

THE GUITAR, THEORBO AND LUTE WORKS OF ROBERT DE VISEE:

A STUDY OF HIS PROCESS OF ARRANGING

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*N.B.: Two footnotes were inadvertently omitted. These are marked in the text by red numbers and the footnotes themselves are found at the end of the paper under the heading "ADDITIONAL FOOTNOTES".

PRINTED WORKS:

Livre de Guittarre dédié au Roy, Paris, 1682

Livre de Pièces pour la Guittarre, Paris, 1686

Pièces de théorbe et de luth mises en partition, Paris, 1716;
Rés. 1187, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES FOR GUITAR WORKS:

Rés. F 844

Rés. 1402

Vm⁷ 6222

Vm⁷ 675

} Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

J.B. Louis de Castillion, Recueil des pièces de guitarre des meilleurs maitres du XVIIe siècle, (Ghent, 1730). MS 5615, Bibliothèque du Conservatoire, Brussels.

Santiago de Murcia, Passacalles y obras de guitarra (1732).
British Museum, London.

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES FOR THEORBO WORKS:

Vm⁷ 6265

Rés. 1106

} Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

MANUSCRIPT SOURCE FOR LUTE AND THEORBO WORKS:

MS of J. Vaudry de Saizenay, R. 339, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

TABLE I. List of Sources for Robert de Visée's
Guitar, Theorbo and Lute Works.

ALLEMANDE "LA CONVERSATION"

Guitar: Livre de guittarre, p 18 *dm*
Theorbo: Saiz. p376; Vm7 6265, p 70 *gr*
Lute: Saiz. p 172 *dm*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p59 *dm*

COURANTE

Guitar: Livre de guittarre, p 20 *dm*
Theorbo: Rés. 1106, fol. 7v *dm*
Lute: Saiz. p 187 *gr*
Mel. & B.C.: Rés. 1187, p 62 *dm*

GAVOTTE

Guitar: Livre de guittarre, p 25 *dm*
Theorbo: Saiz. p 254; Vm7 6265, p 9; Rés. 1106, fol. 27r *dm*
Lute: Saiz. p 47 *dm*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p 86 *dm*

COURANTE

Guitar: Livre de guittarre, p 29 *dm*
Theorbo: Saiz. p 223; Vm7 6265, p 34; Rés. 1106, fol. 72v *dm*
Lute: Saiz. p 190 *dm*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p 7 *dm*

MUSETTE

Guitar: Rés. F 844, pp 195 & 109 *G*
Theorbo: Saiz. p 292; Vm7 6265, p 68; Rés. 1106, fol. 24r *G*
Lute: Saiz. p 152 *A*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p 77 *C*

COURANTE

Guitar: Rés. F 844, p 214 *C*
Theorbo: Saiz. p 285; Vm7 6265, p 66; Rés. 1106, fol. 16r *G*
Lute: Saiz. p 96 *G*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p 73 *C*

CHACONNE

Guitar: Rés. F 844, p 237 *dm*
Theorbo: Saiz. p 258; Vm7 6265, p 6; Rés. 1106, fol. 28v *dm*
Lute: Saiz. p 64 *dm*
Mel. & b.c.: Rés. 1187, p 87 *dm*

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Robert de Visée, French performer and composer, was born around 1660 and died sometime after 1732.¹ Although he is probably best known today as a guitarist, he was also a theorbist and lutenist as well as a gambist and singer. Records supplying information about his life mention him as being employed at the court of King Louis XIV from about 1682 onwards, in the capacity of "maitre de guittarre" and "jouer du theorbe".² His activities at court included performing and teaching as well as composing, which he did for guitar, theorbo and lute; a complete list of the sources of de Visée's music for these instruments can be found in Table I.

A close examination of his compositions reveals seven pieces which exist in a version for each of these instruments, as well as in transcription for violin and basso continuo. These pieces and their sources are shown in Table II.

The purpose of this paper is to determine the principles behind how these arrangements were made. These principles, once discovered, will provide insights into de Visée's use of each instrument, and should serve as a guideline for anyone wishing to make his own arrangements of pieces by de Visée or his contemporaries.³ The question could naturally arise as to which

¹Most references to de Visée give 1720 as a probable death date. However, in 1732 an air by him was published in Concerts parodiques, Livre 4e (Paris), and there is no evidence to suggest that he died before then.

²Recently published information about de Visée and his life can be found in R. de Visée: oeuvres complètes pour guitare (Heugel, Paris, 1969) edited by Robert Strizich, and the article on de Visée by Robert Strizich in the 6th edition of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians (in preparation).

³De Visée's arrangements of pieces by Forqueray, Couperin and Lully, in addition to numerous arrangements found in various manuscripts of pieces from operas for solo lute, guitar and theorbo, indicate that in France at that time it was not uncommon to make arrangements of pieces to suit another instrument.

version of a given piece might have been composed first. Unfortunately, this study did not reveal any conclusive evidence to show in all cases which of the versions was composed first. However, it did uncover a few criteria, which, when combined with relevant facts, should aid in developing a feeling for a possible chronology; these criteria will be discussed in the summary.

In making an analysis which will answer the questions posed above, it would be tempting to assume that the version for violin and basso continuo (to be hereafter referred to as "Rés. 1187") was composed first, since de Visée would be least restricted in this medium by limitations imposed on him by the other instruments; thus unhampered, he could set down his original concept of the piece. Proceeding in this way, one would try to determine why the plucked versions agree or disagree with the "original model". However, in addition to chronological facts that speak against this approach, the results of even a cursory analysis yields results which tend to indicate that he must have arranged the pieces for each instrument in accordance with what he wanted on each one, and that each of the versions has its own validity.

Therefore, it seems logical to consider and study each piece for itself, and determine just what use de Visée made of the capabilities and limitations of each instrument. This approach takes the emphasis off of comparison and allows each version to stand for itself as an example of what he wanted to do with each instrument for its own sake;⁴ comparisons between versions will

⁴This assumes, of course, that de Visée is responsible for all of the versions of a given piece. While there is no reason to doubt this in most cases, certain of the guitar pieces (i.e., the ones in MS sources) show signs of being later arrangements, possibly not by de Visée (to be discussed below in the summary). André Tessier, in his article "L'Ecole française de luth" (SIM, Liege, 1930, pp. 217ff), believes that the lute pieces are adaptations of theorbo and guitar pieces made by Jean Vaudry de Saizenay, compiler of the main source of de Visée's lute and theorbo pieces and student of de Visée. However, certain of the lute versions

of course be made when they prove useful or interesting. For the purpose of this analysis, the initial question before considering each piece has been: "What factors seem to lie behind the outcome of each of de Visée's arrangements?" This is tantamount to asking, "What would one need to know in order to be able to make one's own arrangement in the style of de Visée?" The following questions were found to be relevant:

- 1) What determines the choice of key for a given arrangement?
- 2) What decisions determine the choice of texture?
- 3) What determines the choice of string or position for a given note?
- 4) What ornaments are found in these pieces and where are they placed?
- 5) What are the principles behind de Visée's right and left hand fingering?
- 6) What principles govern de Visée's choice of rhythmic notation?
- 7) How frequent are variants in pitch between the different versions, and what conclusions can be drawn from these variants?

In the following section, each of these questions will be discussed, and in the summary, the findings will be presented as they apply to each instrument. The summary will also discuss the chronology of these pieces based on this analysis and on other relevant facts.

must unquestionably be by de Visée, since there are titles which are followed by the phrase "mise par Mr. de Visée". Perhaps the other titles which only say "... de Mr. de Visée" could possibly represent arrangements by Saizenay. If some of the arrangements were made by Saizenay, they would still be valid for this analysis, for they certainly would have had de Visée's approval.

A N A L Y S I S

1. WHAT DETERMINES THE CHOICE OF KEY FOR A GIVEN ARRANGEMENT?

At first this may appear to be a difficult question to answer, since the word "choice" could refer to either the choice of key for the original composition, or to the choice of key for the arrangement. At this point in the analysis, it is not known whether the piece to be studied is the original or the arrangement. In either case, however, where the piece lies on the instrument provides some clues as to what considerations govern this choice.

The tablatures of the pieces studied show that the key is chosen so that the melody of the piece never extends beyond the tenth fret of the highest-sounding course. The pieces are played for the most part in the low positions, usually below the fifth fret. On the lute and theorbo, the key chosen permits the fullest use of the bass courses. These are the boundaries within which de Visée works, and they apply to all of the versions for plucked instruments. It should be mentioned, however, that the guitar and theorbo versions are more likely to extend up as high as the tenth fret than the lute versions; this is due primarily to the tuning of these two instruments.

De Visée tuned his guitar in the "French" tuning: aa, d'd, gg, bb, e'.⁵ The range is relatively small, encompassing just two octaves (tenth fret = d'), so it is understandable that full use would be made of the higher frets of the top courses. Also,

⁵Although this tuning may seem strange, most of the French baroque guitar music is composed for it and represents a compromise between the "high" tuning (aa, d'd, gg, bb, e'), which lends itself well to the campanelas technique, and "low" tuning (aA, d'd, gg, bb, e'), which is appropriate for accompanying. De Visée's tuning is also prescribed by Corbetta (1671) and Derosier (1694 and 1699). For an explanation of campanelas, see below, p. 10. A detailed discussion of baroque guitar tunings is found in Sylvia Murphy, "The Tuning of the Five Course Guitar, Galpin Society Journal XXI, March 1968.

it is important to stress that the melody was mainly played on the top courses, because this enabled the use of full strums. The strum, or batterie, was employed very frequently, since it was considered particularly guitaristic. Batteries are most effective when they encompass all five courses, and this is only possible when the melody note is on the top course. The fewer the courses employed, the more the supportive role of the the strum is decreased; therefore, to achieve the fullest effect with the batteries, de Visée uses mainly the top two courses for the melody. A good example of how the key chosen affects the use of strumming can be seen in the two versions for guitar of the Musette (Rés. F844, p. 109 and p. 195). One version is in G major and lies quite low on the instrument, requiring frequent use of the third course for the melody. There are almost no strums in this version. On the other hand, the arrangement in C major almost always has the melody on the top course and there is at least one strum in every bar.

On the theorbo, the reason why the higher frets are used more frequently is that the top two courses are tuned lower than the third course: G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, d, g, b, e, a.⁶ The third course is thus the highest in pitch, and if the melody lies more than a fourth above this, then the higher positions on this course must be used.

The desire to play in the lowest position possible shows up most clearly in the lute tablatures. The lute pieces studied rarely go above the fifth or the sixth frets, and in some of them the highest note is only the second fret on the top string.

⁶Written indications in the Saizenay MS referring to the keys of pieces indicate that de Visée was using a theorbo tuned in A; there is evidence to suggest that the French theorbo was strung with single strings.

2. WHAT DECISIONS DETERMINE THE CHOICE OF TEXTURE?

By the second half of the 17th century, due perhaps to the powerful influence of Lullian opera, the music for lute and keyboard had evolved from the textural ambiguity of style brisé to a point where the melody and bass were clearly distinguishable from one another, and stood in the textural foreground of the composition.⁷ Thus, in the music of de Visée, the minimum texture is two voices, although this can and does vary constantly throughout a given piece. This variety usually involves an increase in the texture, but there are also passages where only one voice is present.

De Visée seems to use more than two voices in the following situations:

- 1) He uses a thicker texture when he wishes to draw attention to a particular harmony. An example of this is found in the eighth bar of the Allemande:



In many cases a chord treated in such a way usually has a chromatically altered tone in it.

- 2) A change in texture is also used to create accents which can either a) reinforce the expected melodic or metric accents, b) create an unexpected accent, c) accent the high point of a phrase, or d) mark the start of a new one. Each of these cases is illustrated in the following

⁷For an interesting and detailed discussion of this development, see Wallace Rave, Some Manuscripts of French Lute Music 1630-1700: An Introductory Study, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1972 (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor) pp. 23-75.

examples:

Ex. 2a

3:9 expected metric accent

Saiz p 110 (lute)

Ex. 2b

3:2 unexpected accent

Res 1106 fol. 7v (theorbo)

Ex. 2c

3:4 high point of phrase

Saiz p 190 (lute)

Ex. 2d

3:2 start of new phrase

Livre de Guittarie p. 20

- 3) Sometimes a thicker texture over a period of several bars has the effect of increasing tension and often leads to a specific harmonic goal (perhaps this could also imply a gradual increase in dynamics as well):

Ex. 3

8:12 13 14 15 16

Courante. Livre de Guittarie p. 29

Ex. 3

- 4) Especially in refrain-couplet pieces such as the Chaconne, a change in texture can be used architecturally to give a couplet a different character. In the theorbo and lute versions of this piece the fourth couplet stands out by virtue of being the only one with a consistently thicker texture throughout.

Changes from the minimum two-voice texture are accomplished in any one of three ways: full strums, three-note plucked chords, and a special effect called campanelas.

The music of de Visée calls for a variety of strums; these are indicated by notes written into the uppermost space in the staff after the chord. These notes indicate 1) the duration, 2) the direction of the strum, and 3) whether it is executed with the fingers or the thumb, as follows. If the note is of a longer value (♩ or ♪) and the stem points upwards, this indicates an upward strum with the index and middle fingers together; if the note is of a shorter value (♩ or ♪) and the stem points upwards, an upward strum with the index finger alone is indicated. A downward-pointing stem indicates a downward strum (gravitationally), and all downward strums are to be played with all four fingers (to be unfurled, presumably, one after the other). A quarter note or an eighth note with a half circle under it (♩ or ♪) means that one should strum downward with the thumb only; finally, a half note or a dotted half note with the same half circle under it (♩ or ♪) indicates a downward strum with the fingers first, followed immediately by a downward strum with the thumb "en adoucissant". These batteries are generally done on all five courses of the guitar, although occasionally the top or the bottom course is omitted if it does not fit in with the harmony. In

addition to the four situations explained above -- in which strumming might occur -- there are two other interesting uses of strumming found in de Visée's music for guitar. Occasionally, when a batterie has been played by the fingers on the strong beat, it is followed by a strum with the thumb on the next weak beat, which produces a softening or "echo" effect. The reverse also happens (see example 2d); in this example the loud strum on a beat which is usually weak serves to accent the beginning of a new phrase. Another interesting use of the strum is found sometimes on the upbeat and downbeat to the beginning of a piece or at important cadences:

Ex. 4

B:7
Livre de Guittarre p. 20

As this example shows, the anticipatory melody note, although on an unimportant beat, receives an upward strum, and a strong downward strum is played on the downbeat.

The following signs, which appear in lute and theorbo arrangements indicate that a limited amount of strumming was also done on these instruments:

Ex. 5

(a) B:1 (b) B:2 (c) B:6 (d) B:8 (e) B:17 (f) B:17
Courante Saiz p. 96 Allemande Saiz p. 65

Although these signs are not explained by de Visée himself, some of them appear in pieces published by other composers, and in the prefaces to editions containing these pieces the player is told how to interpret these signs. For example, the first sign in the

above example (example 5a) is also found in pieces by Gaultier; it is explained by him in his Livre de tablature de pièces de luth (n.d.) as signifying a downward strum with the thumb, the top note being played with the middle finger. Both Gaultier and Charles Mouton use dots on either side of (or under) a chord to signify either an upward strum (when the bass note is also played) or a downward strum when there is no bass note. Both of these strums are performed with the index finger. Although one cannot be sure exactly what de Visée meant by the signs he uses in his lute and theorbo music, the directions given by his contemporaries provide one with some ideas as to how they could be interpreted.

Another way in which de Visée varies the two-voice texture is found in the theorbo and guitar versions of the Musette. Here, the bass is temporarily omitted and the melody is played using the campanelas technique, a special effect in which each note of a scalar passage is played on a different string, causing them to ring together, thus producing a bell-like quality.⁸ This technique is most suited to the guitar and the theorbo since the re-entrant tuning of each of these instruments results in several courses being a whole step from each other in pitch; however, an attempt was made to imitate this effect in the lute versions as can be seen in the following passage taken from the Musette:

Ex. 6a

Res. F844 p. 109 (guitar)

⁸ "Campanelas" does mean literally "bells" in Spanish. The term comes from Gaspar Sanz, Instrucción de música (Zaragoza, 1674).

One can see from the above examples that for de Visée, the effect of the texture is more important than maintaining strict voice leading throughout the piece. The texture "speaks" in a composition just as much as the melody or harmony; this tendency can be observed in all French baroque lute and keyboard music.

Occasionally, there are short sections of three-voice texture in which the voice leading is strict, although isolated occurrences of parallel fifths or octaves, and of unprepared dissonances can be found, as the following examples show.

Ex 9a

B:28

Allemande. Saiz p. 172 (lute)

Ex. 9b

B:5

Courante Res 1106 fol. 7r (theorbo)

Ex. 9c

B:22

Allemande. Saiz p. 172 (lute)

None of these examples, however, constitutes a blatant "mistake" on the part of de Visée. The parallel intervals in examples 9a and b are not between the outer voices but are "hidden" between an outer and the inner voices. Although the dissonance in example 9c is not prepared, it is resolved in the proper manner.

Isolated cases of three-note chords -- that is, chords which are not in one of the sections with strict three-part writing --

seem to show that ease in playing for both hands was taken into account since the third voice is often played upon a nearby open string. Chords of this type are likely to occur in only one of the versions, for what is convenient to play on one instrument might not be at all convenient on another.

Ex. 10a

Courante, Suite p. 187 (lute)

Ex. 10b

Courante, Res 1106 fol. 7v (Theorbo)

The note circled in example 10a is an open string on the baroque lute and does not appear in the theorbo version (example 10b), since on that instrument it would be too difficult to play.

The last aspect to be considered under the heading of texture is the number of voices in cadential chords. Here also, the texture varies, but a general pattern does exist which seems to be related to the type of piece. The cadential formulas in the Allemande and the Courantes occupy one full bar and the downbeat of the next bar. They begin with either a single note or a chord of two or more notes -- plucked or strummed -- consisting usually of the octave and fifth, occasionally the third. This is followed by an upward-moving broken-chord figure using mainly the first and the fifth, and sometimes also the third of the tonic chord. The chord on the next downbeat is almost always a batterie and has usually three or more notes in it, with or without the

third:

Ex. 11

Allemande Saiz p. 172 (lute)

In the lute pieces these strummed^{chords} occasionally consist of only two notes. The direction of these cadential strums varies, but on the guitar they are generally downward (gravitationally), although upward strums are also found. The direction of the batteries in lute and theorbo versions depends upon how one interprets the batterie sign. Since the last chord is usually without a bass note, this could possibly indicate a downward strum with the index finger, although an upward strum would certainly be possible. The cadences in the Musette, Gavotte and Chaconne simply end with a two-note chord, the top note of which has an ornament. The guitar versions often have a chord of three or more notes which is strummed. The first half of the Gavotte in each of the plucked versions ends with an ornamented plucked chord which is followed by that same chord "en batterie".

It is perhaps interesting to note within the context of texture, that the inner voices of the instrumental versions often do not correspond to the figures which de Visée has placed in the version in Rés. 1187. Passages such as the one in example 12, where the inner voice moves in parallel thirds with the melody, often occur without regard for the figures.

Ex. 12a

Allemande Saiz p. 172 (lute)

Ex. 12b



The circled tones in the lute version (Ex. 12a) are those which are not indicated by the figures in the Rés. 1187 version (Ex. 12b). There are other cases where it would have been possible to play the notes indicated by the figures with no difficulty, and yet they are still ignored in the versions for plucked instruments.

Ex. 13

B:3

Courante. Saiz p 223 (theorbo)

... etc. could have been so: ... etc.

... etc. could have been: ... etc.

Example 13 shows that in the theorbo version, de Visée would only have had to repeat the note just played in order to correspond to the version in Rés. 1187. Another perplexing occurrence of this is found often at cadences. In Rés. 1187, de Visée has marked a major third over the penultimate bass note. The versions for plucked instruments, however, only have a trill on the fifth above the bass, leaving the leading tone out entirely; in many cases this omitted tone would have been easy to play. In the two instances mentioned above, it is clear that de Visée made these versions in accordance with what he wanted on the given instrument; no attempt was made to re-create the version in Rés. 1187.

3. WHAT DETERMINES THE CHOICE OF STRING OR POSITION FOR A GIVEN NOTE?

Due to the large scope of this question and to the peculiar tuning of the guitar and the theorbo, the following discussion will consider first the bass, then the melody, and finally the inner voices, dealing with each instrument separately when it is appropriate.

BASS. In choosing the position for the bass notes on the guitar, de Visée has dealt with an interesting phenomenon. As stated earlier, the tuning of this instrument requires that the fifth course sound a fifth above the fourth course and not a fourth below it, as on the modern guitar. In spite of the fact that the fifth course is higher than the fourth course, de Visée nevertheless assigns the job of playing the bass line to the fifth, fourth, and sometimes the third course. The fifth course is considered to be a bass string because this string is usually played by the thumb, and hence "feels" like a bass string to the player. Thus, it sometimes happens that a bass note, when on the fifth course, is actually higher than the inner voice. In the following example, the bass even sounds above the melody; the tablature is included to show that the encircled tones are written as bass notes whether they sound like bass notes or not.

B:12

Courante. Livre de Guitarrre p. 30

Ex. 14

A further consequence occurs during a strum: the actual bass note, if it is played on the fifth course, will not actually be the lowest-sounding pitch, but will sound above the fourth string, and thus its bass function would be temporarily obscured. Except for this situation, the bass line of the guitar versions nearly always agrees with the bass line of the other versions. The choice of whether to use the third or the fifth course for a bass note is sometimes influenced by what is easier for the left hand (see example 15); it is also influenced by a desire for an ornament (see example 16).

Ex. 15

B:11

Livre de Guitare p. 18 Allemande.

Ex. 16

B:2

Courante. Res. F844 p. 214

It is interesting to note that in the former example, the deference to ease for the left hand has resulted in the use of the campanelas technique in the bass. In the latter example, the ornament is easier to play when the bass note is on the third course rather than on the fifth.⁹

⁹If the note were played on the fifth course, the second fret would be required, placing the left hand in an awkward position for the trill.

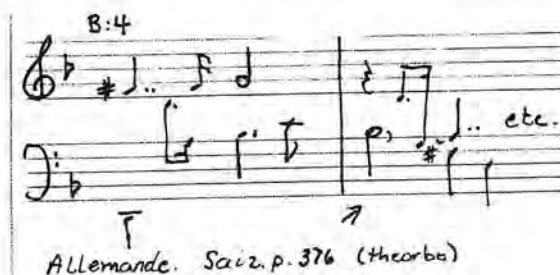
On the theorbo and the lute, de Visée uses the open diapasons for the bass line whenever possible; this, of course, is easier for the left hand and results in a fuller sound. Exceptions to this principle occur either when the bass note is chromatically altered or when he wants to ornament a bass note: each of these cases would require that the left hand stop the open diapson. In these cases, instead of using the bass strings, de Visée places the note to be altered or ornamented in the higher octave, returning to the lower octave as ^{soon as} possible. An instance involving a chromatically altered tone is shown in Example 17:

Ex. 17



A rather extreme instance of an ornament or an altered tone affecting the choice of octave for the bass line, occurs in the theorbo version of the Allemande (see Example 18).

Ex. 18



In this example, it is apparent that de Visée had to change octaves either because of the ornament or because of the altered bass note after it. The bass figure was impossible to play in the middle register with the melody on the seventh fret, so he had to play the bass line up two octaves. Another exception to the use of the low octave for the bass line occurs when the same harmony

prevails through an entire bar. In order to keep the bass note sounding, the note is repeated; this repetition almost always takes place in a different octave, as the following example illustrates:

Ex. 19

Allemande. Saiz. p. 172 (Lute)

Sometimes it is not possible to determine why one possibility is chosen over another. In the following example, the lute could easily have had the bass notes in the same octave as the theorbo does, avoiding the leap of a seventh in bar 10, and allowing the bass to be played in the low octave.

Courante. Saiz p. 187 (lute)

Res. 1106 fol. 7v (theorbo)

Ex. 20

From this instance and others like it, it is apparent that whim plays a part in the choice of octave for the bass line.

MELODY. For the position of the melody notes, one general rule seems to apply to all three instruments: the notes are played in the lowest position possible on the first three courses. There are, of course, exceptions, and these are caused by a desire for a slur or an ornament, as Example 21 illustrates; the letters in red show where the notes could have been played.

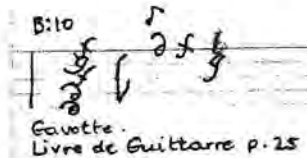
Ex. 21

Courante. Saiz p. 285 (theorbo)

Chaconne Saiz p. 64 (lute)

It also happens that a barred chord causes notes to be played in a higher position than usual (see Example 22).

Ex. 22



Another situation which could affect the position of a note is the desire for the sound quality of stopped strings; a good example of this is found in the fourth couplet of the Chaconne in the lute version, where there are parallel thirds which could have been played in a lower position. Playing them on the higher frets not only imitates something which the theorbo had to do (these notes are not playable anywhere else on that instrument), but it also creates a change in color which characterizes that couplet.

On the guitar and theorbo, a further exception to the rule of playing a note in the lowest possible position on the first three courses is caused by the use of the campanelas technique, during which any or all of the first five courses may be used. Campanelas are employed often on both descending and ascending passages of eighth notes. They can be used for a short passage of just a few notes; they can also be used in a more architectural fashion, giving one couplet in a couplet-refrain pieces a distinct color.

INNER VOICES. The position or string chosen for the inner voices is determined, of course, by the position of the melody note. Often the middle voice consists of a neighboring open string plucked by the index finger while the melody is played with the middle finger. When the inner voice requires a stopped string, then it is played in close proximity to the position of the melody note: wide stretches for the left hand are rare. Although these principles apply to all of the plucked instruments, the tuning of the theorbo complicates matters somewhat, especially with respect

to three-note chords. Since the top two courses on this instrument are lower in pitch than the third course, the notes in a chord of three or more voices would sound in the wrong order if arpeggiated slightly by the right hand in the usual manner (from the bottom note to the top note).¹⁰ This would occur when the melody note has to be on the third course and the inner voice is on either the second or the first course. It would happen again if the melody note were on either of the top two courses and if the inner voice were on the third, making it higher in pitch than the melody.

Often it seems as if no other fingering solution is possible, as is the case in bars 32 and 33 of the Allemande. Example 23 shows this passage, first in tablature and then in notes.

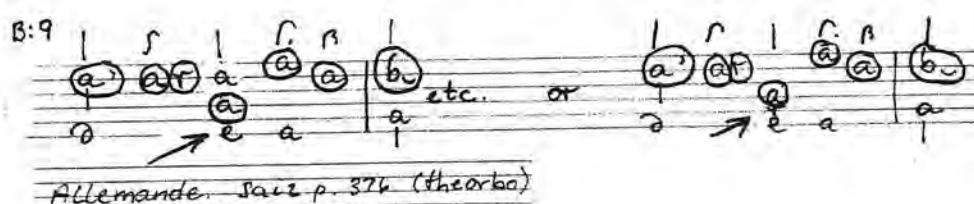
Ex. 23

In order for the notes in the first chord to sound in the proper order (assuming the chord were arpeggiated), the "middle" voice -- positioned in the middle of the chord but sounding above the melody -- would have to be played down an octave. This would require the use of the fifth course, which however, must be occupied by the chromatically altered bass note since the latter

¹⁰The following discussion of this aspect of theorbo music assumes that a performer may wish to arpeggiate some of the chords. At least some small degree of arpeggiation is very natural on plucked instruments. In lute, theorbo, and guitar music, the appearance of many kinds of strums -- which by nature prevent the notes in a chord from sounding at the same time -- shows that the effect of playing the notes of a chord absolutely simultaneously was not always desired.

cannot be played in the low octave. The same thing happens again on the first beat of the next bar; only here, if the middle voice is played down an octave it would sound below the bass. In this and in other similar cases it is apparent that the desire for a thicker texture takes precedence over the proper order of pitches.

There are other cases, however, when the notes could have been notated in the proper order -- occasions where it appears that circumstances other than texture are taken into consideration. The following example shows two possible ways of playing the same passage, the first of which is actually de Visée's choice. The second solution indeed has the notes of the chord in the right order; however, it would not only require that the right hand suddenly jump down and play on the lower courses, but it also would require that the left hand stop more notes. Even though in the first solution the notes of the chord are out of order, this solution is easier for the right hand because the sudden jump has been avoided, and furthermore, the two open strings make the three-note chord easier for the left hand.

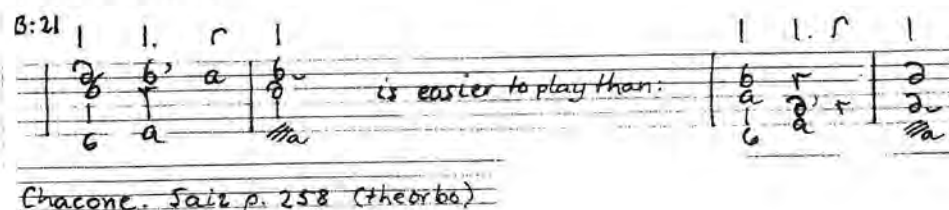


Ex. 24. (the circles indicate melody notes)

This example shows that ease in playing for both hands is perhaps more important to de Visée than having the pitches in the right order.

Another consideration which takes precedence in this matter is the desire for an ornament. In Example 25, the middle voice which is at the top of each chord, could easily have been played

on the fourth and fifth courses if it were not for the ornament on the second beat.



Ex. 25

A comfortable spacing for the right hand seems to be one more consideration when choosing the string or position for an inner voice. The theorbo tablatures show that in general, three-note chords are arranged in such a way that the middle and index fingers usually play on adjacent courses; rarely do these fingers play with more than one course between them. The thumb often plays quite far away from the fingers. The few exceptions to this rule are very awkward for the right hand and, strangely enough, show a determination to have the notes sound in the proper order. Following are two examples of chords found in the Allemande, whose pitches^{are} in the right order when arpeggiated, but whose spacing creates an uncomfortable stretch for the right hand.

Ex. 26



In general, one can say that the melody note is written as the top note of a chord, even though it may actually sound below the inner voice. Exceptions to this rule are usually cases such as

as  where the melody note (encircled) is positioned in the middle of the chord and the inner voice is positioned above the melody on an open string.

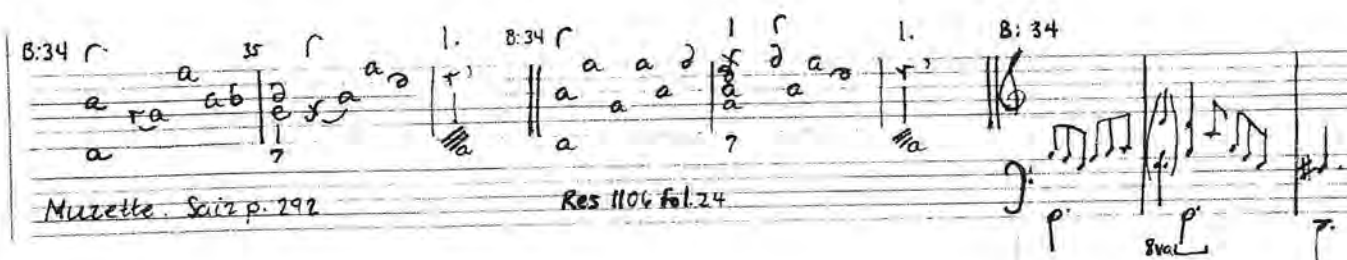
Similar problems involving the order of the notes in chords also occur in the theorbo and chitarrone music by Piccinini and Kapsberger. These two composers however, give detailed instructions on how to arpeggiate these chords so that the highest pitch sounds last. I have not yet found any indication, either in French theorbo treatises or from special signs in the music, that the theorbists in France changed the order in which the strings were plucked during an arpeggio so that the highest pitch sounded last. Even if they did try this technique, it would have been of little use to them in cases where the melody note is not the highest pitch in the chord. Performers would then have to decide whether to play the melody note or the highest pitch last.

That the notes being out of order was most likely an accepted feature of theorbo music is also shown in the following two examples -- 27a and 27b. Here, the prescribed way of plucking brings about a result opposite to the result that would be produced if the top two courses were not lower than the third.

Ex. 27

a	b

The first (Example 27a) is an example of separer, whereby the two notes are plucked separately and not together. This technique will be discussed in more detail later: the important point here is that the separer slash usually indicates that the note in the lowest position is played first and that the top note is played afterwards. Since the top note is usually the melody, the result is a melodic delay; however, in this example, it is the inner voice which is delayed, for the melody is in the low position and



Ex. 29

4. WHAT ORNAMENTS ARE FOUND IN THESE PIECES AND WHERE ARE THEY PLACED?

De Visée makes use of the following ornaments: the trill (') with or without the cadence (Nachschlag), appoggiature (v), mordent (x) and vibrato (* or *). In general, the ornaments in his music are found on strong beats and/or long notes; however they do occur sometimes on weak beats or on shorter notes. They appear most frequently on melody notes, although occasionally on bass notes or in an inner voice.

A close examination of the placement of ornaments reveals that they often seem to serve specific functions. By drawing one's attention to the beat upon which they fall, they are used as another device to re-inforce or to playfully oppose the metric structure of the piece; this is especially true in the Courantes. That ornaments are used in this way becomes clear upon comparison of the various versions of a given piece: often, when the theorbo and lute versions have an ornament, the guitar version has a strum, which itself may or may not have an ornament on it. Since we have already seen that strums are used for rhythmic accent, this comparison shows that ornaments are used to achieve the same effect. In addition to emphasizing metric elements of a piece, ornaments also are used to give more expression and more tension to the

therefore played first. In the second example (27b), no matter which way the chord is strummed the result is still the reverse of what it would normally be. In other words, if one does an upward strum, one expects the melody note to be struck first. In this case, the opposite result would occur since the melody note is not positioned at the top of the chord. The reverse would happen with a downward strum: one would expect the melody to be heard last, but in this case it would be heard first.

In some instances, it is not possible to determine why a given note is played on one string and not on another; indeed, conflicting principles often seem to be at work as shown in Example 28. The red letters indicate where the notes in question could have been played and the melody notes are encircled.

Ex. 28

Ex. 28 shows two musical examples, a and b, illustrating chord voicing. Part a is in 3/7 time and part b is in 3/11 time. Both parts show a sequence of chords with notes circled and some notes in red. The title 'Courante. Les 1106 fol. 7v (theorbo)' is written at the bottom.

The principle in Example 28a seems to be that ease for the left hand takes precedence over having the notes sound in the right order. In Example 28b, the principle seems to be to have the melody note on top. The alternative position for the inner voice (the red letters) shows that the only explanation for such a case is whim, since each chord could have been played the other way. A further indication that whim plays a part in deciding upon a position for a given note is that often, when theorbo pieces appear in more than one source, different solutions are found for corresponding measures (see Example 29).

melody; the next example clearly illustrates this use of ornaments.

Ex. 30

Chaconne. Saiz p. 64 (lute)

The importance of ornaments in de Visée's music is shown by the fact that he will place a melody note in a less ideal position (Example 31a), or play isolated bass notes in the higher octave (Example 31b) in order to facilitate or to make possible the playing of an ornament.

Ex. 31

Allemande. Saiz p. 376 (theorbo)

Courante. Res 1106 fol. 7v (theorbo)

a

b

In Example 31a the circled note would possibly have been easier to play on the top course as an open string if there were no ornament. There are even instances in the guitar pieces where the proper inversion of a chord is forsaken in order to render the ornament easier to play (see Example 32).

Ex. 32

Courante. Res. F844 p. 214 (guitar)

If de Visée had not wanted an ornament on the top note of this chord, then it would probably have been played as in Example 31b; however, the ornament is easier to play with the notes as they

are in Example 32a.

A study of the relative frequency of de Visée's ornaments produces the following results. Trills are by far the most frequent ornament, appearing most often in descending lines or on repeated notes. Naturally, as in all French baroque music, the trill also occurs on the penultimate note in a cadence, and is often followed by a "cadence". The cadence is found almost always in the lute and theorbo pieces, only occasionally in the guitar pieces, and never in the versions in Rés. 1187; it is either ascending or descending, and the two notes are always on different strings.

The appoggiatura, which occurs generally in ascending lines, is the next most commonly found ornament, although it appears less often in the guitar pieces. There seem to be two kinds of appoggiaturas which are distinguishable from one another in the way they are written. One kind is represented by the sign $\smile$, which is placed underneath the tablature letter; this kind is found most frequently in the lute and theorbo pieces. In the other kind of appoggiatura -- found often in the guitar pieces, but also in those for theorbo -- the two notes of the ornament are written out in one of two ways: one way is "unmeasured" -- that is, the two notes are written under one rhythm sign, as in Example 33a; the other way assigns a rhythm sign to each of the notes in the ornament (see Examples 33b and 33c).

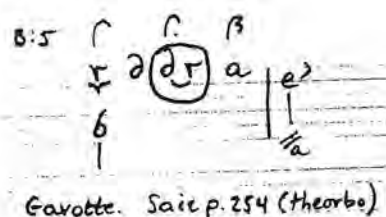
Ex. 33

B:13 ef Corrente. Rés. 1187 v a	B:3 ┐ a e 2 etc ab Corrente. Livre de Guitare p. 29 b	B:16 f 9x26 ab etc. 2 c
--	---	--

From these different types of notation, one could infer that the written-out appoggiaturas imply that the first note is longer and more stressed than it would be otherwise. However, it does

often happen that when the guitar version has a written-out appoggiatura, the other versions have the sign. . Thus, it is difficult to determine in these cases whether these are two ways of notating the same effect, or whether there are indeed two manners in which an appoggiatura can be performed. The written-out superior appoggiatura occurs less frequently, usually in descending lines (see Example 34).

Ex. 34



Finally, an ornament occurs in the lute version of the Allemande which could be interpreted either as a special kind of inferior appoggiatura or as an acciacatura (see Example 35).

Ex. 35



If one were to take the vertical line between the letters *r* and *a* seriously and pluck all three simultaneously, the effect would be that of an acciacatura; in fact, one could immediately remove the finger from the *a* fret, thus leaving the consonance to sound for the remainder of the beat. On the other hand, one could strike the letters *r* and *a* together but delay the uppermost note of the chord, thus producing the effect of an inferior appoggiatura. Indeed, this interpretation would be supported by the versions for guitar and theorbo, both of which have the usual type of inferior appoggiatura notated at this point.

The mordent does not appear very often in any of the plucked instrument versions. When it does occur, it is found either in situations where the low note of the mordent has just been played (as in Example 36a) or immediately after a leap in the melody (as in Example 36b):

Ex. 36

Ex. 36 consists of two musical examples, (a) and (b), each showing a mordent ornament. Example (a) is titled 'Courante. Saiz p. 92 (lute)' and is in 3/8 time. It shows a melody with a mordent on a note. Example (b) is titled 'Gavotte. Saiz p. 47 (lute)' and is in 3/7 time. It shows a melody with a mordent on a note. Both examples include a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

The last ornament to be considered is the vibrato -- an ornament used to give more expression to notes in high positions. It appears most often in theorbo and guitar pieces, whose limited melodic range necessitates more frequent use of the notes beyond the fifth fret. Vibrato marks are placed on weak beats as well as strong beats. Often, when one version has vibrato, the others have another ornament:

Ex. 37

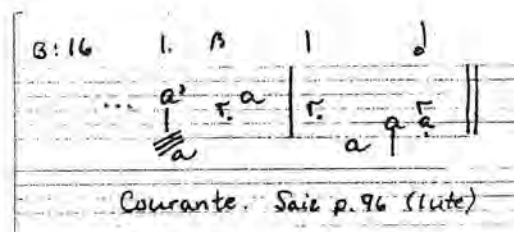
Ex. 37 consists of two musical examples, (a) and (b), each showing a vibrato ornament. Example (a) is titled 'Allemande. Livre de Guitare p. 18' and is in 2/4 time. It shows a melody with a vibrato mark on a note. Example (b) is titled 'Saiz p. 172 (lute)' and is in 2/4 time. It shows a melody with a vibrato mark on a note. Both examples include a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

In general, the versions in Rés. 1187 have fewer ornaments and there is no effort made to specify what kind of ornament to play, all being marked with an X.

5. WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND DE VISÉE'S RIGHT- AND LEFT-HAND FINGERING? 12

The fingering marked for the right hand shows that de Visée has adhered to what can be called the "position principle" rather than to the "weight principle" which was preferred in the early 17th century. This can be most clearly seen in the fingering prescribed for the ascending cadence. As was stated earlier, the two notes of a cadence are always on adjacent strings. When, as in an ascending cadence, the lower string must be played first, composers from the early 17th century -- such as Nicolas Vallet (1614) -- indicate that the middle finger should play the first note in accordance with the rule that the first of a pair of notes of the same value should be played by the middle finger (due to its heavier weight). In contrast, de Visée prescribes the use of the index finger for the lower note, followed by the middle finger for the upper note. This type of fingering, which could be referred to as the "position principle", takes into account the natural relationship of the fingers to the strings: the index finger, being closer to the thumb, can more easily play the string closest to the thumb than can the middle finger, which is further away from both the thumb and from the lower note of the cadence (see Example 38).

Ex. 38



¹¹The fingerings described here are found in the large lute and theorbo MS compiled by Jean Vaudry de Saizenay. If these fingerings were not actually written in by de Visée himself, one can at least assume that they were approved by the composer, who was, of course, the teacher of Saizenay.

Pieces by the Gaultiers and by Dufaut are also fingered in the latter way, showing that by the middle of the 17th century, the position principle seems to have been preferred over the weight principle. On descending cadences, the index finger slides from the upper string to the lower string; this process is notated in the following manner:

fingerings for the right hand marked in de Visée's lute and theorbo music show that the use of the thumb is not restricted to the open diapasons; indeed, the thumb sometimes has to jump over as many as six courses (see Example 39).

Ex. 39



Perhaps the most noticeable feature of de Visée's left-hand fingering shows up when a shift in position is necessary. This shift almost always happens before an upbeat, and serves the purpose of placing the left hand in that position which is necessary for the following downbeat:

Ex. 40



6. WHAT PRINCIPLES GOVERN DE VISEE'S CHOICE OF RHYTHMIC NOTATION?

Already at first glance, one becomes aware of numerous rhythmic discrepancies between the various versions of a given piece for which it is difficult to find any apparent logic. Such inconsistencies often occur even within one and the same version. In the following example, the second beat has been notated differently in each of the four versions.

8:3

etc. etc.

Livre de Guittarre p. 18 (orig. dm)

Saitz. p. 376 (orig. gm)

Vm, 6265

Saitz. p. 172

Res. 1187 p. 59

a b c d e

Ex. 41

Notice that in the theorbo version (41b) de Visée has used the device called separer in which the melody note or upper note is delayed until the lower note has been played first on the beat; this melodic delay is indicated by the diagonal slash.

At this point, one may well ask just why there are so many variants of the same measure of this piece. These variants occur in a situation where two beats of C minor must be filled out. It is particularly appropriate to the character of the guitar to activate a harmony using different kinds of strums, while the lute and theorbo must use different -- more melodic -- means to achieve interest and forward thrust: this explains the simplicity of the guitar rendering. Now the main task is to determine what rationale lies behind the rhythmic variants of the other three versions. One could argue that the notational variants should be taken

absolutely literally in each case; however, when exactly the same measure of a piece is notated in four different ways, one must begin to suspect that the notation itself is inconsistent. With regard to 41e, it is important to keep in mind the French practice of inégalement which would require that the eighth note after the dotted quarter^{note} come late. With this in mind, 41d appears to be a written-out inégalement. The next problem involves the exact rhythmic interpretation of the separer in 41b. In the corresponding passage in another theorbo manuscript (Example 41c) the separer is interpreted as two equal eighth notes. However, again keeping in mind the common practice of inégalement, the second of the two eighth notes would have to come late. Perrine substantiates this interpretation, and himself interprets  as .¹² Given all of this evidence, one can only conclude that separer is an alternative way of notating inégalement in the melody and that the actual choice of rhythmic notation is perhaps not as important to de Visée as the aural effect he is trying to create: indeed, each of the variants -- excepting the guitar version -- seems to constitute a different way of achieving exactly the same aural result. The inevitable final conclusion to be drawn from these examples, and others like them, is that de Visée's choice of a particular rhythmic notation is simply arbitrary -- the result of momentary whim.

If, as we have seen, the notation of melodic delay or separer is variable, the placement of it seems less inconsistent. In de Visée's music, separer occurs almost exclusively on weak beats and has the effect of leading into the next strong beat. This way of using separer represents a change from its use in the music of Dufaut or the Gautiers: these composers not only delay the melody on strong beats as well as weak beats (Example 42a), but also

¹²Perrine, Pièces de luth en musique (Paris, 1680), p. 7.

delay the bass note instead (Example 42b).

8:22 8:16

etc. etc.

Courante de Mr. g.[autier] Livre de Tabutature p. 25 transcribed after Perrine p. 32

a b

Ex. 42

When melodic delay is used in this way, certain expectations are left momentarily unfulfilled, resulting in a floating quality between cadences. De Visée, on the other hand, rarely leaves one unfulfilled in this respect, but rather uses this device as a means to push towards a goal. The following passage from the Allemande shows a clear example of this.

8:10

etc.

Livre de Guittarre p. 18

Ex. 43

Thus, de Visée has taken a technique originally employed to create ambiguity and has used it to create clarity.

There are, however, a few exceptions to de Visée's general treatment of the device of separer; one of these exceptions is shown in the next example:

8:4 8:4

etc. or, as the lute has it:

Courante. Saiz p. 223 (theorbo) orig. dm Courante. Saiz p. 190 (lute)

Ex. 44

After such a three-note upbeat figure, one really does expect these notes to continue to their logical resolution on the downbeat. The fact that this does not happen there weakens that beat and thus causes a heavy accent to fall on the second beat, which is also strengthened by an ornament and a long note value.

Finally, it should also be noted that in general, the guitar versions have fewer instances of separer than the lute and theorbo versions, although one occasionally does find cases where the guitar version is the only one which has separer.

7. HOW FREQUENT ARE VARIANTS IN PITCH AND WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THEM?

A comparison of each of the four arrangements of the seven pieces studied reveals remarkably few variants in pitch of the melody notes, whereas deviations in the bass are more frequent. The melodic differences seem to be most often caused by written-out appoggiaturas. These occur most often in the guitar versions and are sometimes written out in connection with a batterie.

Ex. 45 consists of three musical examples, labeled a, b, and c, each showing a short musical phrase in treble and bass staves. Example a is titled 'B:12 written out ornament with strum B:8 without strum' and shows a phrase from 'Allemande. Livre de Guitare p. 18 (orig. dm)' with a 'Res. 1187 p. 59'. Example b is titled 'B:13 added or omitted passing tone' and shows a phrase from 'Gavotte. Livre p. 25' with a 'Res. 1187 p. 86'. Example c is titled 'B:13 added or omitted passing tone' and shows a phrase from 'Allemande. Livre p. 18 (orig. dm)' with a 'Res. 1187 p. 59'.

Ex. 45

Example 45 shows a written-out inferior appoggiatura which is begun with a strum; Example 45b illustrates a similar situation without a strum. Melodic variants in the form of written-out appoggiaturas also occur in the other versions -- these often include superior appoggiaturas, an illustration of which is shown

in Example 45c.

Variants in the bass line are usually the result of one of three factors. The first, and perhaps the most frequent variant, consists of the addition of the root tone on the beat following a six-chord which has just been played, and which, in another version, is held through the next beat. This is found more often in the theorbo, lute and figured bass versions than it is in the guitar version. In some cases it appears that these downward leaps of a third are added to hold interest during a long note in the melody (Example 46a), but there are other instances when this is not necessarily true (Example 46b).

Ex. 46

The image shows two musical examples, (a) and (b), each with a treble and bass staff. Example (a) is titled 'Courante. Saiz p. 187 (lute)' and has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. The bass line shows a sequence of chords, with a root tone added on the beat following a six-chord. Example (b) is titled 'Allemande. Saiz p. 172 (lute)' and has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. The bass line also shows a sequence of chords, with a root tone added on the beat following a six-chord. Both examples are labeled 'etc.' at the end of the bass line.

a

b

The guitar equivalent of each of these measures does not have the root tone added after the six-chord. Perhaps the reason why this is not a feature of the guitar pieces is that such movement in the bass would often require that a barred chord be lifted just for this tone or that the position of an inner voice be relinquished so that this tone could be played on its string. This figure in the bass line is thus more suited to instruments with a wide bass range.

The second most frequently-occurring variant involves other instances of tones that are omitted or added: usually (but not always) these are passing tones. In the following example, the Rés. 1187 version (Example 47a) whose bass line agrees with the guitar version, is shown in contrast to the lute and theorbo versions.

44

Handwritten musical notation for three examples of Courante in B-flat major, 3/2 time. Each example consists of a two-staff system (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major) and a time signature of 3/2. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and repeat signs. Example 'a' is labeled 'Res 1187 p. 62 Courante'. Example 'b' is labeled 'Courante Salz p. 187 (Lute) origgm'. Example 'c' is labeled 'Res. 1106 Ed. 7v (Orig. gm) Theorb.'. The word 'etc.' is written between the staves of each example.

Ex. 47

In many other cases, notes are omitted because they are inconvenient or impossible to play, and others which are easier to play are added in their stead. In other cases, the pitches are different for no apparent reason. In the next example it could be assumed that the bass line in the theorbo, Rés. 1187, and lute versions is the "preferred" bass, since the agreement of these three versions represents a "majority" opinion. However, the guitar version has a slightly different bass even though it would have been possible (and certainly no more difficult) to play what the other versions have.

Ex. 48a

Ex. 48b

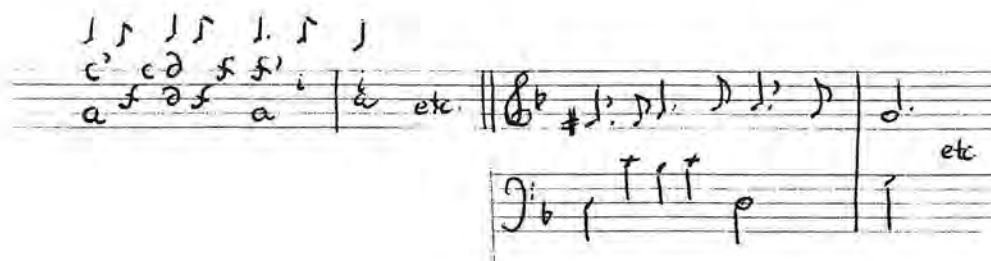
B: 18

C' C 2 f f' | a etc. |

a c 2 f a | a etc. |

Courante:
livre de Guitarrre p. 29

etc.



Ex. 48c

Here, the guitar plays what is shown in Example 48b; however, it could easily have played the bass configuration shown in Example 48c, which then would have agreed with the other versions (48a) in pitch (although not in octave-placement of the bass notes). Whether or not this is a case of one bass line being preferred over another -- which brings us back to the question of the order of composition -- it is apparent that no great effort was made always to retain the same bass pitches in all version of a piece.

Finally, the third kind of variant in the bass is found in the cadential measures of main sections, where some versions -- usually the Rés. 1187, sometimes the theorbo and lute, but rarely the guitar -- have a short scalar figure in the bass which leads back to the beginning of the section. A typical example of one of these is given in Example 49.

Ex. 49



This study of the frequency of pitch variants shows that more care was taken to preserve the original melody in arranging the pieces for another instrument than was taken to insure that the bass line agreed from version to version. It should be noted here that the changes in the bass almost never result in a different

harmony: there are no harmonic discrepancies in the pieces studied. The bass variants occur mostly on weak beats and the biggest change they affect is in the inversion of the chord.

The fact that the melody was found to have only occasional changes should not be too surprising, especially in the light of what de Visée himself says about the melody of his pieces, i.e., that in composing he has applied himself as much as he could to the melody to make it as natural as possible, giving it a character similar to that of the "inimitable Monsieur de Lulli".¹³ The harmony, then, also unchanged from version to version, serves mainly to give character to the melody. The details of the bass are attended to after those of the melody and the harmony. One should not infer from this that the bass lines are primitive or awkward; this analysis has shown only that they were not as "sacred" to de Visée as the melody, and hence, were more subject to change. The numerous variants which have no explanation, as well as the other differences which seem to be a result of the adaptation of the music to the given instrument, could be further indications that each arrangement was made for itself and that de Visée was not necessarily working from a pre-existing written-down model.

¹³"...je me suis attaché au chant le plus que j'ai pû pour les rendre au moins naturelles, ...en donnant a mes pieces autant que ma foiblesse me la pû permettre le tour de celles de l'Inimitable Monsieur de Lulli." Livre de guittarre, 1682, p. 4.

S U M M A R Y

It seems appropriate at this point to bring together and re-arrange the above findings under suitable headings in order to obtain a clearer overview of how de Visée uses each instrument.

PRINCIPLES WHICH APPLY TO GUITAR, THEORBO AND LUTE

Position on the Instrument. In general, the pieces do not require notes above the tenth fret on any string, and they stay for the most part below the fifth fret. Necessary changes in position are made before the eighth note in a dotted quarter-eighth note figure.

Texture. Isolated chords of three or more notes are found at the beginning of main sections, on downbeats, and sometimes at main or intermediate cadences. The sustaining of long notes, accentuation of other notes or high point of a phrase are also supported by a thicker texture. Between cadences, however, the basic texture is two voices. Occasionally, during the short spans of three-voice texture which occur in contrast to sections with two voices, the voice leading is strict and the inner voices often proceed in parallel thirds with the melody. Such passages are likely to occur when the melody is ascending and during bars with a change in harmony on nearly every beat. In both of these cases, the increase in texture helps to increase the dynamic level somewhat and to create a build-up in tension. If, in making one's own arrangement, one takes the versions in Rés. 1187 into account, then the figures should only be used as a guide and should not be taken as binding.

Rhythmic Notation. The notation of the rhythm varies a great deal with respect to inégaie. All versions interchangeably use one of three notational devices to achieve inequality in the melody. Melodic inégaie is either indicated with a separer slash, written out as a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, or notated as a double dotted quarter note followed by a

sixteenth note.

Ornaments. The ornaments used by de Visée, listed in order of relative frequency, are: trills, appoggiaturas, mordents and vibrato. All arrangements show extensive use of the trill, which is mainly found in descending lines. The appoggiatura is used less frequently, appearing more often in the lute and theorbo versions than in the guitar pieces; mainly the inferior appoggiatura is found, occurring most often in ascending lines, while the written-out superior appoggiatura is encountered only seldom. Vibrato -- used on high notes to give them more expression -- is found most often in the guitar and theorbo arrangements. All of these ornaments are used mainly to reinforce metric or agogic accents in the melody, although de Visée has occasionally placed one on a normally unaccented beat for a special effect.

PRINCIPLES APPLYING ONLY TO THE GUITAR

Position of Notes on the Instrument. It is important to remember that the melody is played primarily on the top two courses in order to enable it to be adequately supported by full strummed chords when desired. The fourth and fifth courses are used for the bass line and the third is used for either melody or bass.

Texture. In order to create more variety in the texture, different kinds of strumming are used in addition to the three-note plucked chords. The eighth-note upbeat as well as the following downbeat at the beginning and end of main sections are both strummed on occasion.

Rhythmic Notation. The rhythmic structure of the guitar pieces is sometimes more simple than the other versions, in that often when the other versions have a dotted quarter followed by an eighth, the guitar version has two quarter notes. In these instances, the interest held by means of the dotted figure is often supplied

by a batterie on the guitar.

PRINCIPLES APPYLING TO GUITAR AND THEORBO

Texture. The campanelas technique is found in both the guitar and the theorbo music. Limited use is made of this technique in the standard dance-forms (Allemande, Courante, etc.), whereas in couplet-refrain (Musette, Chaconne) it is used architecturally to provide a change in color for a section.

PRINCIPLES SHARED BY LUTE AND THEORBO

Position of Notes on the Instrument. The most important characteristic shared by these two instruments pertains to the bass line: in general, the bass notes are played in the low octave and unstopped where possible, using the high octave when chromatic alteration or an ornament is desired. These or other octave changes often occur during a long note in the melody or when the harmony is relatively static. The melody notes are played predominantly on the top three courses, although the fourth course is also used. Ornaments. It is typical for the lute and theorbo to have either an ascending or descending cadence after the trill on the penultimate note of the main cadences.

PRINCIPLES PERTAINING ONLY TO THE THEORBO

Position of Notes on the Instrument. Since the re-entrant tuning of the theorbo often results in chords whose notes sound in the wrong order, it is necessary to remember that ease in playing for either hand usually takes precedence over the pitches sounding in the right order.

We are now in a position to make some observations -- drawn from this analysis and other pertinent facts -- concerning the chronology of these arrangement.

To begin with, there is strong evidence to suggest that the versions in Rés. 1187 were probably not the first ones composed. A closer look at the date, title page and forward of this edition provides some interesting information. It was published in 1716, long after most of the other arrangements were made: this late date is, of course, not conclusive evidence for a late origin of the versions for violin and basse continue, since these versions could have been composed earlier and merely published later. However, the title of the print -- Pièces de theorbe et de luth mises en partition -- could perhaps imply that the pieces were taken from already composed lute and theorbo pieces (guitar also, although this instrument is not mentioned), and re-set for violin and continuo.¹⁴ A further clue is found in the forward to this publication, where de Visée gives two reasons as to why he has made these arrangements. The first is that his pieces have enjoyed so much popularity at court¹⁵ that he thought he would publish them; the second reason is that some of his pieces have been scattered abroad in such incorrect versions that he feels obliged to disown them.¹⁶ Both of these reasons given imply that the pieces in this print existed in other versions prior to the 1716 publication.

¹⁴On the other hand, the phrase "mises en partition" could simply be a turn of phrase meaning "in staff notation" and might not imply "re-set" at all.

¹⁵"Le succes que ces pièces ont eu a la court...", Pièces de theorbe et de luth mises en partition (Paris, 1716), "Avertissement".

¹⁶"Quelques unes de ces pièces...sont répandues dans le monde, mais si peu correctes et même si défigurées que je suis obligé de les désavoiier...", Ibid., "Avertissement".

In addition to the figured bass arrangements in the 1716 edition, more arrangements of this type are found at the back of the 1682 and 1686 publications of guitar pieces. De Visée himself, in the Advis to the 1682 Livre, refers to these arrangements as afterthoughts: "I am obliged to set these pieces in score for the satisfaction of those who would like to play them on clavecin, violin and other instruments."¹⁷

Whether or not these figured bass arrangements were composed first brings us to the question of de Visée's compositional procedure: did he write down his original concept of these pieces in staff notation, and are the plucked versions an attempt to achieve or recreate the ideal of the original concept? To the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies made of the compositional methods of the time, and as a result, this question will remain open for the present study. In my own opinion, however, it seems most natural to imagine a performer-composer such as de Visée composing at his instrument. Since de Visée was so highly regarded as a performer on guitar and theorbo and therefore extremely familiar with plucked instruments, it seems, further, unnatural to think that he would first conceive of a piece in the abstract, write it down in staff notation and then transcribe it into tablature. The final point, which results from the analysis, is that there are differences between the plucked instrument arrangements and the transcriptions that are not explainable in terms of an effort to conform to the figured bass model. In other words, there are numerous places -- especially in the bass -- where the instrumental versions could

¹⁷"Ils m'ont obligé d'en mettre une partie en Musique pour la Satisfaction de ceux qui voudront les jouer sur le Clavecin, le Violon, et autres instruments."

have agreed with the transcription if de Visée had so desired.

Assuming that the figured bass versions were composed later, our task now is to determine which of the other versions could have been the original compositions. In cases where the title of a lute piece is supplemented by the words "transposée du theorbe", one can be certain that these pieces were not originally composed for that instrument. Three of the pieces in this analysis have this phrase after their titles (the Chaconne, Gavotte, and the Courante in Saizenay, p. 96), and there are three other pieces (not analyzed in this study) which are also described in the Saizenay MS as being transposed from either theorbo or guitar. In other cases, one cannot be so sure when the lute arrangements were composed in relation to the other versions. The statistical evidence below shows that any of the remaining lute pieces could have been composed first and that one should not assume that de Visée's recorded fame as a guitarist and theorbist automatically places the lute arrangements at the end, chronologically. Of the 42 lute pieces in the Saizenay Manuscript (the only source for de Visée's lute pieces), fifteen pieces have the figured bass version as their only concordance, while nine other lute pieces have no concordance at all. These figures reveal that over half of the lute pieces were probably composed for that instrument first; which ones these are remains an unanswered question.

In proceeding with the search for a possible chronology, there are some cases where playing the piece provides a clue as to how successful this arrangement is on a given instrument, and this in turn can suggest a possible order of composition. One good example of this is the guitar arrangement of the Chaconne. The thin texture, infrequent strums and certain missing bass notes

in this version show that full use was not made of the instrument and that therefore this piece was probably not composed for guitar first. Assuming this to be true, and taking into account that the lute version was composed after the theorbo version ("transposé du theorbe"), a probable sequence could be: the theorbo version first, followed by the lute arrangement, with third place going to either the figured bass transcription or to the guitar version, depending on the date of the guitar manuscript (Rés. F. 844).

The *Courante* on page 20 of the *Livre de guittarre* is another example of how the playing of a piece provides clues as to the order of composition. The guitar version makes full use of the instrument in terms of range and strumming; on the other hand, the piece lies low on the lute, and frequent chromatic alterations in the bass result in many octave changes on the theorbo. Hence, one has the feeling that the piece belongs to the guitar.

The *Musette* is another example of this type. The extensive use of strumming and the use of campanelas underscore the rustic nature of this piece and make it extremely successful on the guitar. By comparison, the lute version has a thin texture (thinner than the theorbo) and therefore one could possibly conclude that the lute version was probably not first. Based on this evidence, one must assume either that one of the guitar arrangements or one of the theorbo arrangements was composed first.

Finally in playing the *Allemande*, it becomes evident that this piece might not have been composed for theorbo first for the following reasons: the unusual instance discussed in Section 3 (p.18) where part of the bass line had to be played two octaves higher than normal; the voice crossing in bars 17, 32, 33, 36, and 37 (see Example 23 for bars 32-33); the awkward chords also discussed in Section 3. These situations would probably have

been avoided if the piece were originally composed for theorbo. In contrast, the Allemande lies very well on the lute -- well enough to wonder if the lute version could have been composed first. The choice of key here is perhaps also worth mentioning. The piece is in C Minor (not an easy key on the baroque lute) and it lies low enough so that, unless there were some other reason to choose this key (such as desire to use the lowest bass string -- C), D Minor could possibly have been easier. The other lute pieces in C Minor have no other concordance, so it seems plausible that these pieces could comprise a suite originally composed for lute, the Allemande of which was re-arranged for guitar, theorbo, and figured bass. On the other hand, the piece also lies well on the guitar and shows full use made of the capabilities of that instrument. Thus, the only conclusion one could draw here is that the Allemande was probably not composed for theorbo first.

At this point it will be interesting to see whether the dates of de Visée's publications and of manuscripts containing his pieces can shed any light on the matter. The earliest dated collections of pieces by de Visée are the two editions of guitar music of 1682 and 1686. 1699 is the next known date; this marks the year in which the collection compiled by Jean Vaudry de Saizenay was begun. All of the lute and most of the theorbo pieces are in this collection.¹⁸ The last known date is 1716, the date of the transcription for figured bass and melody

¹⁸ Although this important collection was started in 1699, there is an explanation next to one suite of pieces which says "Cette suite de pièces en D la re mineur n'est pas dans le livre gravé en partition des pièces de Mr. de Visée" (Saiz. p. 199). This shows that the manuscript was still being added to after 1716, the date of the "livre gravé en partition" referred to here.

instrument. With these dates, one could put forth the hypothesis that any piece with a version for guitar that is in either the 1682 or 1686 print was probably composed first for guitar. This tentative conclusion does not consider the possibility that any of the guitar pieces could have existed previously in versions for either lute or theorbo which were not written down prior to 1682, or which have been lost. However plausible this might be, there is only one piece of evidence which could possibly suggest that this was the case: a reference dating from 1680 which mentions de Visée only as a theorbist.¹⁹ Even if he happened to improvise some of the pieces on theorbo but later made the final printed arrangement for guitar, the guitar editions would still represent the first known pieces by de Visée. If we assume that this music was all composed for guitar originally, then a number of questions are cleared up. The issue concerning the Allemande becomes settled in favor of the guitar version as the original composition. The conclusion that the Courante (p. 20 of the 1682 edition) was most successful on the guitar is supported by this assumption. An interesting situation concerning the Gavotte arises as a result of the above hypothesis. If the guitar version of 1682 really was the first one composed, then the theorbo^{version} has to have been the next arrangement (not counting the transcription at the back of the guitar book); then the lute version would have come after the theorbo version ("transposé du theorbe"). Hence, when the title of a lute piece is accompanied by the entry "transposé du theorbe" it does not imply that the theorbo version was the first one; it only implies that it was made before the lute version. If these dates are a true indication of the order

¹⁹Le Gallois, Lettre...à Mlle. Regnault de Solier (Paris, 1680), p. 62. Quoted by Rave, op. cit., pp. 53-54 (cf. footnote 7).

of composition, then the Courante on page 29 of the Livre de guittar (1682) was also written for guitar first.

When the only source of a guitar piece is one of the three manuscripts, the problem becomes more complicated because their exact dates are unknown. Only one of these manuscripts (Rés. F 844) pertains directly to this study; the repertoire in this manuscript seems to suggest that it might date from the early to mid 18th century.²⁰ Two pieces in Rés. F844 -- the Chaconne and a Courante -- show definite signs of not being originally for guitar. The Chaconne (p. 237) has been discussed earlier; the Courante (p. 214) again has suspiciously thin texture and absence of strums, suggesting that it too existed in a version for another instrument first. Since both the Chaconne and the Courante have the remark "transposé du theorbe" after the title to the lute arrangement, a plausible chronology for these two pieces could be: theorbo, lute, melody and b.c., guitar (whereby the guitar version could have been made before the version for melody and b.c.). It should be noted here that the inferior quality of these two guitar arrangements strongly suggests that they were probably not made by de Visée at all: if Rés. F 844 is indeed a later manuscript, then the C Major Musette which is so successful on the guitar was probably written for theorbo first.

Once the first piece has been determined, the next task would be to discover which of the remaining versions was the second one. Although a surmise has been possible in the few cases above, I know of no criteria upon which one could base any further attempts at conjecture.

²⁰It contains arrangements of harpsichord pieces by François Couperin and Rameau.

I am well aware that evidence based on the study of such a small group of pieces is hardly enough to solve this complex, but fascinating, question. However, if the above points are taken into consideration, it becomes possible to develop a feeling for chronology where specific pieces are concerned. A more complete understanding of the chronology of the works of Robert de Visée awaits further research.

ADDITIONAL FOOTNOTES

¹See J. H. Kapsberger, Libro primo d'intavolatura di chitarrone (Venezia, 1604) and A. Piccinini, Intavolatura di liuto et di chitarrone, libro primo (Bologna, 1623), Cap. XXIX.

²Cadence is the term used by Mary Burwell in her instruction book for the lute (1668-1671). In this book she explains that the cadence is played in two ways -- descending or ascending -- each way consisting of three notes.

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