

Silvius Leopold Weiss and the Improvised Prelude¹

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ABSTRACT: The prelude, whether pre-composed or improvised, presented an opportunity for lute players of all periods to demonstrate their skill in improvisation and exploit their powers of musical expression in a very personal way. The preludes and fantasias of Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750) demonstrate a masterful continuation of the same tradition. This article aims to show that some preludes in lute manuscripts from the middle of the eighteenth century contain features that are related with attempts to emulate Weiss's powers of improvisation. Unmeasured preludes for lute survive in larger numbers than the well-known French repertory for the harpsichord. Some are based—at least in their openings—on standard gestures; in particular, a common d-minor melodic formula can be found in at least twenty-five examples from the 1650s through to Weiss's early years of maturity. Otherwise, a basic harmonic sequence provided a flexible structure for preludes as shown in sketches or more complete examples in many sources. After a brief discussion of some prominent features of improvised music, the article focusses on a group of manuscripts from Silesia showing that some passages within written-out preludes in these sources are extracts from other works, including by Weiss himself, suggesting that quotation may have been a step on the way to learning to compose.

KEYWORDS: Prelude, Fantasia, improvisation, Silvius Leopold Weiss, Johann Michael Kühnel, David Kellner

If you are not able to make preludiums you must learne a great many of others soe that takeing a peece of one and a peece of another when you come to the handling of the Lute in a Company people may thinke that you play a Preludium of your owne made extempore. (“Mary Burwell’s Lute Tutor,” f. 40v)

The prelude is at once the most characteristic and the most mysterious genre of lute music. Its basic function at all periods, and in all cultures in which the lute was (and is) used, was to introduce, explore, or “research” (“rechercher,” “ricercar”) the mode or key of the music to follow. The way in which this was done varied according to the prevailing stylistic idiom of the period, but there are common features between preludes from widely differing dates. In general, the prelude presented an opportunity

¹ This article began life two decades ago as a paper read at Wrocław, Poland, at the 10th International Conference “Tradition of Silesian Music Culture” (March 2001). Since then, it has been expanded somewhat. I am grateful to David Ledbetter (Manchester, UK), André Burguete (Dresden, Germany), and François-Pierre Goy (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, France) for helpful comments on drafts of this version. Thanks also to Grzegorz Joachimiak (Wrocław, Poland), Miloslav Študent (Svatý Jan pod Skalou, Czech Republic) and Sophie-Antoinette von Lülsdorf (Karl und Faber, Munich, Germany). In view of his long-standing encouragement and advice over many years, this article is dedicated to the memory of Douglas Alton Smith, who would undoubtedly have had something to add. I am also grateful to the late Claude Chauvel (Bordeaux, France) for his help in obtaining materials.

for lute players to demonstrate their skill in improvisation and exploit their powers of musical expression in a very personal way. This is not the place to give a history of the lute prelude and related forms such as the fantasia and *ricercar*; it is enough to say that Silvius Leopold Weiss's preludes and fantasias demonstrate a masterful continuation of the same tradition. This article aims to take a closer look at some of them and to show that a number of anonymous preludes in lute manuscripts from the middle of the eighteenth century contain features that could be related with attempts to emulate Weiss's powers of improvisation, probably carried out in the context of teaching.

Lute Preludes

Since it is clear that the model for eighteenth-century German lute music was the earlier French school of lutenist-composers, it might be useful to review the way in which the prelude of Weiss's time fits into this tradition.

The earliest datable unmeasured prelude for lute, written in the hand of René Mesangeau, is found in a manuscript dating from c. 1620.² In the half century between that time and the emergence of the much better-known repertory of unmeasured preludes for harpsichord, from the 1670s onward, large numbers of preludes were written down in lute tablature. Listed in Christian Meyer's inventories of lute tablature manuscripts are over 600 preludes from the baroque period, the great majority from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, very few of which are not of the unmeasured variety (Meyer 1991-99). For comparison, Colin Tilney's 1991 compilation of the known French harpsichord unmeasured preludes (to which perhaps a dozen need to be added for recent discoveries) contains fewer than 100 works (Tilney 1991).

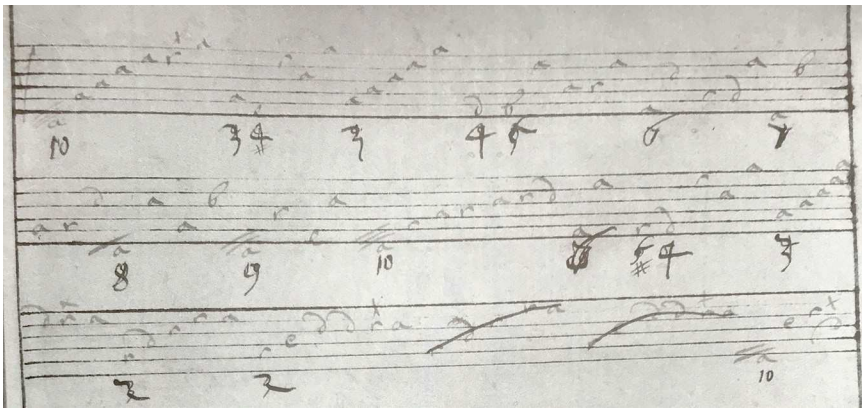
Concordances within the lute prelude tradition are generally rather rare, and often arise from the literal copying of printed sources in manuscript.³ In only one case to the author's knowledge can a lute prelude be found in partial transcription for keyboard. This is a prelude in Darmstadt MS 17, a keyboard tablature dated 1672 that explicitly states that it comprises transcriptions of

² D-Bs N. Mus. Ms. 479, ff. 76v-77. This has been confirmed as an example of Mesangeau's autograph by François-Pierre Goy (Goy 2008, 76).

³ Within the French repertory, a number of direct copies of preludes exist, such as those published in the *Corpus des Luthistes Français*, by Denis Gautier (Gautier, Denis, 1996, nos. 56 and 85); Pierre Gautier (Gautier, Pierre, 1984, no. 84); François Dufaut (Dufaut 1988, nos. 3, 87, and 97); Jacques Gallot (Gallot 1987, nos. 1 and 16); and Charles Mouton (Mouton 1996, nos. 1, 11, 15, 22, 36, 53, 86, and 16). In the later German/Austrian tradition, exact copies are much less frequent; as an example, A-Kr, Kremsmünster Abbey Library, MS L77, f. 48v, "Praeludio 1mi toni," is a close copy of the first prelude from Philipp Franz Le Sage de Richée's *Cabinet der Lauten* (1695).

lute and mandora music on its title page.⁴ The opening prelude in the MS (fol. 1r) begins with almost exactly the same sequence of forty-seven notes found at the start of a prelude (in a layer probably copied in the 1640s or 1650s) in the “Swan” manuscript in the library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.⁵ The opening of the lute prelude and its keyboard transcription (from Meyer’s edition) are presented and compared in parallel in Example 1. Two other preludes from the same copying layer in “Swan” open in a similar way: Nos. 11 (fol. 7r; see Example 2a) and 141, which is a slightly different version of No. 77, using a different tuning (fol. 77v; see Example 2b). In fact, very similar opening gestures can be found in at least twenty different lute preludes stemming from the seventy or so years after its earliest appearance in the “Swan” manuscript, including an example by S. L. Weiss that may be an early work composed during his period in Italy, 1710–14 (see Example 3). This seems to suggest that it was a recognized conventional opening gambit for preludes in this key, to be followed by more “personal” material (none of these preludes, with the exception of the two versions in “Swan,” continues with the same music). A list of D-minor preludes beginning with this gesture is given below as Appendix 1.

Example 1. Prelude openings compared: “Swan MS” and Darmstadt 17



Example 1a. Untitled (prelude), St. Petersburg ‘Swan’ MS, fol. 44r

⁴ D-DS Mus. Ms. 17; the title page reads: “Allemanden, Couranten, Sarabanden, Gigueen, Cavotten [sic] auß unterschiedlichen Tonen mit sonderbahrem Fleiss von der Lauten und Mandor auff das Spinnet von Einem beedes der Lauten, Mandor und dess Clavier Verständigigen abgesetzt, Anno 1672, den 18 May” (modern edition Meyer 2003).

⁵ RS-Span Ms. O, no. 204 (facsimile edition Crawford and Goy 1994, no. 77, p. 44). Like many other pieces in this manuscript, the original lute tablature has been adapted for performance on the baryton by adding bass notes to be played by the player’s left thumb.

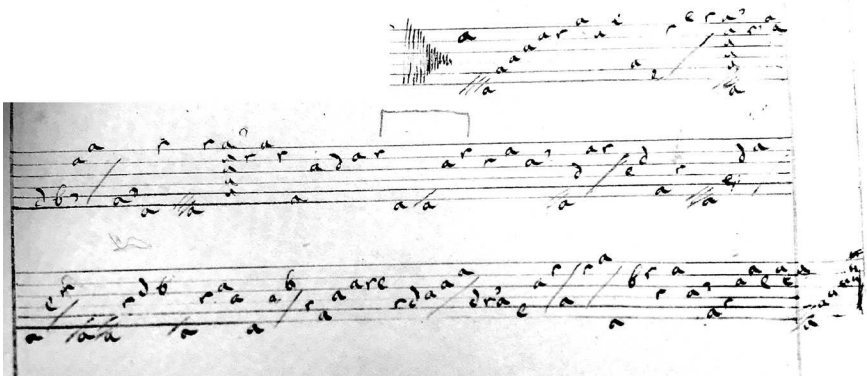
The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a lute prelude. The title "Prelude. C." is written at the top left. The music is written on five staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various chord symbols such as F, P, F.P., and #, along with rhythmic markings and fingerings. The piece concludes with a large "C" time signature and a flourish. The manuscript is identified as Darmstadt 17 (D-DS Mus. Ms. 17), fol. 2.

Example 1b. Prelude, Darmstadt 17 (D-DS Mus. Ms. 17), fol. 2, German keyboard tablature

The image displays a musical score for Example 1c, comparing two pieces: "Swan" and Darmstadt 17. The score is organized into five systems. The first system features a vocal line with a melodic line of notes and a piano accompaniment in 7/8 time, marked with a 'c' (crescendo) and various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows a vocal line with notes and a piano accompaniment with fingerings (3, 4, 5, 2, 5, 5, 2, 5). The fourth system includes a small section with a vocal line and the word "etc." below it, followed by a piano accompaniment. The fifth system concludes the piece with a vocal line and piano accompaniment, including a final cadence with a fermata.

Example 1c. Comparative transcription of "Swan" and Darmstadt 17

Example 2. Two further D minor preludes from "Swan"



Example 2a. "Swan," no. 11, fol. 7r

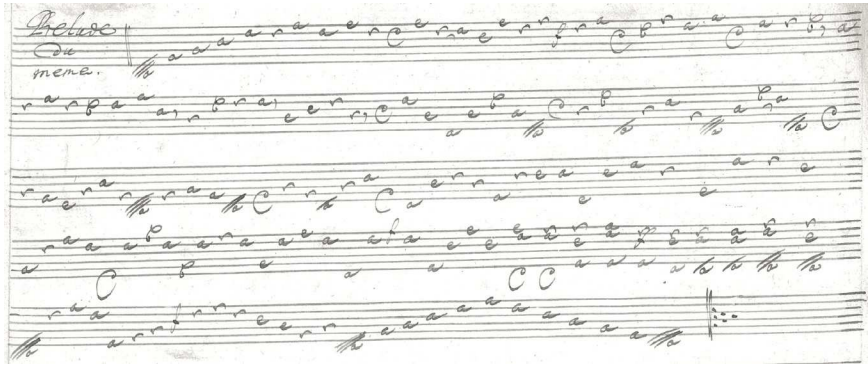


Example 2b. "Swan," no. 141, fol. 77v

Example 3. Two later D minor preludes



Example 3a. Prelude, Rostock 54, Rostock 54, ?1670s (p. 33)



Example 3b. Prelude du meme, (Weiss *43) Harrach I, ?1710-14, fol. 57v

The Prelude in Weiss's Music

By the later seventeenth century, printed lute sources (and some manuscripts) often give preludes at the beginning of each section beginning a new key, but each suite does not always begin with a prelude.⁶ In general,

⁶ Printed examples include Esaias Reusner the younger's *Delitiae Testudinis* (first published 1667) and *Neue Lautenfrüchte* (1676); Jacques Bittner, *Pièces de luth* (1682); Phillip Franz Le

in the eighteenth century lute preludes have a great range of scale, from a tiny sequence of a few chords through to the massive *Preludio Nel quale Sono contenuti tutti i Tuoni Musicali* by Falckenhagen,⁷ which lasts as long as a complete S. L. Weiss sonata in performance, over twenty-five minutes in a contemporary recording (Beier 1997). In Example 4a, taken from the didactic manuscript *Fundamenta der Lauten-musique* (?c. 1710) in the Lobkowitz library,⁸ the anonymous teacher presents a sequence comprising (i) a simple tonic—dominant seventh—tonic cadence, (ii) a series of ten chords, and (iii) a more extended prelude, all with parallel figured bass notation to show the underlying harmonic scheme. This can be compared with Example 4b, a short D-minor prelude from Kalmar County Museum, MS 21072 (before 1715), which has a similar harmonic profile, and one in G minor from the same MS that opens in precisely the same way (Example 4c).

Example 4 (Harmonic outlines)

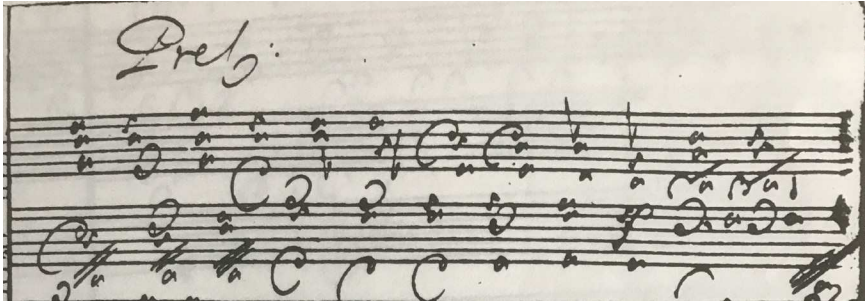
The image shows a page from a handwritten musical manuscript. At the top left, there is a large, stylized letter 'D' enclosed in a square box. Below this, the word 'Prelude' is written in a cursive hand. The page contains several staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a series of notes and rests, with a large 'D' written above the first few notes. Below the notes, there is a line of figured bass notation with numbers like 6, 5, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The second staff continues the music with similar notation. The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The fourth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The music is written in a cursive hand with some corrections and markings.

Example 4a. *Fundamenta der Lauten-musique*, fol. 23v;

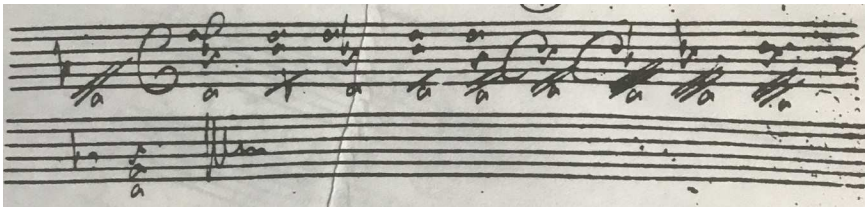
Sage de Richée, *Cabinet der Lauten* (Breslau, 1695). In his *Lautenkonzerne* (Vienna, 1699) for lute with violin and bowed bass instrument, Ferdinand Ignaz Hinterleithner adopted a different strategy: the lute part opens with a single through-composed prelude (for lute solo) that proceeds through the different keys of the partitas of the collection in order, marking the keys and main cadences. How this was meant to be used in performance is not made entirely clear.

⁷ D-As MS. Tonkunst 2o fasc. III, fascicle 51.

⁸ CZ-Nlob (formerly CZ-Pu) Ms. II.Kk.51 (Meyer, *Sources Manuscripts*, III/2, p. 55).



Example 4b. Kalmar 21072, fol. 29, Prel[ude] in D minor;



Example 4c. Kalmar 21072, fol. 42, Prelude in G minor

Weiss himself composed a prelude modulating like Falckenhagen's through all the keys (if we are to trust the Breitkopf catalog entry listing both works with identical titles), which is now lost but can be assumed to have been of similar scale.⁹ By contrast, the Dresden manuscript of his works (which the anonymous compiler systematically organized by key) has some very short preludes at the head of key sections that are little more than introductions to establish the new key. It was on the grounds of their lack of compositional interest that Douglas Smith excluded them from consideration as works by Weiss (Smith 1977, 51-3); on the other hand, there is a possibility that they had been extracted from a longer work, such as the lost prelude in all the keys, and for this reason they have now been included in the *Sämtliche Werke*.¹⁰

The traditional "core" sequence of suite movements (allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue) was well established by this time, and it forms the basis for almost all of Weiss's sonatas (he seems to have preferred this term

⁹ Breitkopf 1761: "XI. Die Laute ... 6. Praeludia und dergleichen Lautenstücke": "Falckenhagen, Adam, Mus. Di Cam. Di Marggr. Di Bareuth, Praeludio, nel quale sono contenuti tutti I Tuoni musicali. a 1 thl. 8 gl" (manuscript copy: D-As MS. Tonkunst 2o fasc. III, fascicle 51); loc. cit., "Weiss, Sylvio Leopold, Musico di Camera di Ré di Polonia, Praeludio, nel quale son contenuti tutti I Tuoni musicali. a 1 thl. 8 gl."

¹⁰ The preludes regarded as spurious by Smith have been included as items 29*, 30*, 31*, 32*, and 33* in Weiss 1983-2013, vols. 5-8.

to “suite” or “partita”), although he almost invariably also included a menuet and usually some other *galanterie* such as a bourrée, gavotte, or paisane. The two principal sources of Weiss’s music, both containing substantial autograph contributions, the *London* (GB-Lbl Add. 30387) and *Dresden* (D-Dl MS. Mus. 2841-V-1) manuscripts show clear evidence that in many cases—probably the majority—preludes were added, sometimes by the composer himself, to the sonatas at some time after the original copying (Crawford 2006). Only twelve out of the total of sixty-two solo sonatas from these two sources (about 23 percent) were copied with “integral” preludes. Extending the count to include all 109 of the sonatas in the *Sämtliche Werke* adds a further ten sonatas to this tally (27 percent); eight sonatas open with a fantasia (or, in one case, a capriccio in similar style).¹¹ Furthermore, not a single one of Weiss’s sonatas can be found in more than one source with the same prelude. No fewer than three different preludes are associated with Sonata 12 in A (using the Weiss 1983–2013 numbering), and we shall be returning to these later in this discussion.

In “London” blank tablature pages were often left where preludes might be inserted and, in at least two cases, Sonatas 26 and 27, Weiss himself added a prelude at a later time to one of his sonatas already copied by another hand.¹² It is likely that this book, like most other lute manuscripts of the period, was compiled in association with lute lessons, the music copied in either by a lute teacher or under his supervision to build a repertory of suitable material for lessons or private practice. The fact that space was left in the initial copying phase for preludes clearly implies that they were in some way necessary, but perhaps also that the composer preferred not to write them down for his pupil (probably Johann Christian Anthoni von Adlersfeld, c. 1690–before 1741) at that stage in his teaching. (Madl 2000) Weiss’s powers of improvisation were legendary; he was even compared to J. S. Bach in this respect. One can be sure that this skill was amply demonstrated to pupils in the intimacy of lessons, and it is probable that Weiss intended that his students should at least attempt to cultivate the art of improvising preludes; the fact that written preludes needed to be added later suggests that the tactic was not completely successful in this case. Even after a prelude had been added, it seems that Weiss did not expect it to be played slavishly as written: one prelude not originally copied by the composer (Sonata 13 in D minor, London,

¹¹ Eight other sonatas open with an “ouverture,” a movement type that is clearly not improvised and thus beyond the scope of this article.

¹² “London,” fols. 125v (Sonata 26 in D) and 129v (Sonata 27 in C minor). It should also be noted that the prelude to the entirely autograph Sonata 1 appears to have been added after the other movements were numbered by another hand.

fol. 56v) has an extra line of music added in Weiss's autograph that leads away from the tonic key, apparently suggesting a direction for extending the piece in the course of improvisation. The return to the home key is not completed, and the extended piece must be finished by an improvised conclusion (see Example 5).



Example 5. "London," fol. 56v

Let us now look at some of the general characteristics of music that owes its origin to improvisation. This is not the place for a thorough examination of the *stylus phantasticus*¹³ and the repertory of the music from the baroque period that is in that style, but the following summary is based on my own observations, informed by comments from contemporary treatises (principally Mace 1676, Baron 1727, C. P. E. Bach 1762) and various modern commentators. The general features that are relevant here are:

- i) sectional or episodic, rather than "architectonic," structure, with ideas presented in succession without an emphasis on thematic continuity or development;
- ii) occasional use of a common stock of musical material between works in this style by the same composer;
- iii) dependence on dramatic performance or rhetorical delivery.

Coupled with these are five technical features found in free preludes and instrumental fantasias; the first and last of these are especially idiomatic for the lute:

- i) arpeggiated chords (with a wide range of variety of interpretation);
- ii) virtuoso passagework (*passaggi*);
- iii) prominent cadenza-like pedal points;
- iv) passages of modulation with expressive dissonances;

¹³ The term seems to have been coined by Athanasius Kircher (*Musica Universalis*, Rome, 1650), though he probably intended to refer principally to the improvisation of counterpoint by organists. This style and its background are examined thoroughly in Collins 2005.

- v) a bass line typically built on diatonic scales within sections marked off by clear cadences.

Some notational features: pieces in this style by Weiss and his contemporaries

- i) are generally unmeasured, though often with a time signature (presumably to indicate the basic tempo of the opening);
- ii) often contain modulating sequences of block chords (frequently without rhythm signs), sometimes marked to be played as arpeggios, although just as often there is no explicit marking (concordant versions sometimes give written-out arpeggiation patterns for these passages);
- iii) sometimes contain rhythmically regular passages in contrast to the generally “free” rhythmical style; these usually involve sequences, and are sometimes measured and even barred;
- iv) occasionally have in broken-chord passages a melodic, quasi-recitative aspect that is somewhat concealed by the notation—the “tune” is differentiated by its position within the texture and by characteristics such as ornamentation.

The matter of arpeggiation in Weiss’s preludes and fantasias was dealt with comprehensively by Karl-Ernst Schröder in a study first presented at a conference on Weiss in Freiburg-im-Breisgau in 1992, and that deserves to be better known (Schröder 2002). From this it emerges that passages in block chords (ii, above) were almost certainly intended to be arpeggiated, even when not explicitly marked so. Some of the Silesian manuscripts which serve as a case study on which this article focuses use a special form of notation, with extra numbers placed above the tablature stave to indicate the method of arpeggio performance, which is explained in a set of instructions copied at the beginning of one of them (Smith 1976).¹⁴ These possibly relate to Weiss’s teaching, although he does not use this notation in his own autograph manuscripts, and it is rarely found outside this particular group of sources.¹⁵

The use of preexistent music as a consequence of an improvisational approach can be divided into two main categories. First, there is the occasional need for all performers to fall back on a common stock of personal “tricks” that can be used in various contexts. Second, there is the entirely conscious allusion to, or quotation of, music that the performer admires, often by way of homage to its composer, a phenomenon that can be observed in all genres of music in Weiss’s time, and very familiar from the habits of jazz musicians

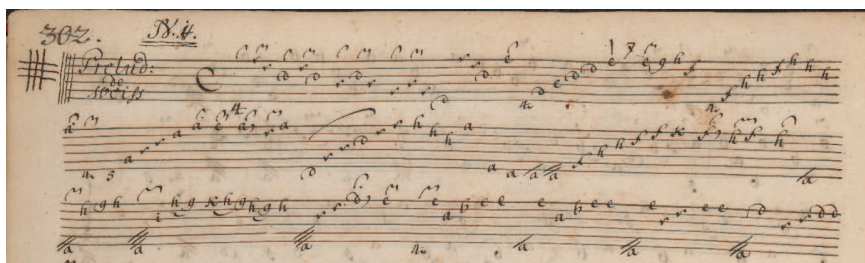
¹⁴ See Appendix 2, below, *WR2002*.

¹⁵ One such example is a measured prelude in the hand of the Salzburg kapellmeister and lutenist Mattias Sigismund Biechteler (1668–1743), in A-Kr MS L78, f. 26v, marked “Harpeggio” (twice!), whose first measure contains block chords annotated with the number “4” as well as written-out arpeggiations (each sounding four notes).

in our own.

Several of the features of the improvisational style mentioned here can be seen and heard in a pair of pieces by Weiss in the *stylus phantasticus* from the “London” manuscript (see Example 6). The second of these, an extended fantasia probably from the mid 1720s (Example 6b), is clearly based on ideas from the prelude copied a few pages earlier in the manuscript (Example 6a) and to which frequent reference is made throughout the piece. These ideas include melodic motives that a sensitive performer must disentangle from the prevailing arpeggio texture in a way that would be hard to express in conventional music notation (such features are by no means explicit in the original tablature notation, either).

Example 6. Prelude and Fantasia from “London”



A printed musical score for a prelude, consisting of three systems. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble and a rhythmic arpeggiated accompaniment in the bass. The second system continues the melodic and arpeggiated patterns. The third system features a more complex melodic line with many accidentals and a steady arpeggiated accompaniment.

Example 6a. Prelude (London, fol. 151v)

The image displays a page from a historical lute manuscript. The top portion features handwritten notation in a cursive, calligraphic style, with the word "Fantasia" written at the beginning. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals. Below the original manuscript are two staves of modern musical notation, which appear to be a transcription of the piece. The first staff is in treble clef and the second is in bass clef, both with a common time signature. The modern notation uses standard musical symbols for notes, rests, and bar lines to represent the original piece's structure.

Example 6b. Fantasia (London, fol. 153)

The Grüssau/Krzeszów Lute Manuscripts

This group of thirteen manuscripts is of considerable importance in the history of the lute in the eighteenth century (see Joachimiak 2016). Formerly in the library of the Benedictine monastery at Grüssau in Silesia (now Krzeszów in Poland), most of the manuscripts had been held at the musicological institute in Breslau (now Wrocław in Poland) until World War II, and now form part of the manuscript collection in Warsaw University Library (see Appendix 2). One or two others were dispersed at an earlier period to other collections, including one purchased at the 1929 Wolffheim sale by the Swedish collector Rudolf Nydahl and now preserved in a research library in Stockholm (Appendix 2, Stockholm), and most notably MS Mf 2002, which has remained in the Wrocław University Library (Appendix 2, WR2002). This latter manuscript, and another that is in the Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw (Appendix 2, WN396), bear identically worded calligraphic title pages that state that they were prepared for Father Hermien Kniebandl, who was at Krzeszów until he moved to Bad Warmbrunn/Cieplice Sl. Zdroj some time before 1737 (Boetticher 1978, 343). Together, these manuscripts, which are unquestionably of Silesian origin, contain evidence of a vigorous school of lute playing during Weiss's mature years and soon after his death in a region that lay directly on the path from his place of employment, Dresden, to Breslau/Wrocław, where his career had begun. Weiss undoubtedly maintained

close contacts with the Silesian nobility as well as with the Polish aristocracy through his employment at the Saxon electoral and Polish royal courts based in Dresden and Warsaw, which he visited with the *Polnische Kapelle* as part of his duties. However, the details of this patronage in his later career have still to be researched in detail, and it is therefore not yet clear how closely Weiss himself can be associated with the writers of these manuscripts, which contain no autograph material.

The Grüssau/Krzeszów manuscripts containing music by Weiss can be very approximately dated thus: WR2002 (c. 1737), W2003/5 (c. 1740–55), W2004 (after 1728), W2008/9 (c. 1744), and W2010/11 (?c. 1744). Most of the music was therefore entered in the composer's later years or soon after his death. The general quality and accuracy of many of the Weiss pieces suggests that there was a fairly close link with the composer, and there are several Weiss *unica* in the collection. An unusual feature of the group of manuscripts, copied by a variety of hands, is that music often appears in duplicate copies in more than one manuscript. The reason for this is not yet clear. In one case, a manuscript was originally copied twice in its entirety (W2008 and W2009 are virtually identical in contents), and a substantial portion of the earliest layer of W2003 was recopied as the basis of W2005 (see Meyer 1991-99, III/2, pages 202-20, 183-8, and 194-9).

Among the preludes in these manuscripts, few are clearly ascribed to Weiss. W2004 contains three sonatas entitled "Parthia del Sig. Weis," each of which opens with a prelude not found in other sources of the sonatas (see Example 7). Those in D minor (to Sonata 11; see Example 7a) and F major (to Sonata 1; see Example 7b) are not altogether typical of the composer's preludes, being in a non-improvisatory, running style closer to that of many of his later sonatas' fast movements (and, incidentally, somewhat reminiscent of keyboard music, notably some of Bach's preludes from the "48").

Example 7. Two Weiss preludes from W2004



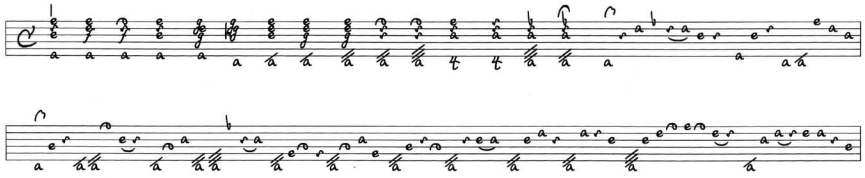
A modern musical score for two preludes. The first prelude is in D minor, 3/4 time, and consists of two measures. The second prelude is also in D minor, 3/4 time, and consists of two measures. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The first prelude features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand, with a simple bass line in the left hand. The second prelude has a similar rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active bass line.

Example 7a. Prelude in D minor (W2004, fol. 1r)

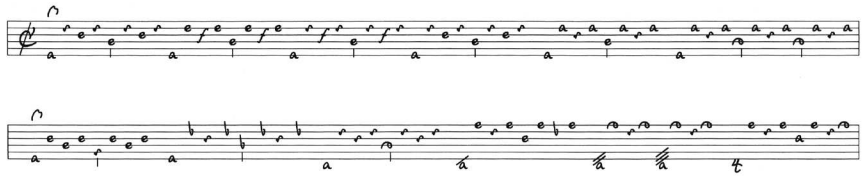
Example 7b. Prelude in F major (W2004, 4v)

The third prelude in W2004, in A major, is one of three authentic preludes for Sonata 12 found in different sources (see Example 8). The openings of these three preludes present obviously different textures: Example 8a (which is also found in a Munich manuscript as an isolated prelude not followed by any sonata) simply presents a sequence of block chords (D-Mbs Mus. Ms. 5362); Example 8b begins with a written-out sequence of broken chords; Example 8c starts with an elaborate arpeggiation of a single A-major chord that settles into an unfolding of arpeggiated chords over scalar bass patterns. They are, however, unified by an identical harmonic scheme, at least in their opening gestures; this can be seen in Example 9, where their progress to the goal of the dominant chord, E major, is far clearer when the arpeggiations are reduced to their generating chords in the manner of Example 8a. Example 9d shows the essential outline, a descending bass line spanning a diatonic tetrachord from the tonic A to the dominant E.

Example 8. Three preludes to Sonata 12 in A. Movements 8, 10 and 9 in the *Sämtliche Werke*



Example 8a. 8. Prelude



Example 8b. 10. Prelude



Example 8c. 9. Prelude

Example 9. Harmonic outlines of the three preludes from Example 8

Example 9a. Chord sequence of prelude 12/8 (Dresden & Munich MSS)

Example 9b. Chord sequence of prelude 12/10 (Vienna 18829)

Example 9c. Chord sequence of prelude 12/9 (W2004)

Example 9d. Common harmonic basis of 4a-c

The Grüssau/Krzeszów manuscripts contain a large number of anonymous pieces, among which are several preludes. These preludes sometimes appear in several copies, sometimes identical, but more often with differences in detail. Some of them bear the unmistakable stamp of Weiss's authorship, while others seem to be in a style reminiscent of the composer but with much less formal clarity and continuity and without his characteristic sense of a dramatic unfolding.¹⁶

Several anonymous preludes from the Grüssau/Krzeszów collection cannot be so easily attributed to the great Dresden master and show some puzzling features. While we must accept that many sources of baroque lute music, and therefore many important compositions of the prelude/fantasia kind (which, as I have argued above, were usually improvised in any case), are lost to us altogether today, it is striking that some of the Grüssau/Krzeszów preludes contain substantial quotations from preexistent works in similar style. Example 10a shows one of these, a D-major Prelude from WR2002, page 8. It shares material with a Weiss fantasia whose source, a manuscript

¹⁶ An anonymous untitled Prelude in D from W2003/5, for example, must be regarded as an authentic Weiss work, since it leads directly into an extended version of a capriccio found in the London manuscript (SC *25), and in turn is followed by an allemande and sonata that appear as no. 25 in the posthumous Breitkopf thematic catalogue (1769) of Weiss's sonatas (Brook 1966, 372). The entire sonata is published as Sonata 91 in the *Sämtliche Werke*.

formerly owned by the Polish musicologist Alexander Polinski and now at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris,¹⁷ puts it among a group of similar works “composées à Rome,” that is, when Weiss was serving Prince Alexander Slobieski in that city (1710–14), although the Paris manuscript was evidently copied in Leipzig from its exemplar many years later, certainly after 1735¹⁸ (see Example 10b).

Example 10. Common passages between a Prelude and a Fantasia by Weiss

Example 10a. Anon., Prelude in D from WR2002, page 8;

¹⁷ F-Pn Rés. Vma. ms 1213; a facsimile of the first page of the manuscript is reproduced in Polinski 1907, 153.

¹⁸ The copyist of the Paris MS was Luise Adelgunde Viktoria Kulmus (1713–62), who moved from her home city of Danzig to Leipzig in 1735 to marry the university’s professor of poetry, Johann Christian Gottsched (1700–66). An expert lute player and harpsichordist, she took some lessons and received music from Weiss, as mentioned in an autograph letter dated September 28, 1741 (Schulze 1968, 203), reproduced in facsimile in Smith 1977, 19–21.

The image displays a handwritten musical score for S. L. Weiss's Paris 1213 Fantasia in D, consisting of four staves. The notation is in a historical style, featuring a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first staff begins with a series of eighth notes, followed by a sequence of sixteenth notes. The second staff continues with similar rhythmic patterns, including some triplet markings. The third and fourth staves show further development of the melodic and rhythmic motifs, with some notes marked with 'a' and 'b' below them, possibly indicating fingerings or specific notes. The overall texture is light and intricate, characteristic of the lute or harpsichord style.

Example 10b. S. L. Weiss, Paris 1213 Fantasia in D (extract)

A Prelude in A from WR2002 (page 37), which also exists in slightly variant form in W2008/9 (pages 118-9 and 170-1, respectively), has a more tenuous but also more intriguing link to Weiss. This piece, as Karl-Ernst Schröder has shown, is partly the same as the fantasia that opens J. S. Bach's Suite for Violin and Obligato Harpsichord, BWV1025, a work whose other movements have been recognized as arrangements by Bach of Weiss's Sonata no. 47 (Wolff 1993; Schröder 1995). In the *unicum* source of the sonata in "Dresden," listed as number four in the Breitkopf catalog (Brook 1966, 370) there is no fantasia, and Wolff proposed that Bach composed his fantasia as a conscious imitation of the lutenist's style (Wolff 1993). It seems equally likely that, like the other movements of the sonata, it was in fact an arrangement of an existing Weiss fantasia, adapted to the idiom and technical resources of Bach's own instrument (and possibly extended somewhat). It seems unlikely, however, that the modest (and not wholly convincing) Silesian prelude was entirely composed by Weiss, although we should not discount the possibility that it derives from a work by him sketched out roughly for a pupil.¹⁹

Weiss is not, of course, the only composer whose works are represented in the Grüssau/Krzeszów manuscripts. And, intriguingly, we find that preludes

¹⁹ The prelude is published as movement seven of Sonata 47 in A in Weiss 1983–2013, Appendix to vol. 6 (p. 210) and vol. 8 (p. 269).

in the collection are sometimes based on music by other composers. One interesting example is an anonymous C-minor Prelude, marked “adagio,” from W2008 (pages 152-3) that can now be identified tentatively as a work by a less well-known lutenist contemporary with Weiss, Johann Michael Kühnel. Several manuscripts of music by Kühnel appeared in two auction sales in the twentieth century, the first in 1929 (Wolffheim 1929) and the other in 1956.²⁰ Sadly, the purchasers of all these manuscripts remain elusive, and much of Kühnel’s music (mostly chamber music for lute with other instruments) has disappeared. Fortunately, the catalog for the 1956 auction printed a photograph of the opening movement of one of the works, entitled “Sommeil de Mr Kühnel”; this turns out to be a version of the W2008/9 prelude with only minor variants in the music that is available to us (see Examples 11a and 11b).²¹ Interestingly, a part of the figuration over a dominant pedal in the bottom two staves reproduced in the photograph also appears in a Prague manuscript of the 1720s (Example 11c), suggesting that the habit of quotation demonstrated in this article below is not unique to Silesia.²²

²⁰ Karl und Faber Kunst und Literaturantiquariat 1956, lots 467-78, pp. 53-9. The music lots 450-508 came from “einem österreichischen Fürstenhaus” [Harrach] according to a note on p. 53 of the catalog.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55 (lot 474). Sophie-Antoinette von Lülsdorff, head of provenance and research at Karl und Faber, kindly provided a photograph of the catalog illustration and informed me that this lot (474) seems to have remained unsold at the auction; it may therefore have been sold privately some time later.

²² CZ-Pnm Ms. IV.E.36, copied by Ivan Jelinek (1683-1759), p. 288, “Praeludium.”

Example 11. Kühnel and others, Prelude in C minor

152 Adagio

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

1. 13

Example 11a. W2008, pages 152-3



The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a lute piece. It consists of seven staves of music. The notation is in a historical style, featuring various note values, rests, and clefs. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged paper. The title 'Sommeil de Mr Kühnel' is written at the top left of the first staff. The word 'Handchrift' is printed at the bottom right of the page.

Nr. 474: Kühnel. Sommeil.

Handchrift

Example 11b. "Sommeil de Mr Kühnel" (MS now lost)

Example 11c. Prague Gelinek, pp. 288-9

Among the Grüssau/Krzeszów pieces are some that also appear in David Kellner's printed collection of 1747 (Kellner 1747).²³ These are found (all without a composer's name) in WR2002 (pages 15, 16-19, 32, 93, and 99-100), W2008/9 (10-11/10-11, 12-13/12-13, and 134-5/199), and W2010 (pages 116-21), which, on the face of it, suggests that all three manuscripts postdate the print's appearance. However, Kellner's collection is for an 11-course lute, an instrument that was effectively obsolete by this late date, and it is just as likely that the music had circulated in manuscript for some

²³ Kenneth Sparr points out that traces of Kellner as a lute player are strikingly lacking in archival or other sources, which contain much about his activities as organist and carillonneur in Stockholm between 1710 and his death in 1748 (Sparr 2012).

years before its publication. On pages 99-100 of WR2002 is a prelude that seems to have been based on the opening fantasia from Kellner's 1747 book; in Example 12a this is presented in a complete transcription with a facsimile of the relevant section of Kellner's engraved tablature as Example 12b.

What is especially intriguing about this particular prelude is that it also contains a similar quotation from a prelude by Weiss, in this case one whose original manuscript went missing in the late nineteenth century, but fortunately exists in a photographic reproduction and an almost complete manuscript transcription by its former owner, the Italian musicologist Oscar Chilesotti (Chilesotti 1912; see Example 12).²⁴ A modulating passage from the middle of the "Chilesotti" prelude is inserted between extracts from the Kellner fantasia in a way that, without these identifications, would give little idea that they were not part of a composition by a single composer in the improvising style.

Example 12. Kellner, Weiss, and others, A minor prelude

Example 12a. WR2002, pp. 99-100

²⁴ Chilesotti 1912, 858-81; the prelude is reproduced on p. 876; his manuscript transcription is in the Fondazione Cini, Venice (see Rumore and Zanenghi 1987). Chilesotti also published a piano arrangement of the prelude (Chilesotti 1915/1968, no. 12, pp. 14-15).

Doppio

No. 3.

Example 12b. Kellner Fantasia #1, page 3



Example 12c. Weiss, A minor prelude from lost Chilesotti MS

It is my belief that here we have evidence of a dilettante lutenist—or group of lutenists—being instructed in the art of improvisation by the practice of “com-position” — literally, “placing together” — of fragments of existing music by lutenists they admired.²⁵ While today this practice, explicitly recommended over half a century earlier by Mary Burwell’s lute teacher in the passage cited at the beginning of this article, might seem to us dangerously close to unethical, it is perhaps to be expected, given the lingering traditional importance of the concept of *imitatio* even in the eighteenth century, one by no means confined to music. The fact that in these cases the writers of these manuscripts were attempting to capture the spirit of improvisation they must have so admired suggests that we have much to learn from their manuscripts not only about the music they played, but also about the *way* in which they played it.

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²⁵ Aspiring keyboard students in Weiss’s time were encouraged to keep a musical commonplace book, in which they would copy musical extracts they admired as a source for their own extempore compositions. See the recently discovered manuscript treatise by J. S. Bach’s younger contemporary, Jakob Adlung (1699–1762), *Anweisung zur fantasieren* (c. 1726–27). An English translation is in Remes 2019.

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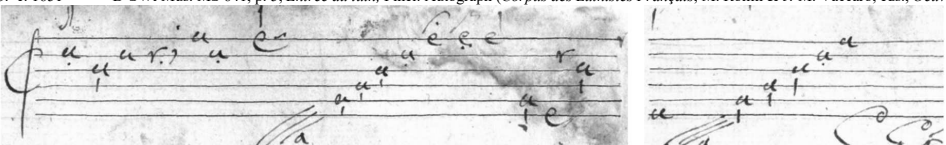
Wolffheim, Werner. 1929. *Versteigerung der Musikbibliothek des Herrn Dr. Werner Wolffheim*. 2 vols. Berlin: M. Breslauer and L. Liepmannsohn.

APPENDIX 1

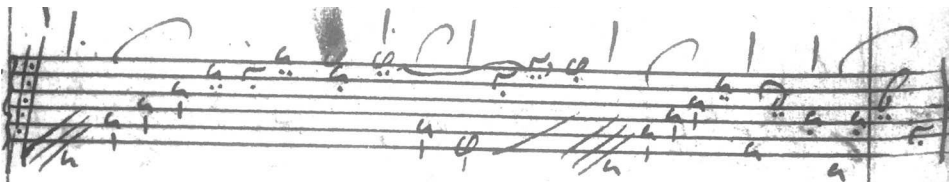
D-minor preludes with very similar openings, c. 1650–1720

The following list provides details of each piece in chronological order indicating date, the source with page or folio, the name of each work, its composer, and additional comments as required.

1. 1650-60? RS-Span Ms O no. 204 (“Swan” MS), f. 44, [n.t.]: Opening = #12 (see Example 1)
2. 1650-60? RS-Span Ms O no. 204 (“Swan” MS), f. 65, [n.t.]: Opening = #12 (see Example 2a)
3. c. 1651 D-SWI Mus. MS 641, p. 5, *Entrée du luth*, Pinel: Autograph (*Corpus des Luthistes Français*, M. Rollin & J.-M. Vaccaro, eds., *Oeuvres de Pinel* (Paris: CNRS, 1982, p. 2)



4. c. 1654-5 GB-LAN “Robarts Lute Book”, f. F1r, *Prelude*, Bourgaise: Autograph

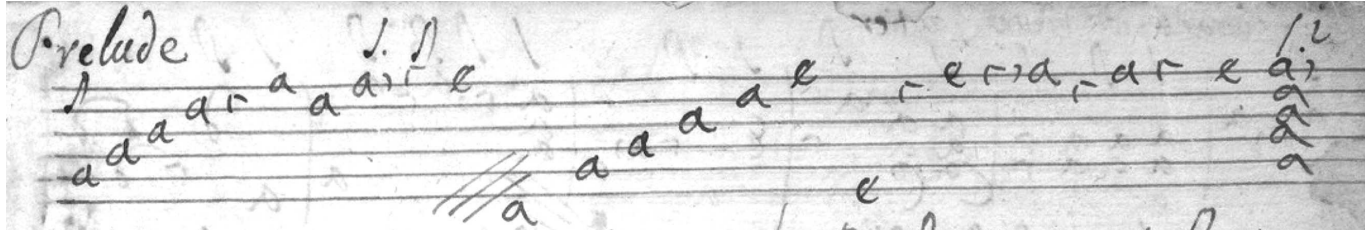


5. 1663-83? F-Pn Rés. Vmf MS 48 (Keller von Schleithem), ff. 70v-1, *Prelude*

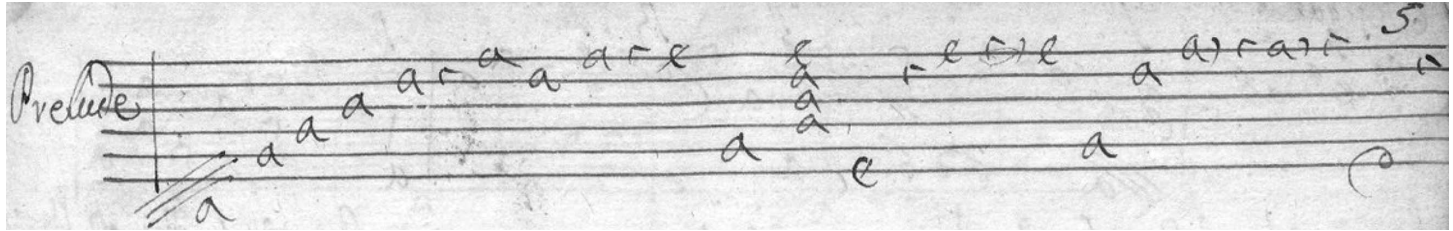


6. 1665-70? D-ROu Mus. MS Saec. XVII-54, p. 33, *Praelude*: (see Example 3a)

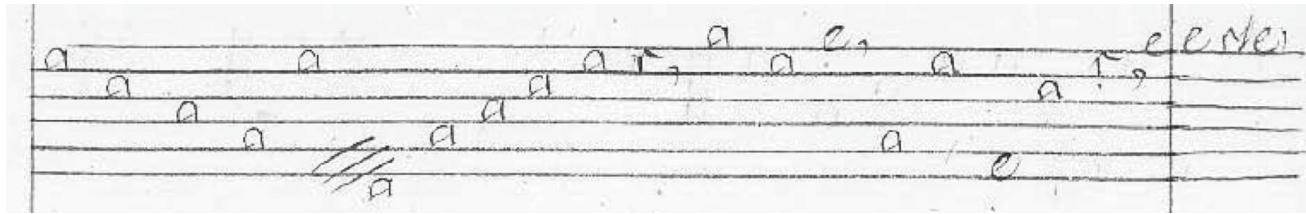
7. c. 1660? US-CA Mus. MS 174, p. 1, *Prelude*



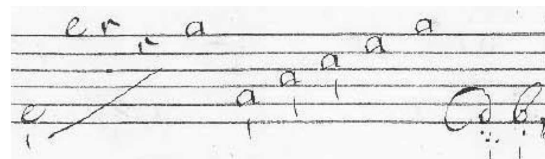
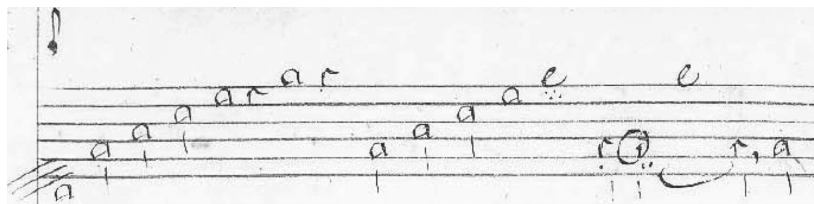
8. c. 1660? US-CA Mus. MS 174, p. 5, *Prelude*



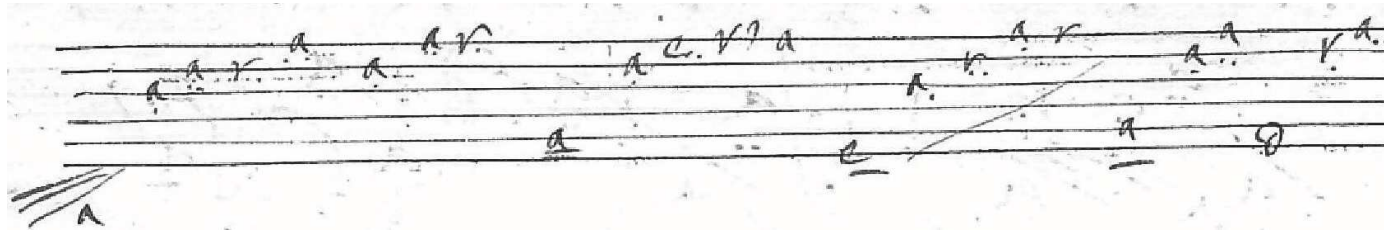
9. 1660-70 GB-Mr "Tabley House Lute Book", p. 2, *A preludeium*



10. 1660-70 GB-Mr "Tabley House Lute Book", pp. 4-5, *A preludium Gautêr of France, D.? or P.? Gaultier?*

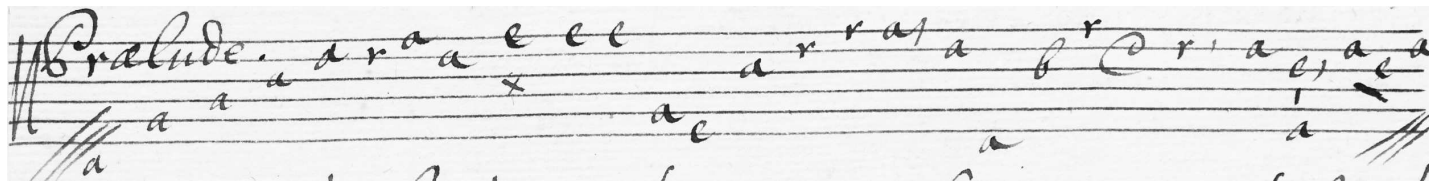


11. 1670 D-Rp MS AN62, f. 4v, *Prelude*



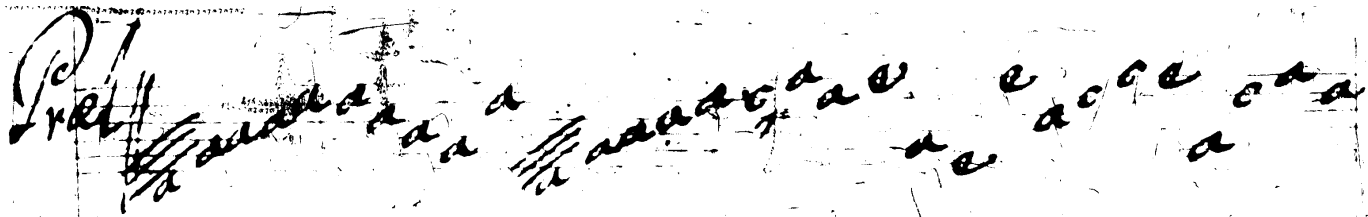
12. 1672 D-DS Mus. MS 17, f. 2, *Praelude*: Keyboard tablature; the opening is a transcription of the beginning of #1 and #2, above (see Example 1b)

13. 1674 D-Bs Mus. MS 40068, f. 28, *Praelude*

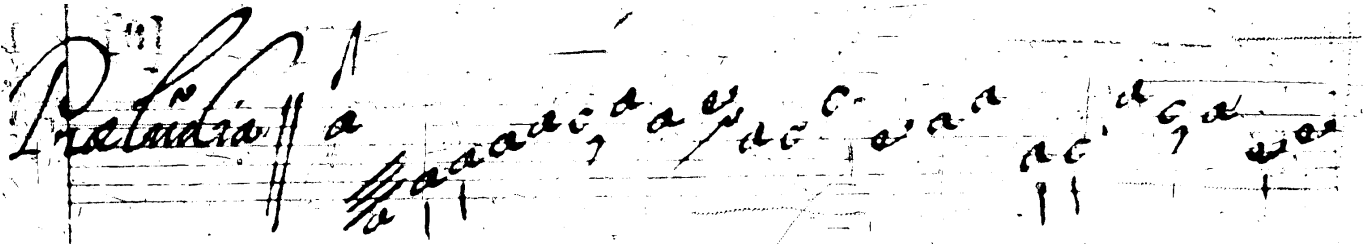


14. c. 1675 D-Bs Mus. MS 40601, ff. 9v-10, *Praeludium*, P. Gaultier: = *Corpus des Luthistes Français*, M. Rollin, ed., *Oeuvres de Pierre Gaultier* (Paris: CNRS, 1984), no. 84

15. c. 1675 D-Bs Mus. MS 40601, f. 12, *Prael.*

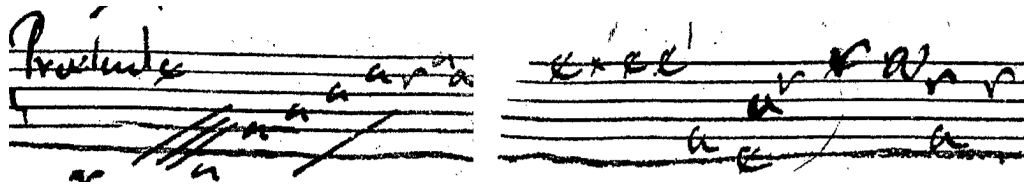


16. c. 1675 D-Bs Mus. MS 40601, f. 14, *Praeludia*, Bousch: = #17



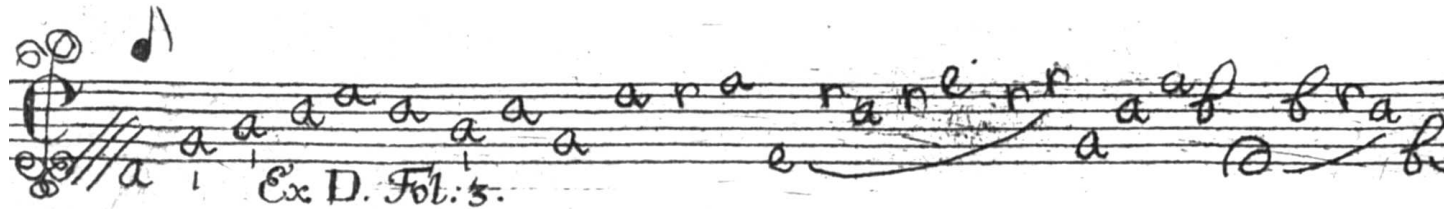
17. [1676] [A-Wengel Ms. Godfredus Bensbergh], no. 3, *Prelude de Mons. Bousch*, Bousch: = #16 (The MS, compiled by Godfredus Bensbergh and dated 1676, was formerly in the possession of Robert Engel in Vienna but is now unlocated; it was published in a modern tablature edition by Franz Julius Giesbert, *Godfredus Bensbergh Tabulaturbuch für Laute* (Neuwied, 1970). See C. Meyer et al., *Sources manuscrites*, vol. III/1, pp. 146-8.

18. 1686 A-Kla Hs I 38 (Goëss Vogl), f. 15, *Praelude*: = 19 (MS of guitar music copied in 1686 by Joannes Jacobus Conradus Vogl for Marianna Freyle Gräffin von Sinzendorff, to which lute pieces were added c. 1710)



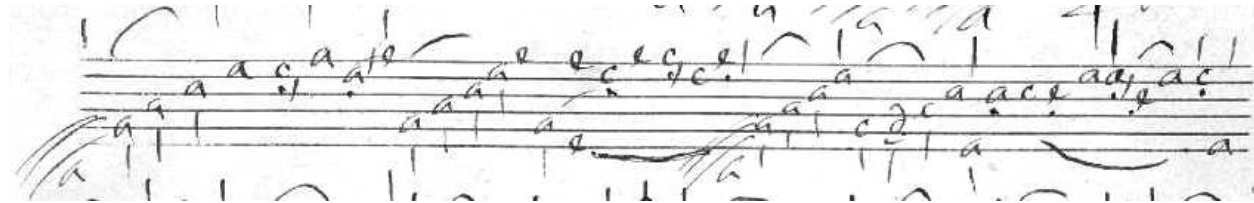
19. 1686 A-Kla Hs I 38 (Goëss Vogl), f. 19, [n.t.]: = 18 (q.v.)

20. 1699 F. I. Hinterleithner, *Lautenkoncert* (Vienna, 1699), pp. 1-2, *Praeludium Ferd. Ignat. Hinterleitner*, Hinterleithner: D-minor opening of an extended prelude passing through the keys of the successive *Lautenkoncerte*

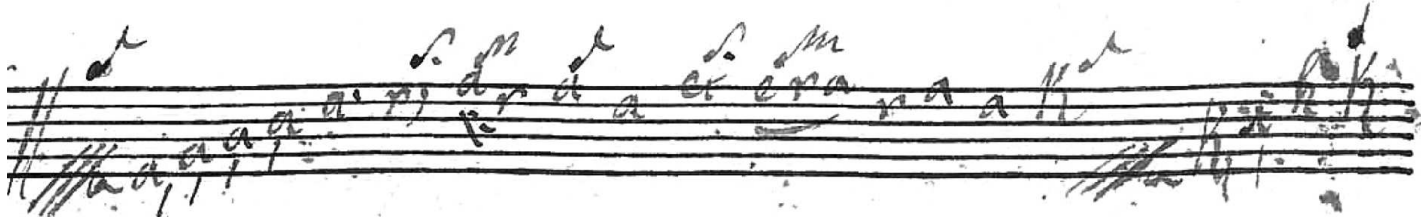


21. 1699 F-B 279152 (Saizenay I), p. 1, *Prelude*, Jacquesson: = #24

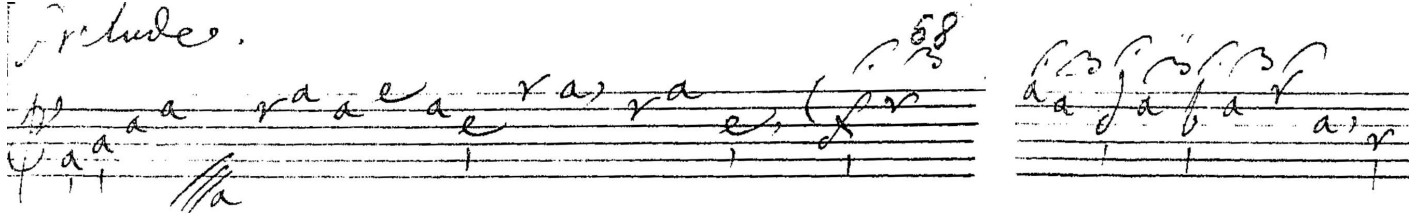
22. 1699 F-B 279153 (Saizenay II), p. 1, *Prelude de Mr. Jacquesson / Le même*, page 1 mere de mon gros livre, Jacquesson: = #23



23. 1710-20? CZ-Bm Ms. Inv. 745/A.371, pp. 63-4, *Prael. De Weichenberg*, Weichenberger



24. 1710-20? D-Bsa SA 4060, f. 68, *Prelude*



25. 1710-14? A-RO MS without signature I, f. 57v, *Prelude du meme*, S. L. Weiss, *Sämtliche Werke*, *43x: MS copied later, but this seems to be attached to a sonata from Weiss's Italian period (see Example 3b), cf #26

26. 1710-20? D-ROu Ms. Mus. Saec. XVII.18-53¹ A, f. 18v, *Prelude*, S. L. Weiss, *Sämtliche Werke*, 84/1: Cf. #25, variant (identical opening)

APPENDIX 2

The Grüssau/Krzeszów lute manuscripts; a provisional checklist

a) Formerly in the Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar der Universität Breslau

1. W2001: PL-WuRM 4135 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2001 a + b); 13 lute duet arrangements of music by Telemann (“Melante”), Martin Prant, Richter, Thielli and anon. (Meyer et al., pp. 177-83)
2. W2003: PL-WuRM 4136 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2003); lute instructions and 152 pieces for lute, by Weiss, Pichler, Porsile, and others (Meyer et al., pp. 183-9)
3. W2004: PL-WuRM 4137 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2004); 69 pieces by Weiss, Weichenberger, and others (Meyer et al., pp. 190-4)
4. W2005: PL-WuRM 4138 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2005); 127 pieces by Weiss, Pichler, and Johann Christian Hobach (an almost complete copy of W2003, with additions, dated 1742, by Hobach) (Meyer et al., pp. 194-9)
5. W2006: PL-WuRM 4139 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2006); “Concertus diversi pro testudine cui accedunt varia instrumenta ... authorum diversorum”; lute parts for 15 ensemble pieces by Weichenberger, Lichtensteger, Glatzel, Lauffensteiner, “Ant. Jose. Simb.,” Losy and others (Meyer et al., pp. 199-202)
6. W2008: PL-WuRM 4140 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2008); 221 pieces by Weiss, Telemann, and Kellner, “Mad. de Stralheim,” Dix, Bergen, Carl Zedlack, Pichler, Finger, Hobach, Weichenberger, Frenzel, Handel, Bohr, and others (Meyer et al., pp. 202-11)
7. W2009: PL-WuRM 4141 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2009); 204 pieces mostly copied in sequence from W2008 (Meyer et al., pp. 212-20)
8. W2010: PL-WuRM 4142 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2010); 228 pieces by Sedl[ack?], Weiss, Pichler, Gaultier (?), Dix, Kellner, Weichenberger, Lauffensteiner (?), and others (Meyer et al., pp. 220-6)
9. W2011: PL-WuRM 4143 (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2011); 80 pieces by Hobach and others, mostly with (Catholic) religious titles in German (Meyer et al., pp. 226-9)
10. Trastulli: PL-WuRM 8135 (Breslau Ms. ?); “I Trastulli d’Apollo in soavi Concerti e Cavate favorite per il Liuto Violino Traversiero e Basso”; lute parts to 12 ensemble pieces with German programmatic commentary, dated 1753 (also mentioning “mon depart de Schweidnitz, 1754”); share at least one hand and much music with W2003/5 (Meyer et al., pp. 229-31)

b) Others

11. WN396: PL-Wn Mus. 396 Cim; “Livre du Luth contenant des pieces

- les plus exquisés ... pour sa Paternité très religieuse, le Père Hermien Kniebandl ... à la maison des Graces à Grissau"; 296 pieces by Losy, Dufault, Eckstein, and others (Meyer et al., pp. 169-77)
12. WR2002: PL-WRu 60019 Odds. Mus. (Breslau Ms. Mf. 2002); "Livre du Luth contenant des pieces les plus exquisés ... pour sa Paternité très religieuse, le Père Hermien Kniebandl ... à la maison des Graces à Grissau" (title identical with WN396, but different contents); instructions and 119 pieces by Weiss, Kellner, Kühnel, "Leub," and others, dated 1739 (Meyer et al., pp. 235-9)
13. Stockholm: S-Smf (MS without signature); contains 153 pieces, many the same and in the same hand as W2001 and W2006, by Thielli, Finger, Rumpelnik, Telemann ("Melante"), Wiland, Smigelsky, Losy, Richter, Zachau (Zachow?), Prantl, and Tobia (J. O. Rudén, *Music in Tablature*, Musik i Sverige, v, [Stockholm, 1981], pp. 39-41)