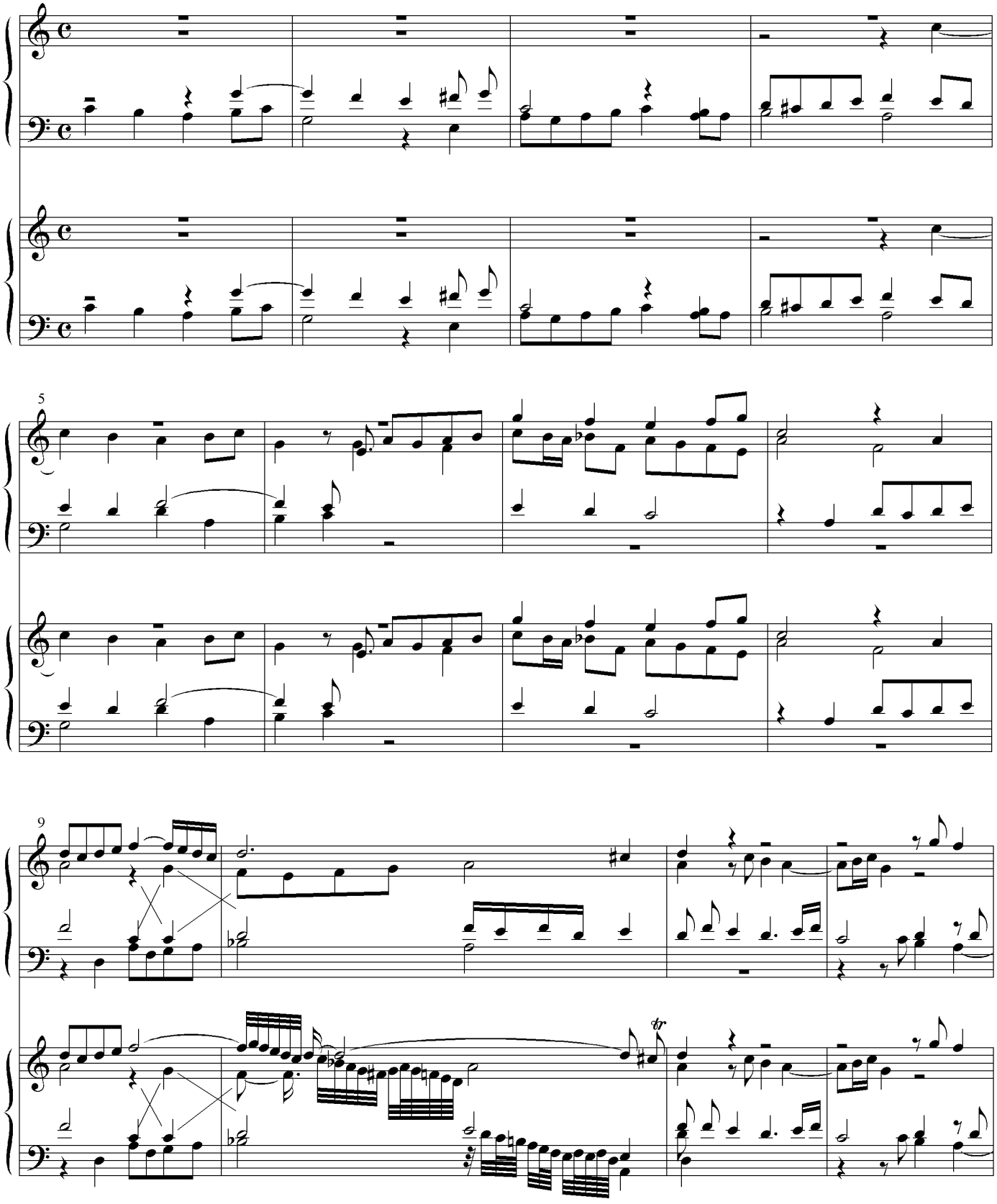
Canzon franzese del Principe
[simple and embellished versions]

Carlo Gesualdo?



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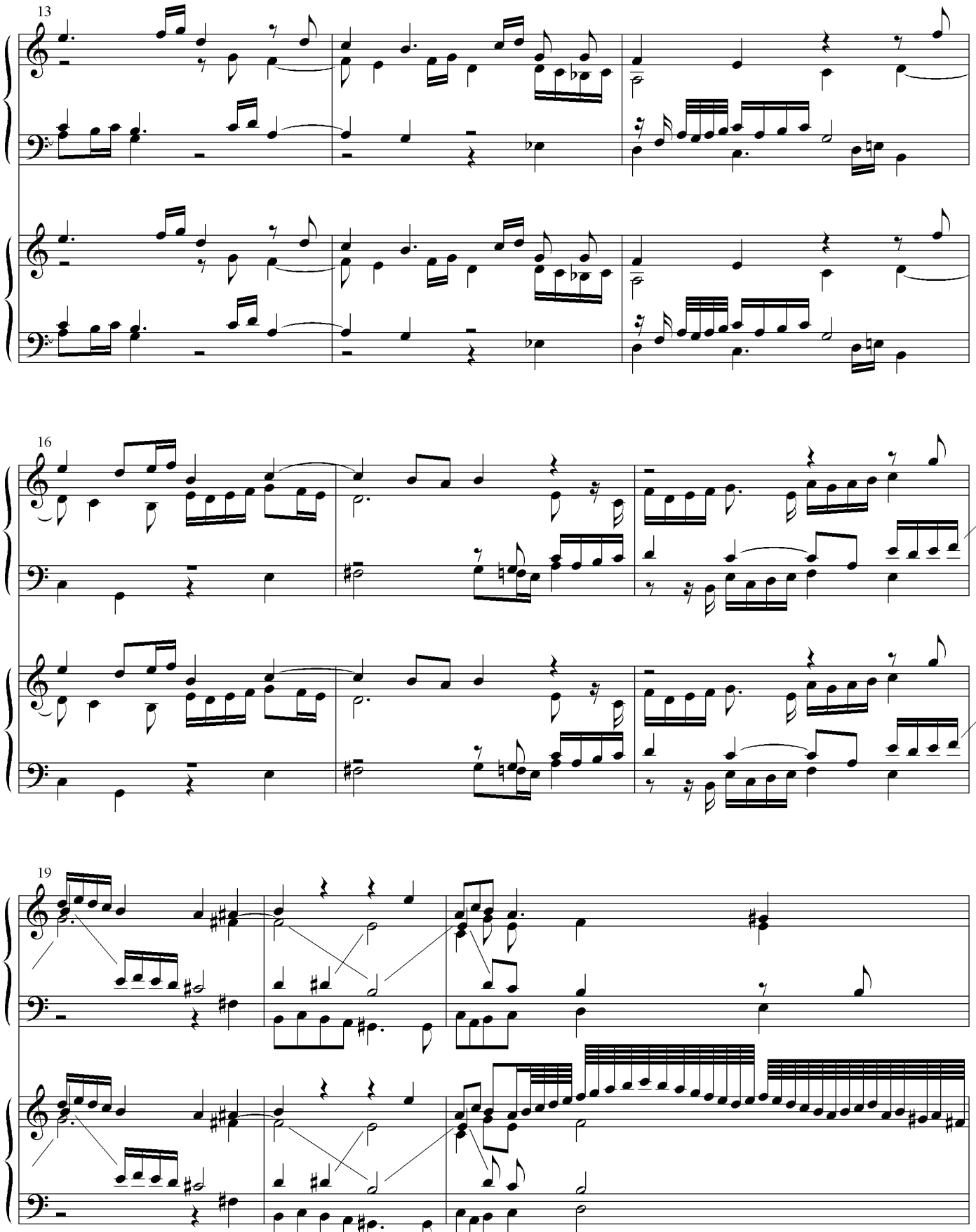
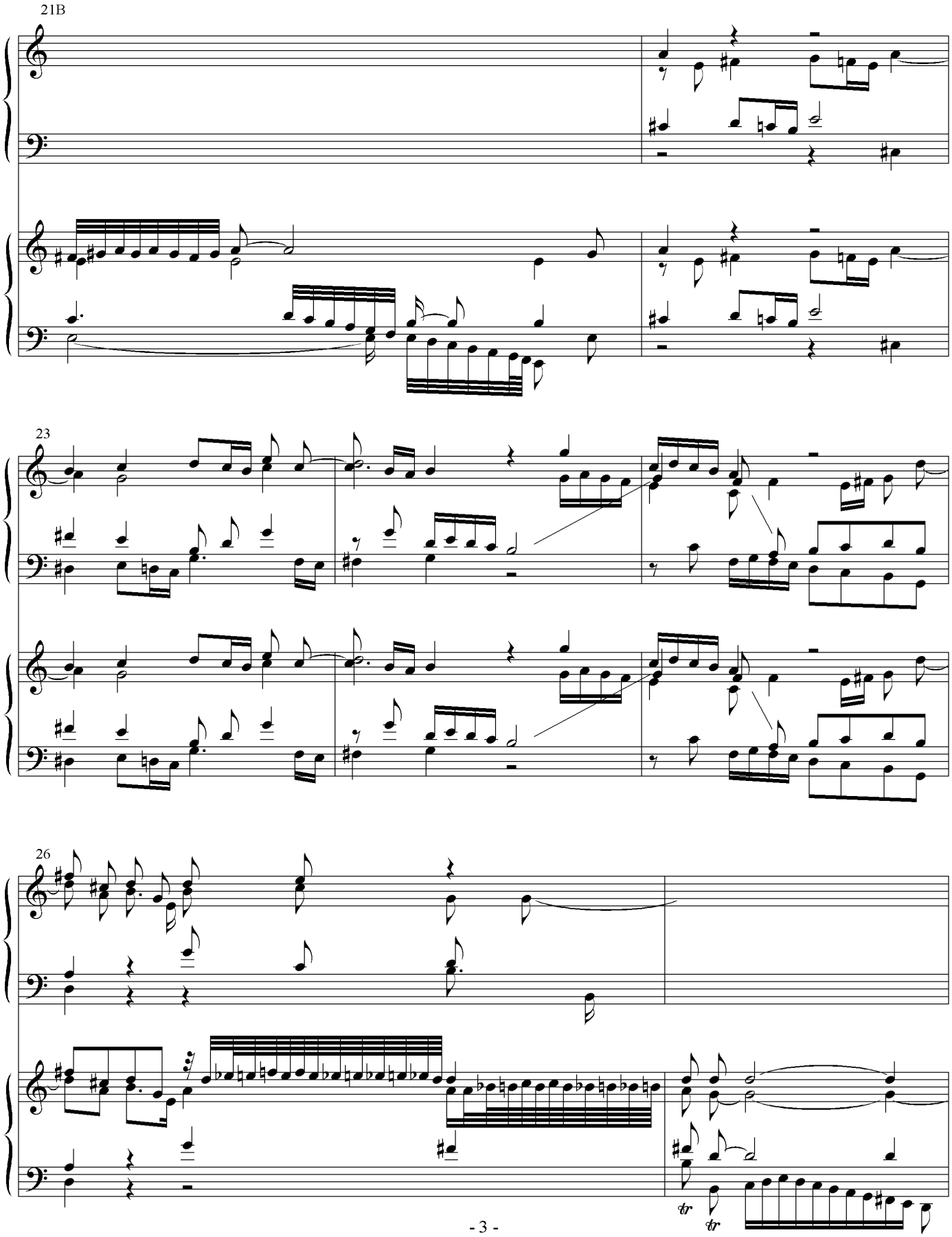
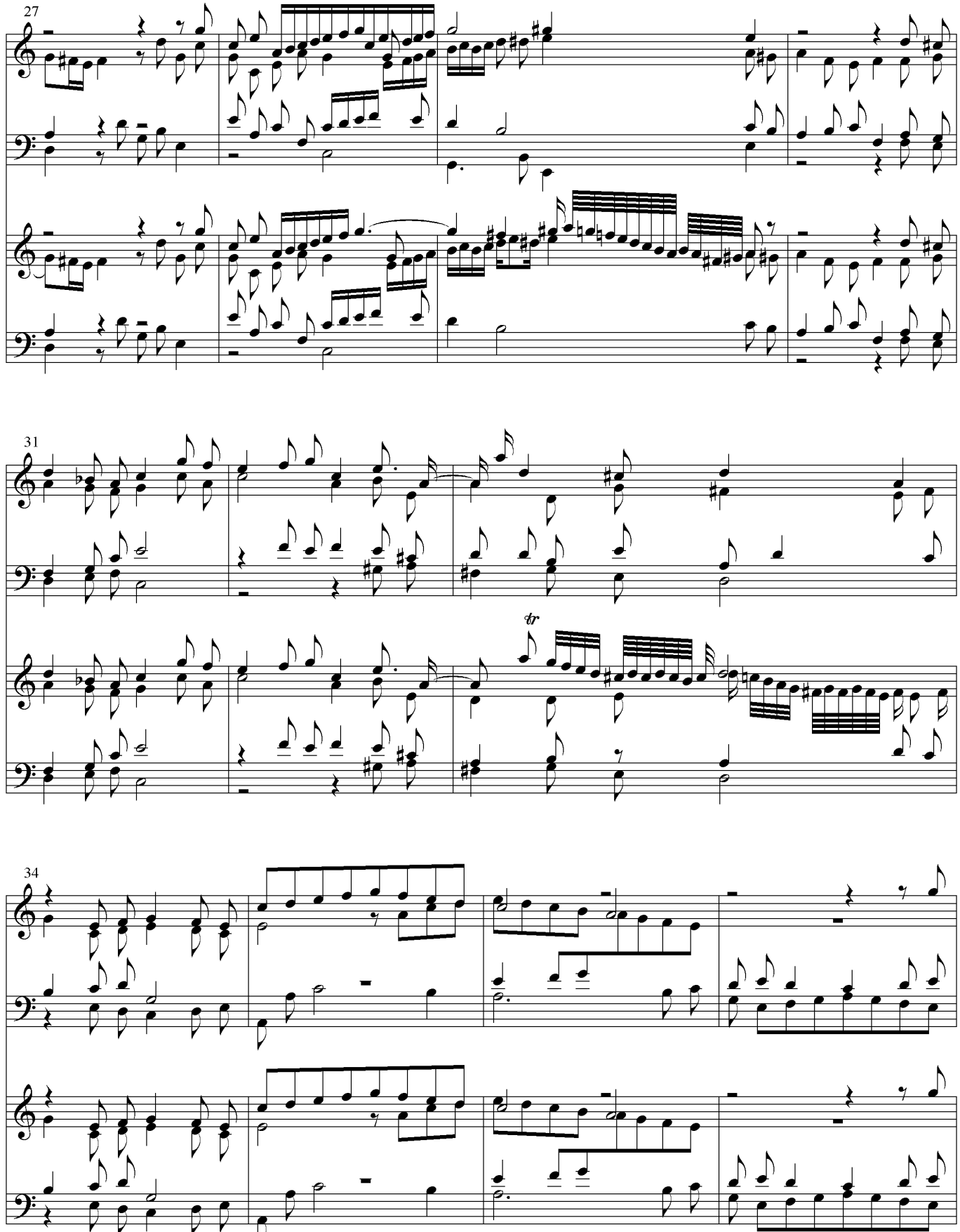
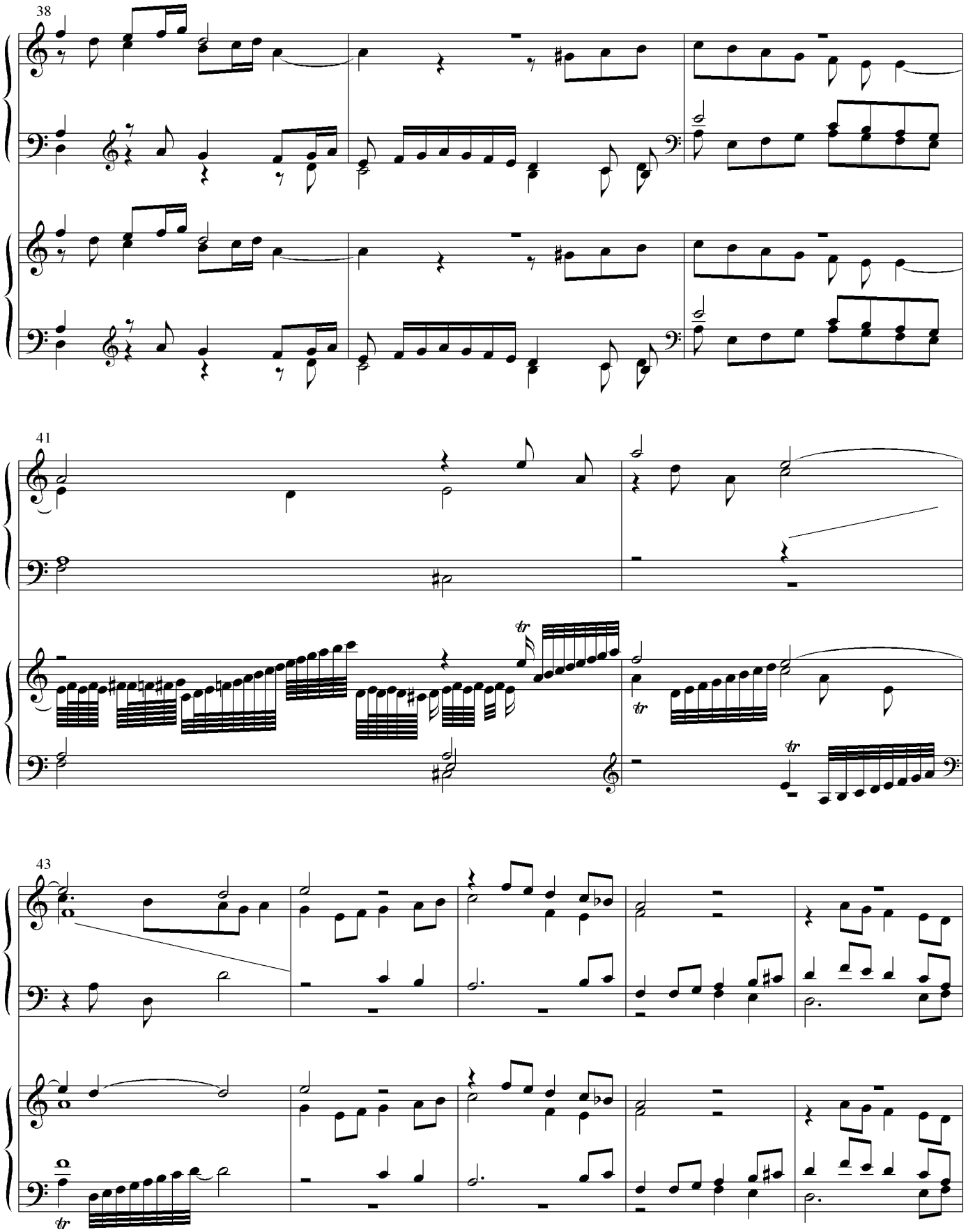
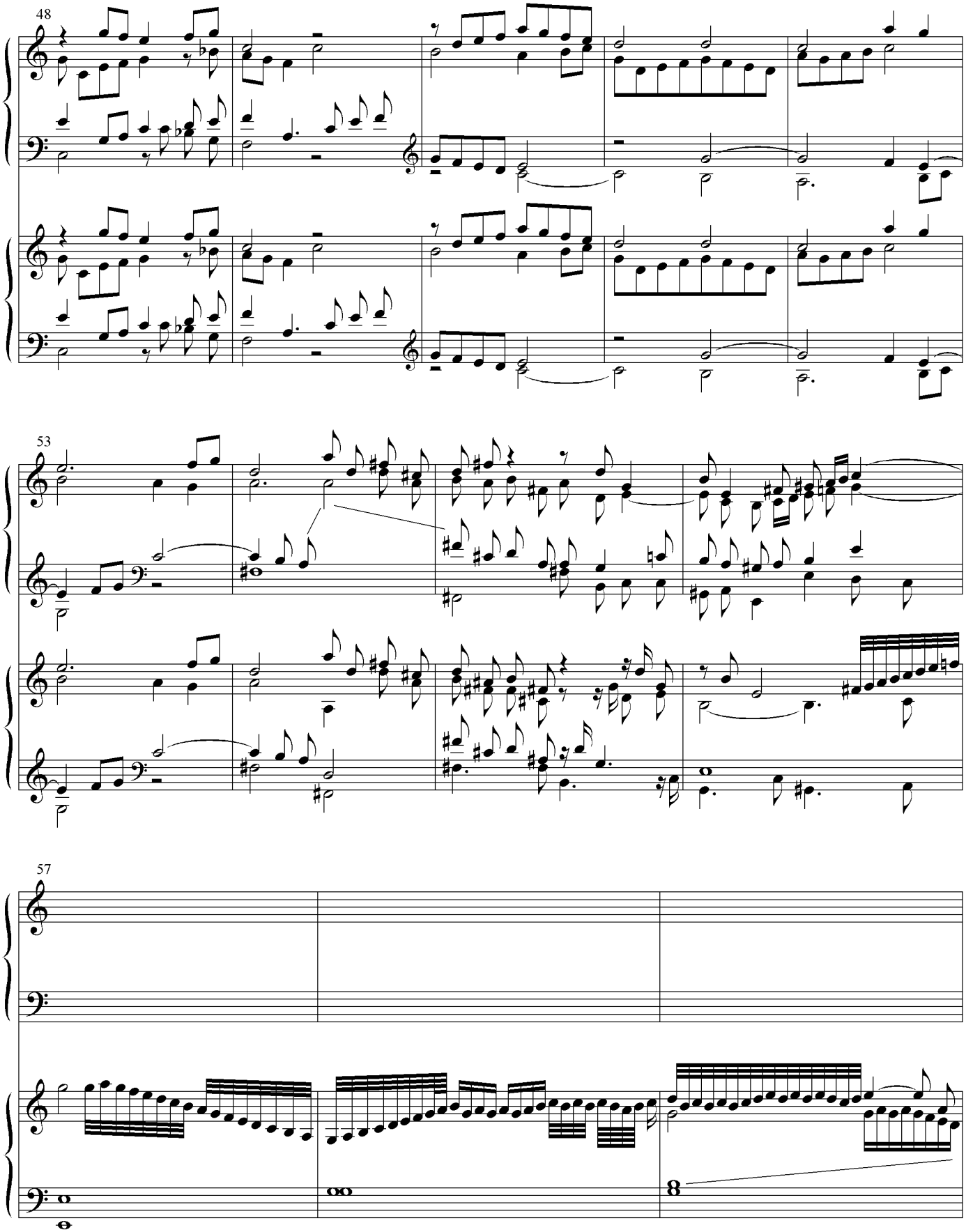
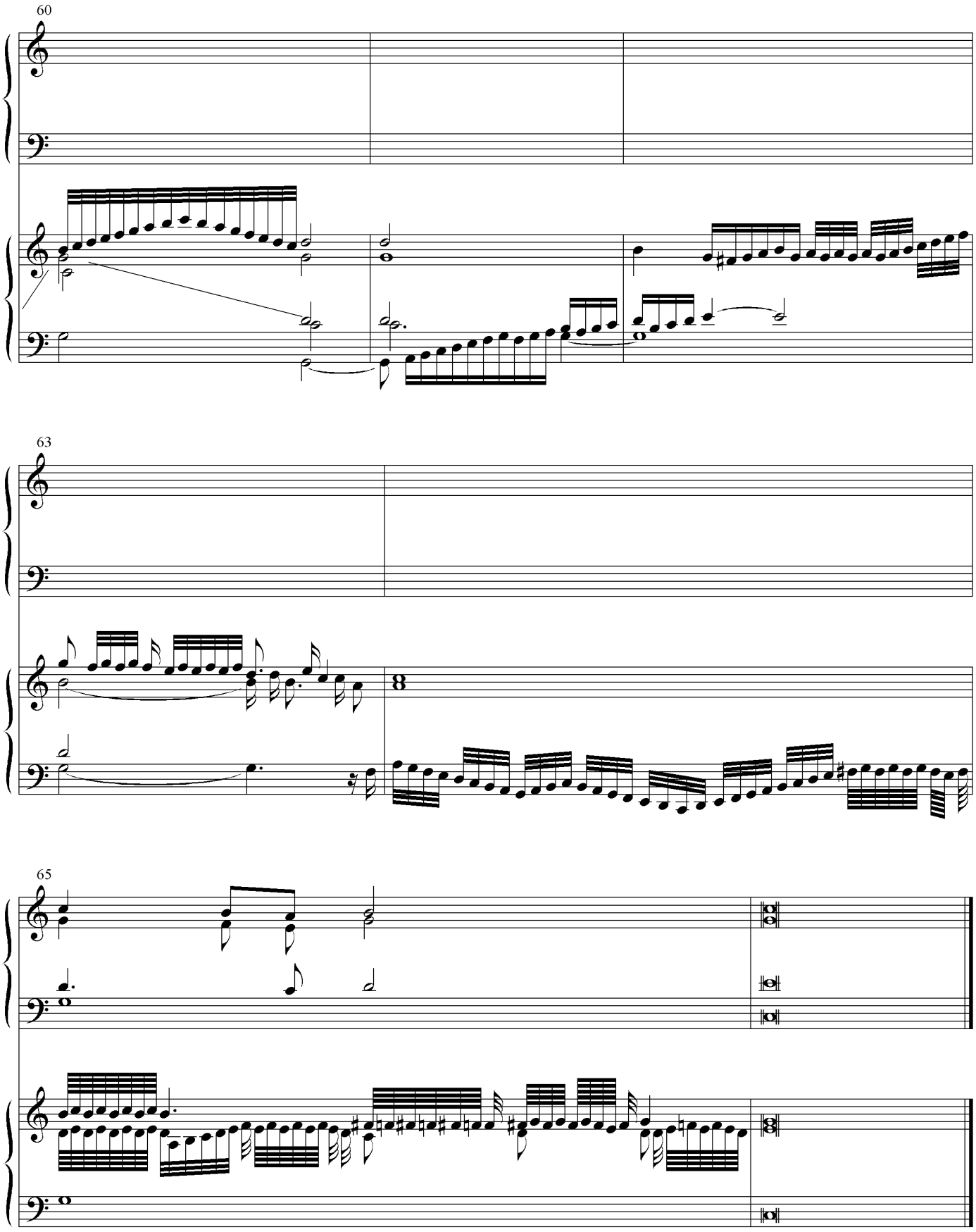

13
16
19


21B
23
26
tr
tr


27
31
tr
34


38
41
43
tr
tr
tr
tr


48
53
57


60
63
65

Gesualdo (?): Canzon franzese del Principe

This edition has been based on the facsimile of the sole source, the manuscript GB Lbl Add. 30491, in *Seventeenth-Century Keyboard Music: Sources Central to the Baroque* , vol. 11, ed. Alexander Silbiger (New York: Garland, 1987), ff. 34'-38'. Silbiger argues that the copyist is probably Luigi Rossi and that this piece was one of the last entered into the manuscript—after 1617, when the list of contents was prepared (bearing that date).

The original is notated in score on four staves, with an additional system of four staves used beneath the main one to enter passages that have been embellished or otherwise varied. Original clefs: treble, soprano, alto, baritone. This edition follows original beaming but modernizes accidentals and reduces to two staves. Measures are counted according to the original or simpler version, with the letter "B" appended to numbers for the two additional measures present within the body of the piece in the embellished version. At the end, however, where the latter has an extended elaboration of the final cadence, the measure numbers follow that version. The sign indicated by a modern trill symbol in the edition is abbreviated in the manuscript as a hastily written "tr" except in its first appearance (m. 10), where the expression "trillo gagliardi:[ssi]mo" appears. The enharmonic trills in m. 26 are marked with explicit natural signs alternating with sharps, but not so subsequently in mm. 41 and 65, where the naturals are editorial additions.

The presumably original (unembellished) version is not quite as poor as it appears to be in the previous editions, which contain misreadings or fail to emend where the text is probably faulty. But whether the piece was copied competently, whether it was actually finished, and whether it is really by Gesualdo all remain uncertain. Whether there were originally words is also unclear; the absence of beaming in some groups of small note values might suggest that the latter originally bore different syllables, but it may also simply reflect inconsistent notation typical of the period. The piece comprises six or seven sections, with the cadence at the end of each section heavily embellished in the second version; the final section restates imitative subjects from the first and fourth sections (compare mm. 1ff. with 44ff., 54ff. with 26ff.), but there is no refrain of either the opening or the closing section as is often the case in actual chansons and canzoni francesi. Occasionally this added system shows *less* embellishment, presumably to make it more idiomatic on whatever instrument this was intended for. That a single instrument was intended, and not a consort, is evident from the occasional presence of two notes in a single staff and the reduction to three voices at the end.

It is difficult to find a convincing interpretation of either the original or the embellished version. The latter, with its enharmonic embellishments, as well as the unusual notation in double score, must reflect some pedagogic or speculative purpose, perhaps inspired by musical theorizing at Naples, Ferrara, or Rome.

Readings:

m.	part	comment
simple version		
13	T	notes 1–2: quarter, dotted quarters; edition reverses values
20	B	notes 4–5 (G): sharp only on note 4
24	B	note 1 (F#) half not quarter (possibly read correctly but paper has deterioriated)
25	T	notes 5–6: d'–c' changed to c'–d' to accord with alto
	B	notes 7–8: B–A, changed to c–B to accord with alto
26	A	note 7 (g'): apparent sharp probably not intended
33	T	notes 5–6 (a, d'): quarter, 8th, changed to 8th quarter to accord with alto (the last two notes, 8ths d', c' , are not beamed together in the ms)
34	A	notes 2–3: a–b, changed to c'–d' to accord with soprano
35	A	last two notes orig. b'–c", noteheads enlarged and "fa sol" written above

55 A note 2 (a') possibly changed to (less likely, from) f#' (cf. embellished version)
56 T note 3 (g): no sharp

embellished version (not including readings previously listed above)

21 S note 4 (a'): dot follows note
21B S last note (g#'): quarter not 8th
T last note (b): 8th not quarter
S the marking interpreted as a rest is unclear, and if indeed a rest its value is uncertain; the value of the last note (d" quarter) is also uncertain as it is written at the inside edge of the page, a portion of which may be covered within the binding or not included in the photographic image seen here
A note 5 on beat 3 (a') apparently a dotted quarter, but the dot is ink bleeding through from the opposite side of the page; a diagonal line between the S and A staves appears to have been intended to mark a simultaneity between this a' (16th) and the last note in S (d"), but exactly which notes it connects (if that is its purpose) is unclear
T value of last two notes unclear, possibly altered
26B B sharp on note 3 (c) apparently cancelled
29 S value of note 3 (g#") unclear, probably 16th; notes 12–15 (b'–a'–f#'–g#') are 16ths, with an additional note g#' (16th) after b', which is preceded by a cancelled sharp; apparent sharp also above note 5 (g")
A note 5 (d") preceded by indistinctly written sharp
there is no B part in this m.
33 S “tr” between ntoes 1 and 2
34 A notes 2–3: g, a (8ths), but cf. original version; note 4 orig. d', changed to e'
41 S rests, if present, are indistinct; note 1 (e") followed by indistinct sign (crossed-out dot?)
A apparent sharp on c' (beat 2) probably blotted out
56 S last eight notes: 64ths, not 32ds; last note (f"): no sharp
58 S only three beats in this measure; notes 10–17 (beats 2–3) 32ds not 16ths
62 S notes 8–15 16ths not 32ds
63 T note 1: e' not d'; no tenor voice beyond this point
65 A note 1 (d'): 32d not 64th; note 8 (e') omitted, added editorially to accord with S; notes 15–20 32ds not 64ths; note 22 (d') 8th not 32d (alligned with the first f#' in S); note 25 (d') 8th not quarter