

SMALL - MENSURED LUTES FROM THE HABSBURG HEARTLANDS AND BOHEMIA IN THE 17TH & 18TH CENTURIES

A) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

1) In the preface to the first concerto of "Aller Treuesten Freindin" (All My Truest Friend), a printed work engraved in 1701 by Nestler in Vienna, the composer Wenzel Ludwig Edler von Radolt gives precise tuning instructions for the first of three required lutes in this composition:

"This concerto is played with three different lutes. The first, which leads the soprano, must be a very small lute and is tuned at least a half tone higher than the cornet."

According to oral information from Dr. Gerhard Stradner of Vienna to the author, the pitch of the cornet (a cornett-like instrument) around 1700 in Vienna was approximately $a = 470$ Hz.

Since the fragile construction of historical lutes and the limited tensile strength of the gut material used at that time exclusively for stringing lutes provide excellent criteria for determining the maximum string length of an instrument to achieve a required pitch, a maximum possible scale length of 60–62 cm for such an instrument could be determined using a formula for the break strength coefficient of gut strings. The scale length commonly used today for 11-course instruments of this period is typically 69–72 cm. Therefore, the required pitch would not be achievable with gut strings on such an instrument.

Further research by the author revealed that several original instruments from the period in question have indeed survived, and that these instruments represent approximately 20% of all surviving original lutes from this era. This clearly demonstrated that the instrument required in Radolt's collection could not possibly be a special type.

A list of all currently known instruments (as of spring 2015) can be found under section C) of this work.

2) In October 2012, the author of this work was commissioned by Kremsmünster Abbey, Upper Austria, to subject the lute instruments preserved at this site to conservation treatment according to museum standards. This work was ultimately awarded to Klaus Martius of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, Germany, where the lutes have been conserved and documented since June 2013. Among the six surviving lutes of the abbey is an instrument from the workshop of Jacob Langenwalder, built in Füssen in 1627 and purchased by Kremsmünster Abbey in the same year. This lute has a scale length of 60.3 cm and thus fits the profile outlined above for a small-scale instrument from the Central Austrian region.

Since this lute, judging from the archival records in the monastery, underwent only one modification in 1678, it can be assumed that, unlike most instruments preserved in museums, it is in a largely original condition from the last third of the 17th century. It therefore appears ideally suited as a model for the project to develop a modern prototype for the reproduction and marketing of a lute type that has been overlooked by "historically informed performance practice" until now. All the work and investigations necessary to achieve the stated project goal could also be carried out within the framework of the required conservation measures at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nürnberg.

B) THE BERR LOUD (MfA 1986.7) AND FURTHER OBSERVATIONS IN TABULATURES OF AUSTRIAN PROVENANCE

1) In his memoirs, printed by Johann Mattheson (Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte, Hamburg 1740), the Elector of Gotha's Court Kapellmeister Johann Gottfried Stölzel writes about his three-year stay in Prague, that he spent several hours almost daily at the house of the Imperial Court Chamberlain Johann Anton Losy Hrabe z Losymthal:

"They played... the lute as well as anyone who does it professionally can. This usually happened for several hours in the morning in their bed, where they sat and played a small lute..."

Gottfried Johann Dlabacz (Allgemeines historisches Künstlerlexikon für Böhmen, Prague, 1815), citing Thomas Balthasar Janowka's "Clavis ad Thesaurum Magnae Artis Musicae" (Prague 1701 - lost), also reports the preference "little lute" by the imperial chamberlain, who in his time was considered the first virtuoso on the instrument.

2) In May 1981, a lute by the Viennese luthier Andreas Berr, dating from 1699, was auctioned at Christie's in London and acquired on behalf of the Museum of Arts in Boston, where it is now kept under the collection number MFA 1986.7. This exceptionally magnificent ivory instrument, compared to other products from Berr's workshop, showed heavy signs of use and had obviously been modified several times. It is currently in the condition of a 13-course lute with a fingerboard length of 62.1 cm. Despite several attempts by the author, it has not been possible to obtain the only existing blueprint of the instrument, which was measured by the English luthier Stephen Barber in 1977. Therefore, it cannot serve as a model for the project to develop a prototype of a smaller-scaled instrument. In recent years, lute researchers have repeatedly linked it to Count Losy, who demonstrably played exclusively instruments from the Berr workshop.

3) For several years, the author has been researching sources that suggest the use of such small-scaled, 11-course lutes for their realization. This can be found, besides Wenzel Ludwig Radolt's collection "Die aller treueste Freindin" from 1701, also in Ferdinand Ignaz Hinterleithner's "Lauten-Concert" (Vienna 1699), Philipp Franz LeSage de Richee's "Cabinet der Lauten" (Breslau 1695), Jacques Bittner's "Pieces de Lut" (Nürnberg 1682), and the manuscripts A-Kr L78 from Kremsmünster, CZ-BM A.371 (now Brno), PL-Kj 40626 (now Warsaw), and Awn 18761 (now Vienna). Further examples of playing in lute ensembles based on the model of Radolt's collection can be found in PL-Kj 40637 (now Krakow). More details can be found under D) in this work. The research is ongoing and cannot yet be considered complete.

C) SMALL-SCALED LUTE SOUNDS DISCOVERED SO FAR IN LARGE COLLECTIONS

Preliminary note: Lutes from the period under discussion (1660 – 1750) consistently exhibit the following characteristics regarding their string arrangement:

- a) Two "chantarelles" in the treble range (indicated in the list as: 2 x 1)
- b) From the third string onward, solo instruments are "double stringed," meaning they have two strings of the same pitch. (indicated in the list, for example, as: 5 x 2)
- c) A considerable number of the identified instruments feature a so-called "theorbo" with two separate pegboxes connected by a rod. This theorbo and its string length are listed separately: e.g.: Th: 2 x 2

Only instruments with a fingerboard scale length of less than 65 cm were considered. Of the 78 original instruments with a Baroque string layout preserved (as of spring 2015), 14 have short scale lengths. Most of the listed instruments (dating from before 1670) have undergone several modifications (so-called "adjustments") over the course of their history. These are not noted separately but should be gleaned from the restoration records held in the museums. The list is in alphabetical order. Where instruments are part of large collections, their inventory numbers are noted. All such instruments in private hands or uninventoried instruments in museum storage were not included.

1) **Anonymous 1626** 2 x 1 und 4 x 2 /Th 3 x 2 Mensur: 45/64 cm
London: Victoria & Albert Museum Inv.Nr.: 7755-1862

2) **Anonymous o.J.** 2 x 1 und 5 x 2 /Th 5 x 2 Mensur: 64/90 cm
Luzern-Triebschen: Richard Wagner Museum keine Inv.Nr.

3) Samuel Berner 1741	2 x 1 und 7 x 2 / Th 2 x 2	Mensur: 64,5/81,5
	Kopenhagen: Musikhistorisk Museum Inv.Nr. nicht feststellbar	
4) Andreas Berr 1699	2 x 1 und 9 x 2	Mensur: 62,1 cm
	Boston: Museum for Arts Inv.Nr.: 1986.7	
5) Hieronymus Brenso o.J.	2 x 1 und 4 x 2 /Th 5 x 2	Mensur: 64/98 cm
	Bologna: Museo Civico Inv.Nr.: 1747	
6) Christofolo Choc 1654	2 x 1 und 6 x 2 /Th 6 x 2	Mensur: 57/85 cm
	London: Victoria & Albert Museum Inv.Nr.: 7756-1862	
7) Uldrich Dieffenprugker o.J.	2 x 1 und 9 x 2	Mensur: 64,2 cm
	Washington DC: Smithsonian Institute Inv.Nr.: NNM 3382	
8) Bartolomeo Eberspacher o.J.	2 x 1 und 6 x 2 /Th 4 x 2	Mensur: 60,8/81,8
	Leipzig: Museum für Muskinstrumente Inv.Nr.: 498	
9) Michielle Harton o.J.	2 x 1 und 5 x 2 /Th 4 x 2	Mensur: 63,7/91,6
	Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum Inv.Nr.: MIR 899	
10) Jacob Langenwalder 1627	2 x 1 und 9 x 2	Mensur: 60,3 cm
	Kremsmünster: Benediktinerstift keine Inv.Nr.	
11) Raphael Mest 1617	2 x 1 und 5 x 2 /Th 4 x 2	Mensur: 64,6/91,5
	Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum Inv.Nr.: MIR 900	
12) Pietro Raillich 1644	2 x 1 und 9 x 2	Mensur: 62,2 cm
	Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum Inv.Nr.: MI 45	
13) Pietro Raillich 1669	2 x 1 und 5 x 2 /Th 4 x 2	Mensur: 64,3/90,6
	New York: Metropolitan Museum Inv.Nr.: 2008.3	
14) Matteo Sellas 1638	2 x 1 und 6 x 2 /Th 7 x 2 (!)	Mensur: 58/83 cm
	Paris: Cite de la Musique Inv. Nr.: E.1028	

Since the 1990s, numerous lutes from private collections in Central Europe have appeared at auctions. Only a few are likely to have found their way into one of the large instrument collections listed above. Among them were certainly other small-bore instruments that are now in private hands (the author is aware of at least two more lutes that meet the above criteria; the owners wish to remain anonymous).

D) EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF SMALL-MENSURED INSTRUMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY TABULATURES

Preliminary note: Lute music for solo use was always written down in so-called "tablatures." These not only record the musical progression but also give precise instructions about the respective fingerboard positions of the left hand. It is therefore possible to deduce the use of a specific instrument type from these tablatures. Tablatures for small-bore instruments contain fingering instructions that require unusually large finger spans for the left hand (compared to "normal" tablatures). Often, lute manuscripts were compiled over long periods and by several scribes for different players with different instrument types. In this case, only those sections in the tablatures that suggest the use of small-bore instruments were considered.

1) Wenzel Ludwig von Radolt: **Die Allertreueste Freindin**, Wien 1701
 Stimmbuch der 1. Laute, Beginn des 1. Concerts

Uvertüre B. S. C.

Ruf' Rotta End' mit' dein' Kind' und' du' in' Concert' nicht' vergessen - ? C.

Concerto I / Laute 1

2) Franz Philipp LeSage de Richee: **Cabinet der Lautten**, Breslau 1695
 Fol. 17 Suite de la Courante, Sarabande, Gigue

Suite de la Courante

Sarabande

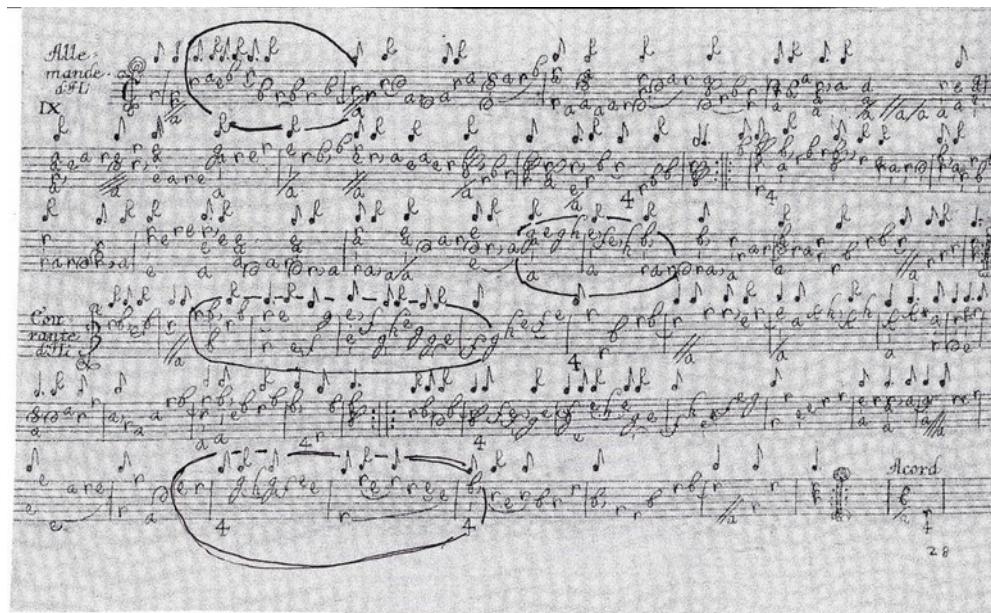
Gigue

Zorne

3) Jacques Bittner: **Pièces de Lut**, Nürnberg 1682
Fol. 22 Courante



4) Ferdinand Ignaz Hinterleithner: **Lauthen Concert**, Wien 1699
Fol. 28 Allemande, Courante



5) Kremsmünster: **L 78**, ca. 1670 – 1700
Fol. 42r Sarabande



6) Brno: **Cz-Bm 371**, ca. 1720
Fol. 22r Prelude – Fantasie



7) Warszawa: PL-Kj 40620, ca. 1720

Fol. 48r Allemande



The sections corresponding to the project requirement, the determination of tablatures for performance on small-scale instruments, were marked in the tablatures by manually circling the corresponding sections.

Since the photomechanical reproductions of handwritten tablature available to the author are often of very poor quality, contemporary printed materials were predominantly used in the above-mentioned collection of examples.

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