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THE EARLIEST VILLANELLAS BY GIACOMO GORZANIS: NOTES ON THE LUTE MS. 1511A IN MUNICH, BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK

GIACOMO Gorzanis was a very successful lute player and composer active in middle sixteenth-century in the territories comprising East Northern Italy (Trieste), Slovenia (Ljubljana), Southern Tyrol and Austria. Even though he was blind, Gorzanis published in Venice six books containing his output in addition to a manuscript collection. Only in the frontespice of his first book there is a mention of his disability (*Intabolutura di Liuto di Messer Iacomo Gorzanis Cieco Pugliese, Habitante nella Città di Trieste. Novamente da lui composto*, Venice: Gardano 1561), while the definition of “cieco” (blind) disappears from the second book onward. Gorzanis speaks again about his blindness only in the dedication to Vito de Dornberg of Gorizia in his *Terzo libro de intabolutura de liuto* published in Venice (Gardano, 1564):¹

Non senza **maraviglia** saran riguardate queste mie fatiche, considerando che, **io, privo di lume**, hora pressuma di **darle in luce**. Ma chi rivolgera nell’animo che molti per darsi alla contemplatione delle cose habitarono le proffonde caverne, & le oscure grotte, & che quel gran Philosopho

¹ “Not without wonder will these labors of mine be regarded, considering that, I, bereft of light, have the presumption to give them in light. But the one who will turn to the mind that many, to give themselves to the contemplation of things inhabited the deep caverns, & dark caves, & that the great Philosopher Democritus voluntarily deprived himself of the light of the eyes, judging that the thoughts of the mind will be more disposed & sharper in contemplating the reasonings of nature, if this person can freed him from the vagueness of seeing, it will cancel his wonder. Nor do I say this so that I may hold myself such, that my thoughts may ascend to the height of such great men, but so that if there is a hint of thought in me, let it be known that more unitedly & with more acuteness I, a blind, possess this little that I would not for the sake of fortune do that much, which nature seeing could granted me. But be that as it may, such at last has been my low thought (let it not be from arrogance said, but from truth) that it has been able not only to induce, but almost to spur the high thought of the most valiant musicians, to give out these works of mine. And rethinking among myself at length under what name these works should appear to the public eyes [...]”. There are two copies surviving of this third book by Gorzanis, in Vienna, Österreichischer Nationalbibliothek and in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (in the Thibault collection). See also the facsimile edition of Gorzanis’ Book 1, 2 and 3 based on the Paris copy (Genève, Minkoff, 1981). I put in bold the terms related to the blindness of Gorzanis.

Democrito volontariamente si **privò del lume de gli occhi**, giudicando che i pensieri dell'animo sarianno più disposti & piu accuti nel contemplar le ragioni della natura, se gli liberasse dalla vaghezza del vedere, lasciarla in tutto di maravigliarsi. Né ciò dico perché mi tenga tale, che i miei pensieri ascendano all'altezza di così grandi huomini, ma perché se pur è ponto de pensiero in me, si sappia che più unitamente & con più accutezza possedo **io cieco** questo poco che non farei per avventura quel molto, che la natura vedendo mi concedesse. Ma come si sia, tale finalmente è stato il mio basso pensiero (non sia per arroganza detto, ma per verità) che ha potuto non solo indurre, ma quasi spronare l'alto pensiero de i valentissimi musici à dar fuori queste mie vigilie. Le quali fra me stesso lungamente ripensando sotto cui nome dovessero **comparire à gli occhi** delli huomini...

This autobiographical fragment written by Gorzanis can help us in considering how strange could have appeared to his contemporaries the growing success of a blind lutenist in the social group he was attending, preparing with an able action his promotion to a Citizen and official Lutenist of Trieste. The words "maraviglia" and "maravigliarsi" for the works published by a sightless man ("privo di luce") are still valuable today if one considers this blind player was not only able to compose and to correct at least six books of varied music, but also to follow in person the printing process in Venice, to travel from his native region Puglia in Southern Italy to Trieste and then from Trieste to Gorizia and to the extreme lands of Carniola from one side and possibly also to Graz or Vienna, in some way involved in the marriage of the Austrian Archduke.

Gorzanis had resided in Trieste since at least 1557 because on May 4 of that year his daughter Domenica Giacomina from his marriage to Dorotea was baptized and later his male son was also born, Maximilian, who edited his father's posthumous lute book published in Venice in 1579, *Opera nova de lauto composed by Misier Jacomo Gorzanis cittadino della magnifica città di Trieste messa in luce da suo figliolo Massimiliano. Libro quarto* (Venice: Gardane, 1579). It is likely that first his wife and then his children helped the blind composer prepare his tablatures for printing, but it is also notable that this system of notation, using symbols that could be placed in relief, allowed some form of direct control through tactile contact by blind musicians. Throughout his artistic career Gorzanis had constant relations with the wealthy bourgeoisie and the aristocracy of his time, as evidenced by the dedications of his printed books: in particular, the Khisl family in Carniola, the Dietrichstein of Radovljica and the Dornberg of Gorizia. Thanks to his relations with the nobility of Ljubljana and Gorizia, Gorzanis entered in contact with the court of Archduke Charles II of Austria: in his dedication to the latter, dated 15 July 1571, in his Second book of napolitane for three voices, the composer addresses him in terms that appear to show that he knew the archduke personally ("the memory I have [...] as your most humble servant, and the real affection I have for you") and which reveal his hope of being taken into his service ("sustained, like a mighty column, by the desire of service [...] Fortune does not allow me to make any other sort of gift at present") and also the hope of taking part in the festivities for the marriage of Charles with Princess Maria of Bavaria, planned for that summer of 1571. Gorzanis was hoping to be engaged on a temporary basis for the occasion but we don't know if it happened. Archduke Charles appreciated the gift in any case, for the following year, in 1572, he sent money to Trieste to pay for the education of Gorzanis' son.

All these elements can help us understand the origin of his only surviving manuscript book, today preserved in Munich. The Ms. 1511a in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is an oblong

volume very similar in size to one of Gorzanis' own lute prints published in Venice, containing 36 sheets arranged with 4 hexagrams per page to accommodate the lute tablature. The title page and dedication placed at the beginning also reinforce the idea that this is a manuscript intended to be sent to a publisher for printing. The title page reads:

LIBRO DE INTABULATURA DI LIUTO.

Nel qualle si contengano vinti quatro passa mezi dodeci per bemolle et | dodeci per be quadro sopra dodeci chiave. Novamente composte con alcune | napollitane de Giacomo Gorzanis Lautanista cittadino de la mag.^{ca} | citta de Trieste scritta de trieste. etc. Del mille et cinque cento et sasanta sette. Annj.

The dedication, on the next sheet, is only a draft to be completed:

AL MOLTO MAGNIFICO SIGNOR ODORICO | Erbert patron suo sempre osservandissimo etc. | Della Signoria Vosstra. servitore. Giacomo Gorzanis | Lautanista de Trieste.

These two pages inform us that Gorzanis in 1567 had composed and had the manuscript prepared in Trieste, where that year he finally obtained the coveted title of “citizen” (reserved for those who had resided in the city for at least ten years), which he immediately exhibited. The title page is in every way similar to those of the three previous lute books published in Venice in 1561, 1563 and 1564. The volume had been dedicated – and probably sent – to Udalricus Herwart, who a few years later would serve on the Augsburg Small Council. In that same city the Herwart family came to prominence throughout the sixteenth century as collectors and patrons of music. Not by chance Udalricus was a cousin of the better known Johann Heinrich Herwart (1520–1583), a trader in business relations with the Fuggers (another famous German family of music lovers),² so fond of music that he amassed a collection of about 500 music books, which included as many as 200 Italian books of madrigals and villanelles. The collection after his death was purchased by Duke Wilhelm of Bavaria and today constitutes a major part of the music collections of the Bavarian State Library in Munich. Moreover, the Herwart family was particularly interested in musical instruments and lute music, as evidenced by the large number of lute tablature manuscripts from the Herwarts that have been identified in the Bavarian Library itself.³

The Munich manuscript, as indicated on the guard paper by an annotation by Julius Joseph Maier, the curator of the music collection in the nineteenth century, was considered “Autograph” and “Enthält: 24 Passemezzi e Saltarelli | 7 Villanellen | 1 Ricercar, Von fremder Hand sind eingeschrieben 3 Villanellen, 1 Ricercar”.⁴

² For a strange coincidence, the copy preserved in Vienna of the *Secondo libro di napolitane* by Gorzanis printed in Venice, 1571, comes from the library of Philipp Eduard Fugger.

³ On the lute manuscripts from the Herwart collection see Ness, “Herwart Lute Manuscripts”.

⁴ The physical description of the manuscript is provided in Boettischer, *Handschriftlich Überlieferte Lauten- und Gitarrentabulaturen*, 218f. Although it is unlikely to be an autograph of the blind lutenist Giacomo Gorzanis, the main hand is definitely Italian, a person close to the composer. In the manuscript, however, the presence of another hand has also been recognized, identified as “scribe C” by Taricani, at fols. 34 and 36v–37v. See Taricani, “Renaissance Bibliophile”.

The villanellas are as follows:

- (1) fol. 34, no. 49: **Se io vegio o dormo sempre | penso atene: Napolitana.** = *S'io veglio o dormo sempre pens'a tene* (*Napolitane I*, 1570, 13)
- (2) [fol. 34v], no. 50: **Ducha vevoio dir una novella napolitana d. Jacomo Gorzanis =** *Duca vi voglio dir una novella* (*Napolitane I*, 1570, 7)
- (3) [fol. 34v/2], no. 51: **Tu ma inganato col tuo dolce viso. Napolitana =** *Tu m'hai gabato col tuo dolce viso* (*Napolitane I*, 1570, 12)
- (4) fol. 35, no. 52: **Tre giorni fa che mi dicesti vieni vieni Napolitana d. Jacopo Gorzanis**
- (5) [fol. 35v], no. 53: **Damo fallano son gia stato morto**
- (6) fol. 36, no. 54: **Bella che tieni li capelli doro**
- (7) [fol. 37v], no. 56: **Donna io te amo nō mi fa morire Napolitana.**

These 7 pieces constitute the only known handwritten copies of Gorzanis' villanellas, in addition to a single piece copied in the so-called Dallis Lutebook (IRL-Dtc, Ms. 410/1, [p. 176]):⁵

- (8) **Chi in Donna | giacomo Gorzanis =** *Chi in donna bella loca lo suo core* (*Napolitane II* 1571, 1).

The peculiarity of the latter manuscript piece is that it is a version for soprano solo voice and lute accompaniment in tablature, whereas the printed original provided three separate partbooks for the three voices indicated by the title (C, T, B), proving the privileged performance practice of the time. However, the version copied in the Irish manuscript (which belonged to a lute pupil of composer Thomas Dallis, where the piece was included along with a few other songs and many instrumental dances prior to 1590) is written in French tablature for 6-order lute with the melodic part of the cantus lacking the text.⁶

⁵ The full manuscript is available in a digital version on the Trinity College Dublin website: <https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/z89orz728?locale=en>. The volume had been reported and studied in Ward, *Dublin Virginal Manuscript*; Goodwin, *English Lute Song*; Craig-McFeely, "English Lute Manuscripts".

⁶ The *Secondo libro delle napolitane a tre voci*, originally printed in three partbooks (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1571) is edited together with the *Primo libro di napolitane* by Alenka Bagarič in Gorzanis, *Il primo libro*.

sufficient financial contribution to cover the printing costs (the dedication left blank suggests that the composer was waiting for a reply). We do not know where Giacomo had meet the German merchant and if the volume was ever printed, but it is unlikely that it could have been used directly for printing, because the final section that accommodates the villanellas, is very haphazard and some pieces seem to have been added at the last moment as filler to augment the vocal section. There is another problem presented precisely by the napolitane in the collection: it was rather unusual to include, in an edition of lute music, intabulations of vocal pieces not previously printed and therefore not known in the original version to be sung. Gorzanis' villanellas all turned out to be unpublished, and only three would be accepted in the later collection of the *Primo libro di napolitane* in 1570. It has, however, already been mentioned by Alenka Bagarič that precisely in 1567 Gorzanis received 10 florins by the Carniola administration for his “Carmina”, which may be a collection of (villanesque) songs that we do not know, from which the pieces copied in the Munich manuscript may have come.

Only in one case there are other settings of a text attributed to Gorzanis in the Bavarian source: *Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro* was inserted without a name of author in the collection *Secondo libro delle muse a 3 voci. Canzon villanesche alla napolitana nuovamente raccolte, et date in luce* (Rome: Antonio Barré, 1557, 14), reprinted in *Li quattro libri delle villotte alla napolitana a 3 voci de diversi* (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1562) and in *Il Secondo libro delle villotte alla napoletana de diversi con due moresche* (Venice: Antonio Gardano, 1560, 29; repr. in 1566 and 1571). In 1566 *Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro* was also set in Antonio Scandello, *El primo libro de le canzoni napolitane a 4 voci* (Nürnberg: Ulrich Neuber and Theodoricus Gerlach, 1566).

After the intabulation inserted in the Munich manuscript dated 1567, the same text was set also by Giovanni Zappasorgo, *Napolitane a tre voci. Libro primo* (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1571). Thanks to those sources, it is possible to reconstruct the full text to be submitted to the tablature, from which it is easy to extrapolate the melodic line of the song contained therein. From the melody it appears that the required instrument is a lute in A, as in two of the villanellas taken from Gorzanis' *Napolitane I*, 1570. We have thus reconstructed from the Munich manuscript a hitherto unpublished new villanella by Gorzanis (see Appendix B).

The role of Gorzanis' first book of villanellas printed in 1570 is remarkable. Exactly around that year, in fact, a new notational format was established for that genre of music that was now widespread throughout Europe, but previously always printed in separate parts (as it was the second book of *Napolitane* by Gorzanis in 1571). The score for solo voice and lute tablature was adopted as early as in the years 1509–1520 in prints by Franciscus Spinacinus, Bartolomeo Tromboncino and Marchetto Cara. But this notational format was never used again in Italy until 1570, when almost simultaneously three authors published villanellas with solo voice and tablature in score: Giacomo Gorzanis, Cornelio Antonelli and Gasparo Fiorino (the latter one year after in 1571).⁸ The Munich manuscript demonstrates that Gorzanis can be considered the earliest of villanella composers to have produced the intabulated version of his own vocal pieces (“queste mie Napolitane, che si suonano, et si cantano”).

⁸ Aside Gorzanis, the other two books are: *Il Turturino. Il primo libro delle napolitane ariose da cantare et sonare nel leuto composte da diversi eccellentissimi musici, et novamente per il Rev. P. F. Cornelio Antonelli de Rimino detto il Turturino, accomodate sul leuto* and *La Nobiltà di Roma. Versi in lode di cento gentildonne romane, et le villanelle a*

APPENDIX

Abbreviations:

Bagarič	Giacomo Gorzanis, <i>Il primo libro di napolitane che si cantano et sonano in leuto</i> (1570) & <i>Il secondo libro delle napoletane a tre voci</i> (1571). Edited by Alenka Bagarič. Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae 51. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Muzikološki inštitut Znanstvenoraziskovalnega centra Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, 2007.
Dallis	Dallis Lutebook, Dublin, Trinity College, Ms. 410/1.
M	Munich, Bavarian State Library (D-Mbs), Ms. 1511a (“Libro de intavolatura di liuto [...] de Giacomo Gorzanis”)
Napolitane I, 1570	Giacomo Gorzanis. <i>Il Primo libro di napolitane che si cantano et sonano in leuto</i> . Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1570. Consulted copy: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, E.6.5.71, <i>unicum</i> .
Napolitane II, 1571	Giacomo Gorzanis. <i>Il secondo libro delle napoletane a tre voci</i> . Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1571. Consulted copy: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, SA.76.E.13.

A. Differences in manuscript versions of villanellas compared to printed editions

1. *S’io veglio o dormo sempre pens’a tene* (Napolitane I, 1570, 15; Bagarič, 27)
Incorrect title in M, fol. 34: *Se io vegio o dormo sempre penso atene*
The manuscript indicates bars (absent in the Venetian printing) after each double tactus (2 x o). The rhythm is indicated with the signs in use in sixteenth-century vocal mensural notation (see Figure 2) instead of the signs typical of Italian lute tablature (see Figure 3). At b. 4 M indicates in the two first chords c # instead of a natural c, as in the inlaid part of the print (see Figure 4).

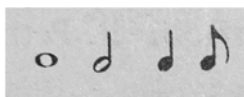


Figure 2 | Signs of the vocal notation

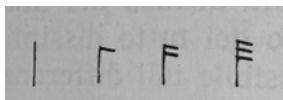


Figure 3 | Signs of the Italian lute tablature

tre voci di Gasparo Fiorino della città di Rossano [...] intavolate dal magnifico M. Francesco di Parise, Musico eccellentissimo in Roma. Not by chance the only surviving copy of Gorzanis *Primo libro*, preserved today in Florence, is bounded together with Antonelli’s and Fiorino’s books. In 2002 I have proposed that the three books by Gorzanis, Antonelli and Fiorino were part of an editorial project by Girolamo Scotto, who already did similar serial projects with lute books. See Fabris, “Solo Singing”.

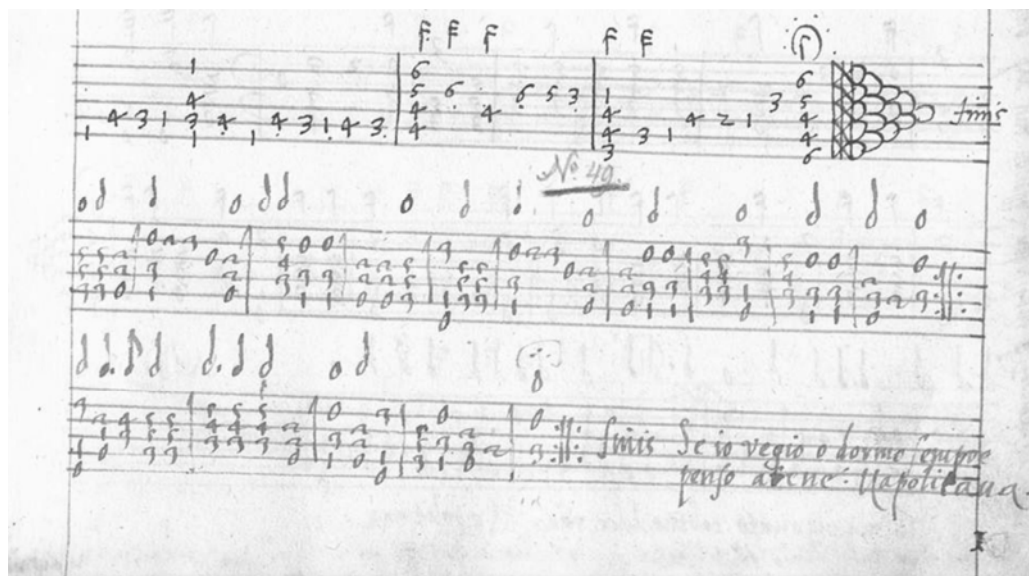


Figure 4 | Giacomo Gorzanis, *S'io veglio o dormo sempre pens'a tene*, from D-Mbs, Ms. 1511°, fol. 34v

At b. 5 last chord repeats triad **c-e-g** instead of **a-c#-e**; the refrain mark, which in the printed edition is inserted at the end of b. 6, is only put in M at the end of b. 10; last beat of b. 7 is a single whole note chord instead of two half notes with repetition of the note **c** on the bass as in the printed edition; in b. 9 the second tactus repeats two triads **D-d-f**, instead of inserting the diminution to the bass of four quarter notes **D-E-F-G** as in the printed edition; in b. 11 the first tactus ends with a quarter note bichord **Bb-d** instead of the triad **Bb-d-f** as in the print; in b. 13 the two first triad chords include **c #** instead of a natural **c**, similarly to b.4; b.14, last half note adds a third note **D** to the bass instead of the bichord **d-f** of the print.

2. *Duca vi voglio dir una novella* (*Napolitane* I, 1570, 9; Bagarič, 15)
 Incorrect title in M, fol. 34v: *Ducha vevoio dir una novella napolitana d. Jacomo Gorzanis* (the title is inserted vertically on the left side of the composition instead of at the top)
 As in the previous piece, M indicates bars (absent in the Venetian print) after each double tactus (2 x **o**), but this time the typical signs of Italian lute tablature are used. In b. 1, the third chord uses the same notes of the print (**F-f-a**) but in a different position on the instrument, as indicated by the tablature, and the last chord has a **D** in the bass instead of **Bb**:



Figure 5 | Giacomo Gorzani, *Duca vi voglio dir una novella*, from D-Mbs, Ms. 1511°, fol. 34

In b. 2 M adds a quarter note A to the bass, where the print has a rest; the second half of the same b. 2 repeats the triad **C-e-g** four times instead of varying chords, as in the printed edition; in b. 3, the third chord uses the same notes of the print (**F-f-a**) but in a different position on the instrument, as in b. 1; in b. 6 the first tactus uses only the bass movement of four quarters instead of not repeating on the third note the bichord **d-f** as in the print; also in b. 6, similarly to b. 2; in triple time, b. 9 (and 12) differs from the print for the insertion of a diminution to the cantus part and rhythmic shift.

In b. 11 (and 13) the cadence is solved after the dissonance without repeating the bass note **A**, as the print does; the final chord adds the high notes **f #** and **a** while the print put only a bichord **D-d**.

3. *Tu m'hai gabbato col tuo dolce riso* (*Napolitane* I, 1570, 14; Bagarič, 25)

In M, fol. 34v², the incorrect title is inserted under the tablature at the bottom of the page: *Tu ma inganato col tuo dolce viso. Napolitana*. The rhythmic notation typical of mensural notation is again used instead of the signs typical of the Italian lute tablature. The division into bars follows the usage of the previous pieces.

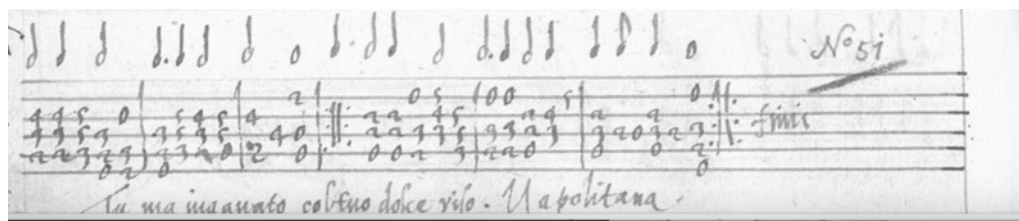


Figure 6 | Giacomo Gorzanis, *Tu m'hai gabbato col tuo dolce riso*, from D-Mbs, Ms. 1511°, fol. 34^v

In b. 2 M adds in the last movement a third half note **d** to the bichord **Bb-d**, which aids the leading of the parts in the next cadence; in b. 5 first two chords have **C** as bass note instead of **A** as in the print; in the final bar the chord is completed with the two high whole notes **e-g** added to the bichord **C-c** of the print.

4. *Chi in donna bella loca lo suo cuore* (Napolitane II, 1571, 1 ed. Bagarić, 55).

The title in Dallis [p. 176] is: *Chi in Donna*, written on the top left of the page before the piece. At the bottom right is indicated: “Finis d. Canzone” (see Figure 1). This is a “mixed score” that bears the cantus part in mensural notation, written on the prepared 6 lines with a soprano clef (and the indication to the left side: “sup.[erius]”); underneath is the accompaniment in the French lute tablature (using the alphabet letters instead of the figures of the Italian tablature) and the rhythmic signs in use in the English lute music of late sixteenth century. The measure bars (absent in the polyphonic parts of the printed edition) are placed every two tactus (2 x **o**). The text under the cantus part is omitted, as in the villanellas copied in M. The tablature reveals that a lute in G is required.

In b. 5, in the final cadence corresponding to the Tenor voice, the half note **F#** is missing before resolving to **G**, and the last chord has the wrong bass **G** instead of **D**; in b. 8 the second chord has a mistaken bass note **C** instead of **Bb**; b. 15, the first chord has a mistaken bass note **B** natural instead of **Bb**; in b. 18, the last chord has a fourth note **G** added to the three voices to reinforce the sonority: this can indicate of a typical performance practice; in the last bar, after the cadenza, the bass is mistaken indicated **F** instead of **C** (the wrong string of the instrument is indicated).

B. Reconstruction of Gorzanis' Napolitana *Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro*⁹

Lyrics by anonymous (reconstructed from the setting in Giovanni Zappasorgo, *Napolitane a tre voci. Libro primo* (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1571))

Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro
Ch'el tuo bel nome dire non si può,

⁹ I wish to thank Gianluigi Bello for his kind collaboration with editing the electronic version of the piece with the software Fronimo 3.0.

Meschino che farò?
Bisognerà morire,
Ch'el non vederti non si può soffrire.

Se veder né sentire non ti posso
Scontiento e disperato morirò,
Meschino che farò?
Mi converà morire,
Ch'el non vederti non si può soffrire.

Se di tutto il mio ben io son son privato,
Dimmi crudel fortuna dove andrò?
Meschino che farò?
Dove potrò fuggire?
Se questo ha da durar voglio morire.

Starò mirando tanto a sse finestre,
Fin che mi veda, o senta lamentare,
Ma forte me ne par,
che mi possa sentire:
O fortuna crudel fammi morire.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation. On the left side, the title "Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro" is written vertically. The music is arranged in four staves. The top staff contains a vocal line with lyrics written below it. The lower three staves contain lute tablature, with numbers 0-5 indicating fret positions. The manuscript includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings like "f". The page is numbered "No. 54." at the top and "36" in the upper right corner. The piece ends with a decorative flourish and the word "finis".

Figure 7 | Giacomo Gorzanis, *Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro*, from D-Mbs, Ms. 1511°, fol. 36v

Music example | Transcription of Giacomo Gorzanis' *Bella che tieni li capigli d'oro* from D-Mbs, Ms. 1511°, fol. 36v

Cantus

Bel- la che tie- ni li ca- pi- gli d'o- ro Ch'el tuo

Lute in A

5

bel no- me di- re non si può. Me- schi- no che fa- rò?

Lute in A

9

me- schi- no che fa- rò? Bi- so- gne- rà mo- ri re ch'el non ve- der- ti non si

Lute in A

14

può sof- fri- re, ch'el non ve- der- ti non si - può sof- fri- re.

Lute in A

- 1) Tablature inserts a wrong sign 4 on 3 third course (d#)
- 2) Rythmic value not present in tablature
- 3) Rythmic value not present in tablature

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