

# Francesco Corbetta - The Best of All

## 21. I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912

### Introduction

**I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912** is an anonymous and undated manuscript of presumably Italian provenance comprising 119 unnumbered folios in oblong format measuring 160 x 225mm. A digital image of the manuscript is available at

[http://bibliomediateca.santacecilia.it/bibliomediateca/cms.view?menu\\_str=0\\_1\\_0\\_4&numDoc=20&physDoc=14398&pflag=personalizationFindBiblioteca](http://bibliomediateca.santacecilia.it/bibliomediateca/cms.view?menu_str=0_1_0_4&numDoc=20&physDoc=14398&pflag=personalizationFindBiblioteca)

There is no title page or other preliminary material. The pieces are grouped according to mode or key with some blank pages between sections. The digital image does not include the blank pages and the listing of these in the library catalogue entry does not seem to match up with what is actually included in the reproduction.<sup>1</sup> It is the work of two separate very distinctive copyists, identified here as Hand A and Hand B. Originally, pieces mainly, if not exclusively, by Corbetta and Bartolotti were copied by Hand A. At a later date pieces, many of them attributed to a certain Domenico Rainer, were copied on the blank pages left at the end of each section by Hand B, possibly by Rainer himself.<sup>2</sup> One interesting characteristic of Hand A is the lopsided 8 which is also a feature of the typeface used in Bartolotti's **Secondo libro di chitarra (ca.1656)**. Hand B uses the more usual upright form.

The mode and the corresponding *alfabeto* letter are indicated on the first page of each section as follows.

p.2 - 15	G minor	[O = Mode 2]
p.16-29	A minor	D = Mode 3*
p.30-39	E minor	+ = Mode 4
p.40-57	C major	B = Mode 5
p.58-66	F major	G = Mode 6
p.67-76	D major	C = Mode 7
p.77-85	G major	A = Mode 8
p.86-91	B minor	Tuono Trasportato

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<sup>1</sup> The page numbers used in this study are those matching the online PDF. Page 1 shows the library catalogue entry; the music is on pages 2-120. The folio numbers given here are provisional; without actually seeing the manuscript it has not been possible to match these definitively to the pieces. According to the catalogue description there are 32 folios at the end of the manuscript which are not included in the reproduction; f.91v-92, 101v-102, f.106v-109 and f.114v-115r appear to bear content of some kind. See Appendix below for a complete list of the contents.

<sup>2</sup> Nothing is currently known about Rainer. It has been suggested that he was a pupil of Roncalli but this is not supported by any evidence. The Allemania on p.113-114/ f.75v-76r is attributed to "Dom<sup>co</sup> Rainer"; elsewhere he is referred to only as Rainer.

\*The *alfabeto* letter is on p.18 rather than p.16.

The section of pieces in A minor includes one piece in A major; the C major section includes two pieces in C minor. The pieces in G minor are not preceded by an *alfabeto* letter or indication of mode. In the seventeenth-century modal system G minor (O) is the equivalent of Mode 2. Mode 1 is the equivalent of D minor (E); it is likely that a whole section of pieces in D minor has been lost at some point. The library catalogue entry describes it as “*incompleto e mutilo*”. The manuscript has clearly been badly affected by damp; there is extensive staining at the top of each page. From p. 92 to the end of the reproduction the pieces are in various keys.

There are six staves to a page. The catalogue entry states that there are 34 pieces in the manuscript, but in fact there are at least 67 separate pieces<sup>3</sup> including two pieces from each of Corbetta’s printed books, **Varii capricci (1643)**, **Varii Scherzi (1648)** and **La guitarre royale (1671)** and 25 pieces from Bartolotti’s **Secondo libro di chitarra (ca.1656)**. There are a further six pieces in Hand A which are not included in the surviving printed books of either of them. However, given that most of the pieces in Hand A are by one or the other of them, it is a reasonable assumption that the unidentified pieces are also by them. On the basis of external evidence, three pieces can be tentatively attributed to Corbetta and three pieces to Bartolotti.

Throughout the music is in Italian tablature combined with *alfabeto*. In the pieces by Corbetta the direction of the strummed chords is indicated by placing the heads of the note values on the highest line of the staff with the stems down for a down (bass to treble) stroke and up for an up (treble to bass) stroke.<sup>4</sup> The only sign for an ornament (apart from slurs) is a t with a dot beside it, similar to that used in Corbetta’s **Varii capricci (1643)**.

### Summary of the Contents

Pieces in Hand A	37
Pieces in Hand B	30
Pieces in Hand A traced to printed books	31
Pieces by Hand A not traced to printed books	6
Pieces by Corbetta	6 + 3
Pieces by Bartolotti	25 + 3 <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Some of those by Rainer are in several sections.

<sup>4</sup> The earliest example of music with the note values placed on the staff in this way to have come to light so far is F:Psg.Ms.Rés. 2344 - Tablature de guitarre fait par Monsieur Dupille which is dated 1649. Some of the pieces by Rainer also use this system but many of them use the standard Italian system placing stroke marks on the lowest line of the tablature staff. In the pieces by Bartolotti, the direction of the strummed chords is indicated by placing the heads of the note values on the line of the staff where the strum begins with the stems down for a down (bass to treble) stroke and up for an up (treble to bass) stroke, as in the printed book.

<sup>5</sup> The three pieces which may be by Bartolotti are  
p.18-19/f.9v-10r Alemanda in A minor  
p.20-23/f.10v-12r Toccata in A major  
p.83/f.51v Sarabanda in G major

The pieces from Corbetta's printed books are set out in the following table.

Table 1				
Corbetta 1643			I-Rsc AS A Ms.4912	
Page	Key	Title	Folio	Title
p.47	G minor	Alm.del 2° tuono	p.2-3/f.1v-2r	Alamanda
p.49	G minor	Sar.b	p.4/f.2v	Sarabanda
Corbetta 1648			I-Rsc AS A Ms.4912	
p..48	F major	Alm. <sup>a</sup>	p.58-59/f.31v-32r	Alemanda
p.50	F major	Sarb. <sup>a</sup>	p.62-63/f.38v-39r	Sarabanda
Corbetta 1671			I-Rsc AS A Ms.4912	
p.22	F major	Prel <sup>de</sup>	p.64/f.39v	Preludio
p.22-23	F major	Allem <sup>de</sup>	p.65-66/f.40v-41r	Alemanda

p.2-3	f.1v-2r	Alamanda	Corbetta 1643 p. 47
p.4	f.2v	Sarabanda	Corbetta 1643 p. 49
p.58-59	f.31v-32r	Alemanda	Corbetta 1648 p. 48
p.62-63	f.38v-39r	Sarabanda	Corbetta 1648 p. 50
p.64	f.39v	Preludio	Corbetta 1671 p. 22
p.65-66	f.40v-41r	Alemanda	Corbetta 1671 p. 22

The manuscript version of the Alamanda from **Varii Capricci (1643)** is the same as in the printed one. Bar 7 of the Sarabanda is different from the printed book but otherwise the two versions are the same.

There are more variants in the pieces from **Varii scherzi (1648)**. In the manuscript version of the Alemanda *alfabeto* chords are used more frequently and the Sarabanda appears to have been abbreviated. (Alternatively, of course, the printed version may have been expanded). In the printed version the first four bar phrase<sup>6</sup> is repeated and the last four bars are a *reprise* of the preceding four bars. There are a few other significant differences. On the first stave the copyist has started to copy what appears to be the opening bars of a different Sarabanda and crossed it out before starting on the piece proper. Bar 10 of the manuscript version has a standard *alfabeto* Chord H3 without an ornament; in the printed version, one of Corbetta's characteristic dissonant chords – the same chord notated in tablature but with the fourth course left unfretted – is used so that a descending appoggiatura or trill can be played on the first course. In bar 27 instead of the standard Chord N5 used in the manuscript, the printed version has the written out dissonant form with the fifth course left unfretted. This facilitates the fingering of the descending appoggiatura on the following note on the third course and the note after that played at the eighth fret on the fourth course. This is of some significance as there is no reason why Corbetta should

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The Sarabande is also included in GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 f.9r where it is attributed to "a". The other two pieces are stylistically more likely to be by him than by Corbetta. See <https://monicahall.co.uk/bartolotti> for further discussion.

<sup>6</sup> A bar line is missing between the second and third bars in the printed version.

have written these chords out in tablature rather than *alfabeto* unless he intended them to be played differently.<sup>7</sup> In bar 15 there is an example of the double descending appoggiatura which Corbetta was rather fond of; the manuscript has a single appoggiatura. At the cadences in bars 6, 11, 15, 25 and 33 the appoggiatura is followed by a notated turn with the lower auxiliary note in the manuscript which is not indicated in the printed version. Otherwise the ornaments are the same in both sources. The open fourth course on the third beat of bar 12 of the manuscript version may be a copying error.

Each of the two versions works well on its own terms. One can only speculate as to whether the manuscript version is a simplified version of the printed one or whether the printed one is a more elaborate version of an earlier one. **Varii scherzi (1648)** is described on the title page as 'Libro Quarto' and almost certainly Corbetta had published a book between 1643 and 1648 now missing. The same Sarabanda is found on f.39v of the Gallot manuscript - **GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94** - in a version which resembles that included here more closely than the printed version. This does not include the repeated sections and has the standard *alfabeto* chords (in French tablature) at bars 10 and 27. It is conceivable that Corbetta re-cycled his work, re-working it to reflect changes in his style over time.

**Sarabanda – 1648 p.50/21. I-Rsc AS A Ms. 4912 p.62-3**



<sup>7</sup> It has been claimed that these and other similar altered *alfabeto* chords which occur more frequently in Corbetta's later books are written out like this to indicate that they should be played with a *barré* and that the dissonant notes should be omitted. See Section IV Part 8 for a discussion of Corbetta's dissonance.



A printed musical score for guitar, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is in 3/4 time and features a mix of chords and melodic lines. Measure numbers 8, 10, 15, 19, and 24 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. Chord symbols are placed below the bass staff: G, G, H3, B, B, I, and C. Some notes and chords are highlighted in red and blue. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and chords.

The pieces from **La guitarre royale (1671)** are in Italian tablature with *alfabeto* rather than in French tablature as in the printed book. Otherwise they are to all intents and purposes identical. Their inclusion in the manuscript suggests that the manuscript was copied after 1671. It also indicates that Corbetta's later music was known and did circulate in Italy.

The following pieces may also be by Corbetta.

**F major**

p.60-61      f.32v-33r      Corrente

**Tuono Trasportato = B minor**

p.86      f.58v      Sarabanda

p.88-89      f.59v-60r      Alemanda

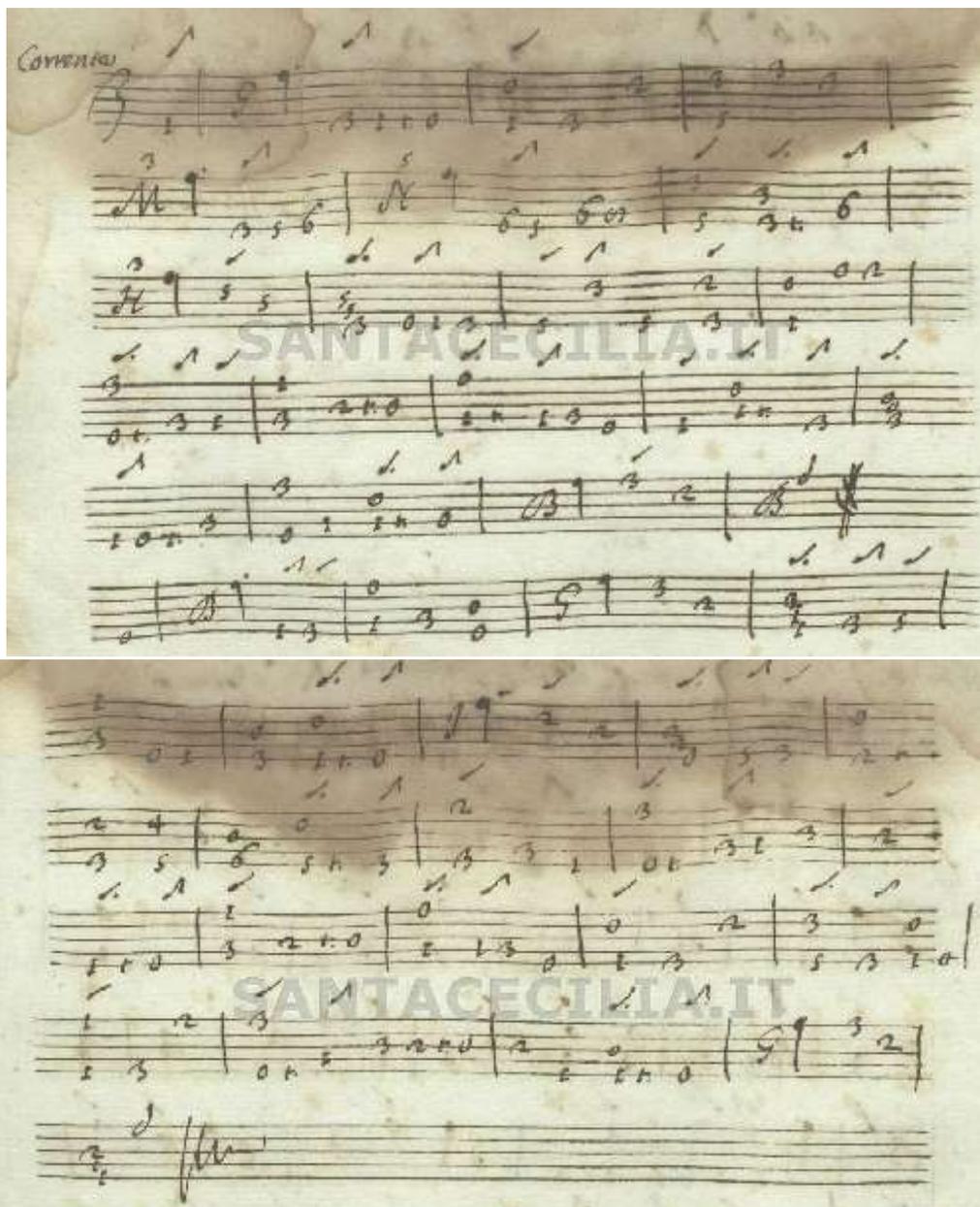
The Corrente has been copied between the Alemanda and Sarabanda in F major taken from Corbetta's **Varii scherzi (1648)**. The printed book lacks the Corrente which makes up the standard movements of a suite. It is conceivable the Corrente in **I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912** formed part of this suite, perhaps omitted from the printed book for reasons of space.

The Alemanda is also found in the Spanish manuscript **Libro de diferentes cifras - E-MnMús.811** p.21 – 23. This includes a number of pieces which may be attributed to Corbetta for one reason or another.<sup>8</sup> Given that his music circulated more widely than that of any other baroque guitarist and that the two versions of the Alemanda are similar allows one to speculate that it is by him together with the Sarabanda in the same key.

<sup>8</sup> See Section VI Part 5/Part 2 for discussion of this manuscript.

The two versions are very similar although the note values in **Libro de diferentes cifras** have been doubled – there are twenty-eight bars instead of fourteen – and there are some minor differences in the rhythm in the second half. B minor is a key which Corbetta favoured – the opening suite in **La guitarre royale (1671)** is in that key. It is possible that all three pieces were included in the missing book printed between 1632 and 1648.

**Corrente - I-Rsc AS A Ms. 4912 p.60 – 61**



**Alemanda I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912 p.88-89/E-MnMús.811 p.21-23**

*Allegretto*

SANTACECILIATT

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Sarabanda I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912 p.86



March 2019

## I-Rsc AS A Ms.4912

### Contents

The following is a summary of the contents of the manuscript showing the disposition of the pieces by Corbetta and Bartolotti. According to the library catalogue entry the folios in highlighted in red are blank.

1r, 1v - 25v, 26r, 26v, 27, 28r, 28v-33r, 33v, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38r, 38v - 47r, 47v-48r, 48v - 51v, 52r, 52v - 53r, 53v, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58r, 58v-63v, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68r, 68v-71v, 72r, 72v-79v, 80r, 80v - 86v, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91r, 91v-92v, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101r, 101v-102v, 103, 104, 105, 106r, 106v-109v, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114r, 114v-115r, 115v, 116, 117, 118, 119r, 119v.

The blank pages are not included in the reproduction but the recto and verso of each folio can easily be determined.

The library catalogue entry also indicates that Rainer's name appears on f.12r, 16v, 26r, 44v, 45v, 75r-v, 84r, 101v, 107r, 108r, 109r; however, these folio numbers do not seem to match up with the listing of the blank pages. The manuscript is described as *incompleto e mutilo*; there is almost certainly a section of pieces in D minor missing at the beginning and there may have been more blank pages than listed in the catalogue entry.

[E 1° D minor – missing?]

[O 2°] G minor (11 pieces) p.2-15

	<b>f.1r</b>	<b>Blank</b>		
p.2-3	f.1v-2r	Alamanda	A	Corbetta 1643 p. 47
p.4	f.2v	Sarabanda	A	Corbetta 1643 p. 49
p.5	f.3r	Alemanda d'Rainer	B	
p.6	f.3v	Sarabanda	B	
p.7-12	f.4r-5r	Capriccio	B	In five sections
p.10	f.5v	Untitled	B	
p.11	f.6r	Presto	B	
p.11	f.6r	Allegro	B	

p.12	f.6v	Untitled	B
p.13	f.7r	Gauotta	B
p.14-15	f.7v-8r	Giga del Rainer	B
p.15	f.8r	Minuet	B

**[D 3°]<sup>1</sup> A minor/A major (7 Pieces)**

p.16-17	f.8v-9r	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p. 54
p.18-19	f.9v-10r	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti?
p.20-23	f.10v-12r	Toccata	A	Bartolotti? In A major
p.24-25	f.12v--13r	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 55
p.26-27	f.13v-14r	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p.57
p.28-29	f.14v-15r	Untitled	B	
p.29	f.15r	Corrente del Rainer	B	

**+ 4° E minor (6 pieces)**

p.30-31	f.15v-16r	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p. 1
p.32	f.16v	Gauotta	A	Bartolotti p. 2
p.33	f.17r	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p. 3
p.34-35	f.17v-18r	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 2
p.36-37	f.18v-19r	Corrente	A	Bartolotti p.3
p.38-39	f.19v-20r	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p. 7

**B 5° C major/minor (16 pieces)**

p.40-42	f.20v-21v	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.26
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<sup>1</sup> Alfabeto letter is on f.9v/p.18.

p.43	f.22r	Minuete	A	Bartolotti p.37
p.44	f.22v	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p.33
p.45	f.23r	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p.35
p.46-47	f.23v-24r	Capriccio	A	Bartolotti p. 33
p.48-49	f.24v-25r	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 34
p.50-51	f.25v-26r	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p. 38
	<b>f.26v-28r<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Blank</b>		
p.52-53	f.28v-29r	Alemanda del Rainer	B	In C minor
p.53	f.29r	Corrente  dell Istesso	B	In C minor
p.54	f.29v	4 Minuet del Rainer	B	
	f.29vP <sup>o</sup> .	Minuet	B	
p.54	f.29v	2 <sup>o</sup> Minuet	B	
p.55	f.30r	3 <sup>o</sup> Minuet	B	
p.55	f.30r	4 <sup>o</sup> Minuet	B	
p.56	f.30v	Minuet	B	
p.56	f.30v	Sarabanda in tempo di minuet	B	
p.57	f.31r	Untitled	B	
<b>G 6° F major (5 pieces)</b>				
p.58-59	f.31v-32r	Alemanda	A	Corbetta 1648 p.48

<sup>2</sup> Library description indicates 26r is blank – an error?

p.60-61	f.32v-33r	Corrente	A	Corbetta ?
	<b>f.33v-38r</b>	<b>Blank</b>		
p.62-63	f.38v-39r	Sarabanda	A	Corbetta 1648 p. 50
p.64	f.39v	Preludio	A	Corbetta 1671 p.22
	<b>f.40r</b>	<b>Blank ??<sup>3</sup></b>		
p.65-66	f.40v-41r	Alemanda	A	Corbetta 1671 p.22
<b>C 7° D major (5 pieces)</b>				
p.67-70	f.41v-43r	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.42
p.71-73	f.43v-44v	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 49
p.73-75	f.44v-45v	Corrente	A	Bartolotti p. 46
p.75-76	f.45v-46r	Untitled	B	
p.76	f.46r	Untitled	B	
	<b>f.46v-47r</b>	<b>Blank ???</b>		
	<b>f.47v-48r</b>	<b>Blank<sup>4</sup></b>		
<b>A 8° G major (5 pieces)</b>				
p.77-79	f.48v-49v	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p. 10
p.80	f.50r	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p. 13
p.81-82	f.50v-51r	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 15
p.83	f.51v	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 f.9r

<sup>3</sup> Page 64 & 65 are both verso pages. Folio 40r must either be blank or include another piece.

<sup>4</sup> Library catalogue description indicates f.47v-48r are blank. F.46v-47r may either be blank or include other pieces.

	<b>f.52r</b>	<b>Blank</b>		
p.84-85	f.52v-53r	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p. 15
	<b>f.53v-58r</b>	<b>Blank</b>		
<b>Tuono Trasportata B minor (6 pieces)</b>				
p.86	f.58v	Sarabanda	A	Corbetta ?
p.87	f.59r	Preludio Arp 2	B	
p.88-89	f.59v-60r	Alemand	A	Corbetta? E-MnMús.811 p.21
p.89	f.60r	Del Rainer Sarab <sup>a</sup>	B	
p.90	f.60v	Alemanda del Ranier	B	f.75v Crossed out
p.90-91	f.60v-61r	Giga del Rainer	B	
<b>D minor (1 piece)</b>				
p.92-98	f.61v-64v	Passagalli	A	Bartolotti p. 78
	<b>f.65r-68r</b>	<b>Blank<sup>5</sup></b>		
<b>A minor (1 piece)</b>				
p.99-105	f.68v-71v	Passagalli	A	Bartolotti p. 62
<b>D minor (1 piece)</b>				
p.106-107	f.72r-72v	Fuga etc....	B	
<b>G minor (1 piece)</b>				
p.108-110	f.73r-74r	Passagalli	B	

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<sup>5</sup> According to catalogue entry f. 64r-68r are blank.

**B flat major (1 piece)**

p.111-112	f.74v-75r	Preludio	B
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**Scordatura (5 pieces)**

p.113-114	f.75v-76r	Allemania Dom <sup>co</sup> Rainer	B
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p.115-116	f.76v-77r	Allemania etc	B
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p.116-117	f.77v-78r	Alemanda del Rainer	B
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p.118-119	f.78v-79r	Alemanda del istesso Rainer	B
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	<b>f.80r</b>	<b>Blank</b>	
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p.120	f.80v	Giga del istesso Rainer	B
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	<b>f.81r-86v</b>	<b>Blank???</b>	
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According to the library catalogue entry all the remaining folios are blank except those highlighted here in black.

**87, 88, 89, 90, 91r, 91v-92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101r, 101v-102, 103, 104, 105, 106r, 106v-109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114r, 114v-115r, 115v, 116, 117, 118, 119r.**

Total number of pieces in Hand A	37
Pieces traced to printed books	31
Pieces not traced to printed books	6
Bartolotti	25+3
Corbetta	6 +3

**March 2019**