During the course of archival research at Simancas in the summer of 1993 concerning the musical chapels in Granada, I was fortunate to locate the privilege granted by Emperor Charles V for the publication of the Seys libros del Delphin (1538) by the vihuelist Luis de Narváez. Although Narváez was one of the most important vihuelists of the sixteenth century whose works were known far beyond Spain’s territorial borders, the details of his life and the modes by which his music was transmitted are still shrouded in darkness. He likely entered the service of Francisco de los Cobos during his youth and it was probably on the death of his patron that he was appointed to the Capilla Real, thereby gaining the opportunity to accompany Phillip II in 1549 on his voyage to The Netherlands, after which all trace of him vanishes. The document that forms the subject of this study sheds new light on both Narváez’s life and on the publication of the Seys libros del Delphin.

Born in Granada, Narváez was educated in the Granadine musical environment at the beginning of the sixteenth century, where the vihuela and the lute held positions of considerable importance. Other members of this Granadine circle were Luis de Guzmán (d. 1528), whose fame, having reached Italy, was praised by Paulo Jovio in his Historia Universal. Cited by Juan Bermudo in Bk. IV of his...

* I would like to thank Michael Christodoulidis and John Griffiths for their suggestions and assistance in the preparation of this article.

JLSA, XXVI-XXVII (1993-94)
© 1998, The Lute Society of America
Declaracion... (Osuna, 1555), Guzmán played a seven-course vihuela, an instrument appropriate “for music of a wide range.” Other players include Hernando de Jaén, also praised by Bermudo as a “great vihuela player who was a musician of the king of Portugal” as well as “one of the best instrumentalists of his time,” and Baltasar Ramírez, of whom the Granadine chronicler Bermúdez de Pedraza wrote the following anecdote:

Baltasar Ramírez was a more famous lutenist than any other Cimon, who after declining an invitation to play, he eventually agreed and was preferred to Themistocles. Once, Ramírez was at a gathering to listen to Sasa, a musician of Don Juan of Austria, who, after playing, saw a lute in a corner of the room and asked to whom it belonged; and in reply to the owner of the house who said it belonged to a servant, Sasa said that this was impossible, and looking at all of the guests said to Baltasar Ramírez, whom he did not know, that the lute was his and that he should play. Excusing himself on account of his old age, he eventually played, and Sasa, proclaiming his skill, said that he was the finest musician that he had encountered in Germany, Italy, England and France.

1 Chap. 62, f. 92r.
2 An Hernando de Jaén was buried on 19 March 1551 in the Cathedral of Granada [Leg. 161. Archivo of the Cathedral of Granada]. It is not known whether this person is the same celebrated musician.
3 Baltasar Ramírez, fue tan famoso tañedor de láté que cual otro Cimon, rehusando tañer en un combate al fin importunado tañer y fue preferido a Themistocles. Así Ramírez estando en una junta para oyer tañer a Sasa, músico de don Juan de Austria: el cual después de a ver tañer, vio un láté en el rincón de la sala: preguntó cuyo era, y respondiendo el señor de la casa, que de un lacayo: replicó Sasa, no es posible: y mirando a los circunstantes dijo a Baltasar Ramírez sin conocerle, que el láté era suyo, que tatease de el se escusara por viejo, pero al fin importunado tañer y Sasa hecho predicador de su destreza, dito, que era el mejor músico que hasta conocido en Alemania, Italia, Inglaterra y Francia”. With the exception of the concluding one, these well-known and frequently cited references have been compiled by Pilar Ramos López, La Capilla de música de la Catedral de Granada en la primera mitad del siglo XVII: Diego Pontar (diss., University of Granada, 1992), pp. 93-98, which also draws on a new source not previously alluded to in the musicological literature: Bermúdez de Pedraza, Antiguiedades y Escenecencias de Granada (1608). This is likely to be the source for the references to Granadine musicians cited in the anonymous manuscript Granada o descripción historial del insigne reino y ciudad ilustrísima de Granada... 3

Another indicator of the vihuela’s popularity in Granada is the Ordenanza que los magnificos Señores de Granada manda que se tenga en el oficio de hacer cuerdas de vihuelas, a detailed ordinance for the manufacture of strings, proclaimed on 26 November 1541, which governed the string-making trade.4

The first printing privilege recorded in Spain was granted to Meinardo Ungut and Estanislao Polonio of Seville and consisted of an exemption from taxes. Not until 1480 were privileges granted to protect a printed work for a specific period of time.5 From this time, the printing privilege became simply a document giving authorization for the printing of a work, as required by the laws current in each Spanish kingdom, in order to secure exclusive publishing rights and to prevent others from publishing the same material. The privilege had to be petitioned from the king and was granted for a specific number of years and within a defined geographical area wherein no one else could publish the work. This privilege was always a royal concession and could be extended at the end of the period. The king granted privileges for the kingdoms of Castile, and in the other kingdoms viceroyals acted on his behalf according to their respective jurisdiction. Through the Consejo de Aragón, the king granted privileges for all the kingdoms under the crown of

Granada, bellíssima entre todas las ciudades that is reproduced in J.B. Gallardo, Ensayo de una bibliotheca española de libros raros y curiosos, 4 vols. (Madrid, 1863-89).

4 The tradesman was required to know “una encordadura de vn tenor y otra de descante, y otra de harpa, y otra de vihuela de arco, y otra de guitarra” [how to string a tenor, a descant, harp, viola da gamba, and guitar]. The lengths of gut had to be of three varas [1 vara = approx 35 inches], without knots, spun on a wheel, and were only allowed to be made from sheep gut. Las Ordenanzas que los muy ilustres, y muy magníficos señores de Granada amandaron guardar para la buena gobernación de su República, impresos año 1552. Que se han vuelto a imprimir... año 1670. Añadiendo otras que no están impresas (Granada: Imprenta Real de Francisco Ochoa, 1672).

practice and art of music, both composing works in measured notation for voices as well as in ciphers to be played on the vihuela and, following your own desires, you have composed many masses and psalms and other works that are sung by Our Holy Mother Church with learned style and novelty, as well as other works such as motets and villancicos in ciphers to play on the vihuela with such genius and clarity of art and with a novelty not previously seen in Spain, and that you also have many other works in measured notation for voices by many other authors which have not been printed in these lands, and others by Francesco da Milano and Luis de Gusmán for vihuela, which you have collected and compiled because they were not reliably available. You have petitioned us and asked our favor, that—since for the greater part of your life you have been dedicated to the aforementioned, in which you have worked ardously, and that it is both useful and beneficial—that we should grant you or whosoever you nominate and not any other person, licence to print the said works in these our kingdoms and realms, and to sell them for the period that it might serve us or however it might appear to us. And in respect of the above-mentioned, and because the works are of the aforementioned quality, we have given our consent. Therefore, I hereby grant you licence and faculty and order that for the time and space of ten years from the date of this decree onwards, you and those empowered by you and no other person, may print in our kingdoms under the Crown of Castile the said mensural works and those composed by you for vihuela, as well as those by other authors that you have corrected and compiled under penalty that any person or persons who, without your authority within the time and space of the said ten years, should print, or cause to be printed, or sell in these realms, or take them beyond these lands to be sold will have the imprisonment confiscation together with the moulds and other equipment they have used; and the books from which they were taken having been printed and made during the said period. Each person will incur a fine of ten thousand maravedís for each occasion that they have done the contrary; and the fine I order to be distributed in the following manner: one third shall go to the judge who sentences [the offender], another third for our Chamber, and the other third goes to the person who accuses him, and by this decree, I order those of our Council, etc... Dated this said day, the 18th of May, 1537.

From this privilege it is possible to flesh out the historical and political contexts of Narváez’s 1538 tablature, chronicle
its publication history, as well as provide new information regarding the transmission of Narváez’s music outside of Spain. It can be seen that the privilege was granted for the kingdoms under the Crown of Castile, but of all the vihuela publications, only the book of Narváez carries the following declaration on the title page: “With imperial privilege for Castile, and Aragón and Cataluña for ten years.” This suggests that he also must have petitioned for a privilege for the kingdoms of Aragón, extending him exclusive rights to distribute his book throughout the whole nation. It is also to be assumed that preparation and editing of Narváez’s book had been completed prior to the issue of the privilege on 18 May 1537. Only a period of eighteen months separates the granting of the privilege from the publication of the book on 30 October 1538. These dates serve to reduce to within a short period the date in which the printing contract would have been drawn up, and which—if it survives—should facilitate attempts to discover it.

Narváez’s book is dedicated to Francisco de los Cobos, secretary to Charles V. It has been indicated on numerous occasions by Anglés, Pujol, and others that Luis de Narváez was a salaried musician of Francisco de los Cobos and probably a musician at the court of the Empress Isabel. This supposition is based mainly on the preface and the dedication to Los seis libros del Delphin, and the well-known anecdote narrated by Luis de Zapata, one of the empress’s pages, in his Miscelánea regarding Narváez’s extraordinary musical skills which he had the fortune to witness in Valladolid. These hypotheses assume greater credibility when examined in relation to the detailed biography of Charles V’s secretary by Hayward Keniston, which contains information that offers a plausible reconstruction of Narváez’s movements during the untraced period of his life.8 I have not been able to locate any

9 The baptismal books preserved in the different parishes of Granada commence after the period in which Narváez would have been born. Another Narváez named Alonso was a musician at the Cathedral of Granada from 1565 (see J. López Calo, La música en la Catedral de Granada [Granada: Fundación Rodríguez Acosta, 1963]), but he appears not to be related to Luis de Narváez since he, his parents, and grandparents were born in Jaén (Archivo de la Catedral de Granada, Leg. 226, fol. 26).

8 H. Keniston, Francisco de los Cobos, Secretario de Carlos V (Madrid: Castalia, 1980).
Spain, and in 1536 made a journey to Rome in order to participate in discussions with Pope Paul III to persuade him to act as mediator between Charles V and Francis I. As is well known, Francesco da Milano enjoyed the patronage of Paul III, and it was precisely in this year that three books of Francesco’s works were published. For the greater part of 1537 and 1538, the years in which Narváez was granted the printing privilege as well as the year of the publication of his Delphin, Cobos resided in Valladolid, where Narváez’s book was published. The same year, 1538, Charles V and François I met in Nice in the presence of Pope Paul III, and it was also on this occasion that the two kings’ lutenists, Francisco da Milano and Alberto da Ripa, probably met. But Cobos, too, was in Nice preparing for this political summit, which was followed by numerous festivities and formal events, which begs the question as to whether Narváez might have accompanied Francisco de los Cobos to either of these historic meetings and whether, in addition to its political purpose, the Nice summit served to provide an encounter between the three greatest lutenists and vihuelists of the day. Even though the idea is plausible no documentary evidence survives to confirm it, and it can only be left as mere speculation. Francisco de los Cobos died nearly a decade later on 10 May 1547, and in September 1548 Luis de Narváez entered the service of the court as master of the mochachos cantorícos, the boy singers.10

Returning to the privilege granted to Narváez, we can see that it recognises in equal proportion his talent as an instrumentalist and as a composer of “masses, psalms and other works” of religious character as well as secular works such as “motets and villancicos to be played on the vihuela.”11

These descriptions are clearly linked to those found in the author’s prologue to the Delphin.12 Additionally, Narváez is portrayed as a compiler of vocal and instrumental works by other composers “in mensural notation to be sung, by many other authors whose works have not been printed in these realms, as well as works by Francesco da Milano and Luis de Guzmán.” Might these have been the works that Narváez was thinking to include in his next book? Narváez himself indicates in the prologue of Delphin: “If I see that [players] reap the fruit of this book (if it pleases God), I will publish other larger works of greater depth which, until I see the success of this one, I shall not publish; and if it be a [success], will the others.”13 All of this indicates that the privilege granted to Luys de Narváez went far beyond the works included in the Delphin, and included perhaps his entire musical output.

Narváez clearly had extensive knowledge of contemporary music—in some measure probably due to his patron Francisco de los Cobos—prior to his contact with the Spanish court, and which further provided him with first-hand knowledge of European music on his journeys through Italy, Flanders, and Germany in 1548 in the retinue of prince Phillip.14 The cosmopolitan character of his musical taste is

---

10 Higinio Anglés, *La Música en la Corte de Carlos V. Monumento de la Música Española* (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1944), 1, pp. 104-5.
11 The preserved vocal works by Narváez are the motets *De profundis clamavi*, a 4, with the 2⁰ pars *Suscitavit anima mea*, published in Lyon in 1589 by Moderne; and
12 It seems unlikely that Luis Milan’s book would have been unknown in the court, since—as in the case of Narváez’s book—it had also been given imperial privilege granted by Charles V himself. It is therefore more likely that the qualifier “new” used in Narváez’s book might refer to the innovative nature of the works it contains.
14 Narváez entered the service of the Royal Chapel in 1548. He travelled in the same year to Italy and, in 1549, resided in Flanders where he is documented for the last time. See Anglés, *La música en la corte de Carlos V...*, pp. 104 ff.
evident in the *Delphin* through his inclusion of works by Josquin, Gombert, and Richafort. Even though this became the norm in later instrumental collections in Spain, there is no precedent to this aspect of Narváez's anthology.

His knowledge of Italian lute music is suggested in the first instance by the type of tablature he used, different in its layout to that used in Valencia by Luis Milán in 1536. This is confirmed by the unequivocal new reference in the printing privilege to the works of Francesco da Milano, and the depth of his knowledge of the Italian's music is suggested by the fact that he felt sufficiently sure of his ability to offer what he believed to be authoritative versions of the works that he claims to have collected. Other characteristics shared by the fantasias and ricercars by both Narváez and Francesco are the use of similar—at times, identical—musical figures, the frequent use of sequences of short motives, and sometimes similar codas, which also later appeared in the works by other Spanish vihuelists, particularly Mudarra and Fuenllana.

It does not appear plausible that such an innovative style could have been assimilated by Narváez in the short time that separates the first publication of Francesco's music in 1536 and the privilege for *Los seys libros del Delphin* of May the following year. Rather, if we consider the nature and quality of the music in Narváez's volume, as well as the references in both the privilege and the preface of the *Delphin*, a considerably longer process of gestation must be allowed for. The travels of Narváez's patron coincide fortuitously with these stylistic observations, and it now becomes clearer to understand how Narváez might have had direct contact with Italian lute music from the beginning of the 1530s.

Further conclusions can be drawn by examining the publication history of Narváez's book within the context of the other vihuela books printed during the sixteenth century. As shown in Table I, all of the vihuela books, from Milán's *El Maestro* (1536) onwards, but with the exception of Mudarra's *Tres libros*, include a statement of royal authorization on their title pages. However, it is not until the publication of Valderrábano's *Silva de sirenas* (1547) that the licences were reproduced in the books themselves, a practice followed in all subsequent vihuela publications. In comparing these with other sixteenth-century books of music and music theory, we can see that beginning with the first edition of Bermudo's treatise (1549), all include the privilege inside the book with the only exception of the *Libro de cifra nueva* (1557) of Venegas de Henestrosa. The interval of time between the granting of the privilege and the publication of these books was indeed variable, with a minimum of hardly three months.

---

15 It is noteworthy that the 1535 inventory of books of polyphony at the Cathedral of Granada lists "a medium-sized book of motets, foreign, bound in paper and covered in white leather" ("un libro de maria mediana de motetes, extranjero, encausulado en tablas de papel y guarnecido en cuero blanco") and "a medium-sized book containing fifteen masses by Josquin, bound in paper and covered in tawny leather" ("un libro de maria mediana, que tiene quince misas de Josquin, encausulado en tablas de papel y guarnecidos en cuero leonado"). The book of masses had been purchased by the Cathedral in 1529 (López Calo, *La música en la Catedral de Granada*, pp. 125-126). In the inventories of the Royal Chapel, the one dating from 1536 does not indicate the authors although it includes "a small book of polyphony with French chansons bound with its covers in old red leather" ("un libro de carso de órgano pequeño encuadernado en tablas y cuero colorado viejo"); the first detailed inventory of 1592 includes "four books by Nicholas Gombert, which appear to have been five, missing one which is the superius" ("cuatro libros de Nicolás Gomberto, parece por ellos que avían de ser cinco, falta uno que es el de tiple"); see J. López Calo, "El Archivo de Música de la Capilla Real de Granada," *Anuario Musical* 13 (1958), pp. 121-22. Additionally, according to the Rollos des beneficios drawn up in Granada on October 2, Nicolás Gombert must have visited Granada at least from 1526 accomplishing Charles V; see Anglés, *La música en la Corte de Carlos V*, vol I, p. 24.

16 Specifically, the use of tablature with the lowest of the six lines representing the first string of the vihuela in the same way as used by Italian lutenists, a practice which was later adopted in all subsequent vihuela publications, and the opposite to that used by Luis Milán. See Narváez, *Los seys libros del Delphin*... ed. Pajol, p. 27.


18 The inclusion of the printing licence, the valuation of the book, and the privilege was decreed mandatory in 1558. As is seen in Table I, this practice had come into use prior to the date of the decree.
for Valderrábano’s book and nineteen months for Pisador’s Libro de música (1552). This delay was probably due to problems beyond the printing itself. For Santa María’s Arte de Tañer fantasía, for example, only three months elapsed between the granting of the Privilegio Real and the signing of the contract between the author and the printer, but that a further sixteen or seventeen months elapsed before the eventual publication. With the exception of the Narváez privilege, no documents have surfaced concerning other vihuela books published prior to the mandatory inclusion of the privilege in the body of the book (see Table 1), although we do know in a number of instances the period of time that elapsed between the signing of printing contracts and the date of publication. Five months elapsed in the case of Fuenllana’s Orphénica Lyra, and only three months for Daza’s El Parnasso.

19 The royal licence for the Arte de tañer fantasía was granted on 28 November, 1557. Tomás de Santa María petitioned a new licence since six years of the ten had already elapsed, and “due to a lack of paper and for many other obvious reasons you had not been able to print the said book and that now you have the disposition to do so” (“por ausencia de gran falta de papel, & por otras muchas y evidentísimas causas no auíades podido imprimir el dicho libro, & que agora tenedís disposición para le hacer imprimir”), he was granted another licence for a further ten years as of 11 April 1563. This quote is taken from the unidentified copy reprinted by Arte Trífaria, ed. Ruedesindo F. Souredo (Madrid, 1982). The location of existing copies of the original are given in Griffiths and Hulberg, “Santa María and the Printing of Instrumental Music,” p. 352.


21 K. Wagner, Martín de Monteceda y su prensa: Contribución al estudio de la imprenta y bibliografía sevillana del siglo XVI (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 1982), pp. 110-11.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Work (date of publication)</th>
<th>Title page: declaration of privilege</th>
<th>Privilege documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luis Milán</td>
<td>El Maestro [4 December 1536]</td>
<td>With royal privilege</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso de Muderre</td>
<td>Tres libros de Música [1546]</td>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriquez de Valderrábano</td>
<td>Silva de Sirenas [28 July 1547]</td>
<td>With imperial privilege</td>
<td>Issued by Prince Philip, 6 May 1547. Reproduced in book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteban Daza</td>
<td>El Parnasso [12 April 1576]</td>
<td>Printed by Diego Fernández de Córdoba, printer to His Majesty</td>
<td>Issued by Philip II, 29 June 1575. Reproduced in book</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the privileges contained in the body of the other vihuela books reveal that they were written according to a standardized format with minor differences as follows:

- With the exception of the privilege granted to Narváez, the document begins by stating the residence of the author and also gives a short and imprecise description of the work. The Narváez privilege describes his music with greater precision than any other. In some of the privileges, as if to defend the merit of the particular work, there is a statement of the time taken in the preparation of the
book: more than twelve years in the case of Valderrábano, and more than fifteen years in the case of Pisador.

- In his *Silva de sirenas*, Valderrábano explains that the book could not be sold until it was evaluated and priced by the Royal Council. Subsequent privilege documents state towards the end that the book should be sold at the price established by the Council. This price is stated on the title page, added by hand in the books of Pisador and Daza, and printed in Fuenllana’s *Orphénica lyra*.

- The license-related documents then address the matter of privilege, given, in most cases, for a period of ten years with the exception of Fuenllana who was granted privilege for fifteen years. Daza petitioned privilege for twenty years, but was granted the customary decade.

- The remainder of the privilege documents deal with the penalties imposed upon those who breach the law. Firstly, in the event of a pirate edition, all the copies were to be collected and, with the exception of Valderrábano’s book, the “forms and apparatus [moldes y aparejos] from which they were made” confiscated. Additionally, a fine was imposed, ranging between 10,000 maravedís for Narváez’s book and 50,000 maravedís for those of Pisador and Daza, to be dispersed in the following manner: one third would go to the accuser, a third for the judge who sentenced the culprit, and a third for the general revenue of the Royal Chamber. Unusually, the privilege granted to Daza indicates that half of the fine would go to the Royal Chamber and the other half to the author himself. Starting with Valderrábano’s book and for subsequent publications excepting that of Daza, an additional fixed fine of 10,000 maravedís was to be paid to the legal representatives who handled the proceedings.

We can see that as a means of communication, the book was subject to varying levels of bureaucratic control in Hapsburg Spain regarding both its content and dissemination—a product of the administrative and political structure of the nation. Initially not limited in any way, the rapid multiplication and distribution of printed works, came under increased control. In 1502, the first law requiring pre-publication censorship came into force in the kingdoms of Castile, decentralized in diverse organizations and individuals within the administration. But it was to be the decree of 1558, promulgated in Valladolid on 7 September, and later modified by more restrictive amendments, that remained in effect until the fall of the Old Regime, with its limits of jurisdiction extended in the early eighteenth century also to encompass the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragón.

The privilege was not simply considered a mere legal formality, but proved to be an effective means of legal protection. In the period under discussion, only one case of musical piracy has come to light, the fraudulent publication in 1555 of Miguel de Fuenllana’s *Orphénica Lyra*. Further archival research will be necessary in order to extend our knowledge, particularly in the early part of the sixteenth century. The eventual discovery of the privilege issued to Luis Milán and the contracts for the printing of his and Narváez’s books should be able to contribute, in the same way as the document I have presented here, important new information regarding the printing of instrumental music in sixteenth-century Spain.24

GRANADA, SPAIN
translated by John Griffiths

---

23 Wagner, *Martín de Montespeca y su prensa*, p. 112.