

JAN W.J. BURGERS

The Lute in the Dutch Golden Age

Musical Culture in the Netherlands 1580-1670

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

AMSTERDAM STUDIES IN THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

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The publication of this book is made possible by grants from the Stichting dr Hendrik Muller's Vaderlandsch Fonds and from the Stichting K.F. Hein Fonds.

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Cover illustration: Frans Hals, *Buffoon Playing a Lute*, c.1623, oil on canvas, 70 × 62 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris © RMN Franck Raux

Cover design: Kok Korpershoek, Amsterdam

Lay-out: Trendsco, Goes

Amsterdam University Press English-language titles are distributed in the US and Canada by the University of Chicago Press.

ISBN 978 90 8964 552 4

e-ISBN 978 90 4851 939 2 (pdf)

e-ISBN 978 90 4851 940 8 (e-pub)

NUR 685

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PREFACE

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the lute played a role in musical life similar to that of the piano in the 19th century. It was the universal instrument for solo music-making, whether the music played was solo music written specially for it, or arrangements of the popular sacred and secular vocal repertoire. It also figured in ensembles and was used to accompany singers. The lute had an aristocratic aura; although it was certainly not unknown among the common people, it was mainly considered to be the instrument of the social elite, the aristocracy and prosperous burghers. In other art forms enjoyed by the upper circles, such as literature and painting, the lute was a ubiquitous phenomenon. The instrument remained popular in the 17th and 18th centuries, although it was gradually supplanted by the guitar and the harpsichord.

In the 16th century and in the early 17th century, the lute played an important part in the culture of the top layer of society in the Netherlands, as it did elsewhere. The young Republic of the Seven United Provinces flourished remarkably in many areas of the arts and sciences. In the first quarter of the 17th century, the art of the lute reached a high-point to equal that of other major cultural centres in Europe. Although the stream of new music for the instrument dried up after 1625, the lute remained prominent in Dutch paintings of that century.

This book wishes to present, for the first time, a study of the position of the lute in what is called the Golden Age in the Netherlands. All aspects of the instrument will be discussed: celebrated and unknown lutenists, professional musicians and talented (or less talented) amateurs, lute music in print and in manuscript, lute builders and the trade in lutes. We will also look at the role of the instrument in literature and art, thus offering a contribution to the cultural history of the Dutch Republic. The book will throw more light on the musical life of the Golden Age, an aspect of that culture which has, until now, been rather underexposed in research.

This study is primarily aimed at bringing together the fruits of existing research. Since the end of the 19th century, musicological and archival studies have been undertaken into music

in the Golden Age in general. Such research has clearly gained momentum in recent decades as a result of a revived interest in Early Music, illustrated by the publications of Rudolf Rasch and Louis Grijp. But where the lute is concerned, it has never seemed to go beyond occasional and fragmented research. As exceptions, we should mention the studies and editions by Louis Grijp, and several contributions by the present writer. The lute in the Southern Netherlands has been extensively documented by Godelieve Spiessens. The present book also profits from research into cultural areas such as painting and emblems in which the role of the lute is mentioned; the name of Eddy de Jongh is inextricably linked with this subject. Some of the related fields have been covered by specialists: Simon Groot writes about music printing and picture motets and about Valerius' *Nederlandsche Gedenck-clanck*, while Jack Scholten discusses lesser-known lutenists in Leiden. Through combining archive research by earlier scholars, both printed and unprinted, and supplementing the results with new findings, it is now possible to give the first coherent overview of all aspects of Dutch lute culture in the 16th and 17th centuries. We thus have a clear picture of the emergence, rise and decline of the instrument in the Golden Age.

I am now left with the pleasant task of offering a word of thanks to Professor Lia van Gemert and the editorial board of the *Amsterdam Studies in the Dutch Golden Age* series, who wished to add this book to their series; to Amsterdam University Press for the constructive supervision of this book's production; and especially to Simon Groot, Professor Eddy de Jongh, Willem Mook and Dr. Ton van Strien, who have commented critically on the text or parts of it, much to my benefit. I remain, of course, entirely responsible for the end result. Simon Groot, David Van Edwards and Andreas Schlegel kindly provided me with some pictures. Lastly I have to thank Neel de Boer, who not only proofread the entire text and assisted in making the index, but was also generous enough to put up with the fact that for some months, most of the time and the attention of the undersigned was taken up by a book that had to be written.

Amsterdam, January 2013

JWJ B

CHAPTER I

The Lute and Its Music in Europe

The early history of the lute in a nutshell

The lute plays an important part in European music history from the Middle Ages to the Baroque. An enormous repertoire for the instrument has come down to us, particularly from the period between 1500 and 1760. Nobody knows exactly how many works there once were, but a rough estimate would suggest approximately 48,000, mostly for solo lute. This is the total number of published and hand-written compositions; there are, however, a large number of copies of identical compositions, so the number of individual works is a great deal lower. On the other hand, a large part of the repertoire has been lost. In addition, the lute was often used in ensembles, more specifically as an accompanying instrument for one or more singers.

The European lute has its origins in the Middle East. In the Arabic world, the lute, *al-'ud* (literally: 'the wood'), was apparently adopted in the seventh century from the Persians, who in turn owed it to the Indian culture of the region that is now known as Afghanistan. The lute rapidly rose to high esteem in Arabic culture. In writings from the 10th century onwards it is described as 'the most perfect instrument' and 'the Sultan of instruments'. When Arabic culture spread to areas conquered by Muslims, such as Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula, Europeans, too, became acquainted with the lute.

The first European references to lutes in writing and pictures date from the middle of the 13th century, for instance in the famous manuscript with the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, made for King Alfonso the Wise (1221-1284) of Castile (Plate 1). The lute spread quickly. It became particularly popular in Italy, but even in the remote parish church of Steeple Aston in England, we find pictures of lutes dating from shortly after 1300 (Plate 2). Incidentally, these clearly show that the instrument was played with a plectrum.

From the last quarter of the 13th century onwards, lutenists appear in royal and noble households, also north of the Alps and Pyrenees. During the 14th century, the instrument spread

further, now also appearing in urban culture. In the 15th century, the lute was an important instrument in the royal courts. It was played in polyphonic, secular compositions, but also in dance music where the player improvised on standard harmonic and rhythmic patterns. At the end of that century lutenists were exploring the possibilities of playing with the fingers instead of a plectrum, which made it possible to play polyphonic music. It meant that contrapuntal vocal compositions could be played in their entirety on the lute. As lute music became more complex and increasingly written for this specific instrument, the need arose for lute music notation. In the years leading up to 1500, this led to the invention of lute tablature, a fingering notation. In the same period, such tablatures were developed for other instruments, such as the organ and the harp. However, musical improvisation continued to be part of the lute culture.

Throughout the 16th century, the lute was undoubtedly the most important musical instrument. It owed that position to its versatility, and to the fact that it had been, since the advent of humanism, associated with real or imagined ancestors in Classical Antiquity; the equally versatile keyboard instruments lacked that connection with the revered Ancients. Some lutenists were prominent and highly appreciated artists. The famous Francesco da Milano (1497–1543) was employed by cardinals and popes (and probably also briefly by the French king); his sublime playing had earned him the nickname ‘Il Divino’ (Plate 3). Francesco’s output, consisting of around 100 fantasias and 30 intabulations of vocal compositions, has been handed down in many printed and handwritten sources; the dance music he would also have played was probably improvised, and was for that reason not written down. In addition, we also know the names and works of dozens of other similarly talented Italian lutenists. From the second quarter of the 16th century onwards, a lute culture also developed in France, Germany and Central Europe, with prominent composers who had their works printed.

The importance of the lute in musical culture is evident from statements by authoritative theoreticians and musicians. In 1618, the German composer and theoretician Michael Praetorius called the lute ‘fundamentum et initium’, the basis and the origin. A contemporary described the lute as ‘principem quasi et Reginam musicorum instrumentorum omnium’ [the prince and probably the Queen of all musical instruments].

The prominent position of the lute in musical life is also highlighted in the visual arts of the period. Two engravings by Cornelis Cort from Antwerp, based on paintings by Frans Floris (c.1519–1570), representing *Hearing* and *Music* respectively, are significant here. *Hearing* (1561) depicts a large number of musical instruments, but the lute has the leading role, for it is the instrument played by the female central figure who represents the sense of hearing. Lying next to her is a deer, because that animal is said to have very sharp hearing. In *Music* (in or after 1565), three singers (and a bird) are accompanied on the virginal by a female figure, who represents Musica, and two lutenists: a younger and an older man. Against the wall and on the floor there are many other musical instruments; among them is a very true-to-life picture of a cittern. These prints illustrate once again the humanist worldview, imbued as it was with the Classics, in which the lute, too, played its part.



Cornelis Cort, *Auditus (Hearing)*. Engraving, 1561



Cornelis Cort, *Musica (Music)*. Engraving, 1565 or later



Tuning of the six-course lute, late 16th century

The historical development of the lute

The lute belongs to the chordophones, the stringed instruments, and within that category to plucked instruments. In principle, the construction of a lute is simple (Plate 4). The sound box consists of a pear-shaped pinewood soundboard or belly, in the centre of which a decorated sound hole is cut out, and a semi-circular resonator built up from a number of slim wooden ribs. Attached to this corpus is the neck, to which the fingerboard is glued. The strings are attached to the sound box by means of a wooden bridge and run up the fingerboard to the top, where they are attached to tuning pegs; these are located in a peg box that is fixed to the neck at an angle of nearly 90 degrees. To improve the tone production and to facilitate playing in tune, the fingerboard is divided by frets formed by catgut strings tied around the neck.

A lute is usually equipped with double strings, the so-called ‘courses’; only the highest string is generally single. The medieval lute had only four or five courses, but around 1500 an extra bass course was added, which led to the ‘classical’ six-course lute that would remain the standard throughout the 16th century. The tuning pitch varied according to the size of the instrument, but for the tenor lute, the instrument favoured for solo playing and voice accompaniment, a tuning based on *G* for the lowest course was used. Just like the modern guitar, lutes were tuned in fourths, but unlike the guitar, there was an interval of a major third between the third and the fourth course. For technical reasons of sound production, the bass course usually consists of one bass string and one string tuned an octave higher.

In the 16th century, some lutenists already used an additional seventh bass course for a greater range on the bass side. Around 1600, the demand for them had increased so much that the seventh course had become generally applied; it was either one tone lower than the sixth course, thus *F*, or a fourth lower, *D*. In the next two decades the number of bass courses increased, so that in 1620 a ten-course lute was quite common (Plate 5). The extra bass courses 7 to 10 were diatonically tuned. Later, an eleventh and a twelfth course could be added. The result of these expansions with four to six courses of strings meant that the fingerboard had to be a lot broader and older instruments had to be thoroughly adapted.

Lute strings were made of sheep gut, but that material does not function so well in the bass (see the explanation on p. 167); this was the reason for combining them with octave strings. The French lutenist Jacques Gaultier, who lived in England, introduced another feature to make the sound of the bass strings more satisfactory: he made the strings longer. He attached a second,



Tuning of the ten-course lute, around 1620

longer peg box to the neck of the lute especially to accommodate the longer bass courses. A portrait of Gaultier, dating from the early 1630s, shows him holding such an instrument (see p. 146). According to the *Burwell Lute Tutor*, an English manuscript from c.1660-1672, this innovation was generally accepted, yet after some years the French masters returned to the lute with a single peg box. In the Netherlands the 'double-headed lute' must have been very popular, because we see them in many paintings from around the middle of the 17th century. The standard at that time was the twelve-course instrument (Plate 6). Because of the lengthened bass strings, which are also used on the theorbo (see below) this type is known as the theorboed lute. To add to the confusion, this type of lute was referred to as *theorbe* in contemporary England and Holland.

Many lutes in Dutch paintings from that period show a new detail: a parchment band covering the connection between the belly and the corpus. Its purpose would not so much have been to act as reinforcement, as to provide a neat covering for the joint between belly and corpus. This could become jagged after the belly had been removed several times during repairs or adaptations, for example, to attach a wider neck.

Once lutes had been equipped with ten to twelve courses, people in France began to experiment in the 1620s and 1630s with different tunings; we shall see, by the way, that the Dutch lutenist Joachim van den Hove had already done this in the first decade of the century. Eventually one particular tuning became the most common, and that *accord nouveau*, in which the upper six courses form a D-minor chord, became the norm in France in the late 1630s, after which the rest of Europe followed. Only the bass strings always had to be re-tuned according to the key of the composition. At the same time the French introduced the eleven-course lute as the standard instrument, with all the strings ending up in one and the same peg box. Both the first and second course were now single-stringed.

The eleven-course lute with *accord nouveau* was introduced in the Netherlands in the middle of the 17th century. We know from Constantijn Huygens' correspondence that he decided to try out the new tunings in 1653. In a letter to the French composer Pierre de la Barre Sr, dated 1 December of that year, he wrote about some of his own recent lute compositions, which he enclosed: 'these are my very first attempts in this field, since it is only in the past few weeks that I have been trying out the new tunings, of which the one used here seems to be among the most melodious'. By 1680 the D-minor tuning had been Huygens' standard tuning for some time: in a letter to Michael Döring in Hamburg he states that he always keeps his lute in the same tuning, apart from an occasional bass string, although his many compositions make use of all possible



Frans van Mieris the elder, *The lute player* (1663). Present whereabouts unknown



Tuning of the eleven-course Baroque lute, second half of the 17th century

keys, both major and minor. This is in contrast to the French, who apparently sometimes also re-tuned the six higher courses for playing in specific keys.

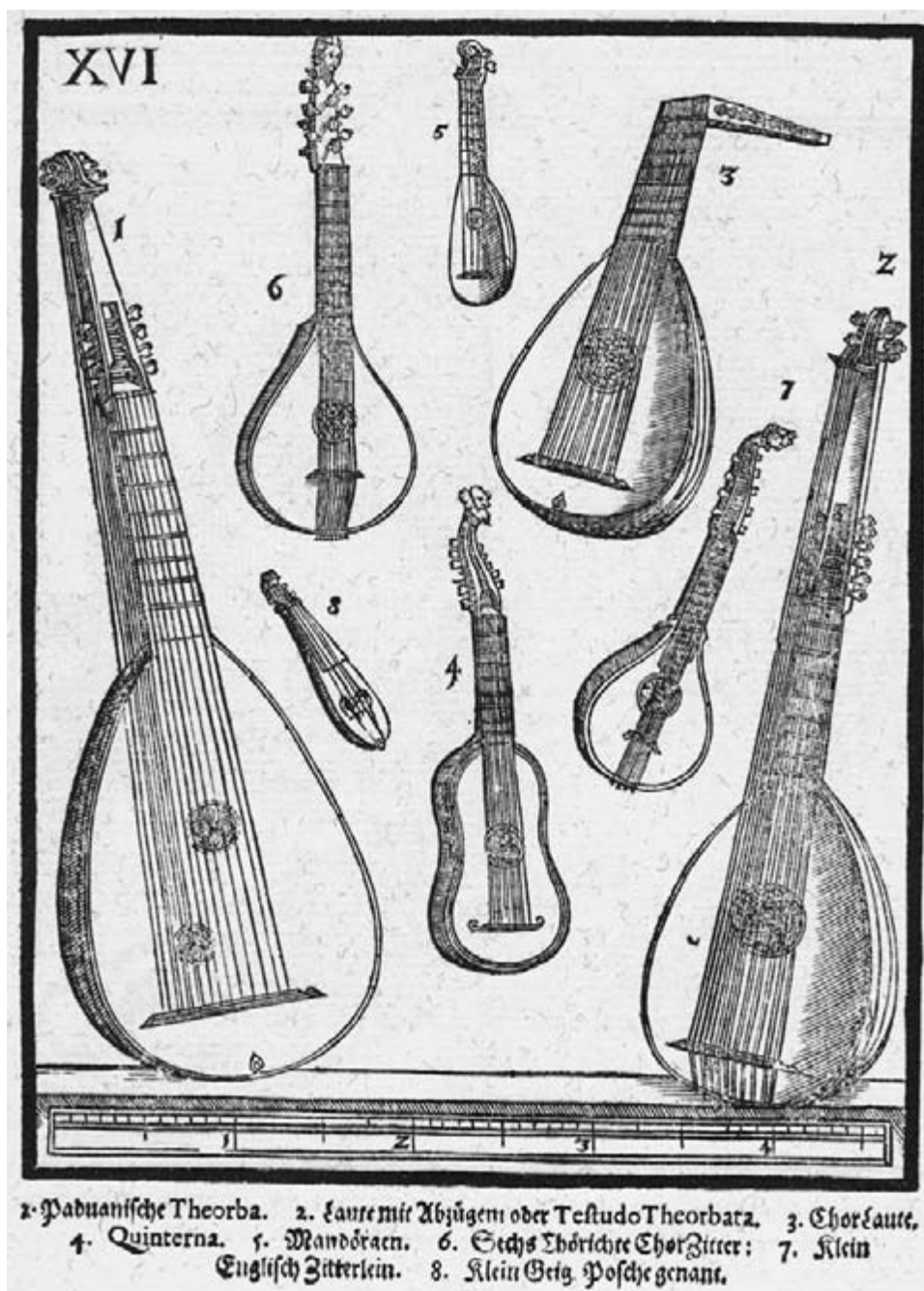
Related instruments

Throughout the history of the lute, many related instruments have been in use. Some of them were directly derived from the lute, others were more superficially related in the sense that they were stringed instruments with a corpus and a long fingerboard. In the 17th century, some of these related instruments were highly popular. A number of them will be dealt with later in some detail, and it is therefore useful to include a short description of them here.

Theorbo and archlute

At the end of the 16th century, Italians invented the *chitarrone* or *tiorba*, a large bass lute that had been adapted for the accompaniment of singers by lengthening the neck with the peg box and adding bass strings, so that it became a fourteen-course instrument with eight long bass courses (or single strings) tuned diatonically. Because of the size of the instrument and thus the length of the strings, the highest string or the highest two strings, which were single, were tuned an octave lower. This distinguished the instrument from the theorboed lute, which was the size of the normal lute with the two highest strings in ordinary lute tuning. The concept then spread to other countries, where it was called a *theorbo* or *théorbe*, or in Dutch *theorbe*. Outside Italy the theorbo only seems to have gained ground after 1650. It was used as an accompanying instrument, and the solo music written for it may have been performed on a slightly smaller model. The theorbo was still played in the 18th century; it was also used as an accompanying instrument in chamber ensembles and orchestras.

The *arciliuto* appeared in Italy around 1600. Again, it was a lute-like instrument with a lengthened neck and added bass strings, but in a smaller format so that it was possible to retain standard lute tuning. There is quite a lot of solo music for this instrument, but it was also used for accompaniment. After around 1680, by which time metal-covered strings had been invented – which gave the shorter bass strings of the archlute more power – it was also used elsewhere as an accompanying instrument.



Page from Michael Praetorius' *Theatrum instrumentorum* (1620) with pictures of a lute (3), a theorbo-lute (2), a theorbo (1), citterns (6, 7), a guitar (4), a mandora (5) and a *pochette* or dance masters' violin (8)

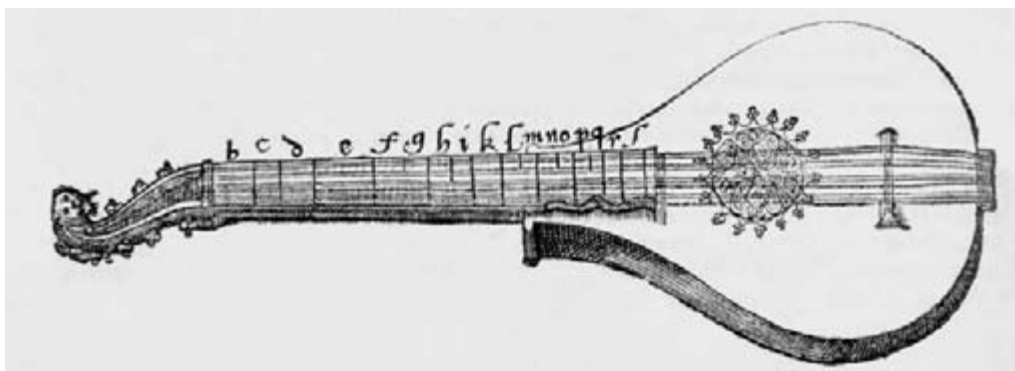


N. Bonnart, *Damon jouant de l'Angélique*. Engraving, 1687

Angelica

The inventory of instruments and equipment left in the workshop of the Amsterdam instrument maker Gerrit Menslage (1670), which we will be discussing later, mentions another instrument related to the lute: the *angélique* or angelica. It was a combination of a lute, a theorbo and a harp: it has the shape and overall string length of the lute, but single stringing and lengthened bass strings as on the theorbo, while the strings are diatonically tuned throughout as on a harp, although there were also tunings in which the highest five strings form a D-minor chord as on the Baroque lute. The advantage of diatonic tuning was that open strings could often be played, which resulted in a full, clear tone colour. The angelica may have owed its name to the sound: the angel-like (lute).

The instrument is first mentioned by Michael Praetorius in his *Theatrum instrumentorum* (1620). The period of the angelica's greatest popularity, however, was the second half of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th. Yet very little music for it was published or transmitted in manuscript form. Christiaan Huygens heard an ensemble of five angelicas playing in Paris in 1661. Menslage's inventory shows that angelicas were known in the Dutch Republic as well, but not to such a degree that the maker of the inventory could spell the name without problems! He first wrote 'ansijlick', and subsequently 'corrected' it as 'anghchlijck'.



Woodcut of a cittern in Pierre Phalèse & Jean Bellère (eds.), *Hortulus Cytbarae* (Louvain, 1570).
The tablature letters that go with the frets are written along the fingerboard

Cittern

A cittern is a stringed instrument with an onion-shaped corpus and a sound box that is flat at the back. There are metal frets on the fingerboard; these are rather unusually arranged, because the semitones do not run all the way across the fingerboard. Cittern strings, usually four courses of two or three strings, are made of metal, brass or copper wire and are struck with a plectrum.

There were several types of citterns in circulation with different tunings and numbers of strings, which could vary from four to six courses. To judge by their representations in pictures, varying formats were available. Proof of the extraordinary popularity of the instrument in the 16th century is the large number of music publications for it that rolled off Pierre Phalèse's presses in Louvain and Antwerp. Especially intriguing is a volume of cittern music published by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck in 1602 and reprinted in 1608, but which has nevertheless been lost; we only know of its existence from bibliographical references.

Other volumes with cittern music were published in the Republic around the same time, but none have survived. In 1607 the States General issued a printing license to a certain Willem de Swert (Swarte), originally from Arnhem but living in Amsterdam, to publish a *citerbouck* by hem gecomponeert van vijftich psalmen Davidts ende achtende vijftich mysick stucken ende lydekens, tzamen maeckende hondert ende acht stuck, in tabelature, geintituleert Cortte wechwijser ter deucht [cittern book composed by him, including fifty psalms of David, and fifty-eight pieces of music and songs, altogether a hundred and eight pieces, in tablature, entitled Short guide to virtue]. And in 1612 the publisher Jan Janszoon in Arnhem published a book by the Utrecht cittern and violin maker Michiel Vredeman, called *Der violen cyther met vyf snaren, een nieuwe soorte melodieuse inventie, twe naturen hebbende, vier parthyen spelende, licht te leeren, half violens, half cyther, zynen naem metbrengende, om alderley musicke te speelen, sonder een note van de musick te verstaan, so wel voor die violens, als voor die cyther, ettelicken musickstucken opgesett, ende in tablatuer gebracht* [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 play a note of music, for violins as well as for citterns, several pieces written out, and set in tablature]. The title suggests that the music was written for a new type of instrument, with five courses, which combined the qualities of the viol and the cittern. Thanks to the tablature notation, the player did not need to be able to read music; the recommendation shows that the book was not aimed at the most educated section of society. An inventory made in Leeuwarden in 1618 mentions another publication by the same Michiel Vredeman, with the title *Der Cyteren lusthoff* [Cythera's garden], as well as *Le jardinet de cythère* [The Garden of Cythera]. They are certainly not identical to *Der violen cyther*. It is more likely that they represent another book of cittern music, published in parallel editions with French and Dutch title pages. We will come across this procedure more often.

The cittern remained a popular instrument throughout the Golden Age. We can deduce this from its many appearances in paintings, where we often see the instrument in the hands of rich young ladies, such as in the well-known *The Love Letter* by Vermeer. However, peasants too are depicted with citterns. Around 1662 Jan Steen painted a woman, possibly his wife Grietje van Goyen, with the instrument (Plate 7).

The popularity of the cittern, particularly in the first half of the 17th century, is highlighted by the fact that in Amsterdam the word 'cittern maker' applied to the builders of all stringed instruments (see p. 159). It is also significant that the 1647 catalogue of the Amsterdam bookseller Hendrik Laurentius contains a remarkable amount of cittern music, including the volumes by Sweelinck and Vredeman that have since been lost. Incidentally, Laurentius also had lute books: one by Vallet (*Compositie van Valet, in 4*), *Hortus musicalis* by Elias Mertel (Strasbourg 1615) and lute settings of the Psalms of David by Daniel Laelius (Arnhem 1617).

Even in the early 18th century, the poet Jacobus Oudaan describes in his volume *Poëzy* (Amsterdam 1712) young people who go boating on the river and start to sing and play the fiddle and the cittern:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Een lietges-bouk | <i>A songbook is</i> |
| Dan uit de houk | <i>And people begin</i> |
| Gehaelt word, en men tyt'er | <i>Aen 't soet gequeel</i> |
| Of strykt de veel | <i>Or to play the viol</i> |
| Of slaet'er op een cyther. | <i>Or to strike the cittern.</i> |

Lute cittern

Louis Grijp and Dirk Jacob Hamoen have drawn our attention to a very special kind of lute found only in seven paintings by the Dutch painter Pieter de Hoogh. The canvases date from the last period of the artist's life, after he had moved to Amsterdam in 1668; he probably died there in the 1680s. The paintings show the luxury of the 'upper ten'; De Hoogh had become a society painter. There are dozens of musical instruments in these paintings: Grijp and Hamoen not

only listed a number of wind, keyboard and bowed string instruments, but also a large number of citterns (nineteen in all, by far the most depicted instrument), but only three lutes. And then there are seven plucked string instruments that are difficult to identify, but which seem to be a cross between a lute and a cittern (Plate 8). They share with the lute the overall size and shape, the width of the neck, the sharp angle of the peg box and the fact that they are played without plectrum – the instrument would have been strung with gut strings. But then there is the obvious cittern-like length of the neck and the metal frets of unequal width that are so typical of the cittern. Whether the back is concave as in a lute, or flat as in a cittern, cannot be seen in the painting. The external characteristics of the instruments have led the authors to conclude that De Hoogh did not, as he frequently did, paint the same instrument over and over again. They are by no means identical: in one painting we see that the strings are fixed to the corpus behind the bridge, as in a cittern, while in other paintings the strings seem to be attached to the bridge like in a lute. Their frequent appearance, however, led Grijp and Hamoen to conclude that this mysterious instrument, which they eventually decided to call the ‘Hooghluit’, must have been fairly popular for a while.

The problem is that this curious instrument is not found in any museum, treatise, or iconographical collection. However, it may be listed in archives. Gerrit Menslage’s inventory, mentioned above, describes in some detail several different types of lutes; the person who drew it up was obviously familiar with the subject matter. The list mentions, apart from a series of lutes in different shapes and sizes, some less common instruments such as an *angelica*, four *bandoras*, a *mandora*, five *katarns* (guitars, perhaps?), and also two *luijtheijthers*. The description neatly fits the appearance of the ‘Hooghluit’, and moreover they are encountered in exactly the right time and place: Amsterdam, 1670. It is likely that the lutes depicted by De Hoogh were in fact in regular use for a while, in any case in Amsterdam around 1670, and that they were called by the apt name of lute cittern.

Guitar

The guitar was already a well-known instrument in the 16th century and music for it was published in France, Spain and the Southern Netherlands. In terms of stringing, tuning, repertoire and the way it was played, the guitar was related to the lute, and just like the lute the guitar was built in different sizes. The 16th-century guitar had four string courses, but in the early 17th century a fifth course was added. Over time different tunings were developed, as well as a special tablature notation for adequately writing down guitar music. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the guitar gradually assumed the place of the lute as the most popular plucked instrument in the upper circles. The reason would have been that the guitar was easier to play than the lute and was less vulnerable. The rise of the guitar would also have benefited from the fact that King Louis XIV of France, the Sun King himself, preferred the guitar to the lute.

In the Dutch Republic, too, the ‘Spanish guitar’, as it was called there, found acceptance. Even Constantijn Huygens, who originally spoke disdainfully of the ‘bastard lute’, finally gave in



German lute tablature, from Hans Neusidler, *Ein Newgeordent Künstlich Lautenbuch* (Nuremberg 1536), f. 44^v

and started to play the instrument and to compose for it. In 1673 he wrote to his friend Utricia Ogle that he had become an accomplished guitar player in the previous year, and that he had already written more than 30 pieces in all modes and keys 'for this miserable instrument'. Guitars also appear in paintings of the period, but not as frequently as lutes. A famous example is the guitar player by Johannes Vermeer (c.1670-1672) (Plate 9).

Dutch instrument makers also built guitars. In 1635, after the death of the widow of Hendrik Peerboom, an instrument maker who had worked in The Hague, an inventory of her goods and chattel was drawn up, and it included instruments built by her husband; among them was a *guytaerne*. Later, another guitar maker worked in The Hague, Jean (de) la Grange by name. In 1681 the musician and instrument maker Philip Rosseter claimed from 'monsieur La Grange, *ghiteer-maker*', more than f. 219 for repairing guitars, refreshments, borrowed money and other things. Obviously he was engaged by La Grange to mend guitars for him. One wonders why La Grange did not repair them himself, given that he was a guitar builder.

In Amsterdam, we also hear of a guitar and even of a professional guitarist. In 1669 there was mention of Jeronimus Reijnwalt (Rijnwalt), a musician in that city, who was going to give one Simon van der Stel guitar lessons. The latter had bought, for the substantial sum of f. 20, 'a certain Spanish instrument with strings, named a *getarre*' from Grietje Boudewijns, widow of Gerrit Menslage, the instrument maker we met earlier, who had continued the business together with the apprentice Arent Roelofszoon from Münster. Payment of that sum in gold coins had taken place in the presence of Reijnwalt. By order of Van der Stel, the instrument had been de-



French lute tablature, from Joachim van den Hove, *Florida* (Utrecht 1601), f. 110r.

For a transcription of the piece, see below, p. 122

livered by Grietje's servant girl to St Annendwarsstraat, behind the *Oude Kerk* [Old Church], in the house of the button maker where Reijnwalt was staying. It is remarkable that the guitar as a phenomenon was apparently fairly unknown, as suggested by the description of it in the notarial deed. The guitarist Reijnwalt, even though he did not yet have a house of his own in 1669, stayed in Amsterdam; in 1670 he still owed Grietje, who had since died, the sum of f. 10:8. In 1672, he was buried in the St Anthonis churchyard from a house in Jodenbreestraat.

The notation of lute music

Finally we need to devote a word or two to the way lute music was notated. Shortly before 1500, the need arose to write down specific instrumental music. For polyphonic instruments such as the organ, lute and harp, special notations or tablatures were developed. Each instrument had its own tablature, adapted to the instrument's specific characteristics. The tablature for the lute was a fingering notation in which the symbols do not represent the notes, but the place where a finger of the left hand should press down a string on the fingerboard. Different systems of lute tablature were developed more or less simultaneously because in the various countries where the lute was played, people came up independently with their own ideas. Tradition has it that Conrad Paumann, a blind organist from Germany, devised a tablature in which the notes that are played on the lute are shown as letters, while the rhythm is indicated above.

In France, Spain and Italy, lute tablature systems were developed that look superficially

like 'normal' staves. However, the horizontal lines do not indicate the pitch here, but the strings of the lute. There are usually six lines, whereas our 'normal' staff has five. The letters or digits on those six lines show whether an open string should be played there (by the letter *a* or the figure *o*) or whether the string should be pressed down at a certain fret: the letter *b* or the figure *1* for the first fret, *c* or *2* for the second fret and so on. Here again, the rhythm is indicated by the symbols at the top. Italy and Spain used the system with figures (with the difference that in Italy the highest string was represented by the bottom line, and in Spain by the top line), while in France the tablature used letters. The French system was adopted in England and the Netherlands, and towards the end of the 16th century would gradually replace the complicated German system. In the 17th-century Republic only French tablature was used. Apart from the notes to be played, various symbols were used to indicate ornaments or which finger of the right and/or left had to be used.

Systems derived from lute tablature were also used for related instruments, such as cittern and guitar, and in the 17th century also for solo works for the viola da gamba.

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