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Chapter Six

The Renaissance Flute in the Seventeenth Century

Nancy Hadden

Introduction

The use of the so-called 'Renaissance' transverse flute in art music is well documented in theoretical writings, iconography and music from the early sixteenth to the late seventeenth centuries. The instrument was used widely both in flute consorts and as a solo instrument in mixed ensembles, and at certain times and places was considered of equal importance to the recorder, violin and cornett. Yet today the Renaissance flute does not enjoy anything like the popularity of its Baroque counterpart.

It is sometimes difficult to make sense of what the treatises tell us, and to match the information with surviving music. Perhaps because of this, the modern literature on Renaissance flute playing is not extensive.¹ This essay will focus on the music written for the flute during the first half of the seventeenth century, before the development of the wholly new 'Baroque' flute. From my perspective as a performer, it has been particularly fascinating to focus on this period in order to re-evaluate the role and nature of the Renaissance flute in the seventeenth century, and to try to answer the question: why did the flute play a more significant role in Italy and especially Germany than it seems to have done in France during the period c.1600–60?

¹ Important studies are A. Smith, 'Die Renaissancequerflöte und ihre Musik', *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis*, vol. 2 (1978), pp. 9–76; H.M. Brown, 'Notes (and Transposing Notes) on the Transverse Flute in the Early Sixteenth Century', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, vol. 12 (1986), pp. 5–39; F. Puglisi, *The Renaissance Transverse Flutes in Italy* (Florence, 1995); and J.M. Bowers, "Flaüste traverseinne" and "Flûte d'Allemagne": the Flute in France from the late Middle Ages up through 1702', *Recherches sur la musique française classique*, vol. 19 (1979), pp. 7–50. Bowers's examination of primary source materials from seventeenth-century French treatises, archival documents and iconography has been invaluable in the preparation of this essay.

The Sixteenth Century

The instrument first appeared in sixteenth-century German sources, with clear military associations:

1. Sebastian Virdung, *Musica getutscht* (Basel, 1511), depicts a solitary *Schwegel* or *Zwerchpfeife*.²
2. *The Triumphs of Maximilian I*, Hans Burgkmair (c.1518),³ a group of three fifers play on horseback, with field drums. The instruments are all the same tenor size, but one player has a case for different sizes of instruments attached to his belt.
3. Urs Graf (1523), pen and ink drawing of four rather comical 'landsknecht' playing a consort of flutes in three sizes, treble, two tenors and bass.⁴
4. The so-called 'Swiss pair' of transverse flute and drum is well documented in Augsburg and other cities playing for dancing, processionals and military exercises.⁵

The earliest treatise that documents the flute as a civilian instrument is Martin Agricola's *Musica instrumentalis Deudschi* (Wittenburg, 1529, revised 1545), written for schoolboys and other amateur players.⁶ He gives fingerings for three sizes of *Schweizerpfeifen*: a bass in G, a tenor/alto in D and a treble in A. Agricola goes to some trouble to explain how the flute consort could transpose by a fourth or a fifth 'to play vocal music on flutes', but says that the transposition by an octave (that is, playing an octave higher than written) is 'the most natural'. He recommends choosing the transposition which is the 'most comfortable'. He also documents the use of breath vibrato, 'zitterndem winde', for playing the flute.⁷

² Facs.: K.W. Niemoller (ed.), (Kassel, 1970).

³ See R. Damman, 'Die Musik im Triumphzug Maximilians I', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 36 (1974), pp. 245–89 for reproductions of the woodcuts with musical instruments.

⁴ Drawing K.108, Kupferstichkabinett, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle; reproduced in A. Powell, *The Flute* (Harvard, 2002), p. 28.

⁵ See K. Polk, *German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 41 and 101–2 for information about the Swiss pair. There are numerous pictures: one example of a Swiss pair playing for dancers is reproduced in Powell, *The Flute*, p. 37.

⁶ Facs. of 1529 edn.: Hildesheim, 1969; pseudo-facsimile of 1545 edn.: R. Eitner (ed.), *Publikation alterer praktischer un theoretischer Musikwerke*, vol. 24: 20 (Leipzig, 1896); Eng. trans. of both editions by W. Hettrick, *The 'Musica Instrumentalis Deudschi' of Martin Agricola: A Treatise on Musical Instruments, 1529 and 1545* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁷ This is not the only documentation for vibrato on the Renaissance flute. A letter written in Cremona in 1582 regarding the construction of the organ there asks that there be a 'tremolo' stop in imitation of the 'fifferi o traverse', to make the harmony more languid and sweet. The letter is quoted in G. Cesari, *La Musica in Cremona nella second metà del secolo XVI* (Milano, 1939), pp. xvi–xvii.

In the same year as Agricola's first treatise a consort of 'quattro flauti all'Alemana' is documented in Ferrara playing during a banquet given in the presence of Isabella d'Este and others.⁸ And in Paris in 1533 the earliest music for flute consort, *Vingt et sept chansons musicales a quatre parties*, was published by Attaingnant, with nine pieces suited to the transverse flute marked 'A', others for recorder consort marked 'B', and pieces for both marked 'AB'.⁹ So we have in the first decades of the sixteenth century significant musical 'events' in the history of Renaissance flute playing.

During the second half of the sixteenth century several more instruction books appeared: Philibert Jambe de Fer, *Epitome musical* (Lyons, 1556); a lost tablature book by Simon Gorlier (Lyons, 1558); Lodovico Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (Venice, 1592); and Aurelio Virgiliano, 'Il Dolcimelo' (c.1600).¹⁰ Inventories, court and church records, iconography and music document the flute's regular participation in chamber, church and spectacle.

The Seventeenth Century

It is widely believed that after about 100 years' presence in most of the major musical centres of Europe, the transverse flute disappeared in the early seventeenth century and was virtually unplayed until its re-emergence about 1680 as an entirely new 'Baroque' instrument. The following is typical:

The transverse flute seems to have gone into a temporary decline in the first half of the seventeenth century, for it could not compete with other instruments in playing in the new expressive style... no solo or chamber music seems to have been composed especially for the instrument during the entire 17th century.¹¹

While it is true that wind instruments such as the flute and recorder did not have a large presence in the seventeenth century, there were strong areas of participation, and, contrary to the statement above, there was a substantial

⁸ Christofaro Di Messisbugo, *Banchetti* (Venice, 1529; facs. of 1557 edn., Bologna, 1982), p. 19.

⁹ Facs. pub. by Alamire (Peer, 1986); 'B' and 'AB' pieces are edited by Bernard Thomas, London Pro Musica (1977); an edition of the nine 'A' pieces for 'flute dallement', edited with an extended preface on the performance of these pieces by Nancy Hadden, Zephyrus Music, is forthcoming. Attaingnant published a second collection of flute and recorder consorts, *Chansons musicales* (Paris, 1533); only the superius partbook is extant. A collection of duos for transverse flutes published by Attaingnant is lost; see H.M. Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600: a Bibliography* (Cambridge MA, 1965), 1533².

¹⁰ Jambe de Fer, facs.: F. Lesure (ed.), *Annales musicologiques*, vol. 6 (1958–63), pp. 341–86; Zacconi, facs.: Bologna, 1967; Virgiliano, manuscript in Bologna, Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale, facs.: M. Castellani (ed.), (Florence, 1979).

¹¹ H.M. Brown, 'Flute', in S. Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st edn. (London, 1980), vol. 6, pp. 672 and 678. Brown revised his opinion in *New Grove 2*, vol. 9, pp. 36–7.

amount of music written specifically for the flute between c.1600 and c.1650.¹² The term 'Renaissance flute' is used here to denote the keyless, cylindrical flute as distinct from the one-keyed conically bored Baroque flute which did not come into general use until the 1680s.

That the Renaissance flute could and did play 'in the new expressive style' can be shown by looking at surviving music from seventeenth-century Italy and Germany, where the flute is an equal partner to the violin and voice. In the examples which will be discussed below, the flute is often associated with texts of a pastoral or amorous character or, in the case of sacred music, with intense or intimate spiritual texts.

Italian diminution manuals indicate that the 'traversa' (also called *pifaro*, *fifaro* or *fifola*) participated equally with the *flauto*, *violino* and *cornetto* in playing virtuoso 'passaggi'. The seventeenth-century Italian humanist Giovanni Battista Doni praised the 'pifaro' for the 'liveliness' (*vivacita*) of its sound (*pifaro* normally refers to shawm but could mean transverse flute in some north Italian sources).¹³ Virgiliano, writing in c.1600, composed ten 'ricercari' to be played interchangeably on *traverso*, *flauto*, *violino*, *cornetto*, and the practice is echoed by Antonio Brunelli in his diminution practice book *Varii essercitii... per esercitio di cornetti, traverse, flauti, viole, violini...* (Florence, 1614).¹⁴ Francesco Rognoni Taeggio mentions both the *pifaro* and the *fifola* in his introductory paragraph on wind instruments: 'il pifaro infino a quindici voci, et la Diana ne havera piu, la fifola infino a diecotto voci'. Here the *pifaro*, with its range of 'fifteen notes, being the instrument shunned by Diana', is surely the shawm, while the *fifola* is the transverse flute with 'eighteen notes'.¹⁵

The Instrument – Then and Now

Original Instruments

Flutes were remarkably consistent in their basic design for over 100 years, as may be seen in surviving instruments from c.1501–1630. It is thus possible to outline some important features present on virtually all surviving Renaissance flutes:¹⁶

¹² Smith, 'Die Renaissancequerflöte' is a catalogue of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works for the Renaissance flute. Some additional seventeenth-century pieces not included by Smith will be discussed later in this essay.

¹³ G.B. Doni, *Annotazione sopra il compendio* (Rome, 1640), vol. 2, p. 338, quoted in P. van Heyghen, 'The Recorder in Italian Music, 1600–1670', in D. Lasocki (ed.), *The Recorder in the Seventeenth Century: Proceedings of the International Recorder Symposium, Utrecht 1993* (Utrecht, 1995), pp. 39–40.

¹⁴ Modern edn. and trans. by Richard Egri (Zurich, 1977).

¹⁵ *Selva di vari passaggi secondo l'uso moderno* (Milan, 1620; facs.: Bologna, 1977), part 2, p. 2.

¹⁶ See F. Puglisi, 'A Survey of Renaissance Flutes', *Galpin Society Journal*, vol. 41 (1988), pp. 67–82.

1. As with other Renaissance instruments, flutes were made in several sizes to play in consorts, with a treble in a' , tenor in d' , and bass in g .
2. One-piece construction for trebles and tenors (basses were in two pieces); keyless with thin walls. Tenors weigh between 90–170 grams depending on wood and length.
3. Cylindrical interior bore with subtle external tapering between the mouth hole and bottom finger hole to control sound emission at each finger hole.
4. Small finger holes and embouchure hole with dramatic undercutting (enlarging of the finger holes in the interior of the bore).
5. Pitch lower than $a' = 440$ Hz, with the largest 'cluster' of instruments around $a' = 407$ Hz. This is a whole tone lower than most surviving recorders and cornetts.¹⁷

Why Has There Not Been a Revival of the Renaissance Flute?

The revival of the Renaissance flute depends on the availability of good modern copies. Only a few specialist makers have constructed instruments modelled closely on originals that, with historical fingerings, can produce clear and responsive sounds over a two-and-a-half octave range, although¹⁸ there is no shortage of exquisite originals with these characteristics.¹⁹ Renaissance flutes have thus been passed over by players who have not had experience with original instruments and consider the modern copies to be inferior versions of the Baroque flute.

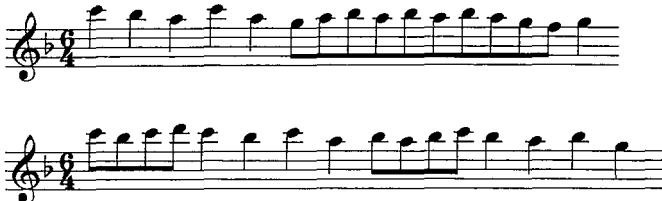
Some makers have tried to 'improve' on original features, making instruments with conical bores, with larger finger and embouchure holes and not enough undercutting. These flutes have a stronger bottom octave but a limited upper range and less flexibility of tone than original instruments. The altered bore allows a'' to be fingered as on the Baroque flute (12), whereas the original fingering charts invariably show 12/456. The original fingering produces a note which is too sharp in pitch, and thus there is a marked step between a rather too flat g'' and a difference in tone quality that can be compared to a singer's chest voice for g'' and head voice from a'' . Embouchure and breath adjustments are needed to play the a'' in tune, a technique dealt with by Philibert Jambe de Fer: 'vent doux et bien couvert' (play this note softly and well-covered).¹⁹ The embouchure and breath manipulations he mentions, which it is suggested should be interpreted as using a quiet and well-directed air stream with the lower lip coming forward to cover a substantial portion of the mouth hole, are

¹⁷ See B. Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of "A"* (Lanham MD, 2002), p. 383.

¹⁸ For a player's view and discussion of some original instruments, see N. Hadden, 'The Flutes of the Accademia Filarmonica, Verona', *Musick*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1988), pp. 7–11.

¹⁹ See his fingering chart for a bass 'fleustes d'alleman' in g in F. Lesure, 'L'Epitome musical de Philibert Jambe de Fer (1556)', *Annales musicologiques*, vol. 6 (1958–63), pp. 341–86.

attainable with practice.²⁰ The ‘right hand down’ fingering system is a brilliant one, as it not only applies to a'' but also to $b\flat''$ (13456), c''' (3456 or 456), and d''' (23456). The tone quality in this ‘head voice’ register is flexible, as it is in singing, and allows stepwise patterns of *passaggi* in ‘flat’ modes (i.e. transposed modes with a B flat in the key signature) to be handled with ease. An example of the fingering system at work is Virgiliano’s Ricercare 6 *per traversa*.



Ex. 6.1 Aurelio Virgiliano, ‘Il Dolcimelo’: Ricercare 6, ‘right hand down’ fingering patterns.

Further Observations on Playing Characteristics and Techniques

The soft bottom octave was not much used. The tenor instrument is credited by most writers with a range of up to nineteen notes (sounding $d''-a''$), with fifteen ‘natural’ tones and the four highest notes achievable by ‘skilled players’.²¹ By comparison, the Baroque flute favours a rich-toned lower register and is rarely required to play above d''' .²²

Tone quality and intonation must be radically corrected through embouchure, finger shading and breath control. It is difficult to tune flutes while they are being made because compromises are necessary between optimum finger placement and reachable finger holes. Original Renaissance flutes approximate the quarter-comma mean-tone temperament. Even so, some notes are too flat and require extreme upward adjustment; $f\sharp''$, fingered 1234, is the worst at 21 cents flat (this fingering can, in fact, also produce a perfectly good f'). Some modern copies have enlarged fifth holes to bring up the pitch of $f\sharp''$ but this coarsens the tone and makes $f\sharp''$ ’s impossibly sharp.

The $e\flat''$ is fingered by half-shading the bottom hole. This fingering is shown in all of Agricola’s fingering charts, fingered 12345+half6. A good instrument will produce a clear soft note with practice. The $e\flat'''$ is no problem, fingered 12346. The German sacred pieces by Schütz, Schein and Michael, the French chansons of Attaignant, and the English consort repertoire require both $e\flat''$ and $e\flat'''$ (many through the application of *musica ficta*). Agricola’s fingerings for $g\sharp$ and $g\sharp''$ include 12+half3, while Jambe

²⁰ Some modern makers’ fingering charts offer 12+half3/456 for a a'' . This avoids the need for embouchure control over the pitch but sacrifices any notion of flexible tone.

²¹ Agricola, Jambe de Fer, Virgiliano and Praetorius agree on this.

²² J.J. Quantz likens the tone of the Baroque flute to an alto voice in his *Versuch* (Berlin, 1752), p. 50.

de Fer gives 1235+half6 for *b* on a bass flute. Zacconi recommends that 'skilled players' on flutes and other wind instruments use the technique of slightly covering and uncovering holes for controlling tone quality and tuning:

cornetts, flutes ('fifari'), recorders, curtals, cornamusas and others that sound by means of bores and holes are those instruments that have a stable sound, which after the sound is made, cannot be altered except by the skill and talent of the player... by covering and uncovering a little of those holes and bores... they help in such a manner that they accommodate themselves as best as possible.²³

This technique is useful for bringing *f* (fingered 1234) up to pitch and for improving the tone quality of notes in the extreme high register.

The Music

Where Was the Flute Played?

The transverse flute moved with ease from battlefield to church to dance floor to court chamber. In the sixteenth century it can be documented in virtually every form of music, with other winds, strings and voices, playing chansons, madrigals, airs, motets, solo diminutions, and dances, in Italy, Germany, England and France. In the seventeenth century the picture alters somewhat.

In England the flute consort continued to serve in the King's Music during the reigns of James I and Charles I, although no specific flute consort music survives.²⁴ However, the so-called 'consort of six', formed by 1580, remained popular in the first decades of the seventeenth century. A substantial amount of music survives for this ensemble, and it represents the only specific English repertoire to include the Renaissance flute. The line-up of violin or treble viol, flute or recorder, bass viol, lute, bandora and cittern performed arrangements of Renaissance madrigals, lute songs and dances by Dowland, Allison, Batchelor, Morley and others. In this repertoire the violin played the soprano melodic line. The flute played alto/tenor parts notated in C2 or C3 clefs but transposing to sound an octave higher, forming an equal partnership as a descant to the violin and lute.²⁵

²³ L. Zacconi, *Prattica di musica* (Venice, 1592), Part I, f. 214; translation in K.T. Meyer, *The Crumhorn: Its History, Design, Repertory and Technique* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p. 22.

²⁴ See A. Ashbee (ed.), *Records of English Court Music*, iii: 1625–1649 (Snodland, 1988), iv: 1603–1625 (Snodland, 1991), v: 1625–1714 (Aldershot, 1991), vi: 1558–1603 (Aldershot, 1992), vii: 1485–1558 (Aldershot, 1993), viii: 1485–1714 (Aldershot, 1995), *passim* for court records of musicians including the flutes between 1509–1635.

²⁵ Only 'Joyne Handes' from Thomas Morley's *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (London, 1599; corrected and enlarged 2/1611) is notated in a G2 clef, necessitating

The information on the transverse flute in France during the period 1600–60 comes from a single source, Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7). Mersenne's detailed discussion features fingering charts and an *air de cour* arranged for flute consort *a4*.²⁶ This source will be discussed later in an attempt to understand why the instrument we have come to think of as quintessentially French was relatively obscure and little used.

The Renaissance flute seems to have been played more in Italy and especially in Germany during the seventeenth century. As I hope to show, this is because German composers continued to use the contrapuntal polyphonic style of the late Italian Renaissance, where the flute, along with other 'Renaissance' winds such as cornett and recorder, was able to contribute a voice in multi-choir motets of Praetorius and Schütz and in more 'affective' chamber works of Schütz, Schein and Michael.

performance at written pitch, or possibly even by a tenor recorder. In the so-called 'Matthew Holmes' partbooks (Cambridge, University Library MSS Dd.3.18, Dd.14.24, Dd.5.20–21, c.1595), the flute was replaced by a tenor recorder and notated in G2. Variant readings between flute and recorder parts, mostly to do with downward octave shifts in the recorder parts, show that the recorder was playing at written pitch and that the parts were carefully reworked. There is no evidence for the use of a bass flute here. Not only were bass parts not normally notated in C2 or C3 clefs, but, in general in Renaissance music, instruments were allocated according to function, so bass instruments were not used to play inner parts. I am grateful to Peter Holman for discussions on this point.

²⁶ Pierre Trichet's treatise 'Traité des instruments de musique' (Paris, Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève 1070; c.1630–44) mentions the 'flute allemande' in passing; see F. Lesure (ed.), 'Traité des instruments de musique', *Annales musicologiques*, vol. 3 (1955), pp. 283–387 and vol. 4 (1956), pp. 175–248.

Italy

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

‘Magnificat’ a7, *Sanctissimae Virgini... vesperae* (Venice, 1610)²⁷

A pair of flutes (the first labelled ‘fifara’ but the second ‘pifara’) play in thirds in a short passage at the words ‘quia respexit humilitatem’ (for he hath regarded the low estate).²⁸ The text, from Luke ii.48, continues ‘ancillae suae’ (of his handmaiden) with trombones, and ‘ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent’ (for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed), scored for cornets and violins, then recorders. The flute was an equal partner to the cornett, violin and recorder at this time in Italy, as shown in contemporary diminution manuals.²⁹ Used by Monteverdi, with its own particular ‘voice’, the flute highlights a particular moment of this intimate spiritual text and is used in conjunction with other instruments for colour.³⁰

Clef: G2/G2³¹ (the G2 clef signals the use of *chiavette*, a system of vocal notation that suggests downward transposition, probably in this case down a fourth, flutes sounding up a fifth)³²

Range: $g'-f''/g'-g''$ (transposed, $d'-c''/d'-d''$)

Mode: g (transposed, d)

‘A quest’olmo’ a6, *Concerto. Settimo libro de madrigali* (Venice, 1619).³³

This pastoral madrigal is the only secular piece of vocal music in Italy with parts assigned to flutes. Scored for six voices with two violins and basso continuo for most of the piece, Monteverdi replaced the violins with a pair of ‘flautini o fifari’ (small recorders or transverse flutes) for eighteen bars at the erotic climax of Giovanni Battista Marino’s ‘sonnetto boschereccio’.

²⁷ Performing score: J. Kurtzman (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi: Vespro della Beata Vergine: Vespers (1610)* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 145–200.

²⁸ The designation ‘pifara’ is likely to be a printing error for ‘fifara’ for the second part surely refers to the transverse flute and not to the shawm. One can assume that both parts are meant for soft transverse flutes at this point in the text. See also J. Kurtzman, *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 417–18.

²⁹ See Brunelli, Virgiliano, Dalla Casa and Rognoni (who also includes the sackbut as a virtuoso ‘bastarda’ instrument).

³⁰ A somewhat different interpretation is given by van Heyghen, ‘The Recorder in Italian Music’, pp. 7–9.

³¹ Clefs and ranges in the following discussion refer to flute parts unless otherwise stated.

³² On *chiavette* and downward transposition, see J. Kurtzman, ‘Tones, Modes, Clefs and Pitch in Roman Cyclic Magnificats of the 16th Century’, *Early Music*, vol. 22 (1994), pp. 641–64; A. Parrott, ‘Transposition in Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610: An Aberration Defended’, *Early Music*, vol. 12 (1984), pp. 490–516; Kurtzman, *The Monteverdi Vespers*, pp. 404–11; and R. Bowers, ‘An “Aberration” Reviewed: The Reconciliation of Inconsistent Clef-Systems in Monteverdi’s Mass and Vespers of 1610’, *Early Music*, vol. 31 (2003), pp. 527–38.

³³ G.F. Malipiero (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi: Tutte le opere*, vol. 7 (Asolo, 2/1965), pp. 14–34.

Flutes and recorders had long been symbols of love and sex. Here the flutes contribute to the pastoral intimacy, perhaps lending an antique flavour as well. Gary Tomlinson calls this a 'retrospective work' which 'looks back to the pastoral sorrows of Book VI' and 'breathes a nostalgic pastoral ethos.'³⁴ The solo bass voice interrupts the dancing villanelle-style chorus to deliver his impassioned 'all'hor che la mia Clori tutt'in dono se stessa el cor mi diede el cor, el cor mi diede' (then my Cloris gave herself to me completely and also her heart as a gift) while the flutes answer in playful counterpoint. As in the *Vespers*, the flute clefs are G2, suggesting a downward transposition for this piece.³⁵

Clef: G2/G2 (*chiavette*)

Range: $g'-e''/c-e''$ (transposed $d'-b''/g-b'$)

Mode: C (transposed G)

*Aurelio Virgiliano, 'Il Dolcimelo' (c.1600)*³⁶

To find out how the flute was played in Italy around the turn of the seventeenth century we can turn to a number of diminution manuals that mention the instrument in passing and offer 'generic' examples of ornamented madrigals and chansons playable on various wind and string instruments. For more specific information, the manuscript treatise by Aurelio Virgiliano offers fingering and transposition charts for the 'traversa'. The treatise is unfortunately incomplete, with blank pages where fingering charts for various instruments are not filled in; the 'modi da sonar le traverse' is on one of the few completed pages. (See Illustration 6.1; for Illustrations see pp. 141–3.)

His fingering chart for an instrument with a nineteen-note range from $d'-a''$ agrees with other sources for tenor flute, the instrument which seems to have been most in use. Virgiliano does not bother with notes outside the 'cantus mollis', a Dorian scale with B \flat . The clefs and instructions to the right of the fingerings elucidate the practice of transposing by a fourth or a fifth, the same transpositions described by Agricola,³⁷ by using a combination of clefs and fingerings.

Ten 'ricercari', written in an ornate hand, are playable on 'flauto, cornetto, violino, traversa et simili', in C1 and C4 clefs, with ranges of $g-g''$. Only one piece, Ricercare 6, gives the 'traversa' as the first choice. While it may be reading more than was intended into his instructions, I suggest that this piece was considered by Virgiliano to be particularly well suited to the flute. It is in the minor mode (g Dorian), with a range of $d'-d''$ (performed an octave higher than written pitch), thus using a modest range and not the most extreme notes. Triple rhythm 'battaglia' elements point to the transverse flute's military associations:

³⁴ G. Tomlinson, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 166–7.

³⁵ P. van Heyghen has investigated the subject of transposition and related cleffing, see footnote 13.

³⁶ See footnote 10.

³⁷ Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis Deudscha*, see footnote 6.



Ex. 6.2 Aurelio Virgiliano, Ricercare 6: 'battaglia' passages.

The musical prototype for flute battle pieces (and indeed the only written-out example of how military flutes improvised) is to be found in Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchésographie* (1589), a dance treatise where soldiers and military music are briefly discussed.³⁸

When soldiers approach the enemy, to join battle they close ranks to form a solid mass. The drummer beats crotchets accompanied by one or two fifers...[the fife is] a little transverse flute with six holes, used by Germans and Swiss, who improvise to please themselves, keeping in time with the drum.³⁹

Comparing Arbeau's tabulations to Virgiliano's more artful composition, one can see similar materials used, including dotted rhythms and the running six-note quaver figure:

³⁸ English translation by Mary Stewart Evans (New York, 2/1967).

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 37–39.

[played 8va]

a.

b.

c.

d.

Ex. 6.3 Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchésographie* (Langres, 1588), pp. 44–6: passages from ‘Tabulation for playing the fife in triple time’.

A further example of military flute music is to be found in an Elizabethan keyboard piece by William Byrd, ‘The flute and the droom’,⁴⁰ Like the Arbeau and Virgiliano pieces it is in triple time. So many of the musical details are the same (compare Arbeau, Example 6.3 a.b.c.d. with Byrd, Example 6.4 a.b.c.d.) that it seems likely that Byrd was consciously copying a recognized idiom:

⁴⁰ A section from *The Battle*; in A. Brown (ed.), *William Byrd: Keyboard Music II*, Musica Britannica, vol. 28 (London, 1971; rev. 2/1976), no. 94.

The image shows four staves of musical notation for a single flute part. The notation is in common time (indicated by a 'C') and G major (indicated by a 'G'). Each staff consists of two lines of five horizontal stems. The stems are grouped into pairs by vertical lines, with the second stem of each pair being longer than the first. The stems alternate in direction (up, down, up, down, up, down, etc.). The first three staves (a, b, c) end with a vertical bar line and the word 'etc.' in cursive script. The fourth staff (d) ends with a vertical bar line, a repeat sign, and a vertical bar line, also followed by 'etc.'

Ex. 6.4 Passages from 'The flute and the droom' (section from *The Battle*) attributed to William Byrd.

We can therefore assume that flute players in battle 'improvised' stock musical phrases such as these. The military associations of the *traversa* are, I suggest, part of the flute's 'amour' mystique (Mars with his spear is, after all, the illicit lover of Venus). We have seen that Italian music for the flute ranges from moments of extreme tenderness to mock-battle aggressiveness.

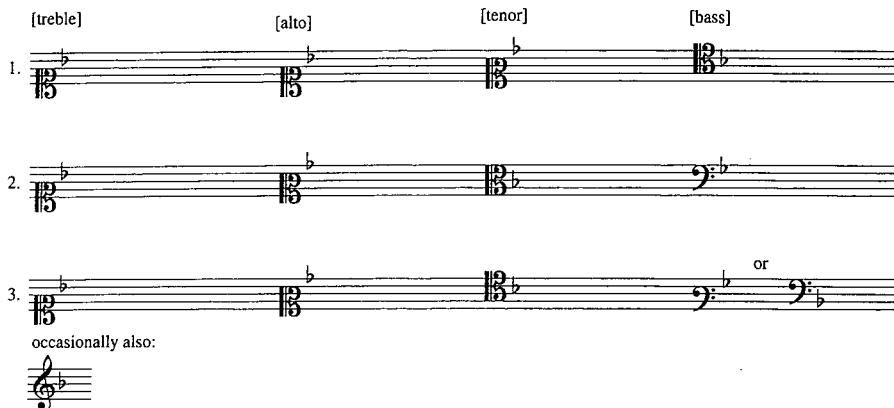
Germany

Michael Praetorius (1571–1621)

Praetorius's detailed suggestions for the instrumentation of large-scale motets suggests that Italian music and musical practices were adopted in Germany at the turn of the seventeenth century. He recommends the 'querflöte' or 'fiffaro', either in a consort of mixed instruments or as a whole consort in motets by Giovanni Gabrieli, Orlando de Lassus, Claudio Merulo, Hans Leo Hassler, and for his own works.⁴¹ He demonstrates the clef combinations and modes most suited to flute consorts in *Syntagma musicum*:⁴²

⁴¹ Listed in Smith, 'Die Renaissancequerflöte', Table V, pp. 70–1.

⁴² Facs.: Kassel, 1958. English translation of volume 2 by D.Z. Crookes (Oxford, 1986, 2/1991); the section on instruments has been translated by Harold Blumenfeld (New York, 2/1962).



Ex. 6.5 Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, vol. 3 (1618, 2/1619), p. 156: clefs and modes for 'traversa or fiffari'.

The repertory referred to above, primarily the Venetian polychoral motet, uses flutes for colour and brilliance rather than for their expressive possibilities. Praetorius states that flutes always play an octave higher than written and recommends that sometimes it should play two octaves higher when playing a tenor part in a large concerted piece where otherwise it would not be heard.⁴³

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)

Schütz was familiar not only with Praetorius's recommendations but also with Venetian practices which he learned while studying with Gabrieli. Schütz scored for flute in four large-scale motets (see below), three early works dating from the second decade of the seventeenth century and another from 1640–50, where the flute is used for colour among other winds, voices and strings. One other motet by Schütz employs flutes, not in large-scale polyphony but in intimate chamber music: 'Anima mea liquefacta est / Adjuro vos, filiae Hierusalem', SWV 263–4,⁴⁴ which was published in *Symphoniae sacrae* (1629) during Schütz's second stay in Italy.⁴⁵ Scored for two tenors and a pair of 'fiffari' (or 'cornettini' as alternatives), it is unique in Schütz's output. The range and technical demands are modest, but the expressive demands are clear in his choice of a pair of flutes to accompany the erotic, spiritual love poetry from The Song of Songs. Monteverdi's madrigal 'A quest'olmo' may have been the secular model for this pairing of flutes that weaves expressive counterpoint with the vocal lines: 'My soul failed when he spake, I called him but he

⁴³ Music by Praetorius that specifies flutes is discussed in my forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation (University of Leeds).

⁴⁴ SWV = W. Bittinger (ed.), *Schütz-Werke-Verzeichnis: kleine Ausgabe* (Kassel, 1960).

⁴⁵ R. Gerber (ed.), *Heinrich Schütz: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Band 13: Symphoniae sacrae I / 1629* (Kassel, 1957), 60–71.

gave me no answer. His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick with love.' Here we see Schütz composing in a most 'affective' style, which combines Italianate rhetorical delivery of text with contrapuntal instrumental writing. This style prevailed in Germany throughout the seventeenth century and was the model for the cantatas and passions of J.S. Bach.

'Siehe, wie fein und lieblich ists', *Der 133. Psalm* (Leipzig, 1619), SWV 48 (Wedding concerto)

Scoring: SSATB; Cantus I: 'cornetto muto o violino'; Cantus II: 'violino o traversa'; Bass: 'violone o fagott'; bc

Clef: C1⁴⁶

Range: *a*–*g*"

Mode: g

Text: Psalms cxxxiii

'Jauchzet dem Herrn, alle Welt', *Psalmen Davids* Op. 2 (Dresden, 1619), SWV 47

Scoring: four choirs. Flute in choir I as follows: Tenor: 'traversa e cornetto'; Bass: 'fagott'; bc

Clef: C1

Range: *c*'–*e*"

Mode: G

Text: Psalms c

'Veni, sancte Spiritus' (Kassel, c.1614), SWV 475

Scoring: four choirs. Flute in choir IV as follows: Cantus I: 'violin o cornetto'; Cantus II: 'traversa o cornetto'; Bass: 'violone'; bc

Clef: C2

Range: *d*'–*e*"

Mode: G

Text: sequence for Pentecost

'Vater Abraham, erbarme dich mein' (Dialogus divites Epulonis cum Abrahamo) (Dresden, c.1640–50), SWV 477

Scoring: SSATB; Cantus I: 'violino' alternating with 'traversa'; Cantus II: 'violino' alternating with 'traversa'; Bass: 'violone'; bc

Clefs: C1

Range: *a*'–*g*"

Mode: various

Text: Luke xvi.24–31

⁴⁶ Clefs and ranges in this and the following examples are those in original transverse flute parts.

‘Anima mea liquefacta est / Adjuro vos, filiae Hierusalem’, *Symphoniae sacrae* Op. 6 (Venice, 1629), SWV 263–4

Scoring: TT; ‘fiffara o cornettino I’; ‘fiffara o cornettino II’; bc

Clefs: C1/C1

Ranges: $c'-eb''/a-eb''$ (to be played 8va)

Mode: d

Text: Song of Songs v.6, 13, 8

Johann Hermann Schein (1586–1630)

All of Schein’s works with flute come from a single collection, the *Opella nova, ander Theil, geistlicher Concerten*, published in 1626 while he was director of music at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig.⁴⁷ The seven pieces which include flute are not large concerted works but chamber motets in four or five parts. The flute always plays ‘Cantus II’. It is clear from the written range of $c'-f''$ that the flute is meant to play an octave higher than notated, making a descant above the violin’s ‘Cantus I’.

The pieces can be grouped by instrumentation:

1. Pieces for solo tenor, violin, flute and basso continuo:

‘O Maria, gebenedeitet bist du’ a4

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violino’; Cantus II: ‘traversa’; Tenor: ‘voce’; Bass (‘instrumento’): ‘trombone o fagotto’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: $c'-f''$

Text: Luke i.42–5

‘Siehe, das ist mein Knecht’ a4

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violino’; Cantus II: ‘traversa’; Tenor: ‘voce’; Bass (‘instrumento’): ‘fagot o trombone’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: $Bb-f''$ (with written eb' and eb'')

Mode: g

Text: Isaiah xlvi.1–4

2. Pieces for solo tenor, violin and flute, with added trombone part:

‘Also heilig ist der Tag’ a5

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violino’; Cantus II: ‘traversa’; Cantus III: ‘trombone’; Tenor: ‘voce’; Bass (‘instrumento’): ‘fagotto’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: $d'-f''$

Mode: g

Text: Johann Spangenberg, 1545

⁴⁷ A. Prüfer (ed.), *J.H. Schein: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, vols. 5–7: *Opella Nova* (Leipzig, 1914–23).

‘Uns ist ein Kind geboren’ *a5*

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violino’; Cantus II: ‘traversa’; Alto: ‘trombone’; Tenor: ‘voce’; Bass (‘strumento’): ‘fagotto’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: *c'–f'*

Mode: g

Text: Isaiah ix.6–7

3. Pieces with voices on all the parts:

‘Selig sind, die da geistlich arm sind’ *a5*

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘voce e cornetto’; Cantus II: ‘voce e traversa’; Alto: ‘voce e trombone’; Tenor: ‘voce e trombone’; Bass (‘strumento’): ‘voce e trombone’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: *d'–e♭"*

Mode: g

Text: Matthew v.3–12 (The Sermon on the Mount)

‘Vater unser, der du bist im Himmel’ *a5*

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violino, cornetto e voce’; Cantus II: ‘traversa, cornetto e voce’; Alto: ‘viola, trombone e voce’; Tenor: ‘viola, trombone e voce’; Bass: ‘violone, trombone e voce’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: *c'–d"*

Mode: g

Text: Matthew vi.9–13 (The Lord’s Prayer)

‘Mach dich auf, werde Licht, Zion’ *a4*

Scoring: Cantus I: ‘violin, cornetto e voce, flauto’; Cantus II: ‘voce e traversa’; Alto: ‘trombone e voce’; Bass: ‘fagotto, trombone, e voce’; bc: organ

Clef: C1

Range: *f'–f"*

Mode: g

Text: Isaiah lx.1–3

Schein’s motet texts are mostly well-known Biblical passages. The small forces of Group 1 (voice, violin, flute and basso continuo) seem appropriate for the gentle and joyful texts relating to Mary, preceding the Magnificat, and foretelling the birth of Jesus. Group 2, enriched by the addition of the trombone, hails the power of redemption through Jesus. Group 3 includes the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ and ‘Lord’s Prayer’, both texts expressing the deepest spiritual outpourings of Christ himself. The scoring of voices doubled by a wind ensemble of cornett, three trombones and flute is certainly unusual, while the ‘Lord’s Prayer’ is the richest scoring of all, doubling singers on I, III, IV and V with a string instrument as well as a cornett or trombone, while voice II is doubled by both

‘traversa’ and ‘cornetto’ in the sections marked ‘Sinfonia’ and ‘Capella’ (‘Concert’ sections are for voices alone). ‘Mach dich auf’, while scored for a large number of instruments, uses them in alternation with solo voices and tutti choir. The texture is thus transparent and ever changing, like the light and darkness of the text.

In all of Schein’s output he expects the flute to play regularly in the third octave as an equal partner to the violin and voice in the trio sonata textures, or to balance a powerful consort of voices, cornetts and sackbuts. The Italian practices brought first to Germany by Praetorius and carried into northern churches by Schütz seem to have inspired Schein as well.

Tobias Michael (1592–1657)

Tobias Michael succeeded Schein as director of music at the Thomaskirche, Leipzig. He took up his duties in 1631. Although he held this prestigious position for over twenty years, he is almost completely unknown today. His main output is contained in *Musicalischer Seelenlust, erster Theil* (Leipzig, 1634–5) and *Musicalischer Seelen-Lust ander Theil* (Leipzig, 1637). The first volume is for five voices with basso continuo, and the second is scored for voices and a variety of instruments in a style much like those of Schein. The following pieces include the Renaissance flute:⁴⁸

‘Das ist ein köstlich Ding’

Scoring: ‘cantus’, ‘traversa’, bc

Clef: C1

Range: $c' - eb''$

Mode: F

Text: Psalms xcii.1–4

Set for solo soprano with solo flute obbligato and basso continuo, this is apparently the only example of this scoring in German sacred music before the cantatas of J.S. Bach. As in the Schein pieces for flute, the part is notated in C1 clef, in F, with a range of $c' - eb''$. Again, as in Schein’s parts, the bottom note c' makes it clear that the part is to be played up an octave.

‘Wo der Herr nicht das Haus bauet’

Scoring: 5vv, ‘violino’, ‘flauto’, ‘traversa’, two ‘trombone’, ‘faggott’, organ

Clef: C1

Range: $c' - e'''$ (f''' occurs once, when doubling the voice)

Mode: F

Text: Psalms cxxvii

This setting is an extended concerto of over 200 bars. It opens with a ‘Sinfonia’ for ‘flauto’, ‘traversa’, two ‘trombone’, and ‘fagott’. These instruments (plus violin later doubling flauto/voice I) alternate with the voices in solo ‘concerti’ and tutti ‘capella’ sections. This is a rare example

⁴⁸ I am grateful to Paul O’Dette for bringing this collection to my attention.

of flute and recorder being used in the same piece, although the recorder is primarily used to double the singer in tutti sections and the flute and recorder do not play together.⁴⁹

The other settings which include flute are among the most tender and beautiful of all Biblical texts. Michael has set both for the rather delicate scoring of violin, traversa, soprano and tenor, with 'fagott' or 'trombone grosso' and organ.

'Kommet her zu mir'

Scoring: Cantus I: 'violino'; Cantus II: 'traversa'; Alto: 'voce'; Tenor: 'voce'; Bass: 'fagott', organ

Clef: C1

Mode: F (with B♭)

Range: *c'–e"*

Text: Matthew xi.28–30

The piece is scored for duo textures, either the two voices answered by the two instruments, or a voice and instrument together. Michael reserves the tutti texture for the final bars of the piece. An interesting feature is that Michael has carefully notated optional diminutions for the voices in several places. These are rather old-fashioned, in the style of the late sixteenth-century Italians such as Dalla Casa. Still, it is of interest that he bothered to write them at all and it suggests that these Italian *passaggi*, examples of which are found in Praetorius's writings, still had currency in mid-seventeenth-century Germany. The instrumental parts are not ornamented – perhaps the vocal diminutions are meant to suggest similar treatment by the flute and violin.

'Wie lieblich sind auff den Bergen'

Scoring: Cantus I: 'violino'; Cantus II: 'traversa'; Alto: 'voce'; Tenor: 'voce'; Bass: 'trombone grosso', organ

Clef: C1

Range: *c'–d"*

Mode: F (with B♭)

Text: Isaiah lii.7–8

This is perhaps the most beautiful piece of all, with its expressive chromatic opening for the soprano alone with basso continuo. The repetition and word painting of upward scales for 'Bergen' (mountains) heightens the effect, as does the triple repetition, inviting tender echoes, of the music for 'die Fusse der Boten' (are the feet of the messenger). At the words 'die da Friede verkündigen' (that bringeth good tidings), the instruments join as the music changes to a joyful triple metre. (See Example 6.6.) The flute and violin take up the chromatic opening theme

⁴⁹ Surviving flutes and recorders seem to have been at incompatible pitches; surviving flutes are invariably at a lower pitch, often more than a tone, than surviving recorders, and for that matter, cornetts. Questions of pitch and transposition of all instruments from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries have been exhaustively covered in Haynes, *A History of Performing Pitch*.

again at bar 90. After vocal duets answered by the instruments, Michael again reserves the tutti texture for the final verse of text, 'for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.'

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The top two staves are for 'voce I' (soprano) and 'bc' (bassoon). The bottom two staves are for 'voce I' (soprano) and 'bc' (bassoon). The music is in common time, with a key signature of one sharp. The vocal parts sing in four-part harmony, while the bassoon provides harmonic support. The vocal parts sing the following lyrics:

Wie lieblich sind, wie lieblich sind, wie lieblich sind, wie lieblich sind, wie lieblich sind auff den Bergen, auff den Bergen, auff den Bergen, die Fus-se der Boten, der Boten, der Boten, der Boten.

The instrumental parts (violin & traversa, and bassoon) play rhythmic patterns that support the vocal lines. The bassoon part includes a section where it plays eighth-note patterns, and the violin part includes a section where it plays sixteenth-note patterns.

Ex. 6.6. Tobias Michael, 'Wie lieblich sind auff den Bergen', bars 1–26.

'Gott schweige doch nicht also'

Scoring: 5vv, 'traverso' I/II, 'trombone', 'fagott', organ

Clef: C1

Range: $c'-eb''/ c'-d''$

Mode: F

Text: Psalms lxxxiii.1-4

The German liking for florid counterpoint was ideally suited to the capabilities of the Renaissance flute, and Schütz, Schein and Michael continued to write for its clear 'soprano' voice as a partner to the violin, cornett, recorder and singers. Further research has yielded only one more seventeenth-century German composer who may have written for the transverse flute, Michael's successor at Leipzig, Sebastian Knüpfer.⁵⁰ The specific tradition of flute playing thus seems to have survived particularly in Leipzig. Knüpfer's 'Ach Herr, strafe mich nicht in deinem Zorn' (Psalms vi) is scored for five voices, with 'clarino' I/II, 'traverse' I/II, 'tamburi', 'violino' I/II, 'violette' I/II, 'fagotto', 'organo'. I have only had access to the modern edition,⁵¹ notated in full score with two flats in the key signature, where the ranges of the flute parts are $eb'-g''$ and $g-bb'$. C minor is not a particularly good key for flutes, the parts are uncharacteristic in range (at 4-foot pitch the tessitura of flute I is very high) and the passagework is awkwardly chromatic. The editor of the modern edition has indicated that the manuscript parts were copied in 1700, 24 years after Knüpfer's death and well after the emergence of the one-keyed Baroque flute. Further investigation needs to be done on the music, players and circumstances in Leipzig and other north German cities (the Hamburg opera, for example, has yet to be investigated) to determine the extent of use of the transverse flute up to the time of J.S. Bach.

⁵⁰ D.P. Walker and P. Walker, *German Sacred Polyphonic Vocal Music between Schütz and Bach: Sources and Critical Editions* (Warren MI, 1992) lists sources and critical editions of German sacred music for three or more voices between 1648 and c.1700. While this is a major source of information, it is unfortunate that the original terms 'flauto', which invariably refers to the recorder in this period, and 'traversa' as used by Knüpfer and others to designate the transverse flute, have been translated as 'flute' by the authors. Most of the 'flute' pieces listed are in fact for recorders. *New Grove 2* (vol. 27, p. 201) lists Matthias Weckmann's dialogue 'Gegrüsset seyst du' as requiring transverse flutes, but the parts are labelled 'flauti' (recorders). The confusion between flutes and recorders in early sources is discussed in detail in my forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation (University of Leeds).

⁵¹ H. Kretzschmar (ed.), *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst*, vols. 58-9 (Leipzig, 1918; rev. 2/Wiesbaden and Graz, 1957), pp. 60-90, which is edited from Berlin, Staatsbibliothek MS 11780, where the flute parts are marked 'traverso'. Another copy exists in Dresden, Sachsische Landesbibliothek Mus. MS 1825-E-501, where the flute parts are marked 'flauto'.

France

French music for flute is disappointingly scarce at this period. A rather more useful assessment of its use may be gained from written documents and iconography, extensively researched by Jane Bowers.⁵² I suggest that we can also be helped in our quest by looking at some of the evidence for the later Baroque flute to help piece together a picture of seventeenth-century French flute playing. Marin Mersenne states that the flute was a consort instrument in his *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7). As a solo instrument it does not seem to feature until the emergence of the ‘new’ Baroque flute c.1670. With the emergence of the ‘affective’ style of music developed in France by Jean-Baptiste Lully in the mid-seventeenth century, the Renaissance flute fell into disuse (as did most of the Renaissance wind instruments) because it was unable to produce the subtleties of tone quality and ornamentation required.

Theoretical Writings and Instruments

Marin Mersenne is virtually the only source of information about the Renaissance flute in France. *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7) contains a good deal of information even if it is somewhat confusing and misleading.⁵³ Mersenne’s explanation of the ‘figure, estendue, & la tablature de la Fluste d’Allemand, & du Fifre’ begins with an illustration of ‘l’une des meilleures Flustes du monde’ (one of the best flutes in the world), which shows itself to be a rather oddly warped keyless cylindrical flute made in one piece, with some ornamental turning and carving at the head and foot ends (see Illustration 6.2). The flute illustrated in his drawing is a consort instrument: he says that it plays the ‘dessus dans les parties’, and that ‘the eyes participate in the pleasure of the ears’ because the flute is ‘ordinarily made of wood, one which is of a beautiful colour and can be polished’, and there are also some of ‘crystal, glass and ebony’. This is no peasant instrument! He goes on to say that a consort of flutes plays at ‘ton de chapelle’ – at this time a very low pitch.⁵⁴

Two fingering charts for flutes are notated at sounding pitches of *g* and *d'*. He points out that the tablature for the flute also serves for the fife, as the fife is not a different instrument except that it speaks more loudly (‘parle plus fort’) and with a livelier (‘plus vif’) and more piercing sound (‘plus esclatans’) because it is shorter and narrower. This means that the fife was higher in pitch than ‘ton de chapelle’. Mersenne comments that ordinarily one does not play all the parts of music on the fife, as one does with the ‘fluste d’Allemand’, which was a consort instrument. (See Illustration 6.3.)

⁵² See Bowers, ‘Flaûte traverseinne’, *passim*.

⁵³ Facs.: F. Lesure (ed.), Paris, 1965. English translation of the book on instruments by R.E. Chapman (The Hague, 1957).

⁵⁴ Bruce Haynes (*A History of Performing Pitch*, pp. 97–8) has shown this pitch to be between *a'* = 370 Hz and *a'* = 392 Hz.

Mersenne's flutes have a range of nineteen notes, a G major scale of $g-d'''$ for the bass g flute and a scale with $F\sharp$ and $C\sharp$ from $d'-a''$ for the tenor d' flute. Mersenne's 'fifre' chart gives the same fingerings as for the d' tenor, but with only a two-octave range from $d'-d'''$. Low-pitched tenor flutes respond more freely in the third octave than higher-pitched instruments; modern copies at $a' = 440$ Hz and $a' = 460$ Hz bear this out. So it makes sense that the 'fifre' would have a more restricted range.

Mersenne's fingerings are a bit odd. He seems to have used a rather haphazard notation, using both circles and dashes to indicate a closed hole. This has given rise to confusion by modern writers. But rather than indicating some sort of 'hybrid' or 'transitional' instrument, as some writers have suggested, I believe that all the fingerings can be explained as 'Renaissance' fingerings for a cylindrical-bore flute. For example, the d' tenor's a'' has two different fingerings: the downward scale shows the usual 12456, while the upward a'' is an overblown d' , 123456, a 'falsetto' tone which is too sharp. Both fingerings need quite a lot of help by the player's breath, fingers and embouchure, a technique described 100 years earlier by both Jambe de Fer and Zacconi. The G major scale for the bass is unusual, as is the lack of an $F\sharp$ fingering for the tenor. So the scales shown are limited and somewhat eccentric, but do not make the case for a new design of flute.

Engravings by Robert Bonnart from the second half of the seventeenth century corroborate Mersenne's statement that the 'flûte d'Allemagne' and the 'fifre' are essentially the same. Bonnart depicts the 'flûte d'Allemagne' in the company of a lute and tympanum, and the 'fifre' as a solitary instrument.⁵⁵ Other than the greater length and the ornamental turnings of the 'flûte d'Allemagne', it looks the same as the 'fifre', both being cylindrical and keyless. Bowers thinks that the 'aristocratic' flute may have been badly drawn and is probably a Baroque flute,⁵⁶ but judging from the exquisite details of the costumes, the lute and the tympanum, I think that the drawings are accurate; besides which, the turnings on the lower end are too far away from the little finger to be connected to a foot joint with its key.

Verses accompanying the engravings refer to the charms of 'l'Amour' and playing 'en concert', or a 'mixed' ensemble: here the flute is accompanied by tympanum and lute. In this period, as in the sixteenth century, music for flute would no doubt have been drawn from chansons and other vocal airs, and dance music. A rustic fifer 'plays all day long on his solitary instrument to relieve the melancholy caused by love', while a soldier, on the other hand, plays 'melodious airs' on his 'fifre' during peace time, and in war 'brings the troops together by playing with the drum'.⁵⁷

Mersenne and Bonnart show that the 'Renaissance' flute in both its forms was played by aristocratic amateurs and as a rustic or soldier's fife. There was anyway a thriving 'peasant cult' amongst aristocratic musicians

⁵⁵ The Bonnart engravings are reproduced in A. Powell, *The Flute*, p. 64; Bowers, 'Flaûste traverseinne', p. 31; and L. Girard, *La Flûte* (Paris, 1949), p. 143, plate 18.

⁵⁶ Bowers, 'Flaûste traverseinne', p. 34.

⁵⁷ The verses are printed in Bowers, 'Flaûste traverseinne', p. 32.

of the seventeenth-century French court, seen in their avid use of musettes, hurdy-gurdies, guitars and the like, and a fondness for rustic dances such as the musette, tambourin and bourée. The old-fashioned flute may have fitted into this category.

The Music

The sole example of seventeenth century French music for Renaissance flutes is the 'Air de Cour pour les Flustes d'Allemand', 'Su su la bergere' by Pierre Guédron (1570–1620). It is an expressive miniature of pastoral simplicity.⁵⁸ What sort of flute consort could have performed this piece? The music is notated in high clefs, G2, C2, C3, F3 (so-called *chiavette*), which suggests that Mersenne published it at a pitch suitable for flute consort of bass in *g* and three tenors in *d'*. If this is true, the superius part plays up to the stratospheric *a'''* in bar 5 of Example 6.7. (Van Eyck's version of 'Su su la bergere', see footnote 58, omits this quaver *a'''*, substituting a *g'''* crotchet on beat three.) Pierre Attaingnant notated his arrangements of chansons for flute consort using high clefs in his *Vingt et sept chansons musicales* (Paris, 1533). The recorder pieces in the same collection are notated in 'normal' clef combinations of C1, C3, C4, F4.⁵⁹

Guédron's *air de cour* is typical of the genre, with its uncomplicated homophonic texture for four voices, and lilting irregular text accents showing the influence of *musique mesurée*. These airs were popular for flutes throughout the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth. The famous flautist Philbert (1639–after March 1717) was said to have played 'sweet songs of Lambert' and his colleague Descoteaux delighted Louis XIV with 'petits airs tendres'.⁶⁰ Jacques Martin Hotteterre even arranged a number of 'airs de cour' by Lambert, Boësset, Lully and others, adorning the 'ancient airs' as he called them on the title page of his *Airs et brunettes* (Paris, 1721), with his own richly ornamented 'doubles'.

Writing in 1666, but using what he calls the 'passionate airs' of Guédron, Boësset and other early seventeenth-century composers' music as examples, Bénigne de Bacilly describes the curious fact that singers improvised elaborate vocal ornaments, but that instrumentalists did not indulge in these complicated 'diminutions':

⁵⁸ Mersenne prints the piece without text; M. Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7), p. 244. Jacob van Eyck includes this piece with some easy diminutions for flute or recorder as 'La Bergere', in *Der fluyten lust-hof* (Amsterdam, 2/1654; facs.: Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 9.

⁵⁹ Discussed further by Nancy Hadden, *Nine Chansons for Transverse Flutes*, Zephyrus Music, forthcoming.

⁶⁰ Bowers, 'Flaüste traverseinne', pp. 37–8.

[Su, su la ber- ger et ber - ge - ret - tes, Ac - cor -

dans main- tent nos voix]

Ex. 6.7 Pierre Guédron, 'Su su la bergere', arr. by Marin Mersenne (*Harmonie universelle*, Paris, 1636–7, p. 244) for 'flustes d'Allemande' (text added from the vocal setting).

Since instrumental music is characterized by a greater degree of melodic simplicity than vocal music, any difficult passage is immediately labelled as 'vocal style'.⁶¹

Bacilly goes further with this discussion:

There are certain short airs... such as gavottes, sarabandes and minuets... it is almost obligatory to perform these little songs in a natural manner... They will not have the tenderness which makes them so appealing if they are sung in too profound a manner.

⁶¹ B. de Bacilly, *Remarques curieuses sur l'art de bien chanter* (Paris, 1668; Eng. trans. by A. Caswell, as *A Commentary upon the Proper Art of Singing*, New York, 1968), p. 46. All references are to the English translation.

Singers may take liberties, often slowing the tempo to give time to the ornaments. This is especially true for gavottes, which demand a greater degree of expression and tenderness. It is unfair to criticize this as being undanceable... if this were the intention of the singer, then his function would be no more than that of a viol... this observation applies to certain gavottes, in which it is permissible not only to slow down the meter but even to alter it to provide additional time for the use of vocal ornaments... but not to alter a minuet or a sarabande to such an extent that it becomes a song in free meter, as is usually implied by the term 'air'.⁶²

Bacilly's instructions for French vocal ornaments, which he says were 'never printed' in the music, include the 'port de voix', 'cadence', 'tremblement', 'tremblement etouffe', 'passionner', and 'accent'.⁶³ We know these same ornaments from later instrumental sources of the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, such as the viol music of Marin Marais, the harpsichord suites of François Couperin, and flute suites by Michel de La Barre, Jacques Martin Hotteterre and Pierre Philidor. But, during the emergence of the Baroque style in France, the ornaments were not codified or written down, and they seem to have been the province of singers. La Barre (c.1675–1743), himself a virtuoso flautist, suggested that the flute was unable to play in the new style that was developing in French music around the mid-century. He wrote that Lully's elevation meant the 'downfall of all the old [wind] instruments', and that this was the reason why Hotteterre and others set about developing instruments that were 'suitable for concerts'. The transverse flute was among the last to be perfected.⁶⁴

The Renaissance flute was not well equipped to perform in the new French style of Lully. Its fingering system and tone, favouring the upper octave, suited Renaissance *passaggi* and the smooth vocal style of the Italian Renaissance. The Renaissance flute could not 'speak' in that particular French Baroque 'sighing' manner, which Bacilly describes in vocal terms as 'monosyllables which seem to require that you stop short, such as "Qui", "Non", "Va" and other similar ones, where the performer should cut short the word and place a rest after it, or before it'.⁶⁵ The flute before its redesign played 'petit airs' such as the one suggested by Mersenne (see above), but was unable to venture into the expressive territories that Bacilly describes.

To understand how far the flute travelled before a new manner of playing was perfected for it, we must look at the first published solos ever to appear for the Baroque flute, published in 1702 but undoubtedly circulating some years earlier. These are Michel de La Barre's *Pièces pour*

⁶² Ibid., pp. 48–9.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 64. The origins of many of these ornaments are in fact Italian; see the vocal ornament tables in Francesco Rognoni Taeggio, *Selva de varii passaggi secondo* (Milan, 1620; facs.: Bologna, 1977).

⁶⁴ See Marc Ecochard's essay (pp. 47–8) for La Barre's original text.

⁶⁵ Bacilly, 'Remarques', p. 55.

la flute traversière avec la basse continue (Paris, 1702). In the 'Avertissement' to players, La Barre defends his new style of music for the flute:

These pieces are for the most part of a character so singular and so different from the idea which went before, of pieces which are suited to the transverse flute, that I resolved only to perform them myself; but the solicitations of those who heard them played, and the faults which slipped in to some copies and which surprised me finally made me decide to print them. And as these pieces are the first which have been made for this sort of flute, I am obliged to give some information to those who wish to play them.⁶⁶

La Barre goes on to explain when and how to perform the ornaments found in his music, including the 'liaison' (to indicate when *not* to fill in an interval), 'port de voix', 'couler', 'battement', and 'tremblement'. Only the 'tremblement' is described with a symbol, 'marked by a cross'. The tone of his explanations indicate that he is describing an unfamiliar practice to potential players. What could be 'of a character so singular and so different' from the idea of what flutes played before? The *Pièces* are ordered in suites of preludes, airs and dances decorated with numerous ornaments. Perhaps most 'singular' are the gavottes with 'doubles', 'La Therese' (Suite II) and 'La Corine' (Suite IV). The gavottes are straightforward enough, but the 'doubles' must surely be performed as Bacilly prescribes, 'slowing the tempo to give time to the ornaments', in order 'to make the pieces more expressive and tender'. (See Example 6.8 below.)

Remembering Bacilly's remarks of 1666 (see pp. 137–8), singers were expected to perform dance music with artful use of rubato and ornamentation, while instrumentalists, whose function it was to accompany dancers, were not permitted such liberties. We are thus reminded that the expressive 'complicated' style was first of all a vocal one. La Barre's exquisitely ornamented flute solos in a 'vocal' style new to flute playing – a daring departure from simple dances and 'petits airs' – were made possible by the transformation of the instrument. At the time of Bacilly's writing, the light soprano Renaissance flute was undergoing a drastic transformation, to emerge during La Barre's youth as a throaty contralto, especially suited to expressing the most tender and charming of Baroque passions.

⁶⁶ Translation by Nancy Hadden.

Gavotte

Double

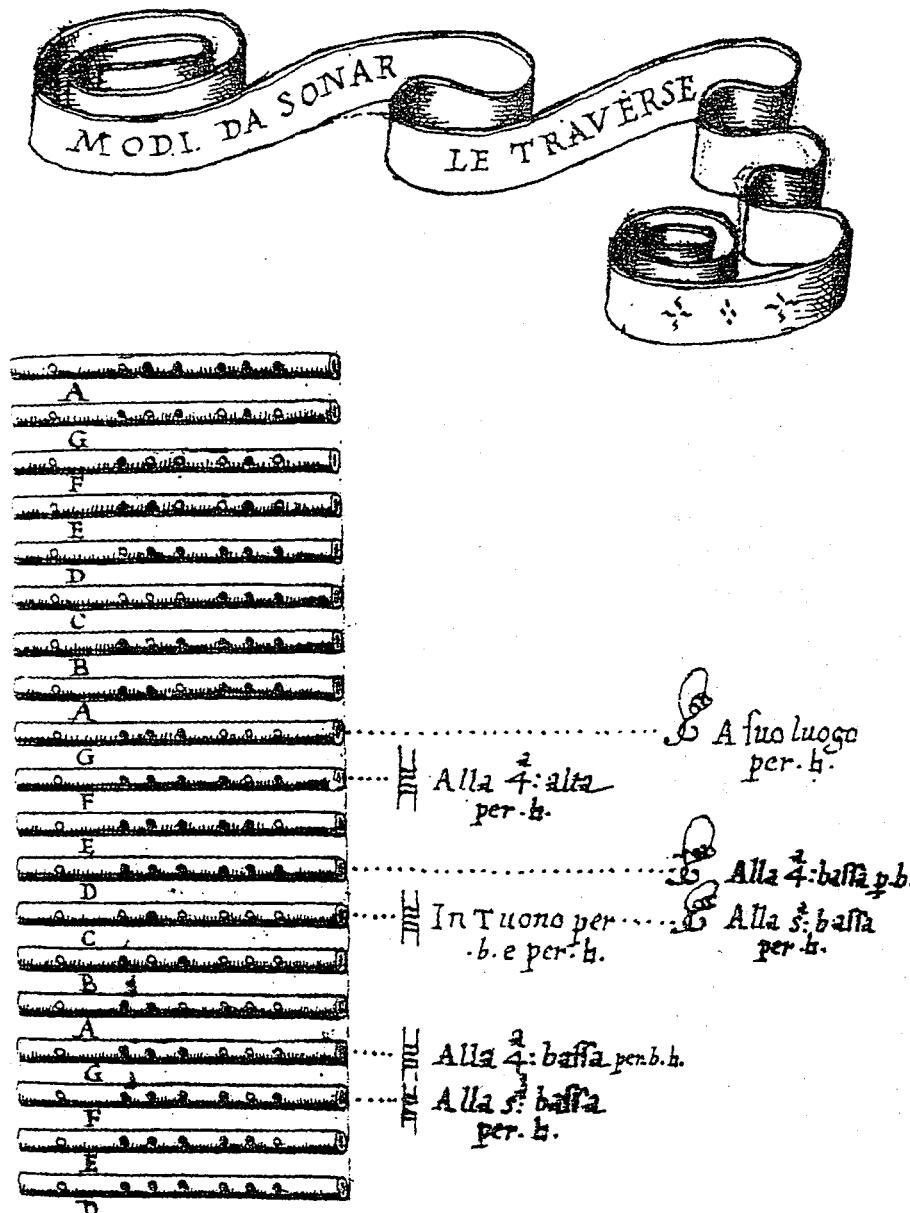
Basse

6 6 6 5 7 6 6

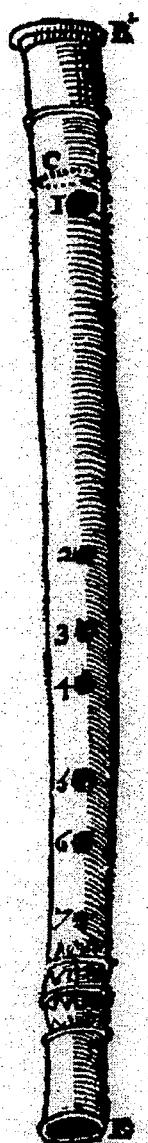
6 3

5 6 6 5b 4 3

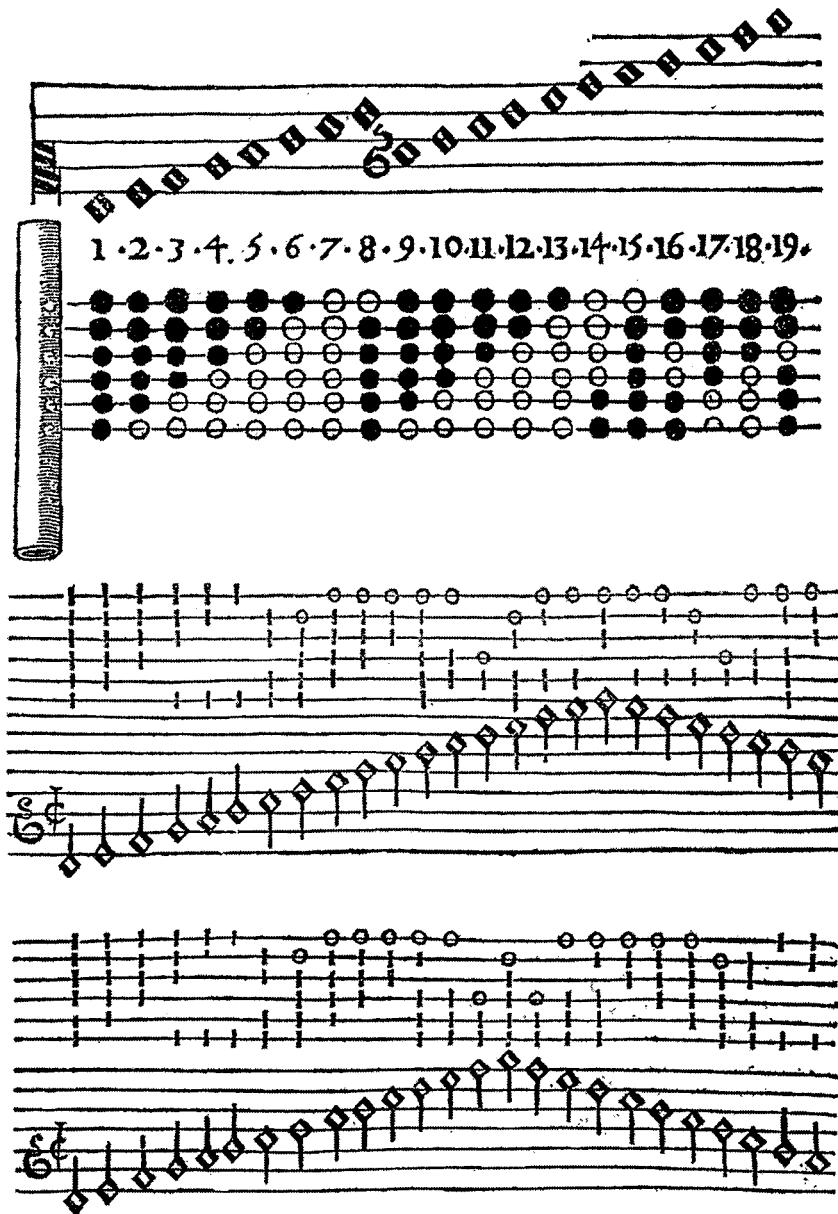
Ex. 6.8 Michel de La Barre, *Pièces pour la flute traversière avec la basse continue* (Paris, 1702): 'La Therese' from Suite II, gavotte and



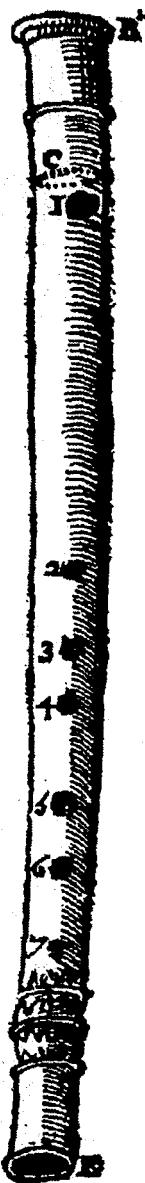
Illus. 6.1 Aurelio Virgiliano, 'Il Dolcimelo': fingering chart for 'traversa'.



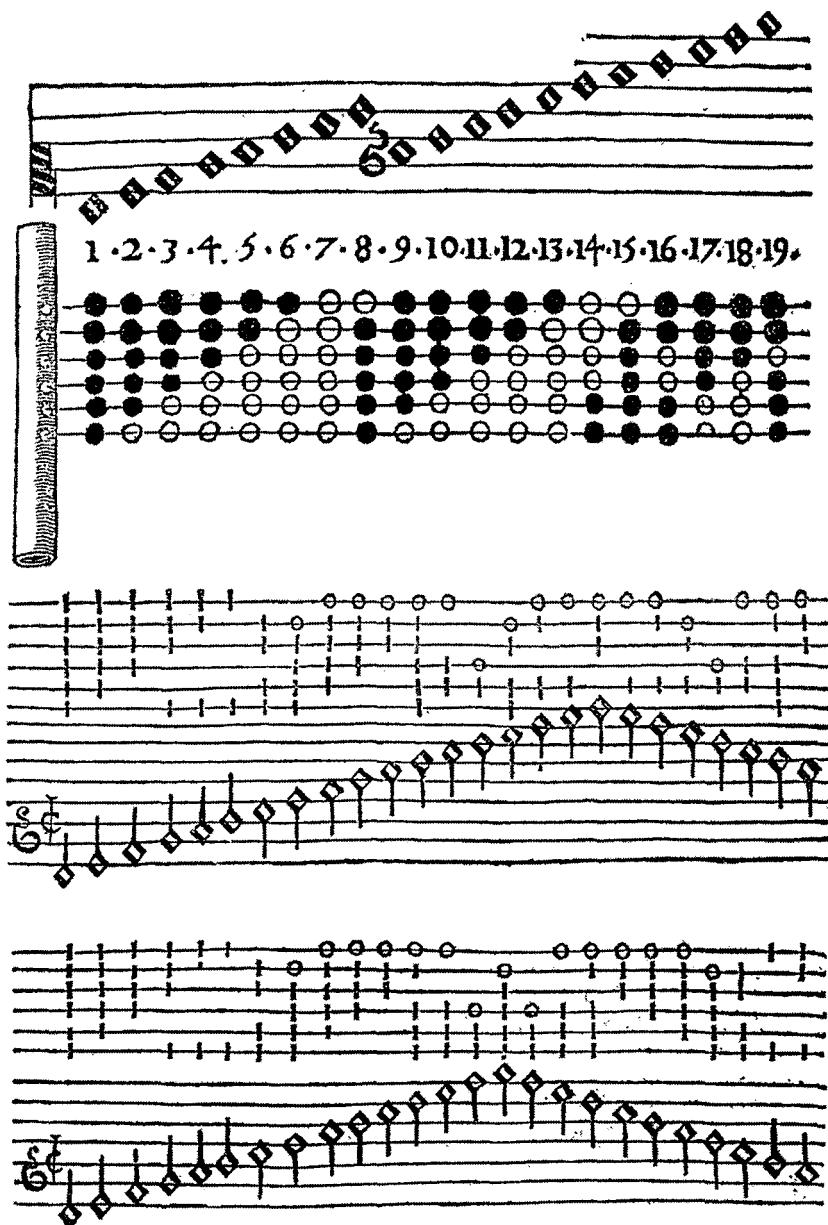
Illus. 6.2 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7), p. 241: 'Fluste d'Allemand'.



Illus. 6.3 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7), pp. 313–14: fingering charts for *g* and *d'*, ‘fluste d’Allemand’, and for *d'*, ‘fifre’.



Illus. 6.2 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636-7), p. 241: 'Fluste d'Allemand'.



Illus. 6.3 Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1636–7), pp. 313–14: fingering charts for *g* and *d'*, 'fluste d'Allemand', and for *d'*, 'fifre'.