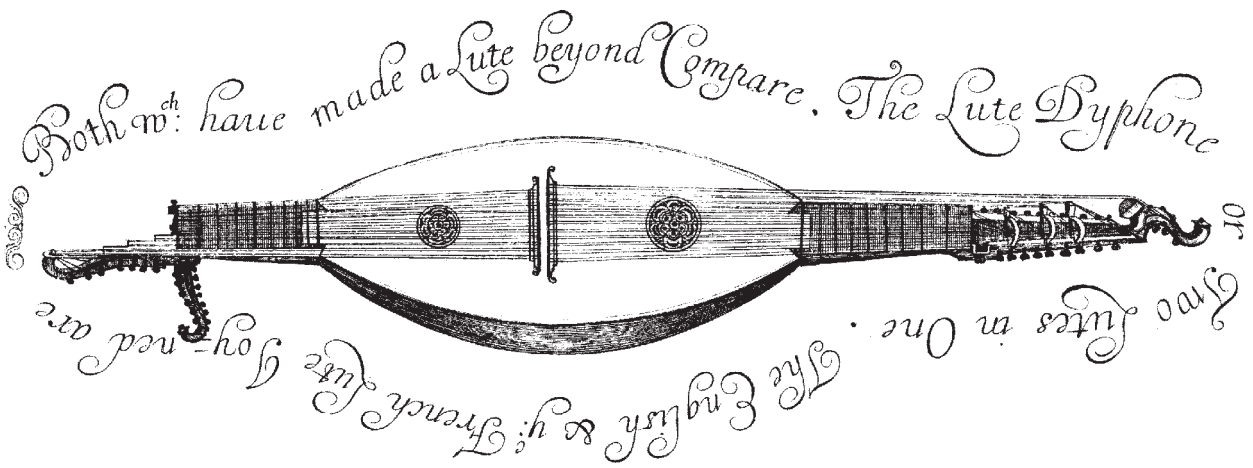
William Lawes

3 Pieces for two Lutes

Audio CD included



edited by

Anthony Bailes & Anne van Royen

TREE EDITION

William Lawes

(1602 - 1645)

3 Pieces for two Lutes

Facsimile: GB-Oxford, Bodleiean Library
Mus. Sch. b. 2, Page 86
Version for two Lutes
using the tuning:
f’ d’ h g d A G F E (D) C
playable on ten courses

Version for two10-course Lutes
in Renaissance tuning by
Anthony Bailes & Anne van Royen

Cover illustration:
The Lute Dyphone, or Two Lutes in One
Engraving by W. Faithorne, from
Thomas Mace: Musick´s Monument, 1676
(from a copy in a private collection)

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TREE EDITION
Albert Reyerman

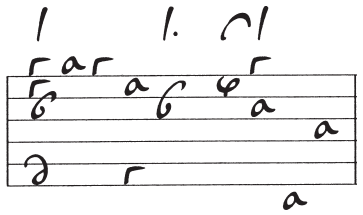
Though William Lawes made use of the theorbo as a continuo instrument in his compositions, the only pieces written specifically for lute are the three duets which are found in the Lawes autograph, Mus.Sch.B.2, housed in the Bodleiean Library, Oxford. From the practised calligraphy of the tablature and the idiomatic writing for the instrument it is clear that Lawes was conversant with the lute. The choice of the tuning, f' d' h g d A G F E (D) C, is equally interesting, for it is one of the lesser used "accords nouveaux", tunings fashionable in France during the 1630's and 1640's. Excepting a few appearances in lute manuscripts it only appears to have found favour with René Mesangeau and Pierre Gaultier, both of whom used it in modified form for a lute with ten courses (the tenth course was lowered to C, the note D being unused). There is a further link between Mesangeau and Lawes: the part for lute 1 of the alman appeared in Pierre Ballard's "Tablature/ de Luth/ de differents autheurs/ sur les accords nouveaux" in 1638, attributed to Mesangeau. It is also found in several English manuscripts of the time and must have been fairly well known in England. Lawes might even have heard Mesangeau play it during his stay there. Whatever, that two composers should be involved in writing one duet is not unusual: the practice of adding a second part - "contrepartie" as it was called in France – to an existing solo piece was perfectly normal during the seventeenth century (cf. pieces by Gaultier, Mouton, Dufaut, and others) and the same procedure is also found in sixteenth century lute music (cf. Matelart's second parts to pieces by Francesco da Milano, Dowland's "Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home" and Johnson's "Delight Pavin"). This phenomenon was not limited to lute music, indeed Lawes sometimes incorporated existing compositions into some of his other works. It is not known if the two corants are also constructed in the same way, though I suspect not, as the parts seem more closely aligned.

The type of lute intended for this music was most probably the twelve-course lute, an instrument which, if we are to believe the Burwell tutor, was the invention of Jacques Gaultier, the "English Gaultier". This instrument, with its two-headed peg box construction, was popular in France, England and the Netherlands and was often depicted in Dutch genre paintings of the mid century, notably those by Gerard Terborch and Hendrick Sorgh. Such a peg box construction can be seen on the left-hand lute of Thomas Mace's lute dyphone, an illustration of which is on the cover of this edition. Though the Lawes tablature calls for eleven courses, it is doubtful that the eleven-course lute, as seen in François de Troy's portrait of Charles Mouton, is intended, for such instruments, which were tuned in d minor, only gained favour later in the century, after the twelve-course lute and the other "accords nouveaux" had lost their popularity (cf: Burwell lute tutor).

Despite references to the lute playing of his colleagues John Wilson and Jacques Gaultier, there is no mention of Lawes as a lutenist, only that he was a member of the king's "lutes and voices". In seating plans of the musicians in "The Triumph of Peace" (Longleat papers, GB) "Lawes" name is placed next to that of Gaultier, but whether as lutenist or singer is unclear. Indeed, the only evidence for Lawes' prowess as a lutenist derives from the three duets, but it is enough to prove indisputably a sure command and love of the instrument.

Errata:

Lawes Autograph

Corant 1: lute 1 - bar 4 should read 

lute 2 - bar 4: „c“ in bass should be one line higher
lute 2 - bar 7, beat 4: „a“ in bass should be one line lower

Corant 2: lute 1 - bar 1: „f“ on the first string should be removed
lute 1 - bar 11, last note: should probably read „c“.

Arrangement for lutes in Renaissance tuning

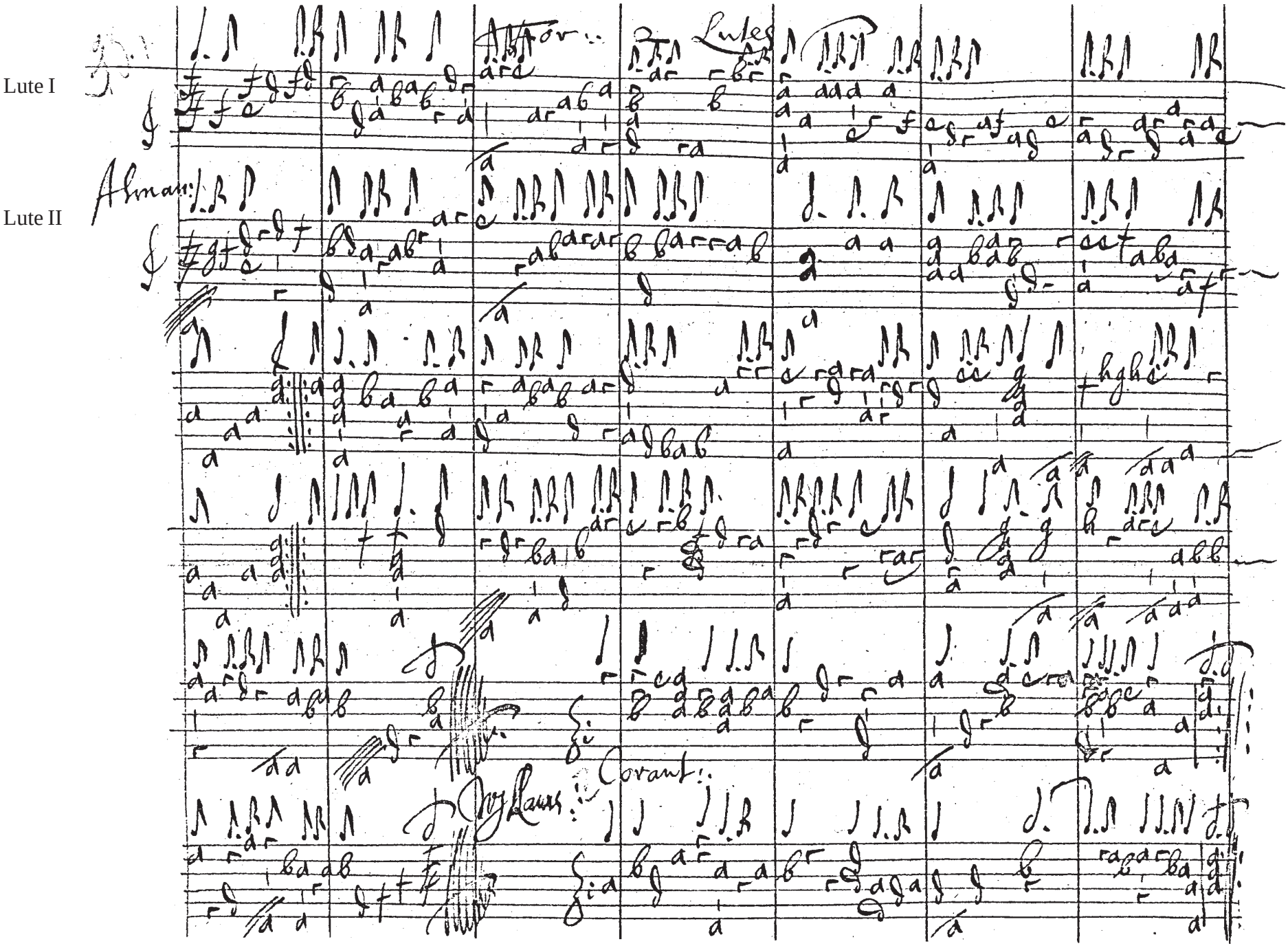
In Corant 2, lute 2, bars 2 and 9, the following chord is an exact transposition:

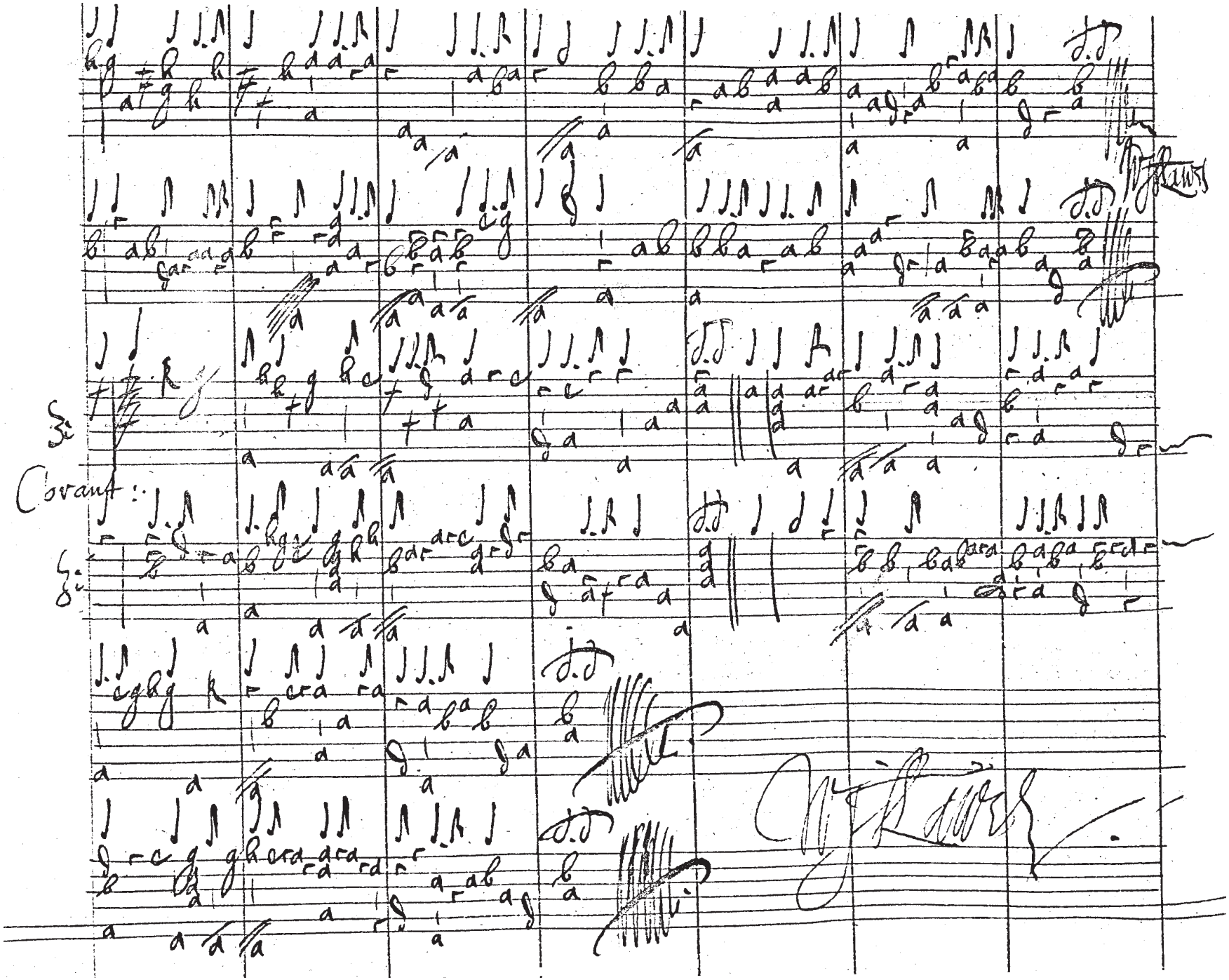
For ease of playing it can be modified to:

Knowledge of lute playing, lute making and the recording of lutes has come a long way since 1975 when our recording of the Lawes duets first appeared. Nevertheless, it was felt that, for all its shortcomings, its inclusion might inspire others to explore the wonderful music of William Lawes.

Anthony Bailes, Anne van Royen and TREE EDITION would like to thank the owners of “Toccata“ records for their permission to use material from the recording “Musik für zwei Lauten“.

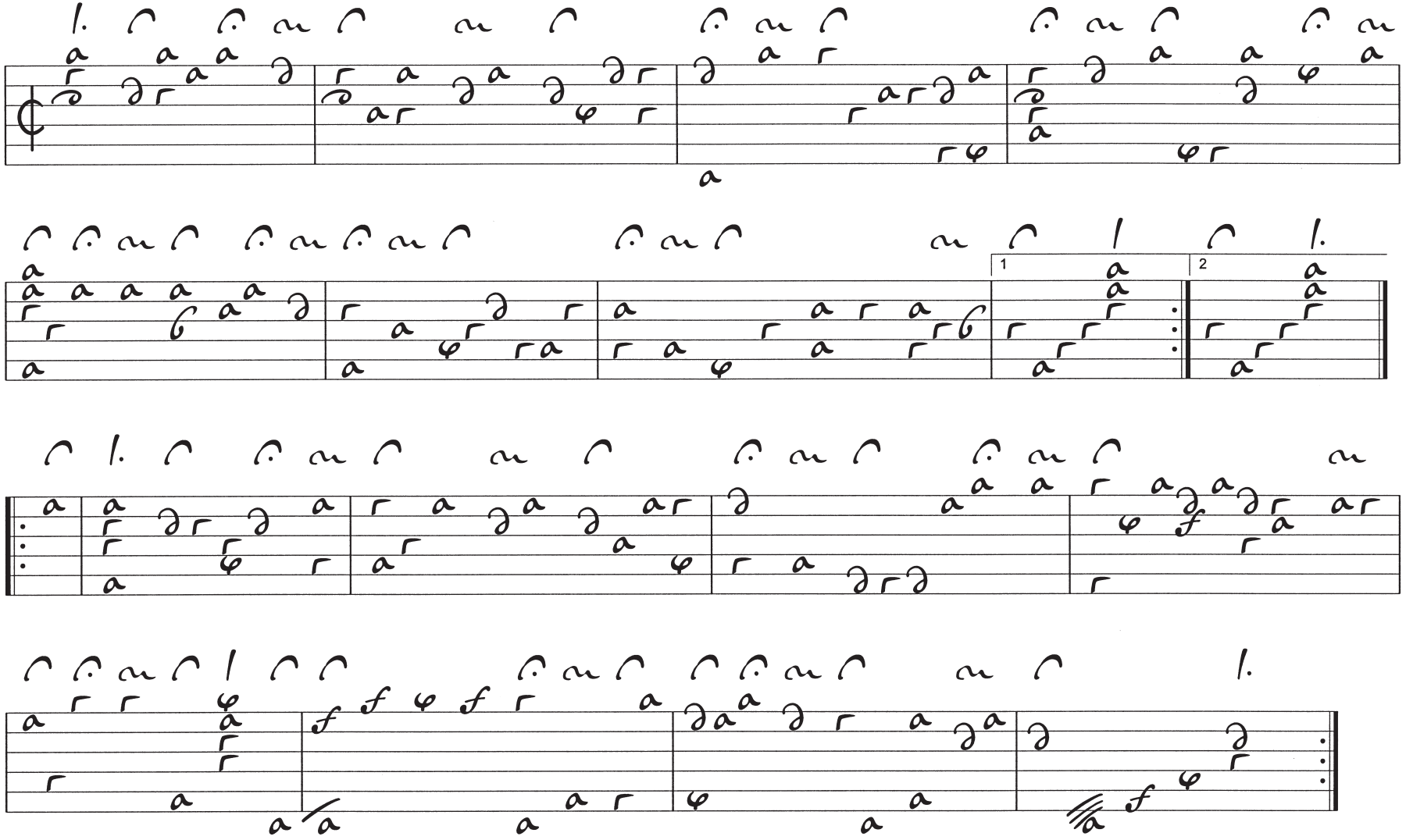
Anthony Bailes


Lute I
Lute II
Almand:
Lutes
Corant:


Courant

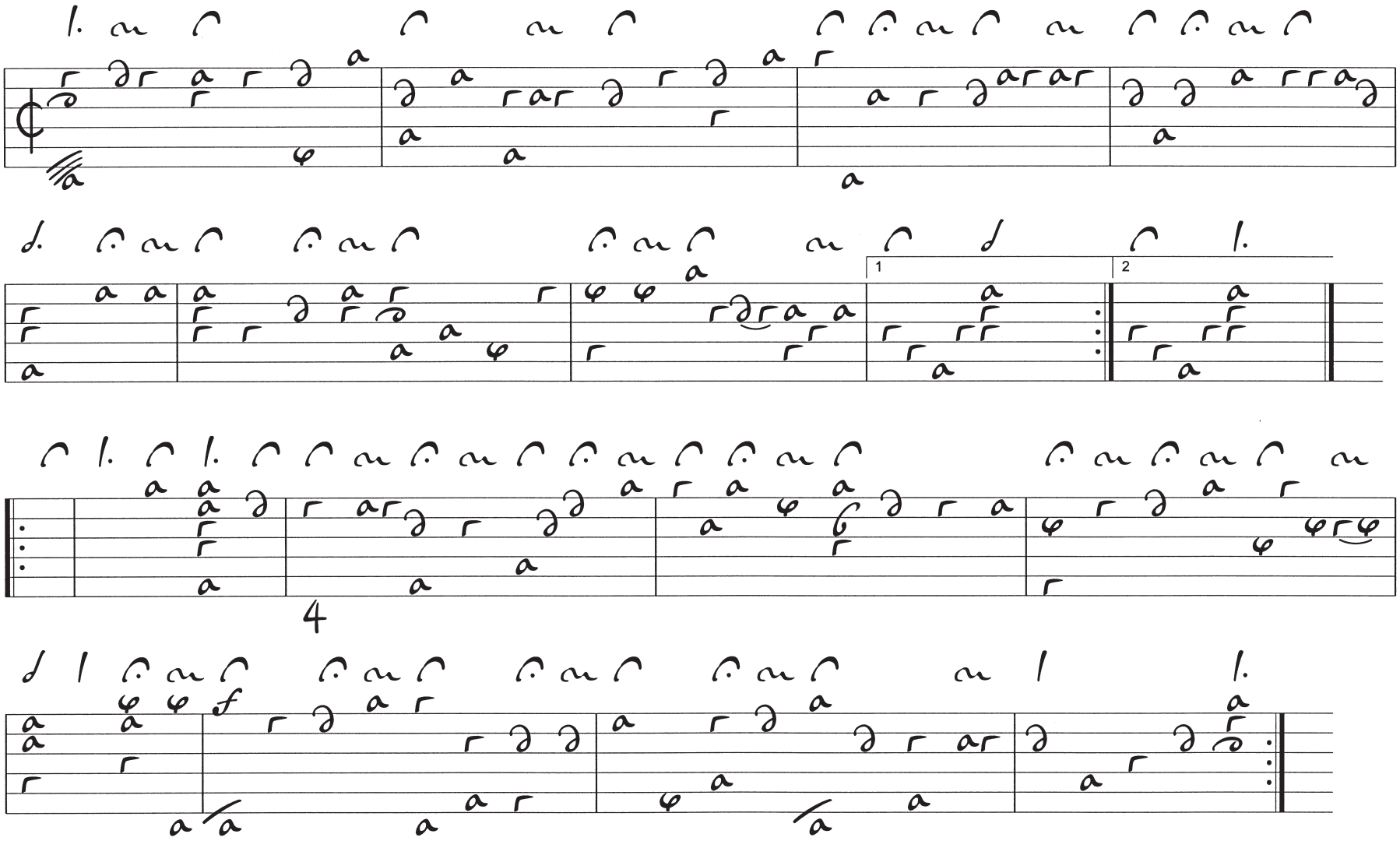
Alman

Lute 1



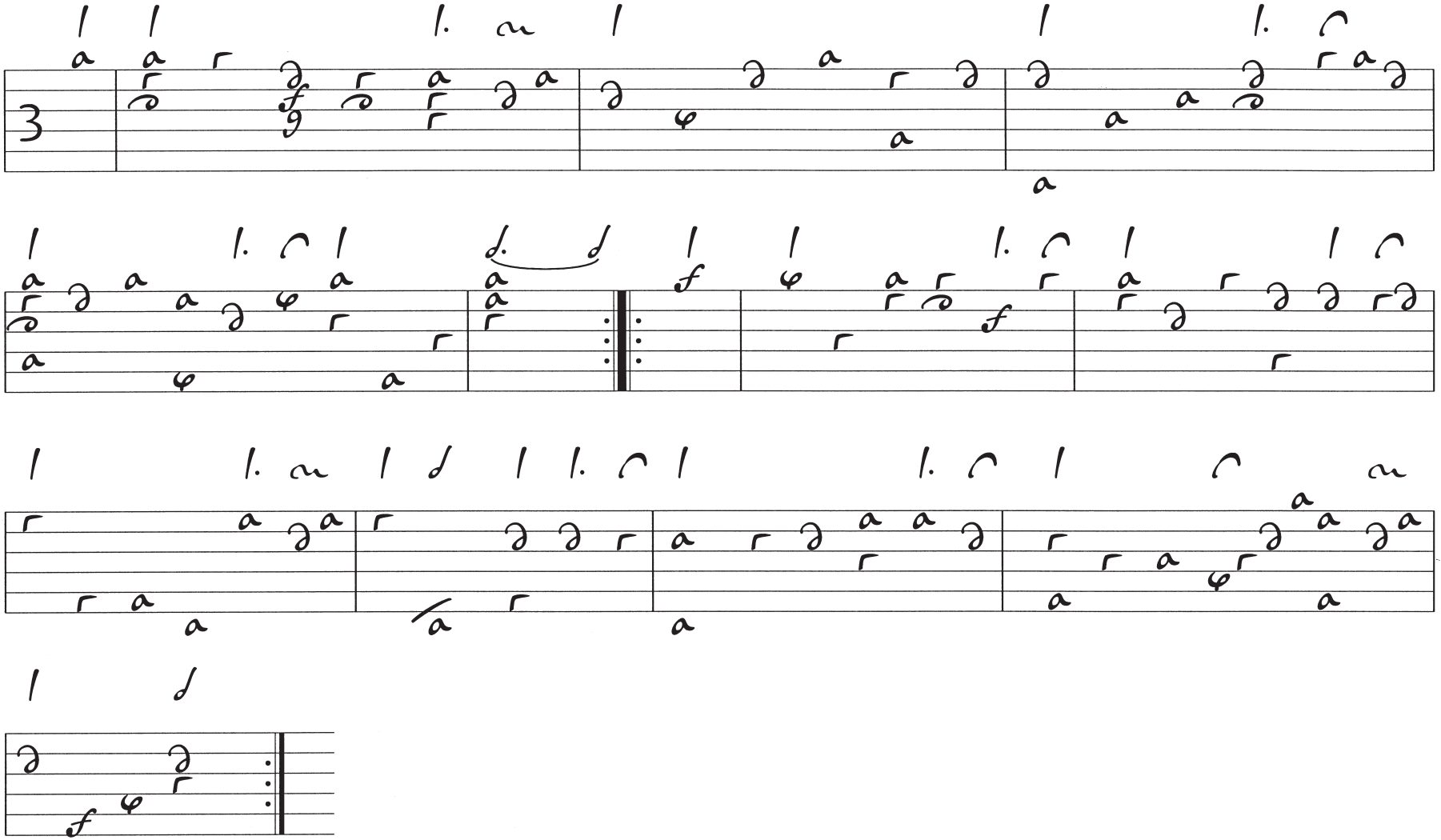
Alman

Lute 2



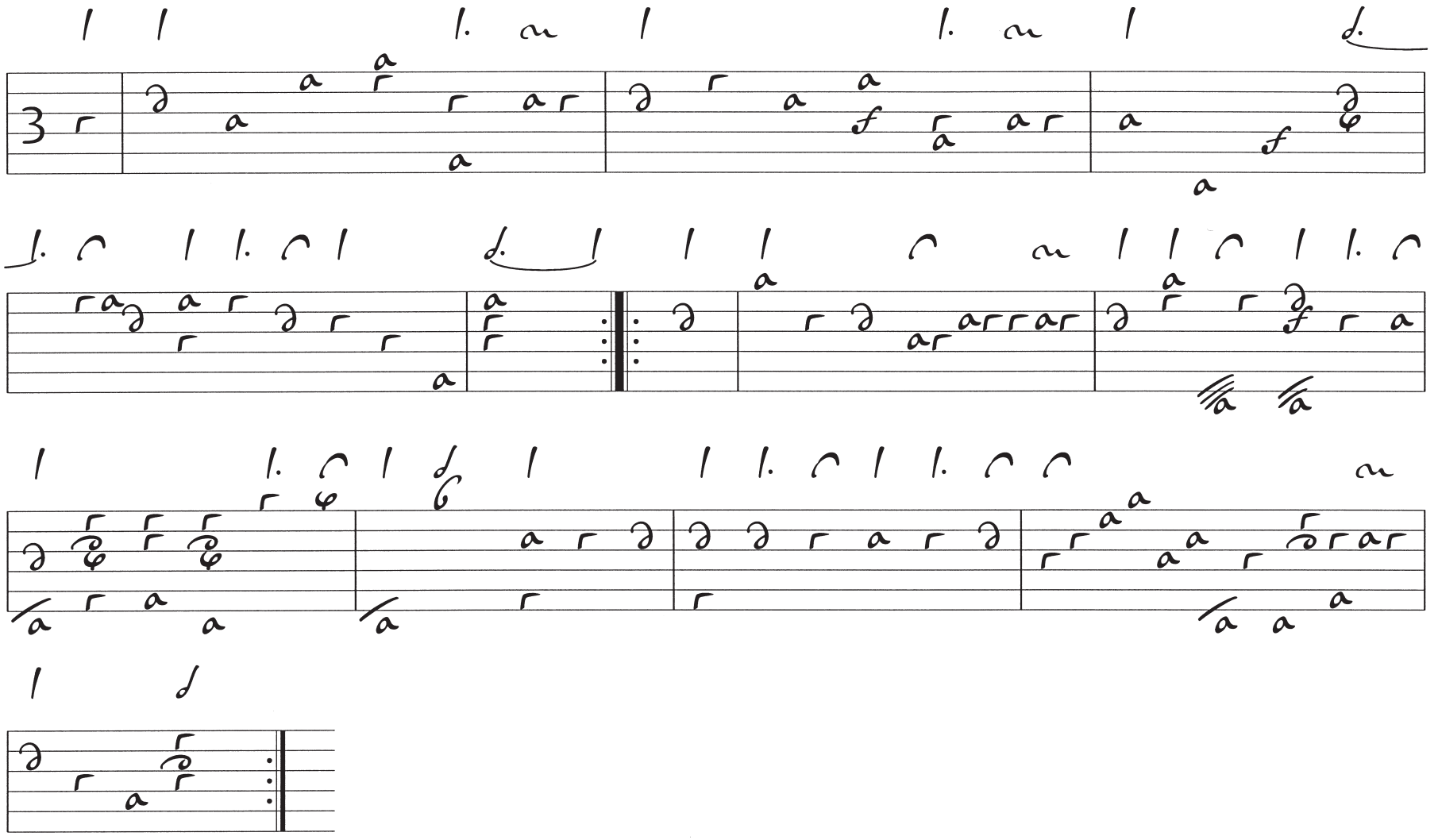
Corant 1

Lute 1



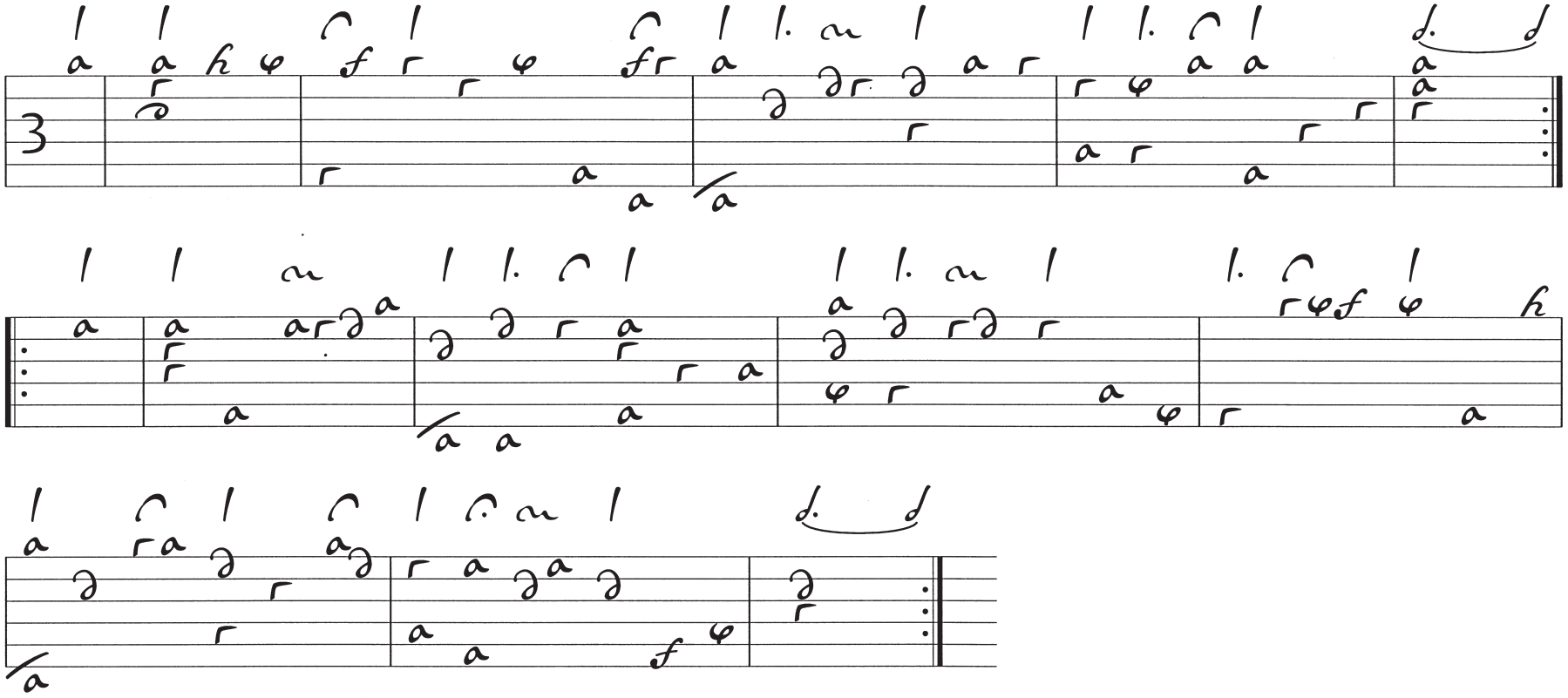
Corant 1

Lute 2



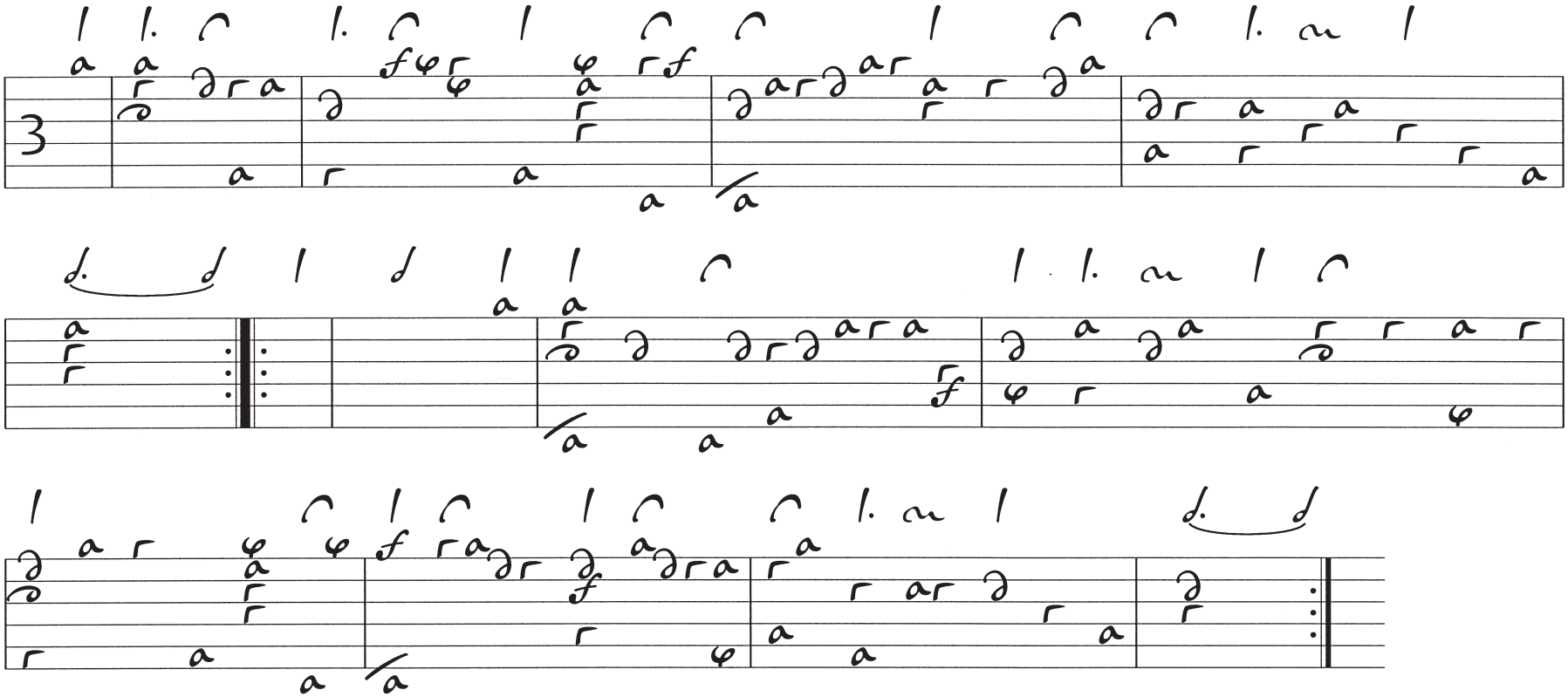
Corant 2

Lute 1



Corant 2

Lute 2



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