.58). ¹³⁴⁰	538	Seven double courses (Original arrangement is uncertain).	Hardwood (possibly maple).	Hardwood (possibly maple). Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce.	Round brandmark „MART... fec. In Padua.’

¹³³⁷ This instrument only publicly survives in a fine detail drawing made for a catalogue by collector Alfred James Hipkins (1826-1903). Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare and Unique*, XIV.

¹³³⁸ Examined by scholar Andreas Michel. Extensive information on materials and manufacture in his [website](#) *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Museum* of the University of Leipzig. Michel, *Zistern*, 1999.

¹³³⁹ Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” n.d.; Forrester, “Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire.”

¹³⁴⁰ Internal catalogue sheets of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and information provided by Kunsthistorisches Museum curator Beatrix Darmstaedter.

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Decoration
12	Mid-16 th century. Giovanni Salvatori , Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E. 543). ¹³⁴¹	490	Probable original six double courses.	Maple (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>). Carved.	Maple (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>). 19 brass frets. Chromatic. Bass cutaway.	Spruce (<i>Picea excelsis</i>). Tenoned soundbar.	Female character carved in peghead. Carved heel with circular patterns. Purfling with geometrical pattern in soundboard near string holder. Purfling body and sides with shell interlacing pattern in the back. Rose in hardwood. Painted curved pattern in fingerboard cutaway. Stamped signature 'D. P. IOVANNI SALVATORI'.
13	Sixteenth century. Piero Paulo, Private Collection, Unknown location. ¹³⁴²	482	Six double courses. Lateral pegs included.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Imitates carved construction.	Hardwood (possibly maple). 18 brass frets Diatonic. Bass cutaway.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Unknown barring. Because of its similarities with the Amati cittern (number 2) can have two soundbars.	Painted purfling and a concentric pattern to the rose. Peghead broken, impossible to know its original carved decoration.
14	16 th Century. Unknown maker, Museo degli Strumenti Musicali, Rome (inv. nr. 708). ¹³⁴³	430	Six double courses.	Hardwood (possibly maple).	Maple. 17 brass frets. Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce.	Carved satyr head (grotesque carving). Probable painted purfling and a pattern that is concentric to the rose.
15	1580. Girolamo Campi , Royal College of Music, London (inv. nr. RCM0048). ¹³⁴⁴	Circa 430	Six double courses.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Carved.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). 17 brass frets Diatonic. Bass cutaway.	Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) or fir (<i>Abies</i>) Tenoned. soundbars.	Carved female peghead. Grotesque carvings in peghead. Purfling with geometrical pattern in soundboard near string holder. Rose in hardwood (modern-not original). Painted curved pattern in fingerboard cutaway. Stamped signature 'GIRONIMO CANPI'.

¹³⁴¹ Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," n.d.; Forrester, "Italian Citterns in the Museum of the Paris Conservatoire."

¹³⁴² Personal communication with Peter Forrester, who examined the instrument and generously shared his findings with the author. Hartig, "The Renaissance Cittern Site: [Http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com](http://Cittern.Theaterofmusic.Com)."

¹³⁴³ Cervelli, *La galleria armonica*.

¹³⁴⁴ Examined by the author in 2022.

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Decoration
16	16th Century. Unknown maker , International Museum and Library of Music of Bologna, (inv. nr. 1746). ¹³⁴⁵	430	Originally five courses (first two double, third one triple and last two double). Now presents a six double standard stringing.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Carved.	Maple 19 brass frets. Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Tenoned. soundbars.	Probably painted purfling and a pattern that is concentric to the sound hole. Rose missing. No carved decoration, sober ornamentation. Peghead with circular elemental carved decoration.
17	1530-1550. A. Rossi, unknown location . ¹³⁴⁶	420	Six double courses.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Carved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). 19 brass frets. Diatonic.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce.	Probably painted purfling and a pattern that is concentric to the rose. Rose probably in hardwood. Written signature in nut: 'URBINO'. No carved decoration, sober ornamentation. Peghead broken, impossible to know its original carving.

¹³⁴⁵ Examined by the author in 2022.

¹³⁴⁶ Correspondence from 1997 between private collector Gabrieli Negri and National Music Museum, Vermillion South Dakota. Negri's report includes measurements. The string length is an estimation based on Negri's 210 nut to 12th fret measurement.

Table 2. Brescian Citterns¹³⁴⁷

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Neck-Heel	Decoration
1	1570 circa. Girolamo Virchi, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. D.MR.R.434). ¹³⁴⁸	420	Six double course setup. Stringing altered (showed in wear marks on nut's surface).	Hardwood (possibly maple). Tapering resonator built in several pieces. Overlapping sides.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. 18 frets partly diatonic (not original). Originally chromatic except in last frets 17 th and 18 th . Original colour coding wedges.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Two support bars for the back and two soundboard bars. Small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard.	The heel is a separate piece of the neck, joint to the sides. Neck and peghead are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Elaborate grotesques carved and painted in the peghead. Female character carved and painted in the peghead. Purfling in soundboard. Concentric purfling around the soundhole. Parallel purfling in the fingerboard's sides. Gilded scrolls on shoulders. Design painted with ink or black paint in the fingerboard cutaway. Stamped round mark, between the inner and the outer circles with the maker's name and a coat of arms «HIERONIMUS BRISIENSIS».
2	1570 circa. Girolamo Virchi, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv. nr. E.1271). ¹³⁴⁹	420	Six double courses set up.	Tapering resonator with the back made of six staves of curled and carved maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Overlapping sides.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. 18 chromatic frets (apart from 17 th and 18 th). Original frets replaced but not moved. Traces of original colour coding wedges.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Soundboard replaced (flat). Two support bars for the back and two soundboard bars. Small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard.	The heel is a separate piece of the neck, joint to the sides. Neck and peghead are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Elaborate grotesque design on heel, fingerboard cutaway, back and top of peghead. The peghead decoration includes precious stones. Label attached to the inside of the body. «Antonio Stradivarius Cremonensis/Faciebat Anno 1700», followed by a printed motif «A+S» Rose missing. Inlaid purfling in soundboard.

¹³⁴⁷ There is reference to a Brescian cittern presumably by Girolamo Virchi, which is currently missing. According to Elena Bugini the instrument was at the Staatliches Institut Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikinstrumentenmuseum in Berlin. This instrument is characterised by a rather elaborate finial carving depicting a character eating some sort of food possibly *gnocchi*. Bugini, “La liuteria bresciana e il collezionismo musicale del Rinascimento,” 38.

¹³⁴⁸ Gétreau and Dugot, “Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography,” 2004, 5–7. Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Musée de la Musique in Paris.

¹³⁴⁹ Gétreau and Dugot, 8–10. Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Musée de la Musique in Paris.

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Neck-Heel	Decoration
3	1574. Girolamo Virchi, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. nr. 56). ¹³⁵⁰	433	Six-double course set up.	Tapering resonator with the back made of convex maple staves (<i>Acer</i> sp.) with alternating ‘flowering’ grain. The staves are shaped in a concave and separated by purfling. Overlapping sides.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. 18 chromatic frets Original colour coding wedges.	Precious wood on the soundboard, possible Cedar of Lebanon (<i>Cedrus libani</i>). Two support bars for the back and two soundboard bars. Small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard. Curved.	The heel, neck and peghead are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Elaborate grotesque design on heel, fingerboard cutaway, back and top of peghead. The last has a prominent sculptural bust depicting the myth of Lucretia. The heel presents Ferdinando of Tyrol coat of arms, including the archducal hat. Concentric purfling around the soundhole. Parallel purfling in the fingerboard’s sides. Gild and painted decoration on rose, scrolls, heel and peghead bust. Rose decorated with the Tyrolean Eagle. Stamped round mark in front of peghead, between the inner and the outer circles with the maker’s name and a coat of arms «HIERONIMUS BRIXIENSIS».
4	1580-1631. Paolo Maggini, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. nr. C62). Dendrochronological analysis dates the soundboard to 1593. ¹³⁵¹	447	Six-double course set up.	Tapering resonator with back made of a broadly flamed maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) plank. Overlapping sides. Curved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. 17 chromatic frets with colour coding wedges (The 1st, 4th, 6th, 8th, 11th, 13th, 15th have a hardwood (most likely maple) wedge, while the rest of the frets are made with an ebony wedge.	Coniferous softwood probably spruce. Two support bars for the back and two soundboard bars. Small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard. Curved.	The heel, neck and peghead are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Austere decoration compared with the other citterns. The varnish, having a deep reddish orange stands out as the most striking decorative element. It is possible that the carved decoration once placed at the top of the peghead was sawn off. Stamped round mark placed at the back of the heel «GIO.PAOLO. MAGGINI IN BRESCIA».

¹³⁵⁰ Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

¹³⁵¹ Internal catalogues, X-rays, and technical drawings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

	Instrument	String length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Neck-Heel	Decoration
5	1560-1570 circa. Gasparo da Salo, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.29). 1352	453	Currently 7 courses. Originally 5, one triple and four double strung. Ivory string holder fitted with brass pins.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Tapering resonator built in several pieces (two coniferous wood bars at the back). Back's surface and varnish heavily repaired. Overlapping sides. Curved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. Not original, made of ebony and fitted with 18 chromatic frets in a temperament close to equal. Original wedges lost. The instrument has been heavily played and used.	A possible species of softwood cedar with a particular figuring known as 'Bearclaw.' Heavily over varnished (not original). Currently there is one bar above the rose and one below (possibly not original). Current barring: one bar below the rose, and one above. The soundboard is secured to the ribs by small blocks. Original barring altered. Curved.	The heel, neck and pegbox are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Small hook on the back of the peghead.	Female (ruff wearing) character carved in the peghead (inlaid semiprecious stones). Flowery designs near the shoulder scrolls and acanthus leaves at the front and rear of the pegbox. Inlaid purfling on the soundboard only. Rose in hardwood (possibly not original). Stamped round mark, between the inner and the outer circles with the maker's name «GASPAR DE SALLO IN BRESA».
6	1570 circa. Girolamo Virchi workshop, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (inv. nr. WA1939.30). Dendrochronological analysis dates the soundboard to 1487 or 1488. 1353	465	Currently double course setup. Stringing severely altered. Bone iron/steel string holder fitted with brass pins.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Tapering resonator built in several pieces. Overlapping sides. Curved.	Hardwood (possibly maple). Fingerboard cutaway. Heavily altered (20 th century modern mandolin-style chromatic frets). There is evidence of original frets. It originally had an unequal temperament. The instrument has been heavily played and used.	A possible species of softwood cedar with a particular figuring known as 'Bearclaw.' * The soundboard's curvature is highest near the rose. Two support bars for the back and two soundboard bars. Small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard. Curved.	The heel is a separate piece of the neck, joint to the sides. Neck and peghead are carved from a single piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Elaborate grotesques in heel, peghead and bridge. The latter might not be original. Precious stones inlaid. Female character carved in the peghead. Purfling in body and sides with shell interlacing pattern in the back. Concentric purfling around the soundhole. Parallel purfling in the fingerboard's sides. Rose not original.

¹³⁵² Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern by Gasparo Da Salo*.

¹³⁵³ Milnes and Whiteley, *Musical Instruments in the Ashmolean Museum: The Complete Collection*, 254–57; Pringle, *Cittern Anonymous Italian 17th Century*.

Table 3. Transalpine Citterns

Instrument	String Length	Stringing	Body	Fingerboard	Soundboard	Neck-Heel	Decoration
1 Circa 1620 Petrus Rau[i]tt[a], National Music Museum, Vermillion , South Dakota (inv. nr. NMM 13500.) ¹³⁵⁴	350	Eight pegs. Originally four double courses. Currently altered to an eight single course. The nut is not original. ¹³⁵⁵ String holder protruding from the body as the comb of the Italian traditional cittern	Tapering resonator built in several pieces. The back has 7 alternating strips of plum (<i>Prunus</i> sp.) and maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). The sides are made from pearwood (<i>Pyrus</i> sp.). Arranged in fan-like manner. String holder made of plum (<i>Prunus</i> sp.), protruding from the body similar to the comb of the Italian traditional cittern. Could be not original. ¹³⁵⁶ End block possible of maple. Partially overlapping sides. ¹³⁵⁷	Pearwood (<i>Pyrus</i> sp.). Fingerboard cutaway. 17 chromatic brass frets. Colour coding on frets 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15.	Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). Bridge not original. Internal linings for supporting soundboard of a dark brown hardwood. Two support bars for the soundboard and small wooden blocks joined to the sides to support the soundboard.	The neck and heel are the same piece. While the neck is made of (<i>Pyrus</i> sp.), the neck block is possibly spruce.	Pegbox carving in hardwood terminating in what it seems to be a dog's head. Rose in hardwood with punched, gilded parchment. The pegbox and neck heel are adorned with relief-carved vines over a punched and stippled background. Inlaid purfling on soundboard and concentric to the rose. Label inside reads: «PETRUS RAU[I]TT[A] / ANNO DOMINI [?]79».

¹³⁵⁴ National Music Museum, “Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum.” National Music Museum internal catalogue files. The cittern was also inspected by the author in 2016 while doing his master’s dissertation.

¹³⁵⁵ Hartig, “The Renaissance Cittern Site: Cittern, 34cm Mensur, Possibly English, circa 1600.”

¹³⁵⁶ Hartig.

¹³⁵⁷ The sides overlap outer edges of back in upper bouts but not lower bouts. National Music Museum, “Cittern, Possibly by Petrus Rautta, England, 1579, at the National Music Museum.” National Music Museum internal catalogue files.

2	Circa 1700, Anonymous Maker. Victoria and Albert Museum , London (Inv. nr. 35-1867).	380	Ten pegs. Ten strings in four courses. Ivory string holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Tapering resonator built in several pieces. The back is made in one piece with applied veneer, having strips of ebony (<i>Diospyrus</i> , sp) and maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). ¹³⁵⁸	17 th frets. The current arrangement is chromatic. Originally diatonic. The partial frets were changed into chromatic, and the original diatonic wedges are still present. 4th fret originally was absent. Original diatonic arrangement: Absent frets: 4 th . Partial frets on 6 th , 8 th , 11 th , 13 th , 15 th .	Coniferous wood possibly pine (<i>Pinus</i> sp).	Unknown.	The heel and the back of peghead is stamped with a coat of arms design depicting three Moors or kings with a double-headed eagle. The shield bears the name: «NICOLAS». Purfling on the soundboard and concentric purfling around soundhole. Fingerboard cutaway decorated with a painted design of a fantastical creature (possibly not original). The tuning pegs and head piece are made in bone or ivory (possibly not original).
3	1619, Anonymous Maker. Reconstructed remains, Nederlandse Instituut voor Sheeps- en onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries (inv. nr. OB 71-265 a/b). ¹³⁵⁹	Circa 430	Ten pegs. Ten strings arranged in four courses. The first two double and the last two are triple. ¹³⁶⁰ String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Tapering resonator built in several pieces, all built in maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). The back overlaps the sides as opposed to Brescian citterns.	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Fingerboard cutaway. 17 brass frets. Diatonic arrangement. Absent frets: 4 th . Partial frets on 6 th , 8 th , 11 th , 13 th , 15 th .	Coniferous wood, most likely spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). One support bar for the back. One support bar for soundboard placed crossing the soundhole under the rose. Grain direction in acute angle in relation to the neck (not parallel as common). ¹³⁶¹	The neck and heel are carved from one piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Austere decoration. Pegbox not finished with carving. Inlaid purfling on soundboard and concentric to the rose.

¹³⁵⁸ Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 41; Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments (in the) Victoria and Albert Museum. Vol. 2, Non-Keyboards Instruments*, 36.
¹³⁵⁹

This instrument survived a shipwreck of the *Beurtschip*, a ferry boat serving between Amsterdam and other cities such as Kampen and Zwolle in Northern Netherlands in 1619. The cargo was well preserved even underwater, and the instrument was only missing the following elements: rose, bridge, upper blocks connecting with the neck, the bars of the back, string holder protector, and some other minor parts such as two drilled pieces glued on the sides covering the joint between the sides and the neck. Moreover, some parts of the fingerboards are missing. Núñez and Estevez, “Description of the Remains of Two Dutch Citterns,” 69–78.

¹³⁶⁰ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 83.
¹³⁶¹

Núñez and Estevez, “Description of the Remains of Two Dutch Citterns,” 69–78.

4	1619, Anonymous Maker. Reconstructed remains, Nederlandse Instituut voor Sheeps- en onderwater Archeologie- Lelystad, Low Countries, (inv. nr. OB 71-265 a/b). ¹³⁶²	Circa 430	Ten pegs. Ten strings arranged in four courses. The first two double and the last two are triple. ¹³⁶³ String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Tapering resonator built in several pieces, all built in maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Fingerboard cutaway. 17 brass frets. Diatonic arrangement. Absent frets: 4 th . Partial frets on 6 th , 8 th , 11 th , 13 th . 15 th .	Coniferous wood possibly spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). One support bar for the back. One support bar for soundboard placed crossing the soundhole under the rose. Intentional burnt traces in the inner surface of the soundboard for generating desired bending.	The neck and heel are carved from one piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Austere decoration. Pegbox not finished with carving. Inlaid purfling on soundboard and concentric to the rose.
5	1602, Abraham Tilman, van Antwerp, Low Countries. Musikinstrumenten Museum in Berlin Kunstgewerbe Museum (Inv. nr. K6411). ¹³⁶⁴	Circa 435	11 pegs. 4 courses. String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Tapering resonator built in several pieces.	17 th frets, chromatic. Color coding in frets 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 15. ¹³⁶⁵	Coniferous wood possibly pine (<i>Pinus</i> sp) or spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). Two main support bars, one crossing the soundhole underneath the rose and the other below the soundhole. Two secondary bars placed below and above the rose. Wooden struts placed for joining the soundboard with the sides. Two support bars for the back. ¹³⁶⁶	Unknown.	Painting depicting Orpheus and animals. ¹³⁶⁷ Nacre shell inlay. Signature reads: «ABRAHAM TILMAN VAN ANTWERPEN, 1602».

¹³⁶²

This instrument survived a shipwreck of the *Beurtschip*, a ferry boat serving between Amsterdam and other cities such as Kampen and Zwolle in Northern Netherlands in 1619. The cargo was well preserved even underwater, and the instruments were only missing the following elements: neck, rose, bridge, upper blocks connecting with the neck, the bars of the back, string holder protector, and some other minor parts such as two drilled pieces glued on the sides covering the joint between the sides and the neck. Moreover, some parts of the fingerboards were missing. Núñez and Estevez, 69–78.

¹³⁶³ Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 83.

¹³⁶⁴ Grijp, 83.

¹³⁶⁵ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 75.

¹³⁶⁶ Forrester, “Wood and Wire and Geometry,” 40.

¹³⁶⁷ Grijp, “Fret Patterns of the Cittern,” 75; Grijp, “The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns,” 84.

6	17 th century, anonymous maker. Brussels Musical instrument Museum (Inv. nr 1524). Could be French, Flemish, or Dutch. ¹³⁶⁸	433	Ten pegs. Ten strings arranged in four courses. The first two double and the last two are triple. ¹³⁶⁹ String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Tapering resonator built in several pieces. The back is made in one piece with applied veneer, having fan-like strips of ebony (<i>Diospyrus</i> , sp) and maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). ¹³⁷⁰ The back overlaps the sides as opposed to Brescian citterns. There are two bars to support the back. ¹³⁷¹	17 th frets. Diatonic arrangement. ¹³⁷² Absent frets: 1 st and 4 th . Partial frets on 4 th , 6 th , 8 th , 11 th , 13 th , 15 th . ¹³⁷³	Coniferous wood possibly pine (<i>Pinus</i> sp). Three bars that do not cover the full width of the soundboard. Main bar below the bridge. ¹³⁷⁴	Unknown.	Female character carved on pegbox. Inlaid purfling on soundboard and concentric to the rose. Soundboard edge decorated with alternating dark and light wood. Peculiar geometric purfling on soundboard and back. Very similar to cittern in Musée de la Musique (inv.nr.D.AD.32026). ¹³⁷⁵
7	17 th century, anonymous maker, Museu da Musica Lisbon (inv.nr MIC280). Could be French, Flemish, or Dutch. ¹³⁷⁶	Circa 435	Ten pegs. Ten strings arranged in four courses. The first two double and the last two are triple. ¹³⁷⁷ String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.	Resonator built in several pieces, possibly maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Thirteen fan-like strips of oxidized hardwood. ¹³⁷⁸	17 th frets. Diatonic arrangement. Absent frets: 1 st and 4 th . Partial frets on 6 th , 8 th , 11 th , 13 th , 15 th . Long 6 th and 8 th frets. ¹³⁷⁹	Coniferous wood possibly pine (<i>Pinus</i> sp). ¹³⁸⁰	Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).	Oversized zoomorphic carved head in pegbox. Inlaid purfling on soundboard and concentric to the rose. Concentric soundhole ring with ivory, bone and hardwood inlays.

¹³⁶⁸ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83. Anne-Emmanuelle Ceulemans, European Stringed Instruments, Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments, e-mail message to the author, October 27, 2022. Observations taken from the documentation made by Cantineau, *Bouwplan Cister: 17 de Eews Anonim Nederlanden*.

¹³⁶⁹ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83; Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 40.

¹³⁷⁰ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 41.

¹³⁷¹ Cantineau, *Bouwplan Cister: 17 de Eews Anonim Nederlanden*.

¹³⁷² Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83.

¹³⁷³ Grijp, "Fret Patterns of the Cittern," 75.

¹³⁷⁴ Forrester, "Wood and Wire and Geometry," 41.

¹³⁷⁵ Bragard and Hen, *Les Instruments de Musique Dans l'art et l'histoire. Planches En Couleurs, 53 Planches En Noir, Etc*, Plate III.' 7.

¹³⁷⁶ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83.

¹³⁷⁷ Museu da Música, "Cistre."

¹³⁷⁸ Museu da Música.

¹³⁷⁹ Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83.

¹³⁸⁰ Museu da Música, "Cistre."

8	<p>Circa 1594, Anonymous Maker, Freiburg Dome, Germany.¹³⁸¹ (4 almost identical citterns)</p>	<p>407 412 423 426</p>	<p>Ten pegs. Ten strings in four courses. First triple, second double, third triple and fourth double. String holder that follows the contour of the bottom as in Brescian citterns.</p>	<p>Tapering resonator built in several pieces.</p>	<p>18 brass frets. No cutaway.</p>	<p>Coniferous wood possibly pine (<i>Pinus</i> sp) or spruce (<i>Picea</i> <i>abies</i>).</p>	<p>Unknow.</p>	<p>Austere decoration.</p>
9	<p>16th Century, Unknown Maker, Musée de la Musique, Paris (inv.nr.D.AD.320 26). Could be French, Flemish, or Dutch.¹³⁸²</p>	<p>625</p>	<p>Original stringing unknown. Pegheads and pegbox heavily altered.¹³⁸³ Two supplementary strings added through drilled bores in the neck.¹³⁸⁴ String holder protruding from the body as the comb of the Italian traditional cittern (carved out of the whole block and not set in).</p>	<p>Tapering resonator built in several pieces, all built in maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). There are inconsistencies in the back's reinforcements, which have caused strong warping. The sides overlap at the back as in the Brescian school.</p>	<p>Maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.). Fingerboard cutaway. Diatonic Long 8th frets. Current fretting has partial frets: 6th, 8th, 11th, 13th. 15th position.¹³⁸⁵ The 8th fret is considerably long and possibly served the first three courses. Important alterations: The name of the notes (for an open tuning) is indicated with gilded painting in front of each of the frets, while a letter made with black ink specifies the French tablature system.</p>	<p>Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>). Three main support bars for the soundboard. One above the rose and two more below it. Bars supported by small wooden blocks. No barring for the back.¹³⁸⁶</p>	<p>The neck pegbox are carved from one piece of maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.).</p>	<p>Male character carved in the peghead. Purfling on the back, sides, and soundboard. Concentric purfling around soundhole. Inked geometric designed purfling on the back and straight lines on the fingerboard.</p>

¹³⁸¹ Four gilded citterns made for sculptural work in the Freiberg Dom in Germany, built in 1594. Although the citterns are covered in gold paint, they have almost all their functional features as they were manufactured by a luthier. Two of the citterns have actual chromatic fretting while the other two are fretless.

¹³⁸² Grijp, "The Cittern of Sweelinck and Vermeer: Contextual Information for the Excavated Zuyderzee Citterns," 83.

¹³⁸³ Original stringing possibly in four courses and possibly changed into a six course instrument. Hartig, "Cistre guiterne"; Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," n.d., 10.

¹³⁸⁴ As seen in X- Rays revised by the author in the Musée de la Musique internal files, the two added strings run through internal conducts bored through the fingerboard. Gétreau and Dugot, "Citterns in French Public Collections. Instruments and Musical Iconography," n.d., 10.

¹³⁸⁵ As seen in X- Rays revised by the author in the Musée de la Musique internal files, the fourth fret is not original. Gétreau and Dugot, 10.

¹³⁸⁶ X- Rays revised by the author in the Musée de la Musique internal files. The author is extremely grateful to Sebastian Kirsch for his help.

Appendix 3. List of Mentioned Transalpine Iconography

France and the Low Countries

1. 1509-1575, [*A Merry Company*](#), Jan Massys, Flanders, Stockholm National Museum (inv. nr. NM 2661).
2. 1550. [*Dressoir*](#). Style of Hugues Sambin, France, Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. nr 1942.606).
3. 1560. [*Minerva and the Muses*](#), Frans Floris [de Vriendt], Antwerp, Condé on Scheldt Museum, Chantilly (inventory number not found).
4. 1565. [*Portrait de Gaspar Duiffoprugear*](#), Pierre II Woeiriot de Bongey, France, Bibliothèque nationale de France (inv. nr. VM PHOT MIRI-2 (80)).
5. 1565, [*Musica*](#) (De Zeven Vrije Kunsten Series), Cornelis Cort after Design by Frans Floris, Antwerp (inv. nr RP-P-BI-6398).
6. 1581 – 1556. [*Hearing*](#), Nicolaes de Bruyn, after design by Maerten de Vos, Netherlands, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-P-1903-A-23021D).
7. 1581, *Hearing (The Five Senses)*, Raphael Sadeler, after design by Maerten de Vos, Antwerp, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-P-OB-7576).
8. 1590-1637 circa. *Terpsichore*, Crispijn van de Passe the Elder, engraving, The British Museum, London (inv. nr. D,6.17).
9. 1596, *Adolescentia Amori*, Crispijn de Passe the Elder after Martin de Vos, Series the Four Ages of Man, engraving, The British Museum, London (inv. nr 1850,0726.5).
10. 1597-1671. [*Musical Company*](#), Jan van Bijlert, Kunst Museum Den Haag, The Hague Netherlands (inv. nr. 0332133).
11. c.1600. [*Spring*](#), Anonymous after Maarten de Vos, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Gemäldegalerie, 2200).
12. 1600, *Terra*, Crispijn de Passe the Elder, Series The Elements, engraving, The British Museum, London (1868,0612.2079).
13. 1600-1669. *Hearing (The Five Senses)*, Anonymous, Netherlands, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-T-1886-A-643).
14. 1610/1690. [*Musicians in Tavern*](#), David Teniers, lithography made after 1838 by Luigi Poggioli, Galleria Sabauda, Musei Reali di Torino (inv. nr 3038).
15. 1612. *Musica*. Crispijn de Passe the Elder. Series *Academia sive Speculum Vitae Scolasticae*, The British Museum, London (inv. nr 1972,0722.6.5).
16. 1619. *Iesu Christi dei Domini Salvatoris NRI. Infantia, from the series of the Life of the Infant*, Hieronymus Wierix, engraving, British Museum, London (inv. nr 1859,0709.2991).
17. 1622. [*Vanitas*](#). Theodor Matham, engraving, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco (inv.nr. 1963.40.13265).
18. 1630-32, [*A Young Man and a Young Woman making Music*](#), Jan Miense Molenaer, oil on canvas, The National Gallery, London (inv. nr. NG1293).

19. 1635, [*Self-Portrait with Family Members*](#), Jan Miense Molenaer, oil on panel, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (inv. nr. unknown).
20. ca. 1637-1640 (1637-1640), *Woman Playing the Cittern*, Caesar Bovetius van Everdingen, Rouen, Musée des Beaux Arts (unknown inventory number).
21. 1640-1645. [*Allegory of Transience*](#), Theodoor van Thulden, oil painting, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. nr. 1123)
22. 1641-1679, [*Allegory of Hearing, and of the Senses*](#), Jan van Kessel, Private Collection.
23. 1645. [*Interieur met Musicerend Gezelschap*](#), Joost Cornelisz, Central Museum, Utrecht (inv. nr. 15950).
24. c.1645-1650. [*Concert de Cabaret*](#), Jan Miense Molenaer, Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, Genève (inv. nr. CR 0108).
25. 1656, [*The Procureess*](#), Johannes Vermeer, oil on canvas, [*Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden*](#) (inv. nr. 1335).
26. c. 1658/60. [*The Glass of Wine*](#), Johannes Vermeer, oil on canvas, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (inv. nr. 912C).
27. c. 1658/60. [*Girl Interrupted at Her Music*](#). Johannes Vermeer, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection, New York (1901.1.125).
28. c. 1660. [*Die Cisterspielerin*](#), Gabriel Metsu, Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Germany (inv. nr. GK 301).
29. 1661-64, [*The Dissolute Household*](#), Jan Steen, oil painting, Wellington Museum, Apsley House, London (unknown inventory number).
30. 1662. [*Still Life*](#), Johann Friedrich Grueber, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. nr. SK-A-2564).
31. 1662, [*Woman Playing Cittern*](#) (Allegory of Hearing), Cornelis Bega, oil on panel, Kunst Museum Den Haag, The Hague Netherlands (inv. nr. 0332131).
32. 1662, [*Merry Company on a Terrace*](#), Jan Steen, The Metropolitan Museum, New York (inv. nr. 58.89).
33. 1662, [*Woman Playing the Cittern*](#), Jan Steen, The Mauritshuis, The Hague, Netherlands (inv. nr. 779).
34. 1662-1708, [*Still Life with a Volume of Wither's 'Emblemes'*](#), Edward Collier, oil painting, Tate Britain, London (inv. nr. N05916).
35. c. 1663. [*Allegory of Vanity*](#), Jan Miense Molenaer, Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, United States (inv. nr. 1975.21).
36. 1663, [*Portrait of a Family Playing Music*](#), Pieter de Hooch, The Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. nr. 1951.355).
37. c. 1669-c. 1670. [*The Love Letter*](#), Johannes Vermeer, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. nr. SK-A-1595).
38. c.1665-1670. [*A Woman singing and a Man with a Cittern*](#), Godfried Schalcken, National Gallery, London (inv. nr. NG998).

39. c. 1665-1675. [*Chess Players*](#), Cornelis de Man, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (inv. nr. cat.nr 320).
40. c.1665 – 1669. [*Oyster Eaters*](#), oil on panel, Jacob Lucasz. Ochtervelt, Museo Nacional Thyssen- Bornemisza, Madrid (inv. nr. 304 (1930.82)
41. c.1667. [*Lazarus and the Rich Man or 'In Luxury Beware'*](#), Jan Steen, Oil on Canvas, The Leiden Collection, New York, United States (inv. nr. JS- 106).
42. c.1667. [*A Woman with a Cittern and a Singing Couple at a Table*](#), Pieter de Hooch, Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, Ohio (inv. nr. 1931.395).
43. 1667. [*The Music Party*](#), Pieter de Hooch, oil on canvas, Royal Collection Trust, Cumberland Withdrawing Room, Hampton Court Palace, England (inv. nr RCIN 403028).
44. 1670, [*The Musical Party*](#) (The Trio), Pieter de Hooch, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, United States (inv. nr. UMFA1993.034.007).
45. 1670-1724, [*The Singing Man*](#), Jacob Gole, after design by Jan Havicksz Steen, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (inv. nr. RP-P-1906-3204).
46. 1672. [*Board Partition with Musical Instruments*](#), Franciscus Gijsbrechts, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (inv. nr. KMS3073).
47. 1675, [*Young Woman Playing Cittern*](#), Willem Verschuring, oil painting, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (inv. nr. 426).
48. 1674. [*Self-portrait of the Artist, with Cittern*](#), Frans van Mieris the Elder, oil on canvas, The National Gallery, London (inv. nr. NG1874).
49. 1677. [*Woman with Cittern*](#), Pieter van Slingelandt, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (inv. nr. 1940.25).
50. 1678, [*Terpsichore de Poeterse*](#), Samuel van Hoogstraten, engraving, The British Museum, London (1856, 0614. 225).
51. 1689, [*The Artist and his Family*](#), Michiel van Musscher, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Netherlands (inv. nr. 739).
52. c.1685-90. *Young Woman Playing a Cittern*, Godfried Schalcken, Bredius Museum, The Hague, (inv. nr. 101-1946, Cat. nr.148).
53. 17th century. [*Vanitas*](#), Attributed to Pieter Gerritsz van Roestrate, photograph of an oil painting, original in unknown location, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Musique (inv. nr ark:/12148/btv1b8435515m).
54. 17th century. [*A Painter's Studio \(Gonzales Coques\)*](#), Gonzales Coques, photograph on oil painting located at the Staatliches Museum Schwerin, (old inv. nr 1016786).
55. 17th century. [*Portrait of a man with a Cittern*](#), Gonzales Coques, oil on wood, National Museum in Warsaw (inv. nr M.Ob.1701 MNW).
56. 17th Century. [*Ecclesia umgeben von den Symbolen der Vergänglichkeit*](#), Jan van Kessel the Elder, Johnny van Haften Gallery, London (unknown inventory number).

German Speaking Countries

57. 1534-1544, Peter Flötner. Early Transalpine Cittern Depiction, Nuremberg, Hirsvogelsaal Hall.
58. 1578, *Toppel Cythar*, Sixt Kargel, Johann Dominikus Lais, front title book engraving, Published by B. Jobin, Strasburg.
59. 1583. [*Design for Positive Organ*](#), Cristopher Walther II, Dresden, drawing, Staaliche Kunstsammlungen (inv. nr H 0141.01).
60. 1583-1584. Altar, Writing Desk and Positive Organ Case- Bottom. Cristopher Walther II, carved wood with marble and precious stones, Dresden Rüstammer, lost in World War II (inv. nr. Neg. Nr FD 141 004).
61. 1582. *Splendor Solis*, Folio 2 Solomon Trismosin, book illustration, German speaking countries, British Library (Harley 3469 f. 2).
62. 1594. [*Family Book*](#), Johann Michael Weckherlin, book illustration, Stuttgart, Württemberg State Library (cod.hist.oct.281, 668 – f. 332v).
63. 1594. [*Family Book-Hofkapelle Stuttgart*](#), Johann Michael Weckherlin, book illustration, Stuttgart, Württemberg State Library (cod.hist.oct.281, 532 – f. 256r).
64. 1605. [*Fool Playing the Lute with a Dog*](#), Anton Möller (The Elder), drawing, Print Room of the State Museums in Berlin - Prussian Cultural Heritage, (inv. nr. KdZ 12509).
65. 1619, Micheal Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II De Organographia*, vol. II, printed by Richter Holwein, Wolfenbüttel, Plate XVI.
66. 1623. , Johann Herman Schein, [*Israelis Brünlein, auserlesener Krafft Sprüchlein altes vnd Newen Testaments von 5. vnd 6. Stimmen sambt dem Generalbass auf eine*](#), engraving in front title, published by In Vorlegung des Authoris, Leipzig.
67. 1650, *Musurgia Universalis*, Athanasius Kircher, engraving, Printed by Haeredum Pranscisci Corbelletti, Rome, Plate V, 476.
68. First half of the 17th century. [*Automaton*](#), Bronze, Musée d'Horlogerie du Locle, Château des Monts, Switzerland (MHL Inv. 21).

England

69. 1558-96, [*The Portrait of Sir Henry Unton*](#), unknown artist, oil on panel, The National Portrait Gallery, London (inv. nr. NPG 710).
70. Circa 1567, [*Eglantine Table*](#), intarsia, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (inv. nr. NT 1127774).
71. c.1570, [*Gilling Castle Frieze*](#), Gilling Castle, painting, Yorkshire, England.
72. 1582. [*Staircase Carvings*](#), William Cecil's (Lord Burghley's Mannor) now in Herstmonceux Castle, wood carvings, East Sussex, England.
73. 1609, [*New Citharen Lessons*](#), Thomas Robinson, front title book engraving, Printed by [J. Windet for] William Barley, London.
74. Circa 1639, Portrait of Queen Henrietta, oil on canvas, unknown private collection.
75. 1666. [*Musick's Delight on the Cithren*](#), John Playford, engraving in front title, published by W. G, London.

Appendix 4. List of Mentioned Italian Iconography

76. 1478-82, [*Studiolo from the Ducal Palace in Gubbio*](#), Giorgio Martini in the workshop of Giuliano da Maiano and Benedetto da Maiano, intarsia, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. nr. 39.153).
77. 1504-1506, [*Isabella d'Este nel regno di Armonia*](#), Lorenzo Costa, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. nr 255).
78. 1511, [*Il regno di Como*](#), Lorenzo Costa, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. nr. 256).
79. 1513-1515, [*Daphnis*](#), Giulio Campagnola, formerly attributed to Jacopo Negretti, known as Palma il Vecchio, oil on panel, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. nr 76).
80. 1526. *Angel Musicians*, Girolamo dai Libri, altar painting, San Giorgio Maggiore, Verona (no inventory number).
81. 1535-36. *Angel Concert*, Gaudenzio Ferrari, fresco, Dome of the Santuario Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Saronno (no inventory number).
82. 1540-1609, *Street Musician*, drawing, Federico Zuccaro, private collection.
83. 16th Century, [*Two Lutes*](#), Anonymous, drawing, Princeton University Art Museum (inv. nr Gibbons 719)
84. Mid-16th Century, [*Joyeuse compagnie auto d'une table*](#), anonymous, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. nr RF: 451).
85. 1620-1630, [*The Concert*](#), Pietro Paolini, oil on canvas, formerly at the J. Paul Getty Musuem, Malibu, current whereabouts unknown.
86. Between 1625 and 1630, [*Bacchic Concert*](#), Pietro Paolini, oil on canvas, Dallas Museum of Art, Inv. nr. 1987.17.
87. 1624-25. [*Amor Vincit Omnia*](#), Orazio Riminildi, oil on canvas, Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (inv. 1912 nr. 422).
88. 1625 circa. [*Victorious Love*](#), Rutilo Manetti, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin (inv. nr. NGI.1235).
89. Circa 1630, [*Allegoria della Scienza*](#), Giovanni Serodine, oil on canvas, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Italy (inv. nr 134).
90. Circa 1645, [*David Playing Before Saul*](#), Bernardo Cavallino, oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, (Inv. nr 6804).
91. Circa 1650-59, [*The Oath of Abraham's Servant*](#), Giovanni Benedetto, oil on canvas, The Cleveland Museum of Art (inv. nr. 1969.1).
92. After 1660, [*Virgin of the Swaddling-Clothes*](#), Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, oil on canvas, Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, Hungary,(inv. nr 780). Although this work was made in Sevilla, Spain, the instrument is a traditional Italian cittern.
93. Circa 1670, *Strumenti Musicali e Tendone Rosso*, Evaristo Baschenis, oil on canvas, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo (inv. nr. 06CB00108).

94. Mid-17th Century, [*Terpsichore or Musica*](#), oil on canvas, Antiveduto della Grammatica (1570/71–1626), private collection in England.

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- atq; deductos: paduanas, gailliardas, almandes, branles, aliaq; nonnulla iucundissima in tabulaturam citharae convenienter redacta, nunc primum in lucem elegantiore modo ac ordine edita. Accedit praeterea brevis & dilucida in citharam introductio, qua suo marte quilibet artem pulsandae citharae addiscere possit facillime. Antuerpiae: Phalesius & Bellero, 1582.
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