Angelo Michele Bartolotti – Prince of the Muses

5. I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 (*Olim* I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912)[1]

I-Rama-A-Ms.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 was available at but currently seems to be inaccessible.

http://bibliomediateca.santacecilia.it/bibliomediateca/cms.view?munu_str=0_1_0_4&numDoc=20&physDoc=14398&pflag=personalizationFindBiblioteca

The library catalogue entry describes the manuscript as *"incompleto e mutilo"*. It has been badly affected by damp and there is extensive staining at the top of each page. There is no title page or other preliminary material. The manuscript is ruled throughout with six staves to a page. The pieces are grouped according to mode or key with some unused pages between sections. The original on-line digital image does not include the unused pages. The listing of these in the library catalogue entry at the beginning of the original pdf is unhelpful as the manuscript has recently been restored and the pages re-arranged.[2] In its present state there are eleven apparently blank pages at the beginning (folios 1r-6r); an attempt to erase the content of these has been made at some point and the pieces are no longer legible. At the end there are fourteen further folios, (f.106r-119v), some with erased contents and some ruled but unused.[3]

The manuscript 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, some of them attributed to a certain Domenico Rainer, were copied on the unused pages left at the end of each section by Hand B, posssibly by Rainer himself.[4] 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.

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[1] The manuscript is now in the Bibliomediateca dell'Accademia nazionale di S. Cecilia in Rome. The Accademia and the Conservatorio are now in separate institutions. I am greatly indebted to Lex Esienhardt for making available to me a pdf of the manuscript which includes the blank pages and for sharing with me the notes he made when examining it personally at the library in Rome.

[2] The page numbers used in this study are those matching the online pdf on the assumption that this version is the one to which most people will have access. In the pdf page 1 shows the library catalogue entry; the music is on pages 2-120.

[3] For a complete list of the contents see Corbetta Section VI Part 6 I-Rama-A-Ms.4912.

[4] 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 Allemanda on p.113-114 is attributed to "Dom^{co} Rainer"; elsewhere he is referred to only as Rainer.

The mode and the corresponding *alfabeto* letter are indicated at the beginning of each section as follows.

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

Throughout the music is in Italian tablature combined with *alfabeto*. 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 stave 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. Chord H is sometimes represented by R and Chord M+ by S. The sign for a trill or descending appoggiatura is a t with a dot beside it. An ascending appoggiatura is indicated with a slur beneath the stave as in b. 4, 8, 16 and 20 in Example 1 below. Some of Bartolotti's other signs such as his *arpeggio distesso* sign ⁄. indicating that an *alfabeto* chord should be arpeggiated rather than strummed and *corde insieme/corde separate* slashes are occasionally reproduced. The hash sign # is used occasionally to indicate vibrato; slurs are used in the customary way to indicate groups of notes played only with the left hand.

Most of the pieces are to all intents and purposes identical with the versions in the printed book. The exceptions are the Alemanda (Bartolotti p.49/I-Rama p.71), the Corrente (Bartolotti p.46/I-Rama p.73) and the Passacaglie (Bartolotti p.78/I-Rama p.92). In the Alemanda and Corrente some of the five-part chords are eliminated and the part-writing reduced from three parts to two. Some of the variations in the Passacaglie, including the last 10 variations, have been omitted.

Table

Bartolotti - Secondo Libro ca.1656			**I-Rama-A-Ms.4912**	
Page	Key	Title	Page	Title
p.1	E minor	Prelude	p.30-31	Preludio
p.2	E minor	Allemande	p.34-35	Alemanda
p.2	E minor	Gauot	p.32	Gavotta
p.3	E minor	Courante	p.36-37	Corrente
p.3	E minor	Sarabande	p.33	Sarabanda
p.7	E minor	Gigue	p.38-39	Gigue
p.10	G major	Prelude	p.77-7	Preludio
p.13	G major	Sarabande	p.80	Sarabanda
p.15	G major	Gigue	p.84-85	Gigue
p.15	G major	Alemã	p.81-82	Alemanda
p.26	C major	Prelude	p.40-42	Preludio
p.34	C major	Allemande	p.48-49	Alemanda
p.33	C major	Caprice	p.46-47	Capriccio

[5] The *alfabeto* letter is on p.18 rather than p.16.

p.33	C major	Alle	p.44	Alemanda
p.35	C major	Sarab	p.45	Sarabanda
p.37	C major	Minuete	p.43	Minuete
p.38	C major	Gigue	p.50-51	Gigue
p.42	D major	Prelude	p.67-70	Preludio
p.46	D major	Corrente	p.73-75	Corrente
p.49	D major	Allemãde	p.71-73	Alemanda
p.54	A minor	Prelude	p.16-17	Preludio
p.55	A minor	Allemande	p.24-25	Alemanda
p.57	A minor	Gigue	p.26-27	Gigue
p.62	A minor	Passacaglie	p.99-10	Passagalli
p.78	D minor	Passacaglie	p.92-98	Passagalli

The three unidentified pieces which may be Bartolotti are

p.18-19	Alemanda	A minor
p.20-23	Toccata	A major
p.83	Sarabanda	G major

The Sarabanda can be attributed to Bartolotti with a fair degree of certainty. It is also included on f.9r of the manuscript, **Pieces de guittarre de differends autheurs recueillis par Henry François de Gallot (GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94)** which dates from the 1660s. This includes at least 13 pieces from Bartolotti's **Secondo libro**, in some instances identifying the composer by his initials – **a.m.** In addition, there are four preludes attributed to **a.m.** which may be by him.[6] This Sarabande is attributed simply to "**a**".

In **I-Rama Ms.AS A 4912** the number of courses to be incuded in the strummed chords is indicated in the same way as in the printed book, with the head of the note value placed on the third, fourth or fifth line of the stave as appropriate. As in the printed book, this system does not make it clear whether the first course should be included in the strum. In bars 1, 2, 4 and 8 the first course should obviously be omitted from the G major chord. The piece ends with a short coda which is typical of other sarabandes in Bartolotti's work. The version in **GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94** is in French tablature. It does not include the coda and the harmonic progresion in bars 11-14 is different and arguably more effective. The direction of the strummed chords is indicated by stroke marks below and above the uppermost line of the tablature and does not indicate where the strum should start or finish.

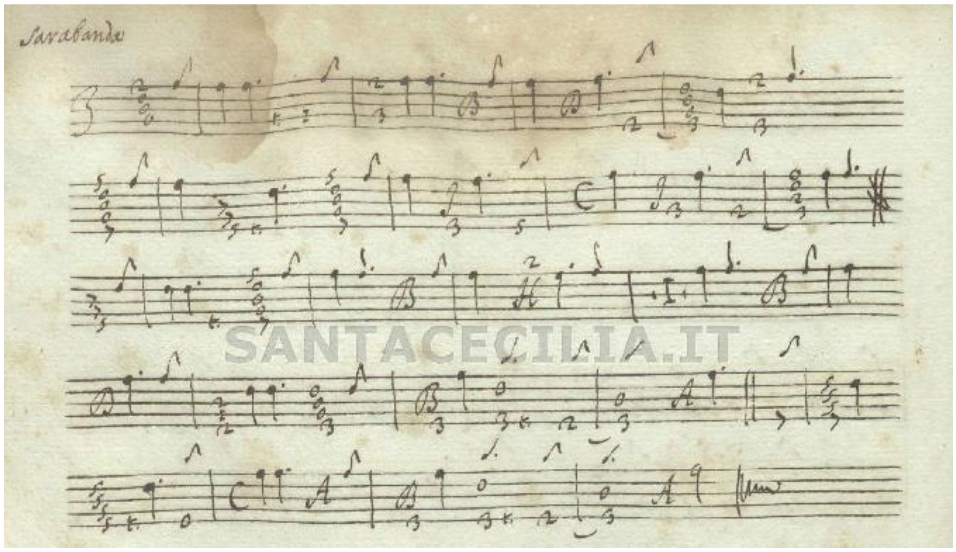
It seems more likely on stylistic grounds that the Alemanda is by Bartolotti rather than Corbetta if indeed it is by either of them. It features the *campanella* passages which Bartolotti is rather fond of. All but one of the strummed chords are represented by *alfabeto* and the second chord in bar one is clearly intended to include all five courses. One interesting feature of the piece is that left-hand fingering has been supplied in b.1, 2 and 3 using the usual system of dots. It is not possible to tell from the reproduction whether these have been added at a later date.

[6] See the Table on p.6 of Section 1 above.

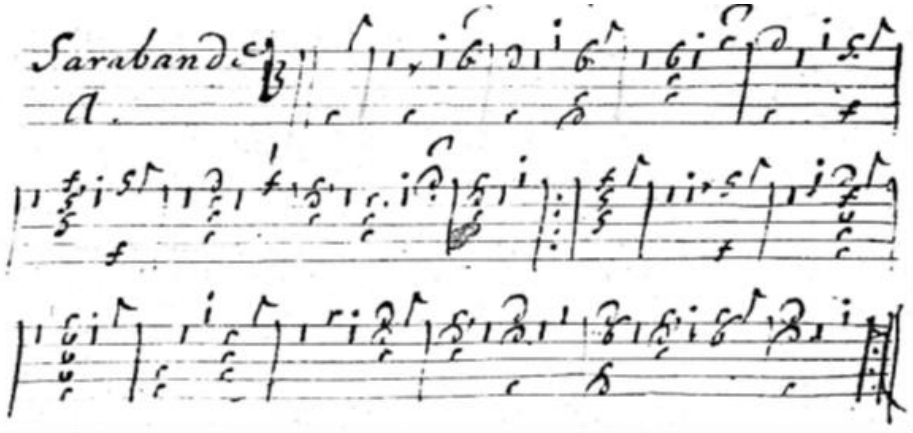
The Toccata is the least convincing piece of the three. It is in A major, which is not a key often used in baroque guitar sources; there is a short foray into A minor at b.33-35. The barring and note values are sometimes less than helpful. It is in several contrasting sections featuring the elaborately arpeggiated chords indicated with the sign **/.** which are typical of Bartolotti; lengthy but repetetive sequential passage work; a section of three-part harmony and a closing section in triple metre. The few chords which are to be strummed rather than arpeggiated have stroke marks beneath the stave in the usual manner for Italian sources, rather than a note value placed on the stave. However, this method of notation is used in Bartolotti's **Libro primo (1640)**. Bartolotti does write extended free-style pieces of this kind usually as preludes to his suites. If it is by him it cannot be regarded as one of his most successful efforts.

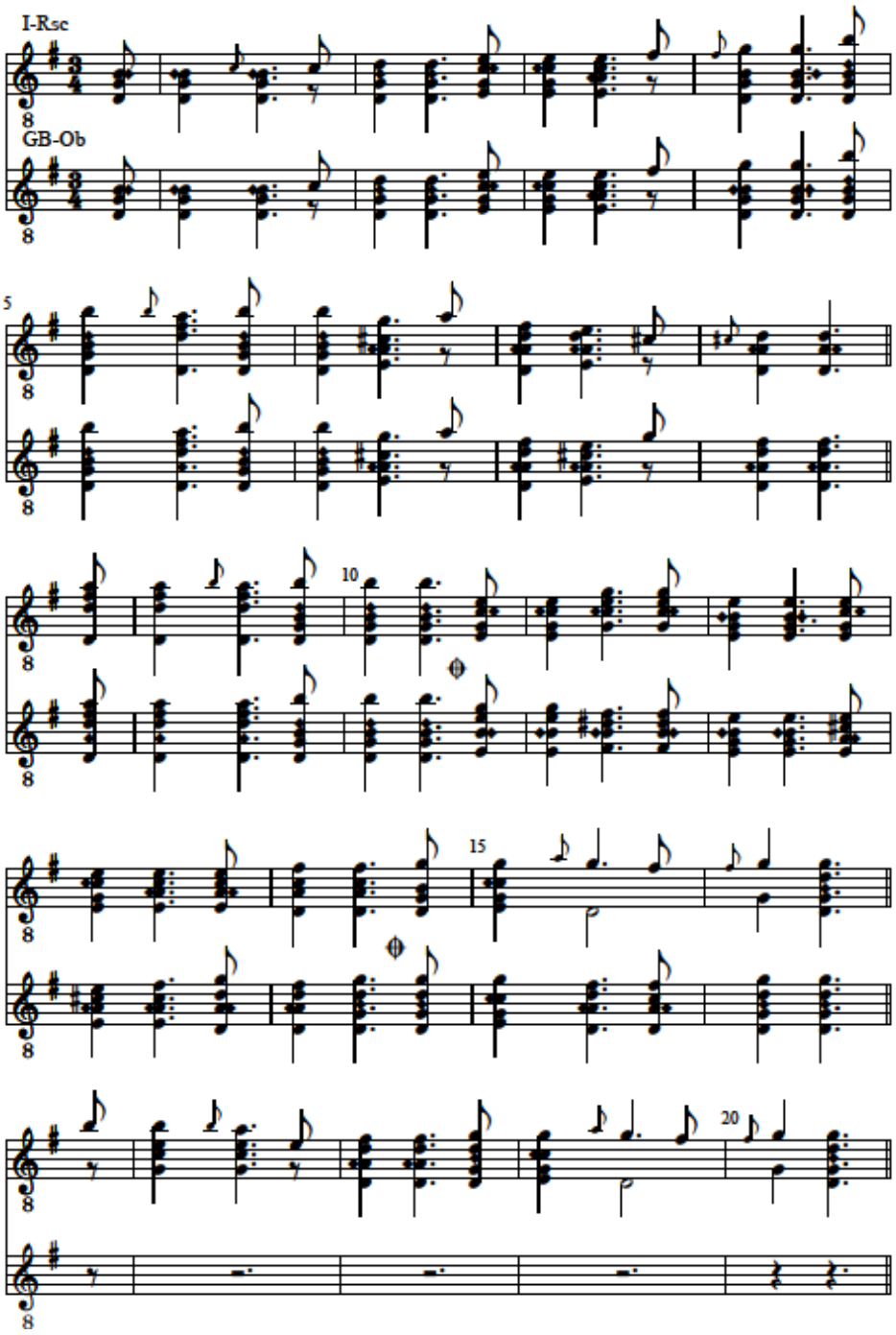
Example 1 - Sarabande

I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.83



GB:Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 f.9r

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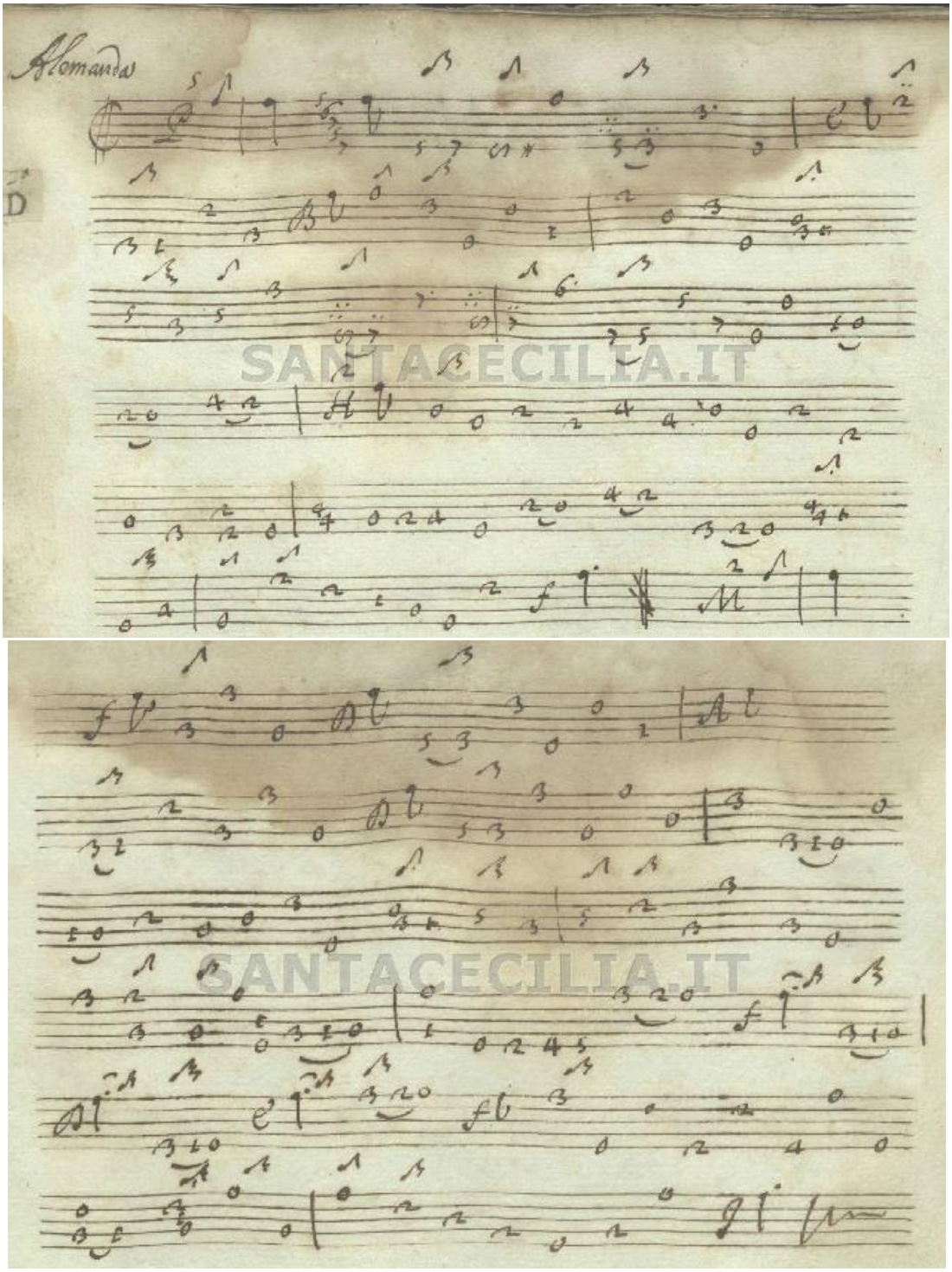
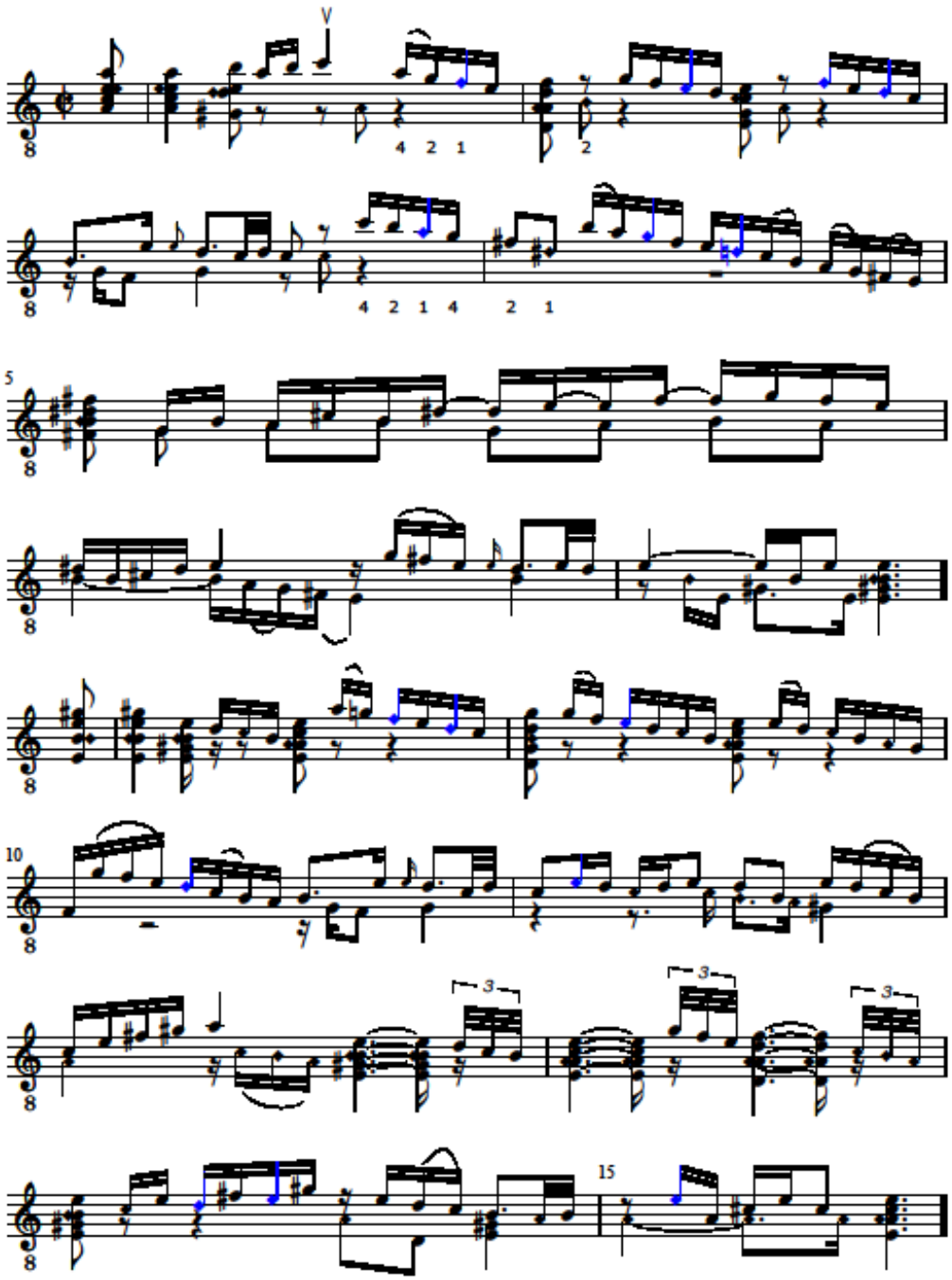
Example 2 - Alemanda

I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.18-19




V
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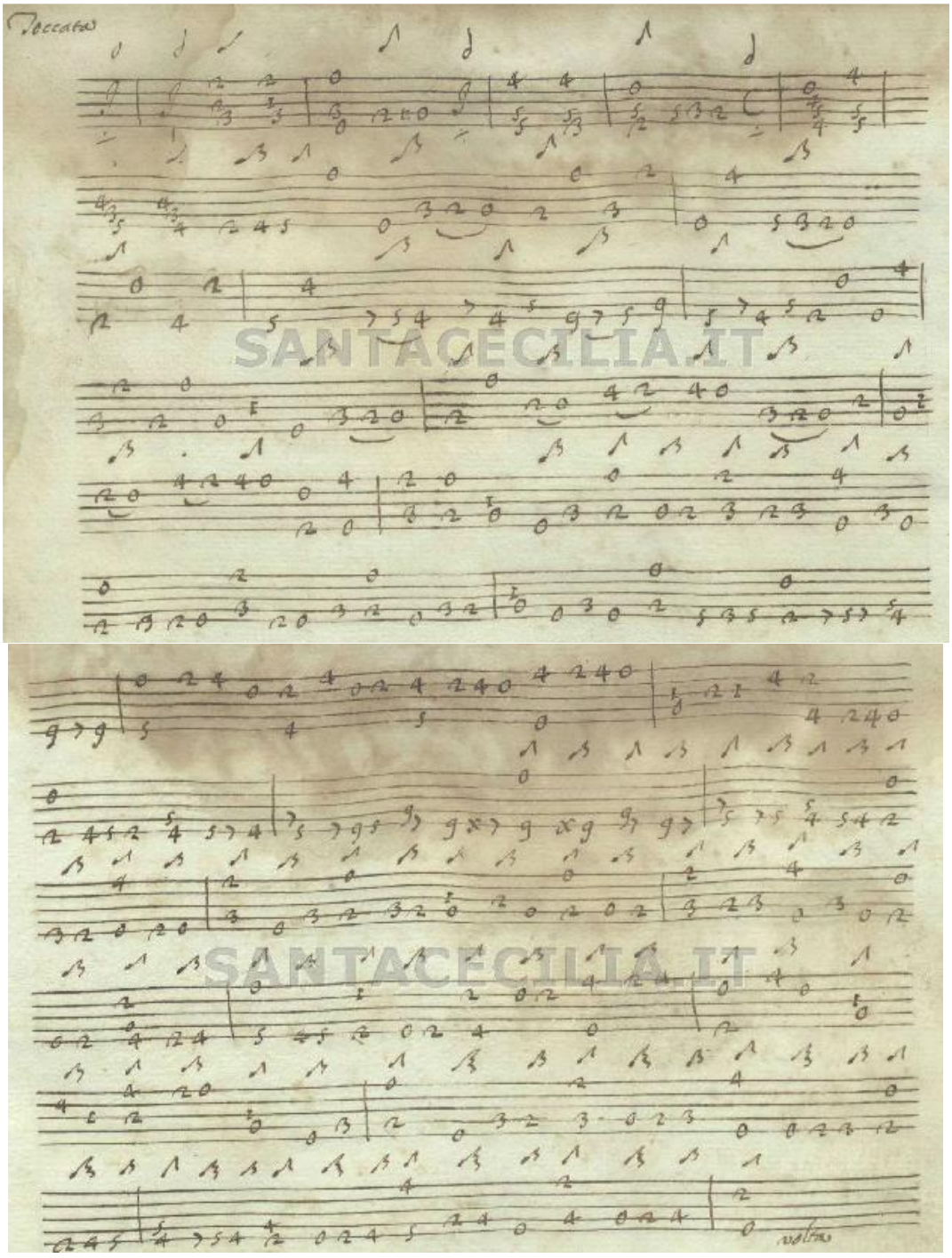
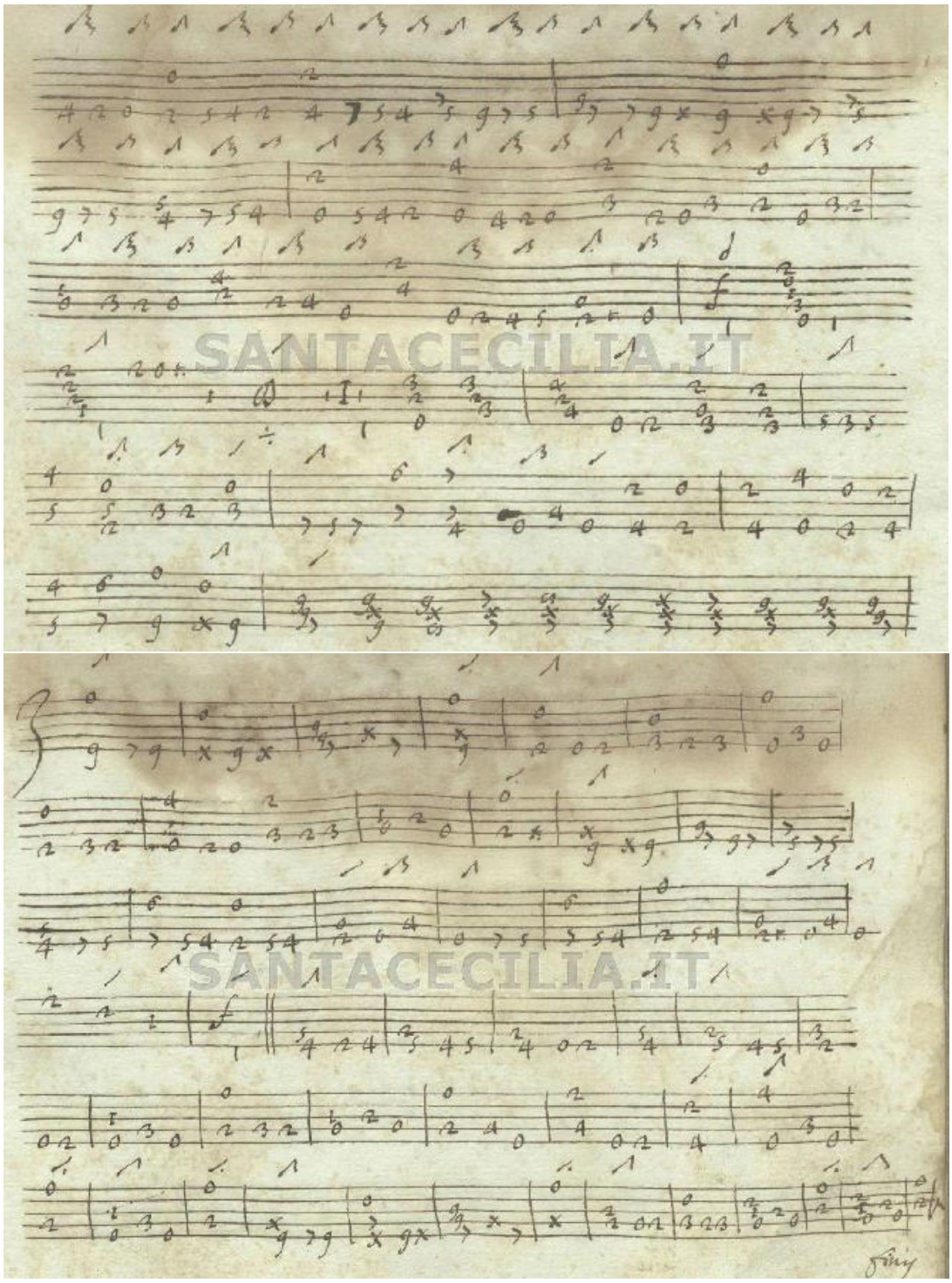
Example 3 - Toccata

I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.20-23

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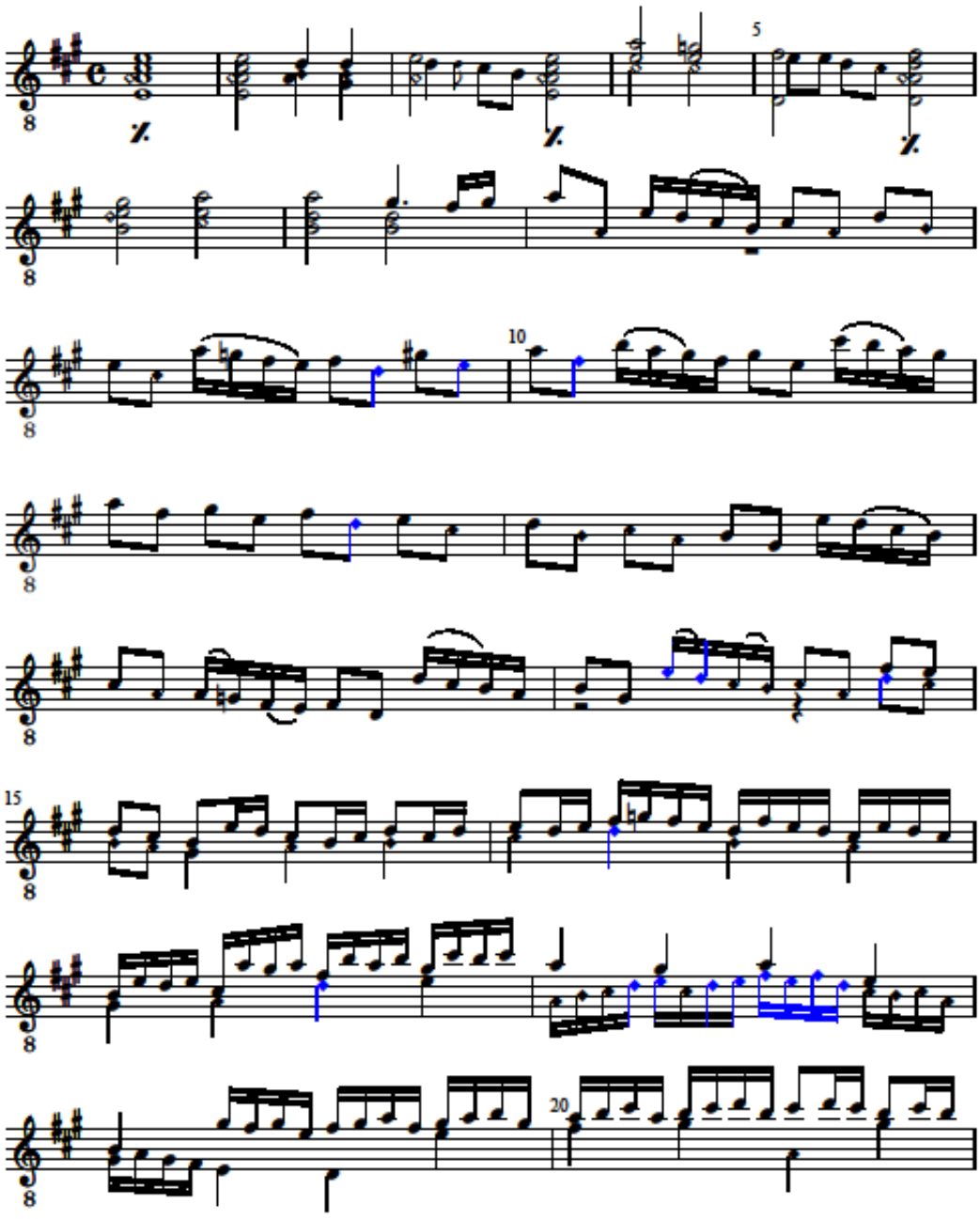
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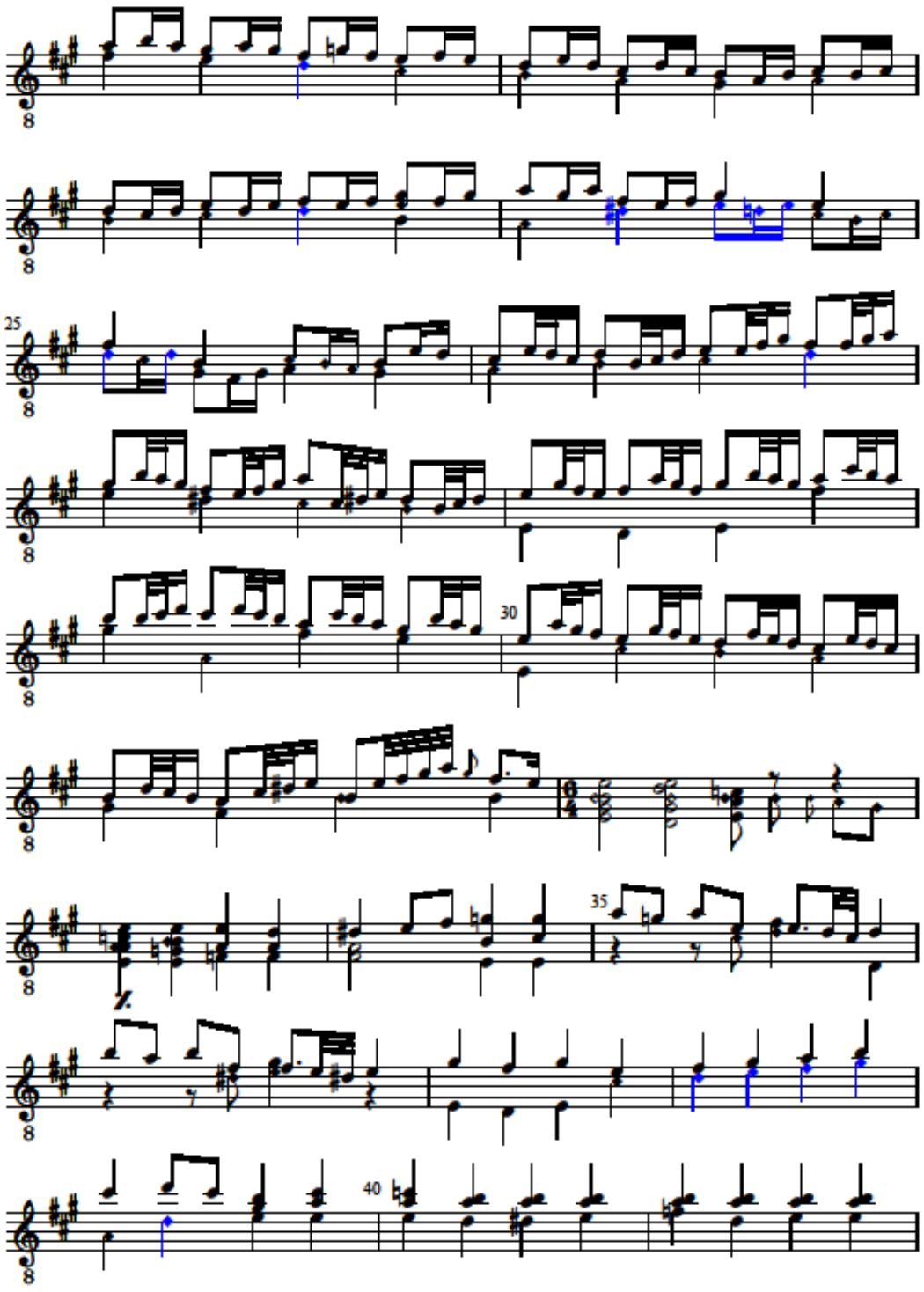
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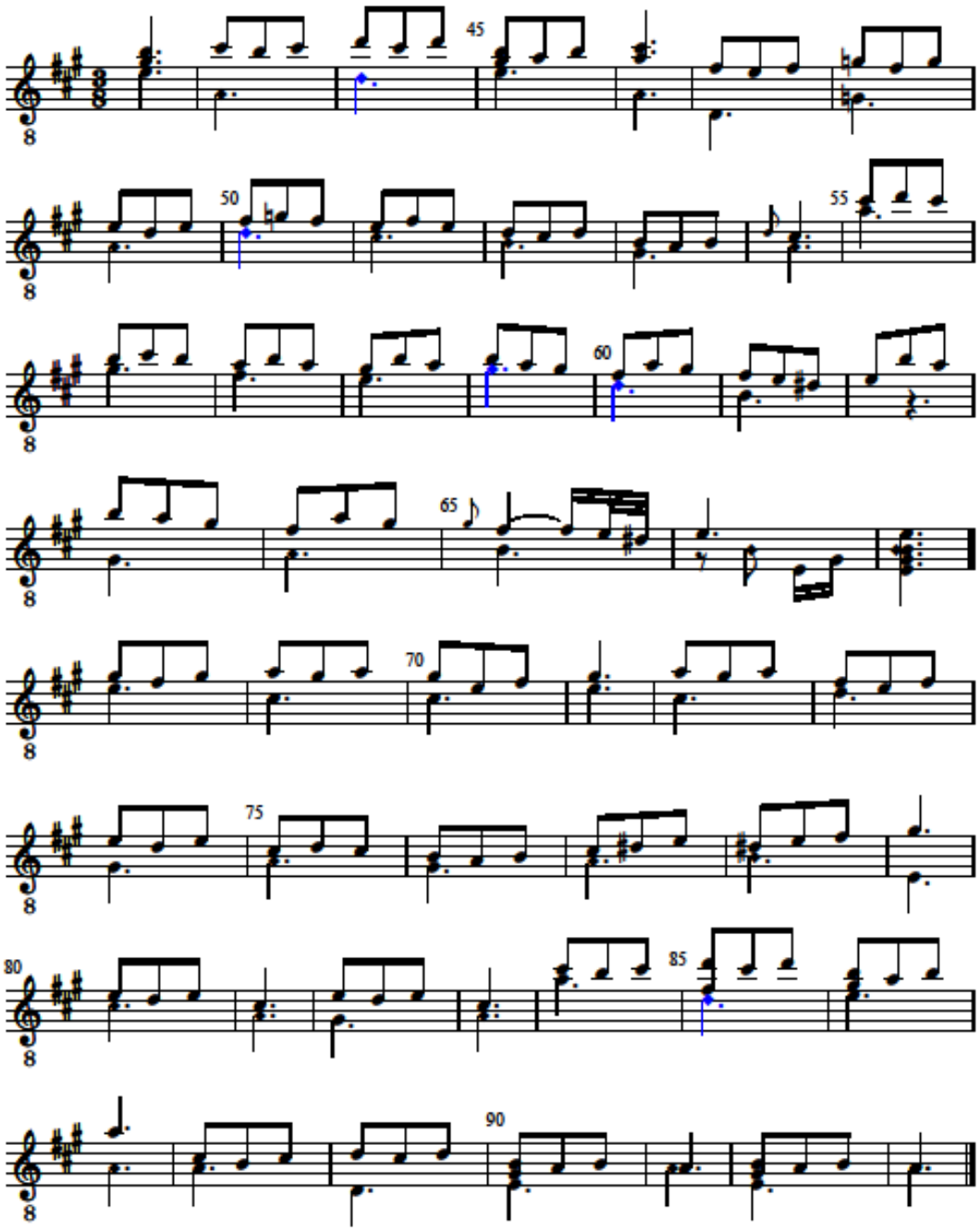

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