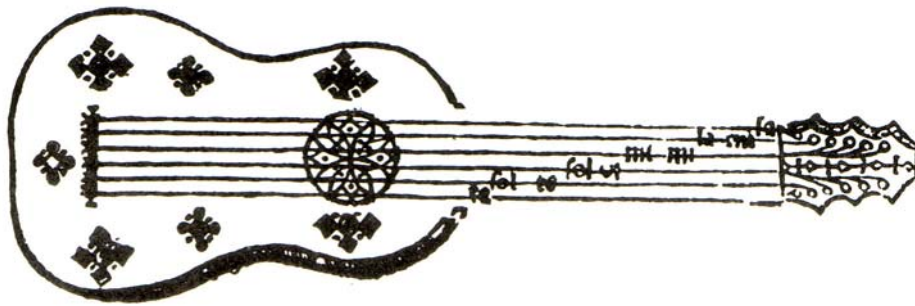


**Vacas
for
Vihuela
(or lute)**



**the collected variations on
Guárdame las vacas**

**edited by
Michael Fink**

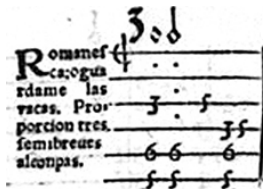
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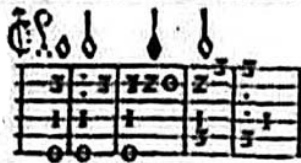


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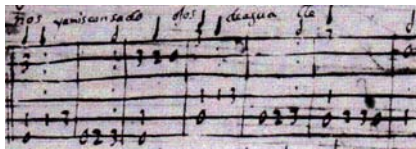
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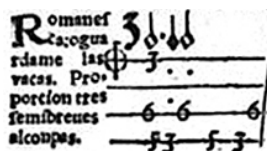


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Introduction

BACKGROUND

Among Spanish *villancico* texts of the 15th-16th centuries, probably the best known is *Guárdame las vacas*. To a poem attributed to Cristóbal de Castillejo (1494-1550), this boy-girl song began:

Guárdame las vacas,
carillo, y besarte he;
si no, bésame tú a mí,
que yo te las guardaré.¹

Since pastoral love poetry was tremendously popular in the Renaissance and beyond, it is no wonder that the text found its way into an English collection of 1600, translated:

“I prithee keep my kine for me,
“Carillo, wilt thou? Tell.”
“First let me have a kiss of thee,
And I will keep them well.”²

Originally, the vocal melody was probably chanted on the discant notes of one of the standard discant-bass *ostinato* schemes of the Renaissance, most likely the *Romanesca*, but possibly also the closely related *Passamezzo antico*. We infer this from the instrumental *diferencias* (variations) titled “Guárdame las vacas” for vihuela or keyboard, all of which are based on one of these two basses³:

The image shows three staves of musical notation, each representing a different variation of the bass line for the song. The first staff is labeled 'Discant' and features a treble clef with a 'C' time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff is labeled 'Romanesca bass' and features a bass clef with a 'C' time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a sequence of notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The third staff is labeled 'Passamezzo antico bass' and features a bass clef with a 'C' time signature and a key signature of one flat. It contains a sequence of notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The word 'either' is written above the first staff and below the third staff, indicating that the notes in these staves are interchangeable with those in the other staves.

Only two composers of *diferencias* (see tables below) introduce a treble melody and inner voices along with the bass in the manner of a quasi-theme. The keyboard set by Venegas de Henstrosa begins with an extended version of the *Romanesca*:

Las vacas con doze diferencias

Diego Pisador

	c	c	c	a	a	a		c	a	c
[C]	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

	c	c	c	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	e	c	a	e	a	a	a	a	a	a
	c	c								

24	1.	f	c	a	c	e	f	a	a	a
	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	c	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

	c	a	c	a	c	e	f	c	a	a
	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	c	c	e	a	e	a	a	a	e	c

	c	c	a	a	c	c	c	a	a	a
	a	e	a	c	c	a	a	a	a	a
	c	c								

	c	c	a	c	c	c	a	a	a	a
	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
	c	c	e	a	e	a	a	e	a	a

270

a	c	δ	a	c	a	δ	δ	c	a	c	f	a	f	f	c	e	f	e	δ	f	δ	f	e	c	a	δ	f	
a	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

281

a	c	a	c	δ	a	h	c	g	h	e	δ	f	δ	c	a	c	δ	δ	c	a	δ	a	δ	a	c	δ	a	
a	a	a	a	c	h	c	h	c	h	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c

12.

292

c	f	e	c	a	f	c	e	a	c	δ	δ	a	c	δ	a	h	c	f	e	f	h	f	e	f	c	δ	δ
c	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ
a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

302

c	c	c	a	a	a	a	a	c	h	c	g	g	e	h	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ	δ
a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

- 1) Stem placement corrected.
- 2) Note added to fill in scale.
- 3) Hand-corrected in original
- 4) c instead of e
- 5) d instead of e