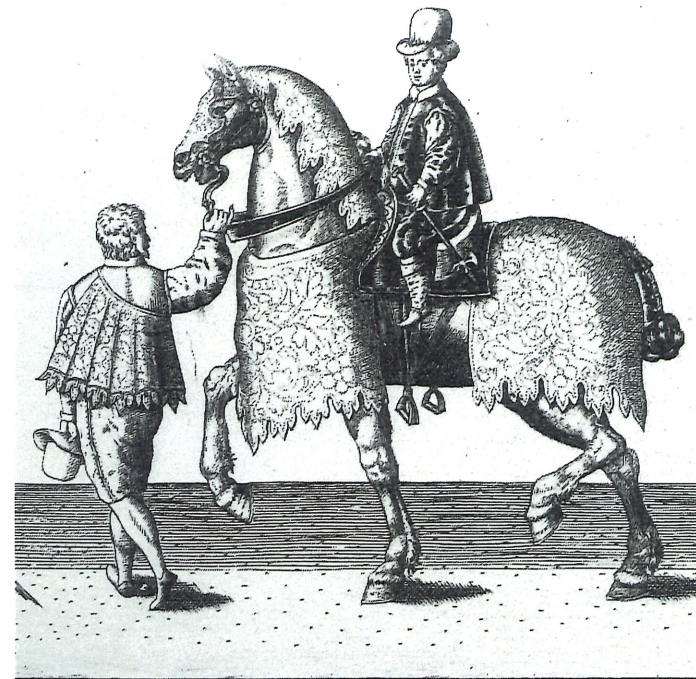


The Lute

Daniell Batcheler.



1988

VOLUME XXVIII

Typeset and printed by
H. Charlesworth and Co. Ltd., Huddersfield

The Journal of the Lute Society

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF JOHANN CHRISTIAN BEYER

ROBERT EKLUND and MATHIAS THIEL

The last instruction for the lute published before the instrument fell into temporary oblivion at the end of the 18th century was Johann Christian Beyer's *Herrn Professor Gellerts Oden, Lieder und Fabeln*, published at Leipzig in 1760.

The book contains a collection of songs — 24 in German, 6 in Italian and 4 in French — given in tablature only, with the lyrics printed below each tablature stave. The lyrics of the German songs were written by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715–1769), an author who was greatly appreciated by his contemporaries. It was above all his concern with stylistics and morally edifying themes that appealed to his audience. Today Gellert is mainly known for his fables and the hymn 'Die Himmel rühmen des ewigen Ehre', set to music by Beethoven.

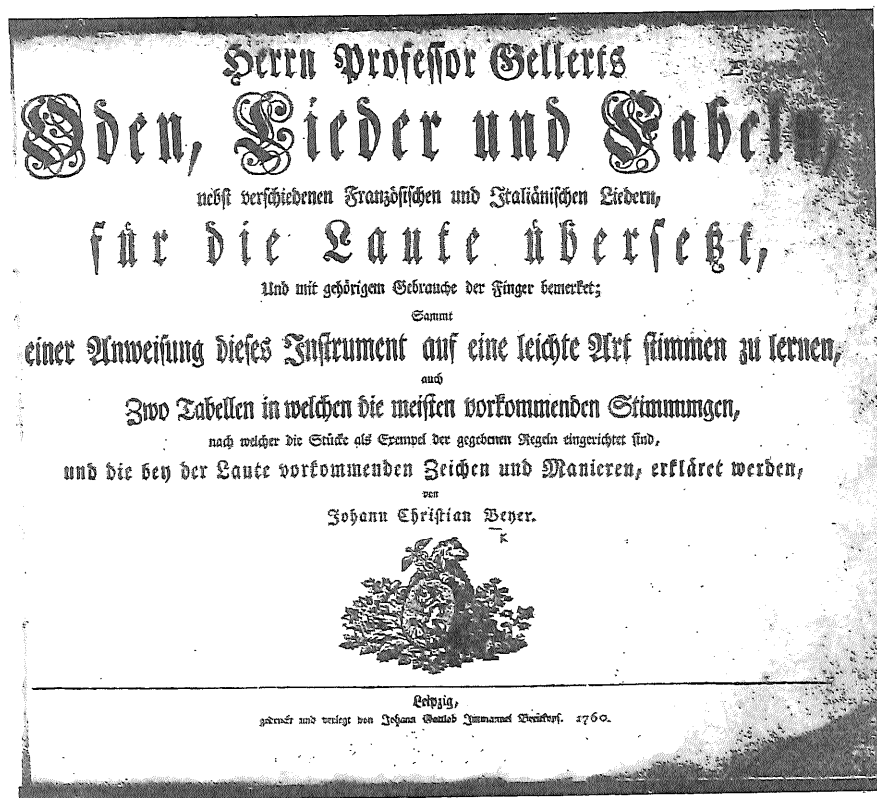


PLATE 1. Title page. Reproduced by permission of the British Library Board

As implied by the words 'für die Laute übersetzt' [transcribed for the lute] on the title page, Beyer is in no way the composer of the songs he provides. Although Beyer does not indicate what music he is using, the source of his transcriptions can be identified in Max Friedländer's *Das Deutsche Lied im 18. Jahrhundert*.¹

The German songs in Beyer's book are taken from *Herrn Professor Gellerts Oden und Lieder ...*,² a collection of songs set to music by anonymous composers, published at Leipzig by Breitkopf in 1759.³ A comparison between Beyer and the Breitkopf collection of 1759 endorses the information given by Friedländer.⁴ The transcription is by and large note-for-note. Friedländer has also identified the sources of the lyrics,⁵ which are taken from two periodicals: *Belustigung* and *Bremer Beiträge*.⁶

Some of the songs⁷ in Beyer's book also appear as lute solos in the so-called Rosani Manuscript.⁸ The tablature is copied out in detail, and even the occasional

[TITLE PAGE]

PROFESSOR GELLERT'S

ODES, SONGS AND FABLES,

including sundry French and Italian songs,
TRANSCRIBED FOR THE LUTE,

and marked with appropriate fingering;
together with

an instruction on how to tune this instrument in an easy way,
also

TWO TABLES EXPLAINING THE COMMONEST TUNINGS,
in which the pieces have been arranged in accordance with the given rules.
AS WELL AS THE SIGNS AND ORNAMENTS ENCOUNTERED IN
LUTE PLAYING,

by
JOHANN CHRISTIAN BEYER.

Leipzig,
printed and published by Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf. 1760.

[TITLE PAGE VERSO]

(contains a dedication in French to mesdemoiselles 'Chrétienne Guillelm. Kuestner' and 'Jeanne Elisabeth Lamprecht' — not translated here)

fingering provided by Beyer is reproduced, strongly suggesting that the scribe was copying from Beyer. The lyrics of the songs are not included in the Rosani Manuscript.

About Beyer, however, nothing is known. He is listed in Ernst Ludwig Gerber's *Historisch-Bibliographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*² (Leipzig, 1760), but simply as the author of ... *Gellerts Oden* More recent works do not provide any further information about him.

In the beginning of his book Beyer explains how to read tablature and how to tune the lute. He also provides a table of the signs and ornaments applied in lute music. Beyer's table very much resembles the tables found in Nuremberg Germanisches Museum MS 274 (*olim* Hs. 25461). The ornaments are mainly the same, and many of the musical examples correspond with each other, as do the names of the ornaments. Moreover, Nuremberg MS 274 is associated with Bayreuth at a time when the lutenist Adam Falckenhagen was employed there, which is interesting since the example of the *Fortgehendes Trillo* in Beyer is taken from the largo of Falckenhagen's Sonata V. The *Bebung* is to be found in the menuet of the Partie II, and the *Daumenschlag* is from the A major fugue. However, these last two are not quite so significant as musical excerpts, and their similarity could perhaps be coincidental.

Beyer's instructions have not been published in full in modern works, although some of the ornaments are published in Diana Poulton's *Lute Playing Technique*⁹ and in *The New Grove*.¹⁰

Here follows a complete translation of Beyer's instructions.

[p.II] INSTRUCTION. How to tune the lute in an easy way.

Having been asked by some friends and lovers of the lute to explain its tuning, I could not refrain from agreeing to their demand, and hereby present them with the same in print in order to sustain other lover's fancy for this noble instrument, since these often dwell in godforsaken places, where no one is at hand to encourage them.

Here one surely could mention the reproach and slight which the lute has had to endure from early days — I do not know why — because of its tuning. Since, however, the most obvious objections have been refuted, and the weaker arguments nullify themselves, it would be a futile task to reiterate matters already settled.

Above all others, I refer to the excellent treatise by Baron¹¹ titled: 'Study of the Lute'¹², in which, in the second part of the first chapter, he most acutely and sharpwittedly has rebutted the most obvious prejudices held against the tuning of the tuning of the lute. Hence this book is justly recommended for diligent reading to all lovers of this instrument.

Thus we turn to the subject proper. First of all it is important to obtain a clear conception of the tablature of the lute. In order to do this you have to be able to make a distinction between the main tunings [*Haupttöne*], i.e. how the courses or strings can be tuned according to the music. You also have to note the application of the notes on the 13-course lute, which is common nowadays.

The main notes are as follows, with their letter names [*nach der Musik*] shown below the tablature signs [*Lautennoten*].

Though all the courses of the lute are called *a*, it is easy to distinguish between them, since they are separated by lines and strokes, which makes it easy to comprehend.¹³ Bear in mind, though, that the open courses, all named *a*, are to be played with the right hand alone and are not to be touched by the left hand. Those now following, however, are to be stopped [*gegriffen*] by the left hand, just behind the frets or measurements of the neck, and played with the right.

Hörte der Laute *a* heißen: so sind sie doch mit Linien und Querstrichen also unterschieden, daß man sich g. daß die bloßen Chöre, welche alle *a* gemeint werden, allein mit der rechten Hand angeschlagen, nicht aber werden gleich hinter den Bänden oder Abmessungen des Halses mit der linken Hand gegriffen, und mit der

PLATE 2. Tuning and tablature insertions from p.II.

These are the frets, which, here shown, are signified by other letters of the alphabet. Now, if you want to find one or the other letter in the given piece, you just have to see whether it is on the first, second or third line et cetera, and then look for the course. For example, if there is an *f* on the third line from the top, you just have to look for it on the third course reckoned from the Chantarelle*.

Generally, you get the clearest picture of the conception of the lute signs in the following way: all the courses

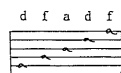
* The first clear [*klare*] and single string is called Chantarelle, from 'chanter': to sing, since it contributes most to the melody.

or strings which are played with the right hand alone, without being stopped on the frets by the left, are called *a*. The first fret throughout, as shown above, is called *b*, the second *c*, the third *d*, the fourth *e*, the fifth *f* et cetera. Knowing the fret on which you have to look for the prescribed letter, you can easily find it.

These are the most necessary comments one has to make concerning lute tablature. Nothing else, then, is left apart from dealing with the tuning itself, which, in order to achieve clarity, we will treat step by step.

[p.III] INSTRUCTION ON TUNING THE LUTE

§1 The basic tuning of the lute is the D minor chord, since these five uppermost courses always remain in the D minor chord. On these five you play in whatever key you want, whereas the basses will have to be adjusted in major or minor according to the requirements of the key in which you play. Having comprehended this as the basic tuning, you will be able to master the other tunings quite easily, too.



Consequently, it will be necessary to go through the courses one by one, and then to show how the others follow.

§2 If you get into your hands a lute that is not entirely in tune, you will have to proceed as follows.

You start with the fifth course reckoned from the Chantarelle, and get from a keyboard [*Klavier*] or another instrument — violin, flute et cetera — the note *d*. In accordance with this given *d*, you tune both strings of the fifth course ‘in unisonum’.



If however no instrument is available from which you can get the note *d*, you will have to think of an arbitrary note that you consider will not prove too high and then tune both strings of the fifth course likewise in unison.

If both strings are in tune, then you have the basic note for the tuning of the whole lute. One could also use a tuning pipe [*Stimmpfeife*], to which one tunes the Clavecin, to get the note *d*.

§3 Thereafter you go on to the fourth course. You check whether both strings of the fifth course are still in unison. If so, you put the second finger of your left hand on the third fret of the fifth course and strike it with the thumb of your right hand. To this plucked *d* you tune both strings of the fourth course.



§4 THE THIRD COURSE is tuned in the following manner: if the fourth course is completely in tune, you stop with the little finger of your left hand *e* on this course and play it with the thumb of your right hand, and tune to this *e* on the fourth course, both strings of the third course.



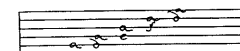
§5 THE SECOND COURSE is tuned in this way: you stop with your little finger of your left hand *f* on the third course, play it with the thumb of your right hand, and tune the second course in accordance with this given *f* on the third course.



§6 THE FIRST COURSE’S tuning is like this: you stop with the second finger of your left hand *d* on the second course, play it with the second finger of your right hand, and tune to this given *d* the Chantarelle or first course.



§7 This is the tuning of the five upper courses, which, as mentioned in §1 above, remains in the same D minor chord in all tunings.



However, before you direct your attention to the basses, you check whether these five courses are still in tune according to the discussed instruction. If you find that one string is false, this often happens when the strings are new, you adjust the one out of tune and then turn to the basses.

§8 Since however each bass on the lute has two kinds of strings, one strong [*eine starke*] and one weak [*eine schwache*], which is the octave, a general thing to note is that the strong string of each bass has to be tuned one octave deeper than the weak one.

THUS THE TUNING IS AS FOLLOWS

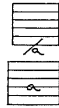
§9 THE FIRST BASS OF THE SIXTH COURSE. You pluck with the first finger of your right hand the third course and tune first the weak string of the first bass in accordance with the ringing *a* of the third course; the strong string is to be tuned an octave deeper, though.



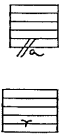
§10 THE SECOND BASS OF THE SEVENTH COURSE. You stop with the second finger of your left hand *c* on the fourth course, and pluck it with the first finger of your right hand, and tune the weak string of the second bass in accordance with this *c* — the strong string, however, one octave deeper.



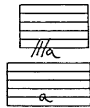
§11 THE THIRD BASS OR THE EIGHTH COURSE. You pluck with the first finger of your right hand the fourth course, and tune to this note the weak string of the third bass — the strong string one octave deeper though.



§12 THE FOURTH BASS OR THE NINTH COURSE. You stop with the second finger of your left hand *c* on the fifth course, pluck it with the first finger of your right hand, and tune to this *c* the weak string of the fourth bass — the strong string one octave deeper, though.



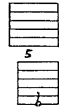
[p.IV] §13 THE FIFTH BASS OR THE TENTH COURSE. You pluck with the first finger of your right hand the fifth course, and tune the weak string of the fifth bass to this note — the strong string, however, one octave deeper.



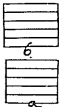
§14 THE SIXTH BASS OR THE ELEVENTH COURSE. You stop with the fourth finger of your left hand *d* on the first bass, pluck it with your right hand, and proceed in the same way as with the aforementioned basses.



§15 THE SEVENTH BASS OR THE TWELFTH COURSE. You stop with the first finger of your left hand *b* on the first bass, and proceed as with the previously mentioned basses.



§16 THE EIGHTH BASS OR THE THIRTEENTH COURSE. You pluck with the first finger of your right hand the first bass, and proceed as with the previous ones.



§17 Thus, this is the basic tuning of the lute in its D minor chord, from which all the others stem, where just one bass has to be tuned a semitone higher or deeper according to the requirement of the key.

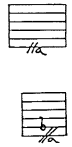


§18 Now we will go through the commonest and most used tunings, in the way that one follows the other, and show how you can proceed with the same. Since however two keys always have the same key signature, we will put together those that are related to each other and consequently can be played in the same tuning.

* One has chosen to designate the last three basses 4, 5 and 6, rather than using four, five and six lines, which would otherwise have been necessary; to those unacquainted with the merits of tablature and who erroneously imagine it to be wondrously complicated, the many lines would only constitute a terrifying sight.

(D \flat) §19 So far we have dealt with the D minor tuning, to which (F \natural) F major is related. If you play in D minor, you can also play in F major. Nothing more, then, is here to be remarked. As the next we will

(B \flat \natural) §20 Take B flat major, which has the same tuning as G (G \flat) minor. The tuning of these keys depends on just one bass: you keep the entire D minor tuning, except for the fourth bass, which you tune according to the scale [*vermöge der Scala*] to *b* on the fifth course in d sharp.



(C \flat) a) In connection with this one can note that the lute pieces by Weiss,¹⁵ Baron and Kropffgans¹⁶ which are (D \sharp \natural) in C minor and D sharp major [Dis dur (i.e. E flat major)] are possible to play in the B flat major tuning. However, Falckenhagen's¹⁷ and Durant's¹⁸ pieces in these keys must also be tuned to a sharp [i.e. b flat], like this:



(D \flat) b) From B flat major and G minor you will proceed to (F \natural) D minor or F major. You keep the whole B flat tuning; you just change the d sharp to e in this way: After D minor and F major follows:



(C \natural) §21 C major, which has the same tuning as A (A \natural) minor. You keep the full D minor tuning all the way until the seventh bass or the twelfth course, which has to be tuned in b natural to the *c* on the first bass. After C major or A minor follows:



[p.V] (G \natural) §22 G major, which has the same tuning as E (E \flat) minor. You keep the C major tuning in whole and add f sharp, which is tuned to the *b* on the fourth course. After G major or E minor follows:



(D \sharp) §23 D major, which has the same tuning as B (B \natural) minor. You keep the entire G major tuning and add c sharp, which is tuned to the *e* on the first bass. After D major and B minor follows:



(A \sharp) §24 A major, which has the same tuning as F sharp (F \sharp \natural) minor. You keep the full D major tuning, but add to that also g sharp, which is tuned to *d* on the fourth course. After A major and F sharp minor follows:



(E#) §25 E major, which has the same tuning as C sharp minor.
 (C#) You keep the entire A major tuning, but add d sharp, which is tuned to *b* on the fifth course.

§26 These are the commonest and most frequently used tunings of the lute. Consequently, when you regard them in the order presented [each of them is] always based on the previous one, and only one bass in the subsequent tuning is to be altered [*gestimmt*], either higher or, when turning back, deeper.

To make this even easier and more comprehensible, the songs [*Piecen*] are arranged according to the hitherto treated order of tuning. By frequently playing through the pieces, the lover of the lute will eventually, without much difficulty, be able to tune his lute in another order.

The use of the General Table [*Generaltabelle*] is mainly to be of assistance when you want to play outside this order, before you have properly learnt how to master it. When you quickly run through the basses you arrange those that are to be tuned higher or deeper according to the letters on the six uppermost lines.

The figures by the letters denote which finger of the left hand is to be put down.



[p.VI]

General-Tabelle der Lauten-Stimmungen.

D. moll. F. dur.		§. 17.	D minor F major
B. dur. G. moll. C. moll. D. dur.		§. 20.	B. dur. G. moll. C. moll. D. dur.
D. moll. F. dur.		§. 20. <u>6</u>	D. moll. F. dur.
C. dur. A. moll.		§. 21.	C. dur. A. moll.
G. dur. E. moll.		§. 22.	G. dur. E. moll.
D. dur. H. moll.		§. 23.	D. dur. H. moll.
A. dur. F. sharp moll.		§. 24.	A. dur. F. sharp moll.
E. dur. C. sharp moll.		§. 25.	E. dur. C. sharp moll.

PLATE 3. General Table of Lute Tunings, p.VI.

Die bey der Laute vorkommenden Zeichen und Manieren.

Abzug, Einfall, Doppelter Einfall, Einfall auf 3. Schlägen, Abzug u. d. Einfälle zusammenhängend, Beide Arten der Abzüge zusammenhängend, Starker Mordent, Einfall und Mordent, Trillo, Starker Trillo, Doppelter Trillo, Festgesetzter Trillo, Biegung, Einzelne Noten, Separat oder getragen, Staccato oder gelassen, Gedrückter Schlag, Seylich geschlagen, Biegung, Arpeggio, Überlage, Daumen-Schlag, Circulo mezzo.

PLATE 4. The Ornaments and Signs used on the Lute, p.VII.

[p.VII] The Ornaments and Signs used on the Lute.

Back-fall/pull off

Double back-fall/double pull off

Back-fall or pull-off through 3 letters

NOTES

1. Max Friedländer, *Das Deutsche Lied im 18. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols (Stuttgart: J. S. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, Stuttgart 1902) 1, pt. 1, 160. Thanks to Tim Crawford for drawing our attention to this work.
2. *Herrn Professor Gellerts Oden und Lieder nebst einigen Fabeln, grösstentheils aus den Belustigungen des Verstandes und Witzes. Auf das Clavier in Die Musik gesetzt von Berlinischen Tonkünstlern.* (Leipzig: J. G. J. Breitkopf, 1759).
3. Friedländer, op. cit., 1, pt 1, 10.
4. We have used the copy of the Breitkopf 1759 collection that is preserved in the Royal Musical Academy Library (Kungliga musikaliska akademins bibliotek), Stockholm. Here follows a list of the songs in Beyer (figures), and the number with which they appear in the 1759 collection (italic figures): 1-37; 2-36; 3-35; 4-2; 7-1; 8-28; 9-15; 11-40; 12-8; 13-5; 14-20; 16-24; 17-30; 18-29; 19-13; 23-6; 24-4; 28-9; 29-7; 30-22; 31-12; 32-26; 33-14; 34-19.
5. Friedländer, op. cit., 2; 527.
6. *Belustigungen der Verstandes und Witzes* (publ. 1741-5) and *Neue Beiträgen zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes*, (publ. 1744-57). Gellert contributed to them both.
7. Songs nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 17.
8. Leipzig, Musikbibliothek des Stadt, MS III.11.64. Thanks to Tim Crawford for providing us with a copy of this MS.
9. Diana Poulton, *Lute Playing Technique*, The Lute Society Booklets 5 (n.p.: The Lute Society, 1981), 35-6.
10. Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), S.V., 'Lute'.
11. Ernst Gottlieb Baron (1696-1760).
12. Ernst Gottlieb Baron, *Historisch-Theoretische und Practische Untersuchung des Instruments der Lauten* (Nuremberg, 1727). Translated by Douglas Alton Smith as *Study of the Lute* (Redondo Beach, California: Musiqua Antiqua Publications, 1976).
13. From this sentence until '... you can easily find it.', Beyer is, apart from the occasional differences in spelling, quoting word-for-word from Baron (*ibid.*, 151-2). The preceding phrases also resemble Baron, although Beyer has changed 'eilf-Chörigten' [eleven-course] in Baron (*ibid.*, 149) to 'dreyzehn-chörigten' (thirteen-course).
14. In the original this *c* stands erroneously on the fourth line.
15. Sylvius Leopold Weiss (1686-1750).
16. There was a family of lutenists of this name. The one referred to here is without doubt Johann Kropffganss Jr. (1708-c.1770).
17. Adam Falckenhagen (1697-c.1761).
18. Paul Charles Durant, who was lutenist at Mannheim in 1723, and was employed (later) at Bayreuth.