Analytical and Performative Issues in Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin
Volume 1: Text

by

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Curriculum Vitae

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I dedicate this work to my own family, and to my Batavia family, the Tiedes.
Abstract

The unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin present an exceptional challenge to music theorists. Formally they seem fluid and ambiguous. They derive from a tradition of ex tempore performance. The harmonies are startling, thwarting resolution in unexpected ways. And as is well known, the scores generally lack traditional rhythmic symbols.

The central problem is to interpret the unusual notation. Drawing on previous work by Bruce Gustafson, and inspecting other scores and instructional texts, the functions of various lines and curves are determined and categorized. This facilitates conventional theoretical analysis. Two areas are explored: rhythm and tonality.

Four components comprise rhythm: order, grouping, accent, and duration. Each aspect helps to comprehend how one can generate rhythm in performance. Applying Schenkerian linear analysis, a tripartite model of form, and principles of cadences and ornaments, Preludes 7 (A minor) and 10 (C major) are parsed and examined, each culminating in a unique performing score. In tonal and voice-leading behavior, these preludes hardly present striking deviations from common practice processes, but E minor is expressed through different strategies in an investigation of Prelude 14.

An introductory overview recounts the history of the unmeasured prelude and its relation to other free rhythmic pieces. The synthesis of this information is helpful and relevant to performers and analysts alike. This survey conveniently gathers and summarizes not only previous modern scholarship by authors such as Gustafson, Davitt Moroney, Paul Prévost, Siegbert Rampe, and Richard Troeger, but also important historical figures such as C.P.E. Bach, Nicolas Bernier, François Couperin, Monsieur de Saint Lambert, and Friedrich Erhardt Niedt.
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Analytical and Performative Issues in Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin

Chapter 1
Introduction to Louis Couperin and His Preludes

[Louis Couperin] mourut vers l’année 1665 & s’est acquis une grande reputation dans son Art. Nous n’avons de ce Musicien que trois suites de Pieces de Clavecin, d’un travail & d’un goût admirable: elles n’ont point été imprimées, mais plusieurs bons Connoisseurs en Musique les ont manuscrites & les conservent précieusement.
—Titon du Tillet, Le Parnasse françois (1732): 403

[Louis Couperin] died around 1665 [sic] and had acquired a great fame in his art. We have from this musician only three suites of harpsichord music, of inestimable craft and taste. They have never been printed, but several true connoisseurs of music have them in manuscript, and hold them preciously.

Louis Couperin and his preludes

One of the most interesting composers of the French Baroque, Louis Couperin was born around 1626 in Chaumes-en-Brie, about 25 miles outside of Paris. From Titon du Tillet we have the oft-told tale of how Jacques Champion de Chambonnières “discovered” Couperin, who, along with his brothers Charles and François, performed an aubade for the famous harpsichordist at his estate in July of 1650 or 1651.¹ Chambonnières was so impressed that he invited Louis to come to Paris. Although we cannot be sure that Couperin actually arrived in Paris in 1650, he was definitely there by August 1651, eventually becoming titulaire of the organ at St. Gervais in 1653. Living and working in Paris, the musical center of France, Couperin must have interacted with other composers and musicians, including harpsichordists Jean-Henry D’Anglebert and Nicolas Antoine Lebègue, the lutenist Blancrocher (Charles Fleury), and most importantly, a likely encounter—and possible studies—with composer and continental

¹ Tillet 1732, 401. Louis’ nephew, François Couperin “le Grand” (1668-1773), was Charles’ son.
traveler Johann Jacob Froberger in the autumn of 1650. Around 1656, Chambonnières retired as *ordinaire de la musique de la chambre du roy pour le clavecin* and the position was offered to Louis, who declined out of loyalty to his benefactor. Because of Couperin’s graciousness, Louis XIV created for him a position as viol player, and court records show that Couperin played in several ballets by Jean-Baptiste Lully. Couperin also traveled to Toulouse with the court, and, under the patronage of Abel Servien, visited Servien’s landholdings in Meudon several times, where he probably served as harpsichordist and organist. Servien’s connections with Italy may have helped to “broaden the scope of Couperin’s musical acquaintances,” and more importantly, his knowledge and acquaintance of foreign musical idioms. The enthusiastic testimonies of Tillet and Le Gallois (*Lettre...a Mademoiselle Regnault de Solier…*, 1680) indicate that Couperin was highly esteemed as a musician and composer, but a rapidly debilitating illness cut short Couperin’s life in 1661.

Although Couperin wrote a range of music, his sixteen unmeasured preludes have garnered the most scholarly attention because they are the best known examples of the genre and the largest number from any single composer. Couperin’s preludes are preserved in just two sources: the Bauyn and Parville manuscripts. Each manuscript comprises chiefly keyboard pieces and transcriptions by known and a small number of as-yet-unidentified composers. The Bauyn MS (Paris, F-Pn Rés. Vm7 674-675) is one of

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2 Supposedly because Chambonnières either would not or could not play figured bass. Scheibert (1987, 13-14) suggests this pretense was engineered by Lully to force Chambonnières out. There is some confusion about the date of this matter: since a document shows that D’Anglebert paid the reversion for the position in 1662—a year after Couperin’s death—scholars assume that the precipitating event occurred in the years preceding.

3 Curtis 1970b, viii.

4 The date of death given by Tillet in the quote that opens this chapter is in error; similarly, early articles give an incorrect year of 1662.
the most important French sources of 17th-century harpsichord music: it contains 345 works by Chambonnières, D’Anglebert, Lebègue, Jacques Hardel, Froberger, and Girolamo Frescobaldi, among others, all copied by a single scribe. The manuscript is the sole source for half of Couperin’s harpsichord pieces. Currently bound as a set of two books, there are signs that it was once divided into three volumes: the first devoted to Chambonnières, the second to Louis Couperin, and the third to a variety of other contemporary composers. Bruce Gustafson (1994) deduces a compilation date of around 1690, given the manuscript paper’s countermark, used by Thomas Dupuy between 1676 and 1731, and the date of the latest pieces in the collection.

Scholars have, however, been puzzled by the provenance of the manuscript and the name “Bauyn” attached to it. The heraldic arms stamped on the manuscript’s boards ostensibly arose from a marriage between the families Bauyn d’Angervilliers and Mathefelon, but no one had ever found evidence of such an alliance, and devices in the arms could have belonged to up to six other families. But the mystery was solved in 2002 by Damien Vaisse. The emblem represents André Bauyn, Fermier Générale, seigneur of Bersan, Jallais, and La Brinière, and his wife, Suzanne de Ferrière. Since they were married in 1664 and were both deceased by 1704, the manuscript must have been bound between 1664 and 1704.5

As regards Louis Couperin’s place in the Bauyn MS, it is important to note that his full name never appears: the works are attributed only to “(Mr) Couperin.”

Nevertheless, a manuscript discovered in 1957 by Guy Oldham helps specify the

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This manuscript collects all of Louis Couperin’s (known) organ works, many of which are appended with a date and location of composition, and his patronymic (a number of scholars are even convinced that this manuscript is an autograph). A *Fantaisie* is annotated “Couperin Org° de St Gervais le 4° Juillet 1653 a paris.” Since Louis took the position in April of that year, this annotation fixes him as the composer of the *Fantaisie*. The *Fantaisie* and two other compositions from Oldham’s manuscript also appear in Bauyn, and so the attribution carries over, “assuming there is only one Mr Couperin involved…”

The Parville MS (Berkeley, *US-BEm MS 778*), acquired by the University of California at Berkeley in 1968, is more modest in its scope and contains 149 works. Stamped in gold on its cover is the name “M. de Parville,” but the name has not yet been traced to a particular family or individual. Up to seven copyists entered works in the MS, which according to Gustafson is either contemporaneous with or a little bit later than Bauyn. Fifty-six pieces are attributed to (Mr) Coupprain, Couprain, Couprin, and Couperin: four of these are unique to the MS, of which two are unmeasured preludes. Although Parville shares ten of Louis Couperin’s preludes with Bauyn, each MS includes preludes not found in the other: 4, 5, 8, and 9 are unique to Bauyn, and 15 and 16 to

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6 The manuscript’s discovery and its contents are detailed in Oldham 1960. He retains the document himself today.
7 As proposed by Oldham in his article on the manuscript (p. 53).
8 Moroney 1998, 11.
9 Curtis 1970b, ix. Curtis’s article also reviews three other items in the University of California at Berkeley’s collection: the La Barre MSS (11 volumes, MS 770), the Lebègue MS (MS 776), and the Menetou MS (MS 777).
10 Gustafson 1997, column 1438. This surmise is based on the latest pieces in the document.
11 Attribution requires careful consideration of dates and information. Chapelin-Dubar (2007, 1: 24) notes that a double by a “Mr Couprrain” for a rigaudoun from Lully’s opera *Acis et Galatée* cannot have been composed by Louis Couperin, since the opera was written in 1685.
Neither document is an autograph, coming as they do several decades after Couperin’s death, nor can they be said to have been copied from the other. Since Parville contains works not found in Bauyn, however, Anne Chapelin-Dubar surmises that Parville was possibly copied from two sources, one related to Bauyn for the preludes, and another for other pieces. But how might these scores be connected to the composer himself?

Controversies with the MSS

In 1662, an agreement was drawn up after Louis’s death between his brothers François and Charles. One important condition runs as follows:

…Charles Couperin promises to furnish within the next three months to said François Couperin copies of all the scores of music left after the death of said Louis Couperin and written in his hand…Charles Couperin is obliged to provide the originals to said François Couperin to allow him to copy in the home of said Charles Couperin the pieces that the aforesaid François Couperin would find relevant.

Davitt Moroney and Siegbert Rampe have speculated that Bauyn might be directly or closely related to the copy provided to François per the conditions of the contract. Both

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12 The catalogue of Couperin’s works, enumerated in Gustafson 1979 (1: 288-291), begins according to the order of pieces in Couperin’s section in Bauyn. Pieces appearing only in Parville simply continue the list, so its two unique preludes are numbered 128 and 129. However, Tilney, Wilson, and Chapelin-Dubar denote them 15 and 16. In both manuscripts, pieces are mainly grouped by tonics (and modes, as quality of the third above the tonic), so the numbering does not imply a compositional chronology.
13 Gustafson 1995, column 1307.
14 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 231.
Chapelin-Dubar and Paul Prévost guess that Bauyn lies at least one copy away from Couperin’s autograph manuscript(s).\(^{17}\) Several facts seem to support this claim. For one, almost half of the pieces copied into Bauyn are *unica*. This speaks of a source with exceptional access to prominent composers of the time, in light of the singular works by Chambonnières and especially Couperin himself, who published nothing during his lifetime.\(^{18}\)

Moroney adds several details. The original three-volume binding which orders the pieces by composer reflects an association with, at the very least, some member of the Couperins: Chambonnières was Louis’s benefactor and teacher, Louis himself the most reputable of the three brothers. The other composers had close (or even personal) associations, many of them centered around Chambonnières: pupils such as Lebègue, D’Anglebert (although, peculiarly, only one piece each), and Hardel; and other well-known contemporary keyboard composers like Frescobaldi and Froberger, and lutenists like René Mesangeau, Henri Dumont, and Germain Pinel. Indeed, the former third volume makes sense as a collection that would “comprise other works which Louis himself would have accumulated during the 1650s…”\(^{19}\) The other works include some written for organ and instrumental (string) ensembles, paralleling the contents of

\(^{17}\) Prévost 1987, 48 and Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 23. Interestingly, nephew François Couperin’s *sixième ordre* (1717) includes a piece titled “La Bersan,” named either for André Bauyn (Clark 1992, 11) or his daughter, named Suzanne like his wife (Saint-Arroman and Lescat, in F. Couperin 1990, 6); Beaussant (1990, 260) guesses that Suzanne *fille* may have been François’s pupil. If indeed the composer were acquainted with the family, this casts a fascinating speculative light on the lineage of the Bauyn manuscript, since the contract implies that Charles, François’s father, was the caretaker of Louis’s musical scores.

\(^{18}\) An incidental exception is François Roberday’s *Fugues et caprices*, published in 1660. In the preface, Roberday writes that he composed these works on themes provided by various composers, Couperin (and Froberger) among them. Unfortunately, Roberday made no explicit attributions, although the fifth fugue (a ricercar) seems attributable to Froberger, since it resembles FbWV 407 (Rampe 1995, xxviii).

\(^{19}\) Moroney 1985, 9 and later cited in Moroney 1998, 8.
Oldham’s MS and thereby supporting the idea that both manuscripts relate to autograph source(s).

Rampe meanwhile cites a particular symbol as evidence of a link between Bauyn and an assumed Louis Couperin “original” autograph. For the works by Froberger and Frescobaldi, a handful of titles are appended with the symbols “./.” or “/,” or the abbreviation “pria.” According to Rampe, the class of annotations or symbols “pria,” “fecit,” “.f,” “./,” and “/” derive from the Latin phrase “in manu propria fecit,” meaning “made in [one’s] own hand.” Used by German composers from Heinrich Schütz to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the phrase and its various shortened versions indicate that a composer has written out a score himself.\(^{20}\) Accepting the phrase and its abbreviations as markers of authenticity, Rampe rests his argument on Froberger: in the Vienna presentation volumes of Froberger’s works dedicated to Ferdinand III from 1649 and 1656, and to Leopold I from 1658, “m pria +f+” is appended to every piece, signifying that the collections are Froberger autographs.\(^{21}\) But for the pieces by Froberger in the Bauyn MS, the argument must clearly be altered, since the manuscript’s dating obviously excludes him from inscribing anything. Instead, Rampe conjectures that the copyist or the original source’s compiler—i.e., Couperin himself—included “pria” or “./.” to indicate that the pieces had been copied \textit{from} autograph scores.\(^{22}\) Rampe cites the case of the Bulyowsky MS (Dresden, \textit{Di} Mus. 1-T-595), in which “pria” also appears in conjunction with two copied Froberger suites, to support this claim.\(^{23}\)

\(^{20}\) Rampe 1993, xxvi.
\(^{21}\) Vienna, \textit{A-Wn} Mus. Hs. 18706 (1659), 18707 (1656), and 16560 (1658).
\(^{22}\) Rampe 2001, lxxv-lxxvi
\(^{23}\) Rampe 2001, lxiv.
But such evidence cuts two ways. A *Duresse de frescobaldi* in Oldham’s manuscript is appended “pria.” If that manuscript is indeed a Couperin autograph, then Rampe’s conjectures for Bauyn make sense. Further, some of the works signed by Couperin in Oldham similarly appear with “/” or “../”. Not only would this strengthen the case that the manuscript is an autograph, but it might also show that Couperin, having learned of such authentication signs by copying from Froberger’s scores, adopted them for his own use. But the same symbols occur with such frequency throughout Oldham that Moroney concludes the marks seem “to be an idiosyncrasy of personal style, more or less equivalent to the use of a full stop.”

Furthermore, in both Oldham’s and the Bauyn MSS, the signs appear with pieces *not* by Louis (e.g., a courante by Hardel), and in Bauyn, not all the Froberger and Frescobaldi compositions are so marked. Having noted this inconsistency, Moroney continues to argue against Rampe:

> [M]any hundreds of pieces in [Bauyn] and other manuscripts do not carry this annotation when they have just as strong (or even stronger) claim to be authoritative copies emanating directly from the composer or his autograph. The safest thing to say for the moment is that we do not know for what “Pria” meant to these copyists, or whether the symbol “../” had a specific meaning, but that Froberger seems to be a central figure in all these cases.

Given these doubts, Moroney even questions the autograph status of Froberger’s Vienna manuscripts, apparently upending Rampe’s basic premise.

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25 To which Rampe attributes forgetfulness on the scribe’s part (1993, xxviii), or even that the pieces were copied from yet other sources that might have had the marking (2001, lxxv).
26 Moroney 1998, 18. A case in point: Preludes 3, 4, and 13 are marked with “../”, but none of the other preludes are (nor any in Parville).
Nevertheless, a fourth manuscript collection of Froberger works removes any doubt over Rampe’s claim, at least with regard to Froberger himself. This new MS, nicknamed by Bob van Asperen as the “French Book” for its use of French throughout, dates from the last few years of Froberger’s life. It is written in the same characteristic hand (for both text and music notation) as the Vienna volumes, features the same calligraphic flourishes, and makes similar use of “m pria +f+.” Most importantly, the MS is not Viennese in provenance, but French: it was prepared in Montbéliard/Héricourt, demesne of Froberger’s patron, Duchess Sibylla of Württemberg and Montbéliard. Froberger must have written out the volume himself, since his Viennese calligrapher would not have been available.

But the emergence of the “French Book” does not resolve the problems surrounding the Bauyn MS. Whatever “./” or “pria” might ultimately mean, the Bauyn copyist, or the compiler of the original source, must have had a very close association with Froberger. The pieces by Froberger and Frescobaldi are either unique variants or would have been difficult to access otherwise. In Frescobaldi’s case, none of the four works had been published at the time, and moreover, Moroney claims them all as unica. Intensifying Moroney’s assessment of Froberger as a “central figure” in this issue, Rampe declares:

How else could [the Frescobaldi pieces] have made their way to France (and apparently Paris) than through a pupil of the composer—and which Frescobaldi pupil would have been more suitable than Froberger who stayed in Paris between 1650 and 1652?

27 The manuscript, offered for auction, is fulsomely described (with photographs) in Maguire 2006.
28 Asperen 2008, § 2.1-2.3. Asperen, however, reads “+f+” as “+s+” (7.1), taking it to mean “scripsi.” He formulates a slightly different phrase: “manu propria scripsi,” or “I have written [this] in [my] own hand.”
29 Asperen 2008, § 2.3.
Froberger would only have entrusted his own manuscripts to a closely associated (competent) colleague or pupil.\(^{30}\)

Though all these facts are provocative and intriguing, they remain largely circumstantial, and we await more evidence, if any can be found, to tip the debate one way or the other. In any case, more specifically musical links between Froberger and Couperin do exist, with Bauyn once again playing a part (these are examined in the next chapter).

But even with this “controversy” in mind, the cryptic notation of Couperin’s preludes, lacking most obviously usual rhythmic conventions, plainly makes interpretation problematic. Certainly the preludes shared by the MSS offer the advantage of comparative readings. Still, a number of modern editors consider Bauyn more reliable than Parville, probably due to its earlier compilation date, its greater number of works, the special circumscription of pieces by Chambonnières and Couperin, the quantity of unica, and the possible stemmatic tie to a Louis Couperin autograph. Chapelin-Dubar relies on this last conjecture when she writes that “la qualité du manuscrit Bauyn, reflet d’une plus grande cohérence stylistique, nous a semblé plus proche de l’original que le manuscrit Parville. Bauyn semble comporter beaucoup moins d’erreurs” (“the quality of the Bauyn manuscript, reflecting a much better stylistic consistency, seems closer to the original than the Parville manuscript. Bauyn seems to have far fewer errors”).\(^{31}\) Alan Curtis, who was the first to incorporate readings from Parville, believes that its discovery “somewhat tempered” the “authority” of Bauyn, but his edition nevertheless “followed Bauyn whenever Parville seemed in error.”\(^{32}\) Prévost simply declares: “Une

\(^{30}\) Rampe 1993, xxviii.
\(^{31}\) Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 231.
\(^{32}\) Curtis 1970a, ix.
comparaison critique montre que la version du Manuscrit Bauyn est souvent préférable à celle du Manuscrit Parville” (“A critical comparison reveals that the version from the Bauyn manuscript is often preferable to that from the Parville manuscript”). 33

We are, of course, at the mercy of the skill of the unknown copyists. Colin Tilney’s summary includes these same details mentioned by these other authors, but his conclusion is a bit more generous:

The writer of MS Bauyn seems to have understood Couperin’s notation better than his colleague: he has a more educated hand and makes far fewer obvious mistakes. The appearance of his copy, although sometimes rather cramped, is on the whole far superior to MS Parville, both as a musical text and as calligraphy, and his version is usually the preferred one if both readings are ambiguous. Occasionally, however, Bauyn nods and then Parville supplements usefully.” 34

Finally, Gustafson’s thoughtful and well-researched articles from MGG on each of the manuscripts do not promote one over the other, diplomatically noting that “Parville provides many clarifications for the readings of pieces otherwise found only in Bauyn.” 35

Gustafson remarks that while the Bauyn preludes are written in an experienced and possibly professional hand, the scribe “probably did not completely understand the notation he was copying.” 36 Glen Wilson describes the style of the Parville copyist of Couperin’s works as “endearingly clumsy.” 37

33 Prévost 1987, 45.
35 Gustafson 1997, column 1439.
36 Gustafson 1994, column 1309. Ledbetter (1999, § 3.3) even speculates that the Parville scribe was “a youngish professional court musician,” and Bauyn’s copyist, although “not a particularly old person,” uses a script that is “decidedly old-fashioned for people above stairs by the 1680s.”
Organizing Couperin’s preludes: tonality and form

One way to categorize Couperin’s preludes is by tonality, an organizational feature found in the MSS themselves. Couperin’s preludes are cast in tonalities “which could be used in accordance with contemporary temperament,” namely those based on the notes of the natural hexachord: C, D, E, F, G, and A.\(^{38}\) In the Parville MS, eight of the preludes are even headed with hexachordal pitch labels: for instance, Preludes 6 and 7 are “en A mi la.” Moroney points out that the ordering of the preludes in the Bauyn MS follows that of the church keys, or the *tons d’eglise*, and not the dodecachordal modal system.\(^{39}\) Chapelin-Dubar elucidates his classification of each of the preludes’ *tons* by noting those that are also transposed; their findings together are summarized in Table 1-1.\(^{40}\) Major and minor modes, as determined by the quality of the third above the tonic, are also distinguished in Parville: Prelude 16 is “en G re sol,” but Prelude 3 is “en G re sol b mol.”\(^{41}\) This is characteristic of the more “modern” conception of tonality as

\(^{38}\) Gillespie 1972, 88. Like Chapelin-Dubar 2007 (1: 21) and Poole 1987 (190), key labels employ a tonic (or final) pitch letter name, and “major” or “minor” only refers the quality of third above the tonic, as communicated in French theory treatises of the 17\(^{th}\) and 18\(^{th}\) centuries. Too, rather than “key” or “mode,” freighted with their modern connotations, the term “tonality” occasionally will be used.

\(^{39}\) Moroney 1998, 11. But even the order of preludes is old-fashioned compared to that of the measured pieces, which proceeds from C to B (divided further by major/minor modes), with F\(^{b}\)-minor works coming at the end.

\(^{40}\) Moroney 1998, 11 and Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 22. While analysis reveals that harmonic syntax in Couperin’s preludes corresponds generally to conventional Common Practice behavior, Prelude 14 differs in its behavior; not surprisingly, it is cast in E tonality (see Chapter 8).  

\(^{41}\) Even Zarlino recognized the quality of the third above the final in categorizing the 12 church modes, but more as an ancillary characteristic (Lester 1989, 20). However, through most of the 17\(^{th}\) century, acknowledgement of this feature did not yet mark a reduction to the major/minor system (Atcherson 1973, 222-223). But by 1707, Saint Lambert writes (p. 26) in his treatise on accompaniment that “[i]l n’y que deux Modes en Musique: le Mode majeur, & le Mode mineur” (“there are only two modes in music: the major mode, and the minor mode”).
promulgated in several French theoretical treatises of the time. And significantly, this major/minor conception is carried through in the pairing of preludes within their ordering by the tons.

[Example 1-1 here.]

We can also categorize the preludes according to their formal structure. Drawing on Richard Troeger’s 1992 article, Couperin’s sixteen unmeasured preludes can be divided into three basic formal types (see Table 1-1 again). Petite preludes are completely unmeasured and relatively brief, essentially spinning out tonic harmony without much elaboration or development. The prelude shown in Example 1-1 is an ideal instance of a petite prelude. It occupies only one page, unlike any other prelude in Bauyn (in Parville, which is oblong, the prelude takes up one page and one staff). A simple applied dominant tonicization of the mediant provides minimal variance from the overall tonic. Finally, melodic development tends to be brief and little elaborated.

Simple preludes are longer than petite preludes and likewise are completely unmeasured (see Examples 6-1 and 7-3). One interesting (but somewhat quotidian) ranking is by number of notes: Prévost’s tabulation shows an unmistakable break at about 200 notes dividing petite from simple preludes. The greater length of simple preludes allows for more internal cadences that can include modulations to other keys. Stylistically, some of Couperin’s simple preludes can also be typed as deriving from the

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42 This way of describing mode (“becarre” and “bemol”) occurs as early as 1689 in L’art d’accompagner sur la basse continue by Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (Lester 1989, 98).
43 Moroney 1998, 11.
44 Prévost 1987, 188 (also 225).
tombeaux or allemandes graves tradition, marked by a stately or elegiac affect and featuring the typical 3-step ascending scalar anacrusis, mostly clearly seen in Preludes 11 and 13.\textsuperscript{45}

[Example 1-2 here.]

Finally, there are grand preludes. Grand preludes are cast in tripartite form: two outer sections and a contrasting central section that give a textural ABA parsing. Outer sections are unmeasured and essentially harmonically (i.e., chordally) based, like petite and simple preludes. Opening unmeasured sections can be almost equal in length to a simple prelude, and are usually longer than the closing section. The middle part is fugal, written in conventional rhythm and meter. Example 1-2 shows the notational divisions of these sections in Prelude 1. Example 1-2a gives the end of the first unmeasured section, closed with a double bar, and the start of the fugue. The indication “changement de mouvement” also highlights the separation between sections. In Example 1-2b, a double bar marks the end of the fugue and the beginning of the last unmeasured section (“suitte” meaning “continued”).\textsuperscript{46}

Significantly, Chapelin-Dubar distinguishes each grand prelude’s central section as a dance genre: a courante in Prelude 1; a gaillarde or tourdion in Prelude 3; a French

\textsuperscript{45}Moroney 1976, 145 and Troeger 1983, 341.
\textsuperscript{46}Chapelin-Dubar (2007, 1: 53) describes the completely unmeasured preludes as “petits,” “longueur moyenne d’un page et demi,” and “grands” (more than three pages), but her terms function more as commonplace adjectives. While the labels presented here derive from the same French vocabulary, they are intended as truly taxonomic terms rather than mere size descriptors. Silbiger (2005, 459-460) wishes to classify preludes in general as “short” and “long,” depending mostly on “whether they divide into subsections with distinctly different styles or maintain the same style throughout.”
gigue in Prelude 6; and an Italian gigue in Prelude 12. Couperin’s fugal sections in the grand preludes seem to be *sui generis* in the literature. Only two other harpsichord composers included measured sections in their preludes, but not in the same layout as Couperin. Rameau’s A minor prelude includes a non-imitative, $\frac{12}{5}$ Italianate gigue that comprises the entire second half of the work. The other composer is Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, three of whose four preludes feature conventionally rhythmic passages. Unlike Couperin’s fugues which maintain a single subject, her imitative or fugal sections offer several different themes, and her closing unmeasured sections are not as lengthy.

Prévost compares the form of such preludes to the structure of French overtures, which begin with a stately and regal section in homophonic texture highlighted by the distinct use of dotted rhythms, move to a faster, more active contrapuntal section, and finally close with a restatement of the opening portion. For Prévost, the similar pattern seen in the grand preludes is not at all surprising, given Couperin’s participation as a viol player in the performance of Lully ballets.

Rather than claim any basis on preexisting forms, Curtis believes that these (central) imitative sections simply provide both rhythmic and textural relief from the homophonic basis of the unmeasured portions (similarly seen in the brief, slightly more rhythmically oriented span in the lute prelude shown in Example 2-2). This kind of

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48 In his 1699 collection, Louis Marchand includes a conventionally notated prelude in D minor. But its instances of polyphonic or *style brisé* textures, a more homophonic closing passage, specifications of uneven melodic durations, and several internal cadences that would mark off sections arguably present contrasts between unmeasured and measured playing, making his prelude similar to Jacquet de La Guerre’s works.
49 Prévost 1987, 76.
50 Curtis 1956, 54.
textural contrast is typical of much Baroque music. Nevertheless, as numerous scholars have repeatedly shown, Couperin’s preludes closely follow on the toccatas of Froberger, which themselves are derived from the Italian form, specifically Frescobaldi’s keyboard compositions.

[Examples 1-3 and 1-4 here.]

The notational difference between the unmeasured and measured sections does not necessarily imply sectional independence, however. Example 1-3 shows the last six systems of Prelude 12, a hybrid of the simple and grand types. Morphologically, the prelude resembles a grand prelude in that it separates into three parts, marked by the internal measured section. But neither the first unmeasured section nor the rhythmic section are tonally closed; they somewhat “dissolve” into (at the first arrow) and out of (the second arrow, at the resumption of “whole note” notation) the other. Even so, the final unmeasured span really amounts to a single, fancifully arpeggiated chord. This part of the prelude shares a strong resemblance to the end of Toccata II by Johann Jacob Froberger, shown in Example 1-4. Just as with Prelude 12, the first two systems in Example 1-4a display an Italian gigue rhythm (quarter note – eighth note, although in white note notation), and where the meter changes comes a codetta that would be played

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51 Bukofzer 1947, 351-358. For Bukofzer, music from the early decades of the Baroque provide the clearest examples of disjunction or contrast, best manifested in multisectional forms, but also composers’ handling of texture and sonority (Buelow 1993, 4). Even so, musical unity was obtained through foundations such as a single theme, as in a variation set, the expression of a single affection, or tonality (Seaton 1991, 194). Bukofzer describes an almost complete reversal towards “integrated continuity” (p. 359) by the end of the era.

52 Moroney 2001, 294. Of course, such Froberger and Frescobaldi works commonly feature more sections of alternating measured and unmeasured playing. Guidelines for performance practice are enumerated by Frescobaldi himself in the preface to his 1614 collection *Toccate e partite d’intavolatura* (see Chapter 3).
in unmeasured fashion, despite the conventionally rhythmic notation. A copy of the same
toccata from the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin manuscript SA 4450 (Example 1-4b) confirms
the free rhythmic style, with the annotation “lentement et à discretion.”

A stylistic perspective offers another way to categorize the preludes according to
genre, namely the toccata and allemandes or tombeaux. Toccata-like features can be
attributed to Preludes 1, 3, 6, and 12, especially given each prelude’s length and
contrasting fugal section, as described by Chapelin-Dubar. Other characteristics of the
toccata include ascending scalar tirades and double trills, found also in Prelude 9. Donna
Beccia-Schuster not only discusses the toccata-like qualities of some preludes: she also
mentions preludes that allude to tombeaux and allemandes. One of the generally
established characteristics of allemandes is the $\frac{7}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{2}{4}$ anacrusis and first-beat arrival
on $\frac{3}{4}$. Based on this, Beccia-Schuster deems Preludes 2, 4, and 14 as allemande-type
preludes; Preludes 8, 11, and 13 can also be added to the list. Beccia-Schuster also
demonstrates a similarity between the opening of Prelude 13 and Couperin’s Tombeau de
Mr. de Blancrocher, a lutenist associate. But Couperin blends elements of the toccata,
allemende, tombeau, and lute pieces in other preludes so well that they cannot be easily
designated as belonging to only one particular style, so this method of classification is not
always unequivocal and ultimately incomplete. Indeed, Chapelin-Dubar considers the
simple preludes as fantasies, in the sense of a free rhapsodic work, and that they are like

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53 See below for a preliminary inquiry about unmeasured performance. Chapter 3 investigates this issue
more, including problems with the term discrétion.
54 Moroney 1976, 145.
55 As also distinguished in Moroney 1976, 145-147.
56 Also $\frac{5}{4}$ - $\frac{6}{4}$ - $\frac{7}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ and, more uncommonly, $\frac{2}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{4}{4}$ - $\frac{5}{4}$ elsewhere in the literature.
57 Beccia-Schuster 1991, 43-47. Prelude 14, however, opens with an arpeggiated tonic chord, followed by a
descending stepwise motive. Couperin uses such a beginning for two allemandes in A minor (Moroney
nos. 99 and 100), although this seems to have escaped Beccia-Schuster’s mention.
tombeaux only in their use of *rubato*. Still, identifying the preludes in this way offers subsidiary information for performance—the toccata-like preludes dramatic and impulsive, the allemande-styled preludes thoughtful and more languid.

**Understanding French unmeasured preludes**

But if traces of toccata and allemandes-tombeaux style appear in Couperin’s preludes, why does he call them “preludes”? To what degree does the detectable influence of Johann Jacob Froberger affect the narrative of the development of the unmeasured prelude in France? Is Couperin’s unmeasured notation the only way to communicate free rhythmic performance? How did composers indicate such free rhythmic performance? To answer these and other questions about unmeasured preludes, we turn to a provocative perspective from Moroney. According to him, French unmeasured preludes suffer from three basic problems: “[T]hey are French; they are unmeasured; they are preludes.” This wry observation highlights the nebulosity (a “mirage,” in Moroney’s word) inherent in these pieces.

First, the French have historically had a notorious reputation for notating scores that do not reflect rhythmic performance conventions. Louis Couperin’s nephew, François “le Grand,” addresses this subject directly:

:\*

Il y a selon moy dans notre façon d’écrire la musique, des deffauts qui se rapportent à la manière d’écrire notre langue. C’est que nous écrivons différemment de ce que nous exécutions: ce qui fait que les étrangers jouent notre musique moins bien que nous ne fessons la leur. Au contraire les Italiens écrivent leur musique dans les vrayes valeurs qu’ils L’ont pensée. Par exemple, nous pointons plusieurs croches de suite par degré-conjoints; Et cependant nous les marquons égales; notre usage nous a asservis; Et nous continûons.

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58 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 56.
59 Moroney 1976, 143.
It seems to me that there are defects in the way we write music that correspond with the manner in which we write our language. It is that we write differently than we play: this explains why foreigners play our music less well than we play theirs. On the contrary, the Italians write their music in the actual note values that they intend. For example, we dot several consecutive stepwise eighth notes; and yet we write them equally; our convention has enslaved us; and we carry on with it.\footnote{F. Couperin 1974, 49.}

The closing sentences describe the tradition of *notes inégales*, probably the most well-known rhythmic performance practice of French Baroque music.\footnote{See Hefling 1993 for a lengthy examination of rhythmic alteration in French music. Powell 1959 similarly covers the same topic.} But these remarks bring to mind other inexpressible or ambiguous practices of music in general and French Baroque music in particular: examples include the indifferent use of “3” as a time signature for minuets (as triple time), courantes, and gigues (as compound time); the many idiosyncratic symbols for ornaments, some unique to a composer; the performance of those ornaments; and above all, the overarching principle of *le bon goût*, which ranks as the ultimate inexpressibility of French performance practice.\footnote{Commentary on triple time signature use is found in Saint Lambert 1702 (p. 25) and Houle 1987 (pp. 28-29).}

The notational experiments undertaken by harpsichord composers such as Couperin, Lebègue, Le Roux, and de La Guerre would seem to stamp the genre of unmeasured prelude as indubitably French, even stemming from slightly prior lute preludes. The usual connection between the lute and harpsichord at this time is often cited as an “origin” for the keyboard preludes. But as Moroney remarks, it is more likely that the *préludes non mesurés* derive from the keyboard tradition of pieces written in measured notation but played with free rhythm.\footnote{Moroney 1976, 143.} He even suggests that the preludes are a “uniquely French articulation” of the Italian toccata.\footnote{Moroney 1976, 143.} Such a line of descent, with
evidence located throughout Europe and ranging from the 15th-century Buxheim organ book to C.P.E. Bach’s Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen from the 18th century, brings the unmeasured prelude in line with a continental tradition, especially given the dissemination of the Italian toccata via German composers.\textsuperscript{65} A wider historical context for the preludes opens up many avenues through which analysts and performers can understand these intriguing pieces.

Moroney’s second problem is the designation “unmeasured,” which refers not solely to the metrical dimension of rhythm. In Example 1-1, the notation omits not only conventional signs that group notes into large (and regular) metric patterns, but also specific durations for the notes. The blank field of “whole notes” provides no apparent guidance about note-to-note durational proportions to a performer accustomed to conventional music notation. This does not mean, however, that the preludes lack meter and rhythmic regularity. While the word “rhythm” may typically call to mind notions of meter and note durations, these two parameters are by no means the only components of rhythm in music. An enlarged concept of rhythm includes how musical (both melodic and harmonic) events are ordered, how they are grouped, and how they are stressed.\textsuperscript{66}

And the notation for unmeasured preludes does, in fact, include information about these other components. Thus order, at least for each staff singly, is conventional by reading left to right, even though coordination between staves is almost never strictly vertical. The straight or curving lines also imply ordering, but more importantly duration and grouping as well. These lines seem to have at least two general functions: to indicate

\textsuperscript{65} Moroney 1976, 150.
\textsuperscript{66} Brown and Mavromatis 2001, 458. Such basic principles of rhythm, and how they affect (linear) analysis, are examined in Carl Schachter’s famous three articles on rhythm, collected in Schachter 1999. See especially the latter portion of “A Preliminary Study.”
how long to hold a note, and to articulate events and groupings.\textsuperscript{67} But the curves’ relative
treatment of duration and their vague placement still makes for a somewhat opaque guide
for performance. The location of stresses or accents at different metrical levels is equally
elusive in this kind of notation. At the note level, some curves are like conventional two-
note slurs, implying a stronger accent on the first note. Suspensions also locate accent; as
well, so do some stock ornaments typically indicated by a stenographic symbol.\textsuperscript{68} As for
meter, Troeger suggests that the preludes’ underlying metric structure is likely duple, in a
comparison with similar free pieces.\textsuperscript{69}

The concept of unmeasuredness is only partly reflected in the mysterious notation
of these preludes. Indeed, as Moroney stresses, unmeasured performance is actually
independent of unmeasured notation. The tradition of freely rhythmic performance of
preludes and related genres could be communicated through either notation or textual
instructions. French composers are well known for their experiments with cryptic
notation for which literal instruction is scanty. But they sometimes provided
prescriptions. François Couperin (although he published fully notated preludes) wrote:

\begin{quotation}
il faut que ceux qui auront recours à ces Préludes-réglés, le jouent d'une maniere aiséé
sans trop s'attacher à la precision des mouvemens; à moins que je ne l’aïye marqué exprés
par le mot de, Mesuré: Ainsi, on peut hazarder de dire, que dans beaucoup de choses, la
Musique (par comparaison à la Poésie) a sa prose, et ses vers.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quotation}

those who resort to these regulated preludes should play them in a relaxed way without
greatly adhering to the exactness of the movement, at least where I have not expressly
marked with the word \textit{measured}. Thus, one might hazard to say that, as in many things,
music (as compared to poetry) has its prose, and its verse.

\textsuperscript{67} Gustafson 1984, 20-21 and Moroney 1985, 15-16.
\textsuperscript{68} See Chapter 5 for more details.
\textsuperscript{69} Troeger 1983, 341.
\textsuperscript{70} F. Couperin 1717, 60.
To elucidate performance style, he analogizes music and language: some music is like verse, which follows a regular metrical pattern through scansion; and some music is like prose, by contrast irregular and variable. Frescobaldi wrote toccatas in fully measured notation and provided guidelines. Froberger also used measured notation, and often resorted to the word *discrétion*, a vague term that might allude to artistic taste as well as the application of *rubato*. These different notational solutions are simply different strategies, but only “for the player’s eye, not the listener’s ear.”71 French composers were participating in a longer, more widespread practice that is belied by their unique notational solutions.

As Moroney suggests, the term “prelude” is equally problematic because the genre is frequently characterized by its uncharacterizable treatment of harmony, melody, and form. F. Couperin described the prelude as “une composition libre, ou l’imagination se livre à tout ce qui se présente à elle” (“a free composition where the imagination abandons itself to all that comes to it”).72 Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s dictionary explains that to prelude is

\[ \text{jouer quelque trait de fantaisie irrégulier et assez court… C’est sur-tout en préludant que les grands Musiciens, exempts de cet extrême asservissement aux règles que l’œil des critiques leur impose sur le papier, sont briller ces Transitions savantes qui ravissent les Auditeurs.} \]

71 Moroney 1976, 147.  
72 F. Couperin 1717, 60.  
73 Rousseau 1768, 389.
Explicitly writing out the rhythm for such works would contradict the freedom described by these explanations. Manuscripts and scores show that composers recognized this as they removed rhythm and meter from conventional notation, limiting the palette of notes to only a few values or only one (representing, in effect, no single duration) and omitting barlines. Improvisation, genius, invention, fantasy, and free rhythm were all ideas applied not only to preludes and introductory-type works but also fantasies, toccatas, and allemandes. Untangling the conflation of these ideas among these conceptually titled genres will help clarify Moroney’s statement about the tradition of measured pieces, rendered freely, that led to the unmeasured prelude in France.

And yet, despite all these problems so aptly captured by Moroney, unmeasured preludes do not invite—within certain stylistic limits—unbounded rhythmic freedom in performance. An infinite number of realizations may exist, but not all of them will be tasteful and appropriate. Analysis of various musical aspects of a prelude can result in a performance more satisfactory than another. Just as with the ambiguous practices enumerated earlier, so certain spans or junctures in a prelude also resist coherent evaluation or measurement, embodying in a highly conceptual way the very rhythmic

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74 Notationally unconventional free rhythmic works were not the sole province of the French, of course: C.P.E. Bach wrote unbarred fantasias, for example. The role of pitch, structuring both the melodic and harmonic dimensions, is covered in Chapters 3 through 5.

75 Free rhythm is also a feature of vocal recitatives. Tilney (1991: 3, 7) calls recitative “the vocal counterpart of the unmeasured prelude.” Recitative mimics “the greater irregularity and variety of rhythm [in] the patterns of everyday speech accents” (Moroney 1985, 12). The parallel to François Couperin’s quote above is obvious.

76 As mentioned in Troeger 1992, “the extremes of the flexibility that the unmeasured notation suggests to the modern eye were apparently tempered, in the Baroque era, by influences less immediately evident today” (p. 90). The article provides a sharply focused overview of notational problems and other factors that affect the performance of unmeasured preludes.
freedom that composers strived for. This is, in a sense, Louis Couperin’s supreme achievement: the consummate expression of artistry and mastery of unmeasuredness.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{77} My thanks to Dr. Elissa Guralnick for leading me to this summation.
Chapter 1 has provided broad preparatory material for understanding Louis Couperin’s life, the unmeasured harpsichord prelude in France, and the general milieu of the composer and the genre. This chapter divides into two parts. The first surveys the received history of the development of the unmeasured prelude, and explains how a previous conflation has been interpreted in recent decades. The second then traces important compositional influences on Couperin’s preludes, with some implications for analysis and performance.

Unmeasured preludes for various instruments

In France, the popularity of the unmeasured prelude lasted about a century, from 1630 to around 1730.1 The first known unmeasured preludes (also called *recherches* and *entrées*) were composed for lute, though similar works for viol date from around the same time. Later composers wrote numerous unmeasured preludes for harpsichord. Tables 2-1 and 2-2 list French composers of unmeasured preludes for lute, viol, and harpsichord (selected because their works are attributable to them, mostly through published collections).

[Tables 2-1 and 2-2 here.]

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1 Scattered examples for harpsichord appear after 1730, e.g., Balbastre 1777. Jacques François Gallay composed a set of unmeasured preludes for horn (Op. 27), published around 1839. Gallay’s preludes are the subject of Russell 2004, which mistakenly attributes 22 unmeasured preludes to Louis Couperin (p. 22).
Today over ninety 17th- and 18th-century harpsichord preludes in unmeasured notation are known; these are preserved in published scores and manuscripts, where some preludes are attributed and others anonymous.\(^2\) Among the most important documents for this dissertation are the Bauyn and Parville manuscripts, the sources of Louis Couperin’s preludes (as detailed in Chapter 1). D’Anglebert’s autograph (Paris, \textit{F-Pn Rés. 89\textsuperscript{ter}}) is also especially valuable since it allows scholars to compare changes that D’Anglebert made when he published his pieces in 1689.\(^3\) As Table 1-2 shows, the relatively short period from 1680 to around 1710 shows a cluster of publications which include unmeasured preludes for harpsichord by other notable French composers. While Beverly Scheibert has observed that “the unmeasured prelude was not popular outside France,” some French unmeasured preludes (by both known and anonymous composers) were transmitted in British manuscripts.\(^4\) Although they relied on fully metrical and rhythmic notation, British composers such as Henry Purcell, Matthew Locke, and John Roberts composed preludes in the spirit of the French unmeasured style.\(^5\)

\textbf{The received history of the lute and harpsichord}

During the first two decades of the 20th century, the writings of French musicologists such as André Pirro, Henri Quittard, and Lionel de Laurencie endorsed the

\(^3\) See Maple 1989 for a thoroughgoing dissertation on these documents. Scheibert 1987 is a monograph devoted to D’Anglebert’s life, career, and oeuvre.
\(^4\) Scheibert 1986, 140.
\(^5\) Prévost 1987 and Tilney 1991 provide examples in sources from England, MS Roper (Chicago, \textit{US-Cn MS VM 2.3 E 58r}) and MS Bodleian (Oxford, \textit{GB-Ob MS E 426}), although the latter was likely compiled by a Frenchman living in England (Tilney 1991, 3: 18). For Locke and others, see Matthew Locke, \textit{Melodhesia}, edited by Christopher Hogwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Moroney’s 2001 edition of keyboard pieces from a Purcell autograph MS includes an arpeggiated prelude that bears a remarkable resemblance to French examples. The transmission of the French style is discussed in Bailey 2001. The rhythmically free performance of preludes and associated genres was of course practiced in other countries, even before this period.
view that the harpsichord unmeasured preludes directly descend from the unmeasured lute repertoire.⁶ And even this was just one aspect folded into the more general implication that harpsichord style was almost completely indebted to lutenists. Quittard provided a lengthy historical overview of Renaissance and early Baroque French instrumental music in the *Encyclopedie Lavignac* (c. 1913). When describing the early 17th century, he notes the onset of a new instrumental style, a style “que l’art des luthistes venait d’instaurer et que les clavecinistes tenaient de plus en plus à faire leur” (“that the skill of the lutenists came to institute and that the harpsichordists would more and more take as theirs”).⁷ Moreover:

Desservi du côté de l’expression, puisque le clavecin est, tout aussi bien que l’orgue, rebelle aux variétés subtiles et immédiate d’intensité dont le luth tire ses effets les plus charmants, il ne s’avance pas moins hardiment dans la voie que défriche heureusement son rival. Et comme, alors que ces ambitions lui viennent, le clavecin ne peut trouver nulle part les modèles d’un style à quoi ne l’avait point préparé sa technique primitive, il imitera tout d’abord les pièces nouvelles des luthistes. Un jour viendra sans doute où les virtuoses du clavecin auront fini, par une pratique assidue, de déterminer sûrement les effets que le plus avantagèseusement leur instrument peut produire. Jusque-là ils reproduiront fidèlement, avec la forme et l’esprit des compositions des luthistes, certain menus détails de réalisation qui chez eux ne seraient pas cependant nécessaires.

Ill-served on the side of expression, since the harpsichord is, quite as well as the organ, unamenable to subtle and immediate variety in dynamics, of which the lute produces its most charming effects, it advances less daringly down the path that its rival has fortunately blazed. And so in realizing these goals, the harpsichord, finding nowhere examples of a style to which it has not readied its primitive technique, it will first of all imitate the new works of the lutenists. A day will come without doubt when the virtuosos of the harpsichord will finish, by assiduous practice, determining securely the effects that their instrument can produce most advantageously. Until then they will copy faithfully, in form and spirit from compositions of the lutenists, certain slight details of realization which to themselves will nevertheless be indispensable.⁸ [italics mine]

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⁶ Pirro 1920 & 1921, Quittard 1902-1903 & 1913, and Laurencie 1919. Ledbetter (1990, 25) argues that even unmeasured lute works derive from a “rhythmic loosening” of an older, measured type of prelude.
⁷ Quittard 1913, 1229.
⁸ Quittard 1913, 1229.
Such pronouncements, coupled with constant references to the lute in the discussion of harpsichord music, sadly deprecate the harpsichord’s status. Harpsichord composers wrote works that “se conformer au goût des luthistes,” and regarding an allemande by Chambonnières, Quittard asks: “ne paraît-il pas la transcription d’une tablature de luth?” (“does it not resemble a transcription of lute tablature?”).⁹ As for Louis Couperin’s unmeasured preludes, Quittard states:

Il est impossible de ne pas les rapprocher immédiatement, ces Préludes de Couperin dont le manuscript de ses œuvres nous a conservé un bon nombre, des grandes preludes des luthistes.

It is impossible not to immediately link them, these preludes of Couperin which the manuscript of his works preserves a good number, with the large preludes of the lutenists.¹⁰

When speculating about Louis Couperin’s compositional development, Pirro observes: “Couperin subit l’influence des pièces de luth françaises, ou des compositions instrumentals à l’italienne.” (“Couperin experienced the influence of French lute pieces, or Italian instrumental compositions”).¹¹ This stylistic feature even fortifies Pirro’s argument about the date of Couperin’s arrival in Paris:

Mais, si cette vogue [for the lute] était universelle, il importe d’observer, pourtant, que Paris était le seule ville où la pratique fût raffinée: on ne saurait parler d’influence des luthistes sur quelque musicien, sans sous-entendre que ce fut à Paris qu’il la subit. Que Louis Couperin fut tout imprégné de leur art, sert encore de prevue établir qu’il séjourna longtemps à Paris bien avant 1656.

⁹ Quittard 1913, 1237.
¹⁰ Quittard 1913, 1241.
¹¹ Pirro 1920, 18. In mentioning Italian music, Pirro foreshadows another stylistic controversy, which will be discussed below.
But if this vogue [for the lute] was universal, it is important to observe, nevertheless, that Paris was the only city where the practice was refined: one will not speak of the influence of the lutenists on some musician without understanding that it would be in Paris that he experiences this. That Louis Couperin was utterly saturated with their art again proves to establish that he had sojourned for a long time in Paris well before 1656.12 [italics mine]

Writers continued to promulgate this perspective in the decades to follow. In the 1950 edition of his François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition, for example, Wilfrid Mellers begins the chapter on keyboard music with a review of lute music in France. The subordinate status of the harpsichord clearly comes across:

…many of the techniques implicit in the nature of the lute[,] were taken over by the first composers of the clavecin, who often wrote in a more or less identical manner for the lute or keyboard instrument. To them the clavecin was a kind of mechanized lute…13

With regard to Louis Couperin’s teacher, Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, Mellers adds that “[i]n most ways is it legitimate to regard his work as an extension of that of the lutenists, who were emulated as much for social as for music reasons, the lute being the traditional instrument of nobility.”14 Similarly in The Interpretation of Music, Thurston Dart notes:

A continuous line of development links the lute-music of [Denis] Gaultier and his school with the harpsichord suites of Chambonnières, d’Anglebert, and [François] Couperin, and many of the mannerisms of the later composers can be traced directly back to the technique and limitations of the lute.15 [italics mine]

12 Pirro 1920, 21.
14 Mellers 1950, 195.
15 Dart 1963, 112. Dart makes no mention of Louis Couperin at all, so the leap from D’Anglebert to François Couperin is all the more startling. Interestingly, a few years after the publication of Interpretation, Dart revised the L’Oiseau-Lyre collection of Louis Couperin’s works (first released under Paul Brunold’s direction in 1932).
From a chronological perspective, this way of viewing the relationship between the lute and harpsichord is partly understandable. The lute had enjoyed its prominence as the esteemed “superior social instrument” at least since the mid-16th century. While historical documents also show the spinet and harpsichord in musical use at the same time, the harpsichord and harpsichordists do not begin to attain greater mention until the 1630s and 1640s. Furthermore, almost no music for the harpsichord and spinet has survived from the century prior to 1650; indeed, the largest collection after this span comes from the Bauyn MS. With hardly any evidence regarding an independent tradition of stringed keyboard literature and style, similarities between lute and harpsichord music seemed to imply that the harpsichord’s eventual ascendancy derived from its appropriation of the lute’s technique, sensibility, and even repertoire.

But in the 1960s, some scholars proposed a rectification of this misperceived dependency, suggesting an alternative and more general link between the instruments. André Souris stated:

Nous inclinons plutôt à penser que, depuis la fin du XVe siècle jusqu’à J. S. Bach, les luthistes n’ont cessé d’adapter la technique de leur instrument commun avec les clavecinistes se rapportait beaucoup moins au luth qu’aux canons esthétiques auxquels obéissaient tous les musiciens.

One is inclined, rather, to think that, after the end of the 15th century until Bach’s time, that lutenists did not cease to adapt the technique of their instrument to changes in style, and that those they had had in common with the harpsichordists relates much less to the lute than to aesthetic codes that all musicians observed.

At around the same time, Jean Jacquot suggested:

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16 Anthony 1978, 234.
But in his 1978 revision of *French Baroque Music*, James R. Anthony maintained the privilege of the lute: for him, “[i]t would do little but labour the obvious” adoption of *style brisé* by harpsichordists from lutenists, or, indeed “all the features of the lute style [that] neatly transferred to the harpsichord.”¹⁹ He even speculates that the “first generation of seventeenth century harpsichordists were probably lutenists as well…”²⁰ But he obliquely hints at the arguments of Souris and Jacquot, although he does not answer the questions he poses himself:

Yet, is it a transference [of the lute style to the harpsichord] or is it rather a parallel development and subsequent co-existence of the same style in two media? Is it not, perhaps, part of the same movement that saw Renaissance humanism converted into a fin de siècle preciousness? Do not the lutenist and the harpsichordist both speak a musical language that has its literary counterpart in the *gallant* and frivolous Voiture at the Hôtel de Rambouillet who with his coterie had begun by 1620 to play a role in the Parisian world of letters?²¹

Certainly, the lute and harpsichord both shared in the attention of French musicians during the 17th century. Scholars have long documented the connections

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¹⁹ Anthony 1978, 244-245.
²⁰ Anthony 1978, 245.
²¹ Anthony 1978, 245. For more on the notion of preciousness (*précieux* or *préciosité*), see Mellers 1987 (pp. 41-51) and Martin 1995.
between the two instruments: sound generated by plucked strings; the professional and social association between each instrument’s composers and performers; treatises on accompaniment that address both instruments; the profuse number of lute pieces transcribed and arranged for the keyboard, so that harpsichordists thereby adopted many dance forms, and especially the common quasi-polyphonic texture and arpeggiated way of playing known as *style luthé* or *brisé*. Notation is particularly regarded as significant: the “whole note” score of Example 1-1 looks very much like Example 2-1, a lute prelude by Denis Gaultier, a representative of the unbarred, slurred tablature of unmeasured lute pieces. Both works seem alike when transcribed into modern notation.

[Example 2-1 here]

Quittard and other authors have assumed that this similarity is another type of evidence that indicates a more or less direct relation between the lute and harpsichord preludes. Philippe Beaussant, although describing François Couperin’s fully notated preludes, tells the reader that “they descended from the art of the lutenists, and was thus unmeasured.” Scheibert hedges a bit, first indefinitely stating that “[t]he clavecin prelude is related to

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23 Anthony 1978, 245. Anthony invokes Froberger’s association with Denis Gaultier and Louis Couperin when describing the spread of *style brisé* to north Germany and J.S. Bach.
24 E.g., Campion 1716 and Delair 1690 (for the theorbo and harpsichord), but even as early as Sancta Maria 1565.
25 Kitchen 1979, Chapter 1.
26 Neither of these is a 17th-century term. While “luté” (as a style of playing) was used in the 18th century (e.g., in the title of a courante by Gaspard Le Roux from 1705), “style brisé” apparently does not appear before 1928 (Ledbetter 1987, 142).
27 E.g., pieces from Denis Gaultier’s *La rhétorique des dieux* (Paris, ca. 1652) presented in David J. Buch’s 1990 edition. As pointed out by Kitchen (pp. 190-191), the lute notation and *style brisé* go hand-in-hand: since “actual note-lengths as well as rhythm, can become complex and problematical” in conventional notation, for unmeasured lute tablature, all that matters is the placement of the notes.
28 Beaussant 1990, 342.
the improvisatory lute prelude,” but later implying a connection through notation by providing a reproduction of a Gaultier lute prelude.\textsuperscript{29}

While a close relationship between the lute and harpsichord cannot be denied, it might seem somewhat astonishing when Moroney writes (perhaps somewhat dismissively) that “[r]eference to contemporary lute preludes is not very instructive” for harpsichord preludes.\textsuperscript{30} More boldly:

Despite superficial similarities, however, the harpsichord preludes are really a separate phenomenon from the lute and viol examples, and in the past too much has been made of their connection with the lute pieces.\textsuperscript{31}

It was the “superficial similarities” that led to both the assumptions of Quittard and Pirro and the more tempered thesis proposed by Souris and Jacquot. None of them was mistaken or wrong; rather, their arguments lacked a secure examination of the musical evidence. David Ledbetter exercised the attentive and discerning scholarship necessary to clearly dissect the 17\textsuperscript{th} century relationship between the lute and harpsichord in his 1987 monograph. Somewhat instigated by the two points of view—the older, that the harpsichord merely imitated the lute; and the newer, that both the harpsichord and lute shared in a similar aesthetic—Ledbetter’s exploration “reveals the inadequacy of both these approaches for defining a keyboard style of some complexity…”\textsuperscript{32} Ledbetter’s critique of both approaches as “inadequate” allows that, while neither alone fully elucidates the development of the harpsichord style, both together partly explain various aspects of the keyboard style.

\textsuperscript{29} Scheibert 1986, 132.
\textsuperscript{30} Moroney 1985, 12.
\textsuperscript{31} Moroney 1980, xx. This article is reproduced in Groves 2001.
\textsuperscript{32} Ledbetter 1987, 139.
Ledbetter’s first strategy is to review other sources that contributed to the harpsichord’s style. While both lutes and harpsichords (and spinets) were employed in large ensembles for ballets and other concerted music, and of course also accompanied singers, the harpsichord was especially selected to accompany viol consort music. Players would double parts, but might also realize all the parts from a full score; these scores sometimes included a transcription for purely keyboard performance.\(^{33}\) In terms of pure keyboard music as an influence, the works and style of Johann Jacob Froberger—in particular his toccatas—exhibited a clear influence on the harpsichordists, and especially Louis Couperin’s preludes.\(^{34}\) In addition, almost every harpsichord composer also composed for the organ, and many were employed as organists as well. Ledbetter even points out that, earlier in the 17\(^{\text{th}}\) century, some keyboard pieces are designated either for organ or spinet.\(^{35}\) Finally, in some dances written by Chambonnières, Ledbetter detects “a polyphonic framework far more pronounced than in lute versions” of the same types of dances.\(^{36}\) This is related to Ledbetter’s primary evidence for an independent harpsichord tradition, that of a three-part texture (bass, soprano, and a middle voice), an “ever-present framework for 17\(^{\text{th}}\)-century dance music for the keyboard.”\(^{37}\) Lute dances tend toward two voices, with a third voice occasionally filling in; thus, this texture is sometimes called “quasi-polyphonic.” Also, the bass line usually follows the upper voice in parallel motion. In the harpsichord’s texture, the middle voice may sometimes gain a

\(^{33}\) Ledbetter 1987, 19.
\(^{34}\) Of course, the influence was mutual, and Froberger’s own music—developed through his associations with French composers—came to be considered (in the Hintze MS) an exemplar of the French style, too.
\(^{35}\) Ledbetter 1987, 20.
\(^{36}\) Ledbetter 1987, 129.
\(^{37}\) Ledbetter 1987, 129.
greater sense of contrapuntal independence, and the lowest voice, clearly independent, moves in contrary motion to the upper voice.\(^{38}\)

It is this texture—notably adaptable to brisé effects for both instruments—that is the principal common thread that ties the harpsichord to the lute. And as Ledbetter smartly observes, “[s]hared characteristics need not immediately imply imitation.”\(^{39}\) In other words, the polyphonic character of these textures, the similar sound production made by plucking, the concerns for resonance and dynamics, and the same basic dance repertoire all relate the harpsichord to the lute, but none of these aspects—essentially a common language—necessarily implies that one was indebted to the other. The harpsichord’s three-voice texture essentially provided a fertile, receptive vine onto which lute technique and ornamentation could be grafted. The greater portion of Ledbetter’s text examines the harpsichord’s borrowing and imitation of lute effects, precisely that point of view tendered earlier this century.

This underlying structure for borrowing is made abundantly clear when Ledbetter examines each instrument’s stylistic tendencies in a parallel genre-by-genre comparison. The evident reason for this borrowing comes from comments made by Le Gallois, author of the famous *Lettre…à Mademoiselle Regnault de Solier touchant la Musique* from 1680, and Marin Mersenne in his *Harmonie universelle* (1636). Both of these authors laud the playing of Chambonnières, who distinguished himself by instigating a “new style of playing in the early 1630s, a style characterised by naturalness of melody and subtlety of touch and ornamentation.”\(^{40}\) This style ushered in what has been called the French Baroque clavécin school, spread and enhanced by Chambonnières’ pupils, who

\(^{38}\) Ledbetter 1987, 54-60.

\(^{39}\) Ledbetter 1987, 129.

\(^{40}\) Ledbetter 1987, 26.
include Couperin, D’Anglebert, Lebègue, and Hardel. And it is likely that their playing was heard by and thus influenced other musicians at court, including de La Guerre.

Ledbetter recounts that, despite the almost five decades that separate them, Mersenne and Le Gallois both discuss an earlier performance style described as “brilliant” but nevertheless brittle, noisy, and bewildering. Mersenne notes that

ils font ouyr…des sons si forts, qu’on les compare & au tonnerre, comme il arrive lors qu’ils triplent ou quadruplent la cadence en faisant 32 triples, ou 64 quadruples crochües aux passages ou aux cadences…

they make…sounds so loud that one compares them to thunder, as it happens when they triple or quadruple the beat into 32\textsuperscript{nd} or 64\textsuperscript{th} notes in passages or trills….\[41\

Le Gallois further disparages such playing as

souvent embrouille, & passe par dessus quantité de touches, qu’on n’entend qu’à demy, quelquefois point de tout; à cause qu’ils passent trop vite; ou qu’ils n’appuyent pas assez fort pour le faire entendre, ou qu’ils frappent les touches au lieu de couler. Enfin on n’observe dans leur jeu qu’une perpetuelle cadence, qui empêche qu’on n’entende distinctement le chant de la piece: Et ils y font continuellement des passages, particulièrement d’une touche à son octave; ce que Chambonnières [sic] appelloit chaudronner.

often muddled, passing over a number of keys which one hears only partly, or not at all, because they pass by too quickly. Or they do not press the keys enough for them to sound, or they pound the keys instead of flowing over them. Finally one only hears in their playing an interminable trill, which prevents the melody from being heard distinctly. And they continually play passages, especially from one key to its octave. This Chambonnières would call metal working.\[42\

\[41\text{Mersenne 1636, 3: 162.}\]
\[42\text{Le Gallois 1680, 77-78.}\]
Chambonnières’ performances, praised by Le Gallois and Mersenne as more pleasing, tender, and delicate, put this earlier way of playing out of style. Ledbetter immediately suggests that some sort of borrowing may have occurred, made possible by the close association of lutenists and harpsichord players, and their high-ranking status as prestigious instruments: in other words, Chambonnières purposely made use of lute characteristics in developing his new style of playing. But Ledbetter’s assessment of the part that lute technique and ornamentation contributed to this new expressive harpsichord is cautious enough to allow for some differences and other sources. For instance, he notes that lute ornaments have a built-in diminuendo effect, because the string need only be plucked once. This is not possible to do literally on the harpsichord, but can be analogized through overholding. Indeed, he claims that it was the viol that was the greater beneficiary of lute derived ornamentation, “for only the viol had the capacity to develop expressive ornamentation to an equivalent degree of complexity and subtlety.”

While Ledbetter does not wish to make the same blanket claims declared earlier by Pirro and Quittard about the harpsichord’s borrowing of lute technique, he nevertheless concludes: “[The harpsichord] appropriated at least some of the lute’s expressiveness to its own technique, whether by imitation or analogy.” And throughout the rest of his text, readers learn how these imitations and analogies were realized at the keyboard. These parallels cannot be overlooked by harpsichordists, for they explain both well-known and seemingly anomalous characteristics of harpsichord music. A good case

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43 Further evidence comes from François Couperin, whose final recommendation in *L’art de toucher le clavecin* (1716, 61) is “former son jeu sur le bon goût d’aujourd’hui, qui est sans comparaison plus pur que l’ancien” (“tailor your playing to the good taste of today, which is without comparison more natural than that of old”).
44 Ledbetter 1987, 27.
45 Ledbetter 1987, 31.
in point is the harpsichord composers’ fondness for the tenor range of the keyboard, a feature especially notable in the refrains of harpsichord chaconnes.\footnote{Ledbetter 1987, 133.} This penchant stemmed from the style of lute playing called \textit{sans chanterelle}, in which only the first course is used. Two other effects are especially important for harpsichord unmeasured preludes. In the first, a single note is sometimes repeated in succession up to three times, a strange melodic affectation for the keyboard. In lute playing, however, repeating a pitch in this way is possible by doing so on different strings. Extending this technique to include further chord members then allowed harmonies to ring while melodic activity continued, the pedalized result known as \textit{baigné}. This resonant quality is exactly that which leads to the notational, slurlike curve called a \textit{tenue}, a graphic prevalent in many harpsichord preludes. Finally, Ledbetter devotes several pages to D’Anglebert’s adoption of lute ornaments and their signs, embellishments that add the nuance and expressiveness that marked Chambonnières’ highly praised performance style.\footnote{Ledbetter 1987, 83-85.} All these modifications and adoptions “blossomed into even greater success and long-lasting popularity.”\footnote{Kitchen 1979, 36.}

With specific regard to the link between harpsichord and lute preludes, Ledbetter notes that some composers wrote preludes that are more lute-like than those of other composers. He considers D’Anglebert one of the former, but Chapelin-Dubar speculates that the lute-like character and brevity of Couperin’s Prelude 7 (Example 1-1) might be his first attempt at imitating a lute prelude. But composers took advantage of keyboard’s greater resources for sonority voicing and range, and so, in Quittard’s words, “amplified” the lute model.\footnote{Quittard 1903, 130.} Indeed, only a limited number of lute preludes approach the extent of
some of Couperin’s longer preludes. The harpsichord preludes leave behind the older notion that these were improvised pieces to test the tuning of the instrument: they are instead “composed improvisations,” with long-range planning and structure. So while composers followed the lutenists in the aspect of unmeasured rhythm, a strong dose of idiomatic keyboard writing inspired by the toccatas of Johann Jacob Froberger (the details of this significant influence will be covered below) elevates the preludes into “artistic works in their own right.”

Ledbetter’s analysis has untangled the relationship between the lute and the harpsichord in France, showing some independent and purely keyboard practices of harpsichord playing. But it must be noted that any writer’s narrative of the history of harpsichord playing will never be complete, due to the lamentable lacunae of musical examples for almost 100 years. Without these details, we cannot precisely describe what sort of French preludial practice for the harpsichord might have existed before Couperin’s time.

A wider continental perspective: Froberger and Couperin

As recounted in the previous section, an acoustic kinship with the lute allowed harpsichordists to capitalize on and incorporate lute techniques. In so doing, Chambonnières developed a new way of playing, ushering in the French Baroque clavécin school. Harpsichordists also expanded on the unmeasured lute prelude, amplifying such pieces beyond brief “tuning” exercises into large-scale artworks. During the early Baroque, instrumental genres moved further away from vocal models, leading to

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50 Ledbetter 1987, 91.
51 Curtis 1956, 56.
52 Curtis 1956, 56.
idiomatic writing, a feature clearly seen in the harpsichord unmeasured preludes. Written-out trills, long scalar ascents and descents, thickly-voiced chords, *batteries*, and extensive imitative, multi-voiced passages all reflect the singular quality of a keyboard instrument to articulate many notes: at times as a single decorated melody, at times as intricate polyphony, at times in rich vertical chords, all in an available range wider than the voice; in successions of different pitches or as a single pitch repeatedly, without exhausting breath or bow; so that melody and (elaborate) accompaniment reside in one instrument.

John Philip Kitchen believes that the French unmeasured prelude “owes much more to the Italian influence than to the comparatively simpler style of the French lutenists.” This opinion is similarly echoed and focused specifically toward Couperin by Ledbetter. Scholars have long recognized figures in Couperin’s unmeasured preludes that possess a strongly Italianate aspect. The musical evidence points to a relationship with the toccatas of Johann Jacob Froberger, himself a student of Girolamo Frescobaldi. The chief formal analogue is the central imitative section in Couperin’s grand preludes, which recall the contrasting measured passages in Froberger’s toccatas. Also notable is an abundance of characteristic Italianate passagework, such that the overall resemblance leads Chapelin-Dubar to call Couperin’s grand preludes “toccatas à la francese.” In other words, one way to think of the unmeasured prelude is as a French version of a Germanic interpretation of this Italian genre. Indeed, Moroney even

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54 Kitchen 1971, 30.
55 Ledbetter 1987, 90.
57 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 56; see also Moroney’s similar claim (1976, 143). De La Guerre even titled one of her preludes “Tocade.”
bypasses Italy, saying that “the frame of reference for [Couperin’s preludes] is that of Froberger’s toccatas.”

Froberger (1616-1667) was the most cosmopolitan composer of his time, absorbing and spreading national styles as he crisscrossed the continent under the aegis of the Viennese Imperial court. Early in his career Froberger studied with Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) in Rome from 1637 to 1641; it is likely that he also became acquainted with Athanasius Kircher. But almost nothing else is known about Froberger’s studies while in Rome. Frederick Hammond downplays Froberger’s foreign contacts, guessing that he probably spent most of his time in the company of his northern European compatriots. Froberger traveled in the winter of 1649 to Dresden, where he and Matthias Weckmann (1621-1674) participated in a playing contest; Weckmann thereafter became a trusted acquaintance. From late 1650 to 1652 or 1653, Froberger sojourned in Paris, just about the same time as Louis Couperin’s arrival in the capital from Chaumes. Jean Loret, in his La muze historique of September 29, 1652, gives a verse account of a concert held in Froberger’s honor that autumn. Loret does not mention Froberger by name, instead insultingly referring to the Emperor’s organist as “Un certain pifre d’Alemand / Très-médiocre personnage” (“A rather stout German / A very second-rate character”). During this time it is assumed that Froberger must have met French musicians such as Louis Couperin, Chambonnières, and the lutenists Denis Gaultier and

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58 Moroney 1985, 12.
60 Hammond 2001, 147.
62 Hammond 2001, 148. Hammond infers from Loret’s report that Froberger was fêted but did not perform.
Charles Fleury (Sieur de Blancrocher). Rampe speculates that a possible “pupil-teacher relationship existed between [Couperin and Froberger] whereby L. Couperin adopted Froberger’s form of the toccata.” This period would also have provided Couperin with the opportunity to copy Froberger’s (and Frescobaldi’s) works into his own “original” music books.

**The musical evidence**

[Table 2-3 here.]

It is through such apparent copying, or parallelism, that scholars have marshaled to show the musical connection between Froberger and Couperin (see Table 2-3). Ranging from somewhat generic and brief melodic and harmonic similarities to astonishing outright borrowing, we can see how Couperin shared in or elaborated on certain of Froberger’s stylings, such as scalar ascents that plummet dramatically more than an octave, other such scales or undulating passage work, angular melody and bass lines, major seventh chord sonorities, expressive dissonant intervals, presented melodically and as harmonic support, and characteristic descents by chained fourths, filled in with neighbor or passing tones.

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63 Moroney 1985, 6 and Rampe 2001, lvii. Froberger and Couperin both wrote tombeaux honoring Blancrocher’s death in November 1652. Froberger had been present at Blancrocher’s fatal fall down a staircase.

64 Rampe 1995, xxviii.

65 Chapelin-Dubar extensively categorizes these and other melodic gestures, associating some with Figurenlehre (*catabasis, anabasis, saltus duriusculae*), in her dissertation (2007, 1: 189-206).
Parallels in only the harmonic or melodic dimension can seem too general to be significant, such as trills and double trills. Example 2-2 is a three-chord span in which the initial dominant-tonic succession that might garner interest because of its unusual bass resolution: the local leading tone B₂ of the G♯ chord leaps down to E₂ for the ensuing C♯ chord; the expected root C₃ briefly sounds as a mere passing tone. An upper voice C♯ tonicizes the third harmony, a D major chord, but Froberger inverts it while Couperin sets it in root position. Example 2-3 gives the stylistic cliché of chained descending fourths. In Example 2-3a (Table 2-3, Row 4), dissonant diminished fourths and fifths appear in relatively skeletal versions of the descent. Froberger and Couperin fill in each leap with ascending steps totaling a third, as done in Example 2-3b (Table 2-3, Row 12). The correspondence here is heightened by the echoing of the pattern between the hands in each composition. In general, the stepwise filling-in motion can comprise a second or a third, and the leaps can change from fourths to fifths. The resulting variability in the number of pitch events gives the flourish an improvisational feel.

Shared features become more striking when both harmonic and melodic aspects parallel each other, as Examples 2-4 and 2-5 reveal (respectively, Table 2-3, Rows 4 and 12, and Row 6). Example 2-4 shows a two-chord succession in which the melodies in the right hands are essentially identical, involving a gesture of a rapid ascent followed by a
sudden plunge in register. The voicing for each hand is also almost exactly the same. In Froberger’s toccata, a pair of chained descending fourths forms the approach, which Couperin extends across both hands. Additionally, Couperin’s arpeggiation of the B♭ major seventh chord—in which the seventh, in a typical move, falls suspension-like to G4—gives a hint about the possible performance of chords written as plain verticalities in Froberger’s music.

Example 2-5 presents a much longer span of music that ends with a D major cadence. Again, the resemblance depends on a shared chord progression, a fairly stock \( \text{ii}^6 - \text{V}^7 - \text{I} \). Couperin inserts a cadential \( \frac{4}{4} \). For Froberger, this is an internal cadence. The situation is ostensibly the same for Couperin, but the cadence marks the end of the first unmeasured section before the change to the contrasting fugal middle part of a grand prelude, and so Couperin uses the cadential \( \frac{4}{4} \) to impart a stronger sense of finality for this sectional division. The passage works like a discrete tonal module, locally defining the same tonic while embedded in wholly dissimilar large-scale tonal contexts. It confirms tonic for the Couperin prelude, in D minor, but in the \textit{Tombeau} it is a half cadence as part of a modulation in G minor within the piece’s overall key of C minor.

Melodically, the correspondence is weak. Each composer has written his own soprano line (and thus different chord voicings), and Couperin does not include the 4-3 suspension in the final chord. But the dramatic scalar opening is quite prominent in its appearance in both works, despite the transpositional alteration, and moreover, the performance details for it are precisely the same: both eventually sustain an octave and an internal fifth by the time the scale dips down to the lower octave replicate, and as the
scale rises again, the interval from that replicate to the third above it is until the upper octave is reached.

[Example 2-6 here.]

The preceding examples might be viewed as generic happenstance, common clichés, or suggestive allusions, depending on how one weighs similarities in harmony, melody, voice-leading, and location. But the connection between Couperin’s Prelude 13 and Froberger’s Toccata V is particularly striking as an unmistakable case of copying. Example 2-6 (or Table 2-3, Row 11) is precisely identical in melody, harmony, and voicing; it is an astonishingly lengthy borrowing of about 6 measures. But we should not dismiss this as trivial replication; Couperin’s version carries valuable additional information. Although Froberger’s score looks quite skeletal in comparison, it becomes, in fact, a structure for improvisation. Couperin’s prelude reveals this with its added ornaments, arpeggiations, and other melodic diminutions. These parallel passages provide a glimpse into contemporary improvisational practice, hidden in Froberger’s conventional notation. A modern performer, unaware, might accept the score as complete, ostensibly imparting enough information to (re)constitute an “authentic” performance.

Pedal points that occasionally open or close a prelude or toccata are clichéd enough to be considered as purely generic. But the opening of Couperin’s Prelude 6, actually quotes from Froberger’s Toccata I (Table 2-3, Row 7; score not given here). It is

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It must be a borrowing by Couperin because Froberger composed the toccata before 1649, when it appeared in the collection presented to Ferdinand III. Note also that this insertion rather confuses the method of classifying Couperin’s preludes by genre type proposed earlier, where Prelude 13 was described as allemande-like. Stylistically, however, Froberger’s largely chordal passage—and thus likely slow-moving—is amenable to the sensibility of an allemande.
made most conspicuous by an annotation in the Parville MS: “Prelude à l’imitation de Mr Froberger” (although it is unknown who added the remark). Evidence like this has convinced scholars of the close or direct association between Froberger and Couperin, an argument of almost unassailable certitude because only two Froberger works publicly circulated during his (and thus, Couperin’s) lifetime. Froberger himself actively prevented the dissemination of his works except to trusted associates. This continued even after his death, as acknowledged by his patron, Duchess Sibylla of Württemberg and Montbéliard:

For [Froberger] told me often that many musicians distributed his compositions as their own, and yet not knowing how to deal with them, they were merely spoilt. Thus I do not wish that his pieces should come into other peoples’ hands, as I would not gladly do him additional harm now that he is beneath the ground.

To some extent this augments the conviction that the Bauyn MS versions of Froberger pieces originate from the composer himself, in turn lending support to the supposition that the manuscript descends from Couperin’s own library of music. And given that Toccatas I, II, III, XVI, and XVIII, some of the Froberger pieces cited by scholars in Table 2-3, do appear in the Bauyn MS, the idea of borrowing could be strengthened as well. But the direction of transmission is not entirely unambiguous. Froberger visited Paris at least twice, in 1650-1652 and again in 1660, and so both stays provided a chance to meet with Couperin. Thus the title Tombeau fait à Paris sur la mort de monsieur Blancheroche places Froberger in the capital with Couperin, and all that can

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67 A fantasia in Athanasius Kircher’s Musurgia universalis (1650) and a ricercar in François Roberday’s Fugues et caprices (1660), although Roberday provides no attributions. The ricercar has been identified, however, as a version of FbWV 407 (Rampe 1995, xxviii).
68 In a letter dated to Constantijn Huygens, dated November 2, 1667 (Rampe 2001, lix).
69 Admittedly, some of the stock figures of the style can be found in many other Froberger works.
70 Kitchen 1979, 59.
be said is that Froberger must have composed it after Blancrocher’s death in November, 1652.⁷¹ Potential borrowing from Toccatas I, II, and III proceeds without question from Froberger to Couperin, since those toccatas exist in the 1649 Imperial presentation copy. But Toccatas XVI and XVIII were first published only in 1693, long after Froberger died. Moroney guesses that the later toccatas could have been composed in Paris: if this is indeed the case, there may have been not a borrowing but a mutual exchange of ideas between the composers.⁷² No explicit evidence of this has been offered to date, but Bob van Asperen has revealed the thrilling news that the tombeau for Duchess Sibylla’s husband, Leopold Friedrich, in the newly-discovered “French Book” appears to borrow a passage from Couperin’s Prelude 9, and that “Froberger intended to memorialize the deceased Couperin: the Stuttgart master unexpectedly uses elements of [the] Parisian composer’s prelude idiom, as well as the ‘Couperin theme’ at the beginning of the first two sections of the new manuscript.”⁷³

But none of this insists that only Froberger’s music opened Couperin’s compositional style to Italianate figures or other idiomatic gestures. Similar features do not necessarily imply similar origins. The dramatic registral nosedives after ascending scales, major seventh chords, and chords built on augmented fifths and diminished fourths (e.g., if the first two chords of Example 2-2 were G♯ - Cm♭, giving B – E♭ in the bass) also occur in lute preludes.⁷⁴ The gesture seen in Example 2-7 (Table 2-3, Row 5) might be viewed as nothing more than the anacrusis figure for allemandes, and not something unique to or derivative of Froberger’s language.

⁷¹ Of course, it is most likely that Froberger composed the lament close to the event itself and not years later (Rampe 2003, xxxix).
⁷³ Asperen 2008, sec. 6.5. It is unclear to me what van Asperen means by the “Couperin theme.”
⁷⁴ Ledbetter 1987, 97.
Furthermore, authors have attempted to deprecate slightly Froberger’s role in the dissemination of the Italian style in France. Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661) imported Italian musicians to Paris and staged several operas (e.g., 1654, 1660, and 1662) for Louis XIV’s court. Kitchen discusses the possible effect about the musical dominance of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), although Lully’s rise to power comes somewhat late in Couperin’s own career. Hammond makes protesting claims that Frescobaldi’s reputation must have preceded Froberger’s arrival in France and Paris. And both Kitchen and Hammond mention that André Maugars, a French gambist, sojourned in Rome and published his observations about the music there (*Response faite à un curieux sur le sentiment de la musique d’italie*, 1639) for Parisian readers. He includes details about Frescobaldi’s playing. And since Couperin played treble viol at court, Chapelin-Dubar wonders whether he and Maugars could have been in contact. This scenario creates a logistical quandary, however: Maugars died in 1645, well before Couperin arrived in Paris.

Finally, Froberger was probably acquainted with French music before he went to Paris and continued to learn about it while there. Since he associated with French lutenists, he and Couperin had equal opportunity to independently incorporate elements of that instrument in their own compositions. Also, Froberger was promised copies of Chambonnières’ works by William Swann, envoy of the Prince of Orania, in the fall of

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75 Buelow 1993, 7.
77 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 35.
Likewise, the tombeaux and other tender and restrained pieces such as lamentations, meditations, and plaints that Froberger composed follow from French practice. Common characteristics thereby derive from common knowledge, not necessarily through borrowing. Except by the works Froberger wrote before his visit to Paris, it is practically impossible to demarcate when one-way instruction became mutual exchange. Froberger eventually mastered the French style so expertly that Matthias Weckmann included at least two of Froberger’s works, along with pieces by Chambonnières and (a) La Barre, in the Hintze MS (New Haven, US-NH Ms. Ma. 21 H59), which bears the title “Franzosche Art Instrument Stücklein” (“Instrumental Pieces in the French Style”).

No incontrovertible documentary proof has yet come to light regarding a personal relationship between Froberger and Couperin, but the circumstantial evidence is not entirely unconvincing. The composers’ connection found in their scores leads to two important outcomes for performers and analysts: (1) how unmeasured notation relates to conventional notation, and (2) information about performing their free rhythmic works. Notationally, each masks something the other reveals. Couperin’s unmeasured preludes, free of conventional metrical and durational signs, express a flexibility in almost all dimensions of rhythm in which Froberger’s pieces ostensibly do not partake, with their arithmetically correct durations fitted to the given meter. Conversely, the vertical chords in Froberger’s works, unadorned and prosaically stacked, completely conceal the exuberant and energetic arpeggiated flourishes written out in Couperin’s scores. And as Alexander Silbiger remarks, the notation of Examples 1-3 and 1-4 “suggest[s] that

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78 Rampe 1993, xxiv.
80 Rampe 2001, lxix-lxx & lxxv. This is the original spelling.
Froberger’s toccatas and Couperin’s preludes may not have sounded as different as they look on the page.\textsuperscript{81} Froberger’s and Couperin’s notational systems reside at the utmost antipodes from the other, yet they both require the same \textit{ex tempore} sensibility in performance.\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{An expansion via Froberger: Johann Mattheson and C.P.E. Bach}

Evidence reviewed earlier clearly affiliates Couperin with Froberger in terms of performance practice and, more significantly, genres other than preludes. The chain of influence extends even earlier to Froberger’s studies with Frescobaldi, a handful of whose pieces appear in the Bauyn MS. We can thus begin to see how the French unmeasured harpsichord prelude as a graft, or offshoot, of a wider keyboard tradition (and not discounting the tradition that extends from French lutenist practice) that is also confounded with improvisation, diminution, and composition; likewise, the idea of a “prelude” hardly takes on a singular, unequivocal conception. Historical discussions about free rhythmic performance of preludes and related genres certainly extend beyond both Couperins, Frescobaldi, and Froberger.

As mentioned earlier, Froberger was acquainted with Athanasius Kircher, who, in his \textit{Musurgia universalis} (1650), specifically names the composer and one of his works (the so-called “Hexachord Fantasia”) as a representative of the \textit{stylus phantasticus}.\textsuperscript{83} Froberger earns similar mention in Johann Mattheson’s well-known work, \textit{Der vollkommene Kapellmeister} (1739).\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Kapellmeister} is a vast compendium of musical

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81} Silbiger 2005, 459.
\item \textsuperscript{82} The issue of unmeasured notation is examined in great detail in Chapter 3.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Moroney 1985, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 55.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
topics, including counterpoint, musical style (church, theatrical, chamber, fantastic), the modes, types of pieces, how to compose a melody, and the six rhetorical parts that comprise the unfolding of a melody. In a discussion of the fantastic style (pp. 88-89), Mattheson quotes two Froberger works, a toccata and a fantasia (he also champions Handel as another exemplar of the style). In another section he mentions Froberger again, making a low-level personal connection:


The famous Joh. Jac. Froberger, court organist for Emperor Ferdinand III, knew how to represent quite well, on the clavier alone, entire stories depicting contemporaneous and participating persons, as well as their emotions. I possess, among others, an allemande with all the trimmings wherein the crossing of Count von Thurn and the peril he endured on the Rhine is rather clearly laid before the eyes and ears in 26-note cascades. Froberger was there himself.

In his earlier Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre (1713), Mattheson defines several genre types. Historically, authors tended to resort to descriptive or comparative language in their discussions about free performance, invention, and similar genres. Mattheson’s prose is representative:

Phantasia oder Fantasia, hat fast eben die Bedeutung wiewol man deren die meisten unter Clavier-Sachen antrifft desgleichen auch Toccaten, die sonst keinem Instrumento, als dem Clavier und der Orgel zukommen auch nach der Caprice des Autoris eingerichtet werden dahero sie denn wenn eine kleine Veränderung von Fugen oder andern Sachen

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85 The famous rhetorical model exordium, narratio, propositio, confirmatio, confutatio, and peroratio (pp. 235-237) informs the analysis of unmeasured preludes in Troeger 1987a (pp. 118-126) and Couperin’s Tombeau de Mr Blancrocher in Lancelotte 1996.

86 Translation from Mattheson/Harriss 1981, 296 (original in Mattheson 1739, 130).
dazu kommt nicht unrecht den Nahmen Capriccio führen…. Praeambula und Praeludia sind auch unter der Zahl solcher Clavier-Sachen richten sich aber bloß nach des Meisters Intention, und wollen gemeiniglich gerne ohne genaue Observirung des Tactes, gleich den Toccaten, tractiret seyn.87

The phantasia (or fantasia) has just about the meaning [of boutade and ricercate], although one finds it mostly among keyboard pieces such as toccatas. The fantasia befits no instrument other than the harpsichord and organ, designed too according to the caprice of the composer; from this, however, comes a small difference from fugues and other pieces, leading not incorrectly to the name Capriccio…. Praeambula and praeludia also fall under the number of such keyboard pieces prepared merely according the composer’s thoughts, and commonly are rendered without exactly adhering to the meter, similarly to toccatas.

Significantly, Mattheson links preludes with toccatas, citing their rhythmic freedom as a common trait. In a nutshell, Mattheson foreshadows a number of issues to be reviewed in Chapter 4: the mingling of various genre types (fantasia, capriccio, toccata, prelude, fugue); the composer’s inspiration (“Caprice,” “Intention”); and performer’s discretion (“ohne genaue Observirung des Tactes”).

Mattheson is a significant figure to the present discussion because he edited the second volume of Friedrich Erhard Niedt’s Musicalische Handleitung (1721). Among other things, this monograph instructs the reader on how to use the same figured bass progression to compose various suite movements, including a prelude. In other words, instead of simply describing a prelude, Niedt (through Mattheson) provides a technical methodology, offering a different avenue by which to understand a free rhythmic composition. Niedt’s work can be grouped with treatises by Andreas Werckmeister (Harmonologia musica, 1702), François Campion (Traité d’accompagnement et de

87 Mattheson 1713, 176. He maintains the same grouping of pieces (fantasias, boutades, capriccios, toccatas, and preludes) in Kapellmeister (p. 232). Also in Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre, Mattheson compares and enumerates at great length the attributes and performance styles of Italian, French, German, and English music and musicians (pp. 200-231), wherein he cites Athanasius Kircher for support (p. 220). He also gives a three-part plan for the compositional process: inventio, elaboratio, and executio, in which the second part is further divided into the six parts listed in fn. 84. For more, and a delicate untangling of Mattheson’s perspective on composition in light of other contemporary authors, see Bent 1984.
composition..., 1716), Johann David Heinichen (Der General-Bass in der Composition, 1728), and C.P.E. Bach (Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen, Part I, 1753 and Part II, 1762) because all them wrote about the relationship between composition and thoroughbass. Mattheson himself demonstrated and taught thoroughbass in Exemplarische Organisten-Probe im Artikel vom General-Bass (1719), in which he included Probestücke (“test pieces”), the same term C.P.E. Bach used to label his complete musical examples about 40 years later.

Bach’s Versuch is a vitally important work because of the detail he provides not only for instruction in thoroughbass and performance practice, but also for the composition of a fantasy. In Chapter 41 of Part II, Bach devotes about 20 pages to the art of the free fantasy. These pieces “nennet man frey, wenn sie keine abgemessene Tacteintheilung enthält” (“are called free because they are not divided into measures”), and Bach describes the performance of broken chords and scalar passages in much the same way as Frescobaldi’s directives from 1614. In other words, these works can be considered as part of the same tradition as the unmeasured preludes by French Baroque composers: they are to be performed in a freely rhythmic manner, and they are written in mixed notation. Bach includes a fantasy in D major (H. 160, or Wq. 117/14) in his discussion, which confirms the physiognomic similarity, although admittedly more to 18th-century unmeasured preludes (see Example 4-5).

Bach ascribes features to the free fantasy that significantly parallel several characteristics we have encountered with unmeasured preludes:

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88 Lester 1992, 66.
Notation: “in solchen Fantasien keine Tacteintheilung Statt findet” (“in such fantasies no barlines are found”), although Bach does employ fully rhythmic notation\(^9\)

Meter: “der Vierviertheiltact diesen Fantasien vorgesezet zu werden” (“these fantasies are set in four-four meter”); in other words, a type of duple meter\(^9\)

Arpeggiation: “Alle Accorde können auf vielerley Art gebrochen, und in geschwinden und langsamen Figuren ausgedruckt werden” (“All chords can be broken in many ways, and performed in both rapid and slow figures”)\(^1\)

Scalar passagework: “Bey den Läufern werden die ledigen Intervallen der Accorde ausgefüllt; mit dieser Ausfüllung kann man eine, und mehrere Octaven, in der gehörigen Modulation herauf und hinunter gehen. Wenn bey solchen Läufern Wiederholungen vorkommen, und zugleich fremde Intervallen eingeschaltet werden” (“Runs fill in the usual intervals of a chord. These passages can venture an octave or two, and in appropriate changes ascend and descend. If they feature repetitions, chromatic pitches may be inserted at the same time”).\(^2\)

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\(^9\) C.P.E. Bach 1762, 326. In Part I, Chapter 3, § 15, Bach briefly describes the free fantasia, noting that “Der Tact ist alsdenn oft bloß der Schreib-Arten wegen vorgezeichnet, ohne daß man hieran gebunden ist.” (“Meter is often indicated simply on account of notation, although one is not bound by it.”)

\(^9\) C.P.E. Bach 1762, 326.

\(^1\) C.P.E. Bach 1762, 337.

\(^2\) C.P.E. Bach 1762, 337.
Pedal points: “Die Orgelpuncte über der Prime find bequem, die erwählte Tonart bey dem Anfange und Ende festzusetzen” (“Pedal points on the primary harmony conveniently set the key at beginnings and endings”)\textsuperscript{95}

Rubato: The performer renders a piece “mit einer Freyheit wieder den Tackte vorgetragen” (“freely in an unmeasured manner”)\textsuperscript{94}

Bach connects rubato with improvisation.\textsuperscript{95} He describes rubato in a section devoted to fermate, in which a note, topped by the same named symbol, invites a moment of improvisation by the performer. Bach equates the performance of fermate with cadenzas and fantasias: in the large, they are played freely rhythmically, and the executant need not give exact durations to rests and notes.\textsuperscript{96} And during a discussion of affect, Bach again brings up rubato, of which he seems to enumerate two types.\textsuperscript{97} On the one hand, he mentions gradual accelerations and decelerations, and the broadening of tempo. On the other, he writes:

Wenn die Ausführung so ist, daß man mit der einen Hand wider den Tact zu spielen scheint, indem die andere aufs pünctlichste alle Tacthieile anschläget: so hat man gethan, was man hat thun sollen. Nur sehr selten kommen alsdenn die Stimmen zugleich im Anschlagen…. So bald man sich mit seiner Ober-Stimme sclavisch an den Tact bindet, so erliert dies Tempo sein Wesentliches, weil alle übrige Stimmen aufs strengste nach dem Tacte ausgeführt werden müssen.

If the execution is such that the one hand seems to play against the bar and the other strictly with it, it may be said that the performer is doing everything that can be required

\textsuperscript{93} C.P.E. Bach 1762, p. 328.
\textsuperscript{94} C.P.E. Bach 1949, 164; originally in C.P.E. Bach 1753, 131.
\textsuperscript{95} He also discusses discretion, but only in regard to tasteful accompaniment (Part II, Chapter 28).
\textsuperscript{96} C.P.E. Bach 1753, 120. He also makes a connection to recitative (p. 124), a comparison similarly drawn by Mattheson (1713, 181).
\textsuperscript{97} C.P.E. Bach 1753, 128. Bach expanded the text in the later edition of 1787.
of him. It is only rarely that all parts of struck simultaneously…As soon as the upper part begins slavishly to follow the bar, the essence of rubato is lost, for then all other parts must be played in time."  

For this *rubato* of coordination, as Bach implies, the left hand keeps the beat while the right hand exercises rhythmic freedom both in terms of tempo and durations. In Louis Couperin’s preludes, we will see that he accounted in his notation for this performance practice, in which all parts are “rarely…struck simultaneously.” Bach notes that it is easier for accompanied singers and instrumentalists to instigate *rubato* of this type, since the discreet accompanist would remain most metrically steady.  

Since he mentions it in the second paragraph of the chapter on the free fantasia, the relationship between improvisation and composition is highly significant in Bach’s eyes. He writes:

Zu diesen leztern Stücken wird eine Wissenschaft des ganzen Umfanges der Composition erfordert: bey jener hingegen sind blos gründliche Einsichten in die Harmonie, und einige Regeln über die Einrichtung derselben hinlänglich. Beyde verlangen natürliche Fähigkeiten, besonders die Fantasien überhaupt. Es kann einer die Composition mit gutem Erfolge gelernt haben, und gute Proben mit der Feder ablegen, und dem ohngeacht schlecht fantasiren. Hingegen glaube ich, daß man einem im fantasiren glücklichen Kopf allezeit mit Gewißheit einen guten Fortgang in der Composition prophezen kann, wenn er nicht zu spät anfänget, und wenn er viel schreibt.

[Typical metered pieces] require a comprehensive knowledge of composition, whereas the [fantasy] requires only a thorough understanding of harmony and acquaintance with a few rules of construction. Both call for natural talent, especially the ability to improvise. It is quite possible for a person to have studied composition with good success and to have turned his pen to fine ends without his having any gift for improvisation. But, on the other hand, a good future in composition can be assuredly predicted for anyone who can improvise, provided that he writes profusely and does not start too late.  

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99 See Chapter 3 for more details on *rubato*.
100 C.P.E. Bach 1762: Chapter 41, § 2, pp. 325-326. Translation from C.P.E. Bach 1949, 430. Schenker later proclaimed the same sentiment in *Free Composition* (1979, 6-7): “The ability in which all creativity begins—the ability to compose extempore, to improvise fantasies and preludes—lies only in a feeling for the background, middleground, and foreground. Formerly such an ability was regarded as the hallmark of one truly gifted in composition, that which distinguished him from the amateur or the ungifted….it would be of greatest importance today to study thoroughly the fantasies, preludes, cadenzas, and similar embellishment which the great composers have left to us.”
True to his word, Bach instructs the reader on how to write a fantasy through a “few rules of construction,” including various figured bass formulae such as pedal point and rule of the octave-like patterns; applied chord cadences and extended modulating progressions; and diminutional prototypes for scales and arpeggios. He concludes by subjecting the fantasy he has composed expressly as an exemplar to analysis.

Bach’s (and Niedt’s) methodology is examined in greater detail in Chapter 4, along with a discourse on the problem of untangling the prelude (as a genre) from similar pieces associated with free rhythmic performance and discretion, and improvisation and invention. More immediately, however, in Chapter 3, we investigate the ways French unmeasured harpsichord preludes were written, notational symbols critical to musical interpretation, and the rhythmic fallout of the notation and typical ornaments.
J’ai tâché de mettre les préludes avec toute la facilité possible, tant pour la conformité que pour le toucher du clavecin dont la manière est de separer et de rebattre plus tost les accords que de les tenir ensemble comme à la orgue; si quelque chose s’y rencontre un peu difficile et obscure, je prie messieurs les intelligents de vouloir suppleer aux deffaux en considerant la grand difficulté de render cette metode de preluder assé intelligible a un chacun.

—Nicolas Lebègue, Preface to his Pièces de clavecin (1677)

I have tried to notate the preludes with all possible skill, as much for accuracy as for playing the harpsichord whose manner is to break and re-sound notes rather than sustain them together as on the organ; if one finds something difficult and obscure, I ask intelligent persons to kindly make up for the defects in consideration of the great difficulty of rendering this method of preluding intelligible to everyone.

For many observers, the unconventional notation of the préludes non mesurés is the most conspicuous manifestation of “unmeasuredness.” Besides exploring the rhythmic meaning of such notation, historical principles regarding pitch must also be investigated. Neither dimension is immune to problems of interpretation, however. Together they have implications for rhythm as order, grouping, stress and duration, with obvious impact on analysis and performance. We begin, however, with the impetus for French unmeasured prelude composers’ notational experiments: unmeasured, or free rhythmic, performance.

Unmeasured performance

The unmeasured prelude was not the sole province of lutenists and harpsichordists, and descriptions of free rhythmic playing are also found in manuals and pieces for other instruments. These confirm a general performance practice in France at
this time. Moroney mentions instructions for pieces (not even preludes) by gambist Sainte-Colombe such as “parce qu’estant sans mesure, on joue comme on veut” (“because [this piece] is unmeasured, one plays it as one wishes”) and “parce qu’il se joue sans mesure et seulement il faut jouer d’aureille” (“because [this piece] is played unmeasured and solely played by ear”). In his manual about playing the flute, oboe, and recorder (1700), Jean-Pierre Freillon Poncein offered the following observations about preludes:

It is nothing other than a preparation to set the key in which one is going to play. They are ordinarily created according to the force of imagination of the players, in the same moment that they will play without having written anything in advance.

There is no particular rule for the tempo nor the length of preludes; one makes them variable according to fantasy, as tender, brusque, long or short, and in hesitant measure; one may as well proceed through all sorts of keys, provided one approaches and leaves them appropriately, that is to say in a way that does not offend the ear. It is nevertheless necessary that every prelude begin on one of the three principle degrees [i.e., final, mediant, or dominant] of the mode in which one will play, and that it finish on any one of the three, although it is better to end on the final. As all kinds of people do not have the facility [to improvise a prelude], I have accordingly provided some here on the seven natural modes, in major and minor, appropriate for the oboe and the flute…

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1 Moroney 2001, 294.
Freillon Poncein interestingly refers to free playing as “mesure interrompuë,” which must be a performance recommendation, since all the preludes he includes are written in completely measured notation. Also noteworthy are references to improvisation, contrast, and modulation; his mention that the prelude should begin on 1, 3, or 5, and preferably finish on the final are rare technical recommendations in this literature.

As noted by Moroney (1976) and Troeger (1983), unmeasured preludes have close ties to two other genres: allemandes (graves) and tombeaux. Characteristic of these are “a slow tempo and freedom of rhythm,” and usually some sort of anacrusis in the melody. This can be as brief as an eighth note, or more distinctly typified as a scalar ascent of a fourth, usually from the leading tone up to a first beat arrival on the mediant, supported by tonic harmony. Furthermore, allemandes and tombeaux are generally in duple meter, which serves as an essential underlying principle for framing a prelude. Even though preludes need not strictly observe the (or a) beat structure, Troeger opines that “[d]uple meter is more neutral from an accentual standpoint and is therefore more suited to the figural and harmonic development characteristic of the prelude.” Although single-value notation and curves employed in some preludes visually obscure or flatten rhythmic and metrical hierarchy, pitch patterns and contours remain. These can be matched to similar gestures in allemandes and tombeaux and thus inform players about meter, rhythm, and style, since the conventional notation clearly shows metrical setting,

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2 Moroney 1976, 146.
3 Troeger 1983, 341.
the quasi-imitative or polyphonic three- or four-part texture that structures harpsichord
music, and lute effects such as style brisé and campanella playing.\textsuperscript{4}

Performance indications are very few in the Bauyn MS, but the sole D major
allemande by Couperin (no. 58 in Moroney 1985) has the instruction “Il faut jouer cette
piece fort lentement” (“This piece must be played very slowly”) written below it.
Another piece by Couperin (no. 67) and one by Henri Du Mont are literally titled
“allemande grave,” but lack any similar direction. Moroney editorially chooses to
designate a few other allemandes as “grave.”\textsuperscript{5} But his decision is not necessarily without
reason: the allemande by Chambonnières “dit l’affligée” is indicated in the MS to be
played “lentement.” These allemandes all have the time signature \( \text{c} \), which Saint
Lambert describes as the “major [time] signature” having four beats that are “fort
grave.”\textsuperscript{6} As Gustafson points out, there are only two harpsichord tombeaux: the one by
Couperin for Blancrocher, and another by D’Anglebert in honor of Chambonnières.\textsuperscript{7}
D’Anglebert’s tombeau shares the same instruction previously seen in these works, “fort
lentement” (although it is in triple time); Couperin’s includes the direction “plus viste”
(i.e., \( \text{vite} \)) in an interior passage, which makes sense only if the previous music has been
played more slowly. Interestingly, Couperin’s tombeau carries the time signature \( \text{c} \).
According to Saint Lambert, this “minor time signature” is beat in two, such that “les
Notes vont une fois plus vite que dans celles qui sont marquées du Signe majeur; puisque
dans la même durée d’un temps, on met deux Noires au lieu d’une” (“the notes go twice

\textsuperscript{4} Ledbetter 1987, 108-111.
\textsuperscript{5} Given with brackets in the tables of pieces from the 1998 Minkoff facsimile of Bauyn.
\textsuperscript{6} Saint Lambert 1702, 18, and exactly the same in L’Affilard 1705, 113. For Morley (1597, 181), the
allemande (alman) is a “heavie” dance, “fitlie representing the nature of the people, whose name it
carieth…”
\textsuperscript{7} Gustafson 2004, 132.
as fast as those in major time, since in one beat duration, two quarters are set in the place of one”\(^8\).

Moroney is surely right to note that playing Couperin helps one understand Froberger, and playing Froberger helps one understand Couperin, even though their notational systems are utterly worlds apart.\(^9\) Comparing parallels and borrowings such as those reviewed in Chapter 2 provides invaluable guidance for performers: not only do we acquire a sense of rhythmic proportions and metrical stress, but, because of the closely related performance practice, we also gain insights about Couperin’s approach to diminution from examining the different ways in which he filled in intervals with scale work and other ornaments. Also, since Froberger had studied with Frescobaldi, scholars have used Frescobaldi’s toccatas (published as completely notated and measured) as a template against which to interpret those of Froberger.\(^10\) In the preface to *Toccate e partite d’intavolatura...* (1637, the most complete version), Frescobaldi gives nine directions about performance. As regards the elasticity of rhythm and tempo, these following comments are pertinent:

1. The manner of playing, just as in the performance of modern madrigals, should not be subjected to strict time. Although such madrigals are difficult, they are facilitated if one takes the beat now languidly, now lively, or holding back, according to the affection of the music or the meaning of the word.

3. The beginning of the toccatas should be played slowly and *arpeggiando*; similarly, syncopations and tied notes in the middle of the piece. Chordal harmonies should be broken with both hands so that the instruments may not sound hollow.

5. In the cadences, even though written in notes of small values, one must sustain them. As the performer approaches the end of a passage, he must slow the tempo.

\(^8\) Saint Lambert 1702, 18. But throughout the 18\(^{th}\) century, theorists varied in interpreting the tempo relationship between these two time signatures: for some, \(\epsilon\) meant a 2:1 ratio; for others, it merely indicated a “somewhat faster” tempo (Houle 2000, 57).

\(^9\) Moroney 1985, 12.

9. In the Partitas, where runs and expressive passages occur, it will be advisable to play them broadly. The same applies to the Toccatas…\textsuperscript{11}

[Example 3-1 here.]

Evidence that these injunctions apply as well to Froberger’s toccatas comes from the Berlin Sing-Akademia MS (SA 4450). While a closing section is given in Example 1-4b, the more significant correspondence is illustrated in Example 3-1a. To the beginning of this copy of Toccata XIV the scribe has added the performance indication “Cette toccata se joüe a discretion jusque” (“This toccata is played freely up…”) that is completed five measures later with “à ♀” (“…to [here]”). This follows Frescobaldi’s third point above, cleverly effected over the opening section by the two-part sentence. After a gigue-like imitative section, another passage follows, written in the same texture as the opening, with “syncopations and tied notes” (Example 3-1b). Now the instruction includes the term “lentement,” but just the same as previously, the symbol “♀” two staves later toggles a return to contrasting measured playing. These directions demarcate the free rhythmic portions throughout the six toccatas in SA 4450, which shares four toccatas (I, II, XV, and XVIII) with Bauyn.

\textit{Discrétion}

Phrases such as “avec discrétion” and “à discrétion” have not escaped the attention of scholars and have been used to offer readers a way to understand

\textsuperscript{11} Translation from MacClintock 1979, 133-134. The numbering is original to Frescobaldi; his remaining remarks address other aspects of performance, and have been omitted here.
Froberger’s performance style was considered so artfully affecting, with such masterful treatment of *rubato*, that, Howard Schott writes, “his pupils and patrons, such as the Duchess Sibylla, [claimed] that only those who had heard him play his pieces could possibly execute them with the proper *discretion*.” ¹³ In his *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte* (1740), Mattheson relates that Froberger once sent Weckmann a copy of a suite “in his own hand with every manner of ornament, so that Weckmann thereby became fairly well-versed in the Frobergerian style of performance [frobergerischen Spiel-Art].”¹⁴ Up until now, however, such directions have come only from second-hand copies, under the assumption that they derived somehow from the composer. One prescription that appears is “sans aucune mesure,” which clearly indicates free rhythmic performance and parallels annotations by F. Couperin for his fully notated preludes. The new “French Book,” as an autograph, erases any doubt over their authenticity with five meditations and tombeaux bearing this same indication: “se joue lentement avec discretion.”

And yet, the rubric is hardly fixed, and the meaning of “discretion,” unlike “sans mesure,” is vague.¹⁵ “Discretion” does not always appear in conjunction with “lentement,” so it may have nothing to do with tempo but rather taste and affect: discreetly, subtly, soberly. This can be inferred because “discrétion” recurs in the descriptive titles of some of Froberger’s allemandes and related pieces such as tombeaux,

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¹³ Schott 1979b, viii. Hence Sibylla’s comment that Froberger’s pieces were “spoilt” by unknowing amateurs.
¹⁴ Rampe 2001, c.
¹⁵ Tangentially, C.P.E. Bach discusses the importance of “discretion” on the part of the accompanist in part 2 (1762) of his *Versuch* (Chapter 31, §§ 3-5, pp. 269-270).
meditations, and plaints, works connoting a dolorous and/or ruminative state of mind seeking consolation. According to Sébastian Brossard’s *Dictionnaire* from 1703:

Discreto ou Con discretione, veut dire Discrètement, avec modération et sagesse, sans aller trop vite ni trop lentement, sans pousser trop, ny trop peu la Voix.\(^{16}\)

Discreto or Con discretione, otherwise Discrètement, with moderation and propriety, neither proceeding too fast nor too slowly, without pressing the voice too much or too little.

Interestingly, the French translation of Schott’s observation includes this parenthetical addition (not in his English original) immediately after the word “discretion”: “c’est-à-dire, la liberté” (“that is to say, freedom”). So another meaning is “at liberty” or “with deliberation” or “as one chooses.” This is not completely at odds with a melancholy affect, which would require a slow tempo, tentative forward motion, and tasteful restraint.\(^{17}\)

This small difference between “avec discrétion” to “à [la] discrétion” earns some fine-tuning from Chapelin-Dubar, too. For her, one must distinguish “l’expression à la discrétion qui signifie à discrétion autrement dit librement, de l’expression avec discretion ou con discrezione qui signifie discrètement” (“the expression à la discrétion which means à discrétion otherwise said freely, from the expression avec discretion or con discrezione which means discreetly”).\(^{18}\) She also points out that since “à la discrétion” is almost always accompanied by “sans aucune mesure,” her interpretation

\(^{16}\) Brossard 1703, 21.
\(^{17}\) This is of course an aspect of French *bon goût*. Indeed, even in his recommendations above, Frescobaldi leaves tempo decisions to the “buon gusto e fino giudizio del sonatore” (“the good taste and discriminating judgement of the player”).
\(^{18}\) Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 47.
corresponds with Brossard’s. Thus, “avec discretion,” alone, may apply more to the affect or sensibility of performance, and has less to do with unmeasured playing.

Although a century removed in style and practice, Daniel Gottlob Türk’s Klavierschule (1789) supports Chapelin-Dubar’s argument. In Chapter 6, Part 5, §71, Türk initially writes:

Wenn der Komponist ein Tonstück nicht durchgängig streng nach dem Takte gespielt haben will, so pflegt er dies durch die beygefügten Worte con discrezione anzudeuten. In diesem Falle ist es also dem Gefühl des Spielers überlassen, bey gewissen Stellen etwas zu zögern, bey andern zu eilen.

If a composer does not wish to have a composition played throughout in strict time he customarily indicates this by adding the words con discrezione. In this case it is also left to the sensitivity of the player to slow the tempo slightly for some passages and to hurry it for others.

But, as he immediately notes, the expression has another meaning:


It is not seldom that a good execution or refined taste is actually meant by this. If, for example, a player performs every musical thought with the proper insight, refinement, and judgment according to the intention of the composer then it is said that he plays with discretion. 19

The fact that this comment concerning taste comes secondarily suggests that Türk would prefer that con discrezione apply principally to expressive tempo fluctuation or rubato.

Rubato

In his 1994 monograph Stolen Time, Richard Hudson presents a history of tempo rubato up to the present day. He describes two kinds of rubato: an earlier type, in which individual notes in a melody are redistributed by means of altered durations or (dis)placement against a more regular, steady accompaniment, and a later type involving changes in tempo of the overall musical fabric. Hudson first associates free rhythmic compositions such as preludes (and other genres such as fantasias and toccatas) with the later, more familiar type of rubato which “robs the tempo of its regular beat.”

It plays a recitative and also cadenzas and fermatas, in which performers would not only perform freely but also add ornamentation. Besides tying the practice to improvisation, Hudson also cites written-down examples dating as early as the 15th century (one of these sources is the Ileborgh tablature from 1448, now in a private collection); perhaps not surprisingly, he also mentions the unmeasured prelude and Froberger’s term discrétion.

As the 17th-century progressed, examples became more multi-sectional, “usually contrasting in texture, metre, note values, or general musical style, and hence presumably to be performed with different tempos or with different degrees of rhythmic flexibility.” Thus, the improvisatory sense featured “a relative lack of organized structure and a free sense of rhythm.” These two implied characteristics (along with the idea of improvisation) confounded many genre types, to be seen in Chapter 4.

The earlier type of rubato is defined as a style in which “some note values within a melody are altered for expressive purposes while the accompaniment maintains strict

\[20\] Hudson 1994, 11.
\[21\] Curtis 1955, 3.
\[22\] Hudson 1994, 10.
\[23\] Hudson 1994, 9.
rhythm.” This can be applied in three ways to prelude performance: melodic embellishment, ornamentation, and arpeggiation. Melodic embellishment, or diminution, relates to the improvisatory aspect of preluding. In Couperin’s preludes, the right hand is typically much more active than the left. Thus we can imagine the right hand’s melodic material as freely concatenating upper voice line(s) from chord to chord, with steady structuring bass notes provided by the left hand (echoing C.P.E. Bach, Hudson remarks that this kind of irregular coordination might be somewhat difficult for a single player to maintain, with the result that the hands will simply synchronize conventionally and result in “a general modification in the tempo of the entire musical texture”).

Ornamentation, of course, is a hallmark of French Baroque performance, and Hudson’s discussion implicitly includes only those typically given by a sign, which C.P.E. Bach categorizes as first-class Manieren. All these ornaments “steal time from an adjacent main note.” F. Couperin aptly portrays this when he writes: “Le port-de-voix étant composé de deux notes de valeur, et d’une petite note-perduë!” (“The port de voix is made up of two notes having duration, and a little lost note!”) And in his illustration, the port de voix is a note set in a smaller typeface between two conventionally sized notes “having duration.” If on the beat, an ornament delays the

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24 Hudson 1994, 1.
25 Hudson 1994, 13-26. Hudson includes notes inégales as a type of rhythmic alteration rubato, but because Moroney (1976, 143) claims that “some contemporary sources state clearly that notes inégales do not apply to preludes,” the practice is omitted from discussion here.
26 Hudson 1994, 112.
27 C.P.E. Bach 1753, 52. Second-class ornaments relate to diminutions: not given by a sign and consisting of “vielen kurzen Noten” (“many short notes”).
28 Hudson 1994, 22.
29 F. Couperin 1717, 20.
entrance of the following note; if pre-beat, it takes time from the preceding note.\textsuperscript{30} Trills (\textit{tremblements} or \textit{cadences}) can steal time in multiple ways, depending on prefixes, suffixes, and the duration of the trill itself. These durational adjustments require rhythmic negotiation between the hands. Couperin’s preludes feature only a handful of ornament signs; many are written out. In these cases, the \textit{rubato} is made somewhat visible through the actual alignment of the notes on the staff (sometimes reinforced with a vertical line in the score).\textsuperscript{31}

Finally, Hudson discusses the most familiar type of arpeggio: that which moves from lower to higher notes. If it is an on-beat arpeggio, the rolled chord necessarily delays the entrance of the top note.\textsuperscript{32} The oblique slant of unmeasured prelude notation reflects this. Other types of broken or staggered playing, such as \textit{style brisé}, result in displaced melody notes, usually delayed against the accompaniment. Hudson focuses particularly on the ornament called a \textit{suspension} (not related to the conventional non-chord tone), which indicates a slight delay in playing a note.\textsuperscript{33} The idea of staggering the left and right hands is inherent to unmeasured notation, again by virtue of the diagonal slant of the notes; that this may be been considered a typical texture are certain vertical lines which \textit{enforced} simultaneities.

Hudson’s argument makes clear that both kinds of \textit{rubato} apply to free rhythmic playing, although tempo fluctuation (the later type, familiar to us through 19\textsuperscript{th}-century

\textsuperscript{30} There has been, of course, much controversy over the metrical placement of ornaments, mostly raised by Frederick Neumann and answered by Robert Donington. References can be found in Hudson 1994, 21-23, especially fn. 16 and 21.

\textsuperscript{31} However, the player must uncover the underlying structural melody notes.

\textsuperscript{32} Hudson 1994, 23.

\textsuperscript{33} F. Couperin (1717, 18) writes: “Le silence qui précède la note sur laquelle elle est marquée doit être réglé par le goût de la personne qui exécute.” (“The silence which precedes the note over which it [the sign] is marked must be decided by the taste of the performer who executes it.”)
Romanticism\(^3\) could apparently be communicated only through textual instruction. The earlier type might be seen to be reflected in the conventional notation employed by Froberger and Frescobaldi for their toccatas: the imposition of a time signature implied a regular sense of meter, and the rapid, jagged runs and swirls of melody in multibeam groups carried the sense of an improvised, embellished melody against a much slower-moving left hand.

**Overview of notational issues**

As revealed both in Lebègue’s remarks quoted at the opening of this chapter and by D’Anglebert’s revisions, the main reason why some unmeasured notation approximated conventional notation was to allow the music to be performed by others, whether for wide general circulation (published scores) or more circumscribed archival purposes (Froberger’s Vienna autographs). It must be kept in mind, however, that a scribe—whether the composer or someone else—partly chooses a notational system depending on the intended recipients. Notation can serve initially as a simple personal shorthand for the writer’s own use in performance, personal symbols that remind him or her of what to do and when. A score may then be circulated to colleagues who are versed in a particular style or genre and can translate the notation with little confusion or misunderstanding. Only when composers opt to distribute their music broadly do they confront issues about communicating with the public through notation. Since Louis Couperin never published his harpsichord pieces—a *recueil* lamented by Tilney as “one

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\(^3\) But Hudson recounts at great length (pp. 325-340) that the earlier type of displacement/coordination *rubato* was also incorporated by 19\(^\text{th}\)-century performers.
of the great missing books in Western music,” the notation in the Bauyn and Parville MSS may represent an arrested development of the first or second stages described above. Thus the issues that arise in interpreting the scores may not solely be the fault of copyists who did not grasp completely what they saw before them, but rather that Couperin’s own idiosyncratic sense of the notation sets up an almost impenetrable block against understanding.

In keeping with the free rhythmic, improvisatory spirit of the preludes, the notation allows for slight differences from performance to performance. There are few difficulties with regard to pitch. Pitch—the musical parameter that most identifies a composition—and pitch order are exactly specified through conventional noteheads, and consequently harmonies and their order are also fixed. Duration and rhythm, however, are only relatively indicated through the use of slur-like curves. While the resulting rhythmic flexibility maintains the sense of improvisation, the notation is not always clear, giving rise to problems for the performer and analyst.

The resulting unconventional notation used for unmeasured preludes varies from composer to composer, and so the performer/analyst must carefully investigate each composer’s particular system. Understanding the general principles elucidated here that govern the notation in these pieces is an obvious first step in formulating ideas for performance, and they also play an integral role in making analytical choices.

Pitch

Since they are presented so conventionally in both contemporary published editions and manuscripts, notated pitches are often considered unproblematic, and lightly,
if ever, addressed. But rather than overarching questions concerning melody, harmony, or tonality on a conceptual level, pitch problems with the sources more often center on individual notes in particular contexts. Such complications are further reduced in modern scores, enhanced by their clear visual quality and supporting scholarly research accumulated over time. Specific corrections or moot instances (there is not always agreement) are described in footnotes or detailed appendices. By offering such open disclosures, editors offer insight into their reasoning, and in so doing, allow users the opportunity to make alternate choices. Justifications range from relying on parallel passages, establishing a strong harmonic progression, observing style, or sometimes, apparently applying a sense of *bon gôut*. Editors also sometimes trot out the rubric that “obvious errors have been tacitly corrected,” a policy that readers and performers should probe, if possible. Still, the overall impression is that the interpretation of pitch is not as problematic as that of rhythm.

But complications do arise. Some corrections are needed simply due to the state of the original historical documents. And more significant important intervention is sometimes required because certain notational conventions are no longer understood or have been superseded.

Certainly, manuscripts present their own special reading difficulties, due to various kinds of copying mistakes made by scribes who might not have fully understood music notation. Notes have been inadvertently left out. Cramped note spacing leads to problems in determining order or alignment, whether in either a single staff or in the coordination between staves. Notes or clefs might be written in the wrong line or space. Glen Wilson refers to a certain note or clef misplacement as *Terzverschreibung*, or “third
mis-writing.” This is a somewhat common error, in which a note might be interpreted as belonging to an adjacent line or space from where it should be. *Terzverschreibungen* arise either from careless placement, or, particularly in the left hand, clef oversight when there is a switch between baritone and bass clefs. Of course, this can result in ambiguous dilemmas for triadic harmonies. At the start of Couperin’s Prelude 1, (Example 3-2a), a clef error makes the left hand’s fourth note either an F2 or A2 in Bauyn.

[Example 3-2 here]

The right hand sustains an A major triad, so the harmony is either an A major chord or an F augmented triad (or seventh chord!). Wilson allows the bass note F2 because he considers Couperin’s use of such an augmented chord to be “highly characteristic.” Moroney, however, thinks that sounding such a dissonant chord so early in a piece is too “unlike Couperin.” He chooses the A2 instead, although he does not remark on the apparently unambiguous “correct” version in Parville (Example 3-2b). Printed books are not immune from errors, but composers took care to present as ideally correct scores as possible. For instance, in the prefaces to their keyboard collections, Chambonnières (1670) and Le Roux (1705) both mention publishing their pieces to combat spurious versions in circulation.

Whether they choose to rely on 17th- and 18th-century sources (in the spirit of a more authentic performance practice) or not, performers today should be aware of three

37 Wilson 2001, 47. Also mentioned by Chapelin-Dubar (2007, 2: 128) more succinctly as an “erreur de tierce.”
38 Wilson 2001, 47.
39 Moroney 1985, 207. While Parville clearly has an A2, this fact is apparently not sufficient: both authors include their contrary opinions about style as further justification.
conventions that no longer regularly apply and nevertheless affect modern editions. First, composers used a wider variety of clefs. The right hand most commonly features soprano clef, as first line C clef; for the left hand, it is baritone clef, as third line F clef. Occasional switching to treble and bass clefs does occur, but these more familiar clefs tend to be more the exception than the rule. Of course, modern transcriptions do away with historical clef usage; what results, every now and then, however, are passages which involve counting many ledger lines, thus highlighting the usefulness of the original notation.

**Guidons**

[Example 3-3 here.]

A second practice is the use of *guidons*, a symbol written similarly to a *tremblement*. *Guidons* (otherwise known as *custos*) are an almost negligible feature today, since they are no longer employed in notation. The most typical *guidons* appear at the extreme right end of a staff (sometimes outside it), on a line or space that indicates what the next pitch will be (see Example 3-3a); we can categorize these as Type 1 *guidons*. Type 2 *guidons*, more uncommon, appear at the *beginning* of system, representing the last pitch from the previous system (Example 3-3b). Importantly, they do not imply restriking the note, but rather its continued sustain. Generally speaking, *guidons* simply substitute for an actual note: Saint Lambert writes that “[i]t is the head of the *guidon* that marks the place, not its tail, which is drawn upwards in a random
fashion.” With regard to unmeasured notation, however, the tails of Type 2 *guidons* can have a supplemental durational meaning, albeit rarely.

**Chromaticism**

Third, performers and analysts also need to be aware of the treatment of chromatic alterations and cancellations, which is slightly different from today. This list summarizes the observations of Loulié (1696) and Saint Lambert (1702):

1. An alteration should be placed before a note, but can appear above or below it.
2. An alteration to a pitch remains in effect for any consecutive repetition(s) of that pitch (in measured music this applies even across a barline).
3. An alteration is tacitly cancelled by a change in pitch or a rest (in measured music this applies even if the original pitch recurs before the next barline).
4. A flat can be cancelled by either a sharp or a natural; this also applies to flats in the key signature.
5. A sharp is cancelled by a flat, and this likewise applies to sharps in the key signature.

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40 Saint Lambert 1984, 59.
41 Loulié 1965, 5-6 and 47-51; Saint Lambert 1984, 61-66. See also Donington 1977, 131-136.
42 This guideline and the one that precedes it together create a characteristic melodic feature of this music: the lightning-quick switch of a chromaticized note to its unaltered state, with only a single intervening different pitch.
43 It is also a convention to write accidentals in all octaves (if possible) for key signatures on the staff. For instance, a “D major” key signature would include two F#'s for treble or alto clef. At least with regard to accidentals, octave equivalency is not observed. This is made clear when Loulié writes that a sharp or flat affects immediate successions of the same degree, where “degree signifies a line or space” (1965, 6).
44 Loulié writes that a natural also cancels a sharp, but Saint Lambert makes no mention of this.
Items 2 and 3 demonstrate that the more modern convention that accidentals remain in force through a measure does not hold for music of this time. So in the manuscripts, accidentals can decorate every pitch in a trill. This is seen in Couperin’s Prelude 6, where every C♯4 in a trill has a sharp written before it (Example 3-4, end of system). Editors today include many courtesy accidentals that clarify items 2 and 3.

[Example 3-4 here.]

It is important for performers and analysts to know the origin of courtesy accidentals in a score, for the most critical pitch issue is deciding whether a passage requires supplemental alterations or cancellations not indicated in the score (a problem not limited solely to manuscripts, or preludes, of course). For some instances, parallelism provides a solution. In m. 26 of the measured section in Couperin’s Prelude 3, the alto has the fugue theme with an E4 written as the fifth note in the manuscripts. The first presentation of the theme has an E♭4, and so Moroney editorially suggests making that alteration in his edition. Tilney includes an interesting case of stylistic parallelism for de La Guerre’s Preludes 1 (D minor) and 2 (G minor) from 1687. Tilney includes chromatic leading tone acciaccature in the arpeggiation of dominant chords at the end of each prelude, although they are nowhere indicated by de La Guerre herself.

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45 The accidental usage described here parallels somewhat the approach taken with post-tonal music, but the reasons are completely different.
46 Added courtesy accidentals can be modern or historical: De La Guerre is one composer who includes them, for instance.
47 Moroney 1985, 53 (his measure 36).
Tilney considers this a “common feature of the style,” citing similar usages by D’Anglebert and Couperin.\(^{48}\)

Harmonic consistency serves to clear up a different passage for Gustafson. In Couperin’s Prelude 13, Gustafson includes two editorial flats, to change two E\(_4\)s into E\(_b\)\(_4\)s (his line 11).\(^{49}\) While these alterations maintain the overall C minor tonality of the span (carrying on for several more chords), they run contrary to guideline 2 from above. Harmonic implication also encourages reconsideration of an ensuing B\(_b\)\(_4\) (his line 12).

All editions of Couperin’s music except Curtis’s propose treating this note as B\(_4\), to provide a temporary leading tone; none of the guidelines above would suggest this change, however. The use of courtesy accidentals to create temporary leading tones or flattened sevenths in secondary dominants sometimes reflects a desire to impart a more tonal profile to a span. Still, some obvious fixes, such as the missing leading tone in the dominant chord at the final cadence of de La Guerre’s Prelude 2 (G minor) from 1687, are unequivocal (Example 3-5). Significantly, two F\(_4\)’s occur only a few notes earlier in accordance with rules 2 and 3.

[Example 3-5 here.]

An example of a more equivocal choice comes from Tilney’s edition. In Nicolas Antoine Lebègue’s Prelude 5 (F major) from 1670, system 3 features a substantial tonicization of G minor (Example 3-6a).\(^{50}\)

\(^{48}\) Tilney, 3: 14.
\(^{49}\) Gustafson (forthcoming), 43. I am indebted to Professor Gustafson for providing galley proofs of his edition.
\(^{50}\) Tilney, 2: 51.
The left hand makes a short descent from A₃ to F♯₃, setting up a secondary dominant D♯⁶. The chordal seventh, C₅ in the right hand, is decorated with a lower neighbor, written as B♭⁴. Tilney recommends playing B⁴ instead (Example 3-6b). This is an issue of scope: B⁴ is helpful as a very local leading tone to C₅, but within the larger span of the tonicization of G minor, B♭⁴ is more appropriate. Since the note is a non-chord tone (and a very short one), either pitch would work, so, at the surface of the music, it may be regarded as a matter of taste. It is in the most ambiguous passages where le bon goût seems to operate: Kenneth Gilbert provides an encouraging—or discouraging—word. In his own editorial policy for D’Anglebert’s pieces, Gilbert writes: “…the player is always free to insert any [precautionary accidentals] he feels would be useful.”

**Rhythm**

To the modern performer, habituated to the greater explicitness of conventional notation, there seems to be scant rhythmic guidance in the score of Example 1-1. It seemingly implies infinite ways to realize note-to-note durations, and yet no way to delineate phrase(-like) spans. By applying order, grouping, stress, and duration—while observing appropriate stylistic conventions—performers can shape the prelude into a coherent, reasonable whole: the difficulty lies in understanding the score. The notation of Example 1-1 was not the only solution that composers formulated in attempting to communicate and guide the elastic rhythms of an unmeasured prelude (while in addition

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⁵¹ Gilbert 1975, ix.
preserving these works in writing with some regard for public consumption). Composers conveyed rhythm in two ways: through various note durations and various curving lines. However, these signs most often apply to order, grouping, and stress: despite the appearance of some typical note values, they do not necessarily represent duration.

Three types of unmeasured notation

From scores made up almost exclusively of whole or quarter notes, to others that appear almost utterly conventional but for the lack of barlines, the degree of assortment and frequency of note durations in unmeasured preludes ranges widely. Consider Example 3-7a-c, excerpts from preludes by Lebègue, de La Guerre, and an anonymous work from the Paignon MS (ca. 1716). The variety of note values provides different degrees of nuance and contrast when compared to the uniform use of one noteshape, seen in Example 1-1.

[Example 3-7a-c here.]

Two lengthy studies by Troeger and Prévost each divide the various notational methods formulated by composers into at least two categories: single-value (en valeurs égales) notation and multiple-value, or mixed (mixte), notation; Troeger includes a third type, dual-value notation.53

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53 Prévost 1987 (Part 2, Chaps. 3 and 4); and Troeger 1987a (Chapter 2). Having issued their work in the same year, these two authors apparently reached their conclusions independently (on different continents), as neither cites the other in his bibliography. “Semi-measured” (Moroney 2001) and “partially measured” (also Troeger 1987a) generally describe dual and mixed notation. Curtis (1955) casually uses the term “mixed” to describe Lebègue’s notation.
Single-value notation uses principally one type of note value throughout, most commonly quarter notes or whole notes, rarely half notes. This method gives the greatest sense of rhythmic freedom because the uniform “durations” leave rhythmic differentiation entirely up to the performer. In other words, the notes simply mark pitches on a staff, and indicate nothing literal about durational values. For the published preludes of de La Guerre and D’Anglebert, Troeger labels their notation as dual value, which, by and large, involves only whole and eighth notes. Even here, Troeger claims that “these values are of no rhythmic significance.”\(^{54}\) In multiple-value or mixed notation, the composer includes a greater variety of durational values. Yet, in the same vein as Troeger, Tilney writes that “no fixed proportions are implied.”\(^{55}\) Chords written as whole notes are free to be played however quickly or slowly as the player wishes, and smaller values rendered at “relative gradations of speed.”\(^{56}\) While players may well find their realizations greatly assisted by the appearance of more rhythmic values, Troeger cautions that mixed notation is “employed with varying degrees of literalness, clarity, and apparent consistency.”\(^{57}\) Tilney adds, strangely ominously, “[t]he more conventional [notation] is just more treacherous.”\(^{58}\)

The durational values of the pitches also have a secondary function: to show the hierarchical importance of a note, which has some application for harmonic analysis. In D’Anglebert’s preludes, for instance, Moroney observes that chordal pitches are written

\(^{54}\) Troeger 1987a, 8. Both composers nevertheless employ a very small number of shorter durations.


\(^{56}\) Tilney 1991, 3: 8.

\(^{57}\) Troeger 1987a, 9. Obviously, the designation “dual-value” is simply a limited kind of “multiple-value” notation.

\(^{58}\) Tilney 1991, 3: 8.
as white (whole) notes, and melodic configurations as black notes that can be beamed.\textsuperscript{59} This applies to de La Guerre and more generally extends to mixed notation also, where some successions of arpeggiated chords appear as half or quarter notes, and ornamental pitches as values that can be flagged or beamed together. This distinction is the same conclusion that Troeger reaches when he writes that, while dual value notation has no \textit{rhythmic} significance, it nevertheless sets up a hierarchy of harmonic and melodic pitches (which makes analytical reduction less troublesome). But perhaps not surprisingly, this functional division is hardly strict. Douglas Maple’s extensive comparative analysis of notational changes between D’Anglebert’s manuscript and published edition gives several striking examples of whole notes as ornamental and black notes as harmonic. Example 3-8 gives the opening of D’Anglebert’s Prelude 1 in G major.

[Example 3-8 here.]

It begins with a three-note stepwise ascending upbeat figure that moves to an arpeggiated chord. The rhythmic similarity to the start of an allemande would seem to imply that the pickup be written as short, black-note durations and the chord as white notes, but D’Anglebert set it exactly contrary to this.\textsuperscript{60} D’Anglebert’s decision is especially interesting with regard to the second F\#4, written as a whole note but which is actually an ornament (\textit{a port de voix}). The notation might hint at tempo considerations: the pick-up to be played slowly and hesitantly, and the chord arpeggiated somewhat more

\textsuperscript{59} Moroney 2001, 295. In his autograph, D’Anglebert used single value notation, and for publication mixed notation. Douglas Maple’s 1989 dissertation exhaustively examines the editorial choices D’Anglebert made for his 1689 collection.

\textsuperscript{60} Maple 1989, 307 (Example 133).
quickly. In another instance from the same prelude, Maple finds parallel melodic arches between the soprano and tenor, and while “the notes do form chords,” the passage is nevertheless given in whole notes (Example 3-9).\footnote{Maple 1989, 308.}

D’Anglebert seems to have privileged \textit{style brisé} texture and rhythmic freedom over functional hierarchy. Thus it is that “white notes are predominantly chordal in function, and the black notes predominantly melodic or ornamental, but they do at times reverse function;” de La Guerre’s notation, however, is much more strict in this functional distinction.\footnote{Maple 1989, 308-309.} This general notational difference between melodic and chordal pitches has implications for the rhythmic transcriptions presented in later chapters of this dissertation.

\textbf{Sustaining curves (Type 1 curves)}

The notation used in unmeasured preludes also tends to be strewn with numerous pen strokes of highly variable length and inclination, some curving, some straight, some wavy, some making knotty flourishes somewhat akin to calligraphic decoration. These marks serve as further rhythmic indicators, primarily to specify duration and grouping. Experts refer to them as \textit{tenues}, \textit{liaisons}, lines, or curves.\footnote{Moroney, Saint Lambert, Tilney, and Gustafson, respectively. “Slur” is often a first resort, but is avoided because of its association with too many other musical phenomena: ties, phrase slurs, legato playing, and \textit{notes inégaux}, to name four.} The terms \textit{tenue} and \textit{liaison}
are already defined in Saint Lambert 1702, and those meanings should not be inappropriately expanded with a modern variation; a confusing conflation already exists (see below). “Lines” may too strongly suggest a straight line, which assuredly many of these are not. So “curve” works best in the generic sense of a mark of some length, with a straight line being a degenerate curve.

Most typically, curves are placed in a score in two ways: either they begin near a notehead and lead away from it to the right (and not to another note); or they lie above, below, or even between groups of notes, sometimes bounding them by pointing to a first and last note, and sometimes hovering over them in a general way. These two configurations each express a basic function: to show how long to hold a note, or to indicate notes that group into some sort of musical unit. However, these functions do not always correspond precisely to these two ways of placement (or possible realization). The two functions may overlap, or one may result as a consequence of the other.

Moroney uses the term *tenues* to describe curves that indicate sustain, and Tilney points out that such a mark is indeed called a *tenue* by Charles Mouton in the preface of his collection of lute pieces (from ca. 1695). Lebègue, in his famous letter (ca. 1684) explaining how to read the notation of his preludes, designates a *tenue* as “le petit cercle” (“the small arc”) which “signifie qu’il faut tenir toutes les notes que ledit cercle entoure” (“signifies that one must hold all the notes which the aforesaid arc encloses”); however, Lebègue later applies *tenue* to a slightly different context for only a single note.⁶⁴ But in Saint Lambert’s treatise from 1702, *tenue* is the same as our modern tie, and that is the

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⁶⁴ In the preface to his collection *Pièces de clavecin courtes et faciles*…, Jean-François Dandrieu (cited in Curtis 1955, 116-117) employs Saint Lambert’s term *liaison*, his description of its function echoing Lebègue’s: “tenir la Notte sur laquelle elle comance jusqu’à celle où elle finit, quoi qu’il n’y en ait d’autres entres deux” (“to hold the note from where it begins to that where it ends, although there may other [notes] between the two”).
term’s chief meaning today. To avoid conflation, I follow Gustafson and call these elements sustaining curves.

[Example 3-10 here.]

Gustafson gives more details about these curves and their operation. Sustaining curves, or Type 1, can apply to (a) a single note or (b) a group of notes, most typically a “discernible harmonic unit.” A Type 1a curve (Example 3-10a) has a pitch only at the left end. Since a tie is a curve that has the same pitch at both ends, a Type 1a curve cannot be equivalent to a tie: this is why the term *tenue* should be avoided (while ties are completely superfluous with the exclusive use of Type 1a curves, ties do appear in more highly detailed mixed notation scores, as in Example 3-7a). Type 1b curves are precisely what Saint Lambert defines as *liaisons.* Generally, both ends of a Type 1b curve point to the first and last notes of the group the curve encloses. While it can look like a slur—indeed, *liaison* can be translated as “slur”—its realization actually relates to sustaining the notes of a chord:

65 Tilney 1991, 3: 3. Tilney and Moroney (1985, 14) argue that Saint Lambert does allow for a sustaining line also called a *tenue.* Saint Lambert’s Chapter 6 discusses *tenues* (as ties), where he explains that some durations are unavailable by use of the dot, and that the tie “was invented” to make “whatever value one wishes.” He expands (p. 61):

La beauté du Chant veut quelquefois qu’une Note tienne long-temps, ou d’une certaine durée de temps, à laquelle aucune valeur particulière ne répond. Alors on a recours à la tenué, & par son moyen on compose cette durée telle qu’on la veut.

Tilney and Moroney translate “aucune valeur particulière ne répond” as “to which no particular value can be assigned” or “corresponds,” and apparently read the phrase to mean a note of indeterminate length. However, in light of the fact that Saint Lambert is explaining the “invention” of the tie, I believe that in the phrase in question he means a duration that cannot be written as a single note—what he has called a “simple note value,” as opposed to “composite” (*composée*), and so “one takes recourse to the tie and by its means composes this duration that one wishes.” He is supplementing his argument, not offering an alternative.

On touche toutes les Notes que la Liaison embrasse, & ce qui est l’effet de la Liaison; on garde toutes ces Notes après les avoir touchées, quoi-que leur valeur soit expirée, & on ne les lâche que lors qu’il est temps de lâcher la dernière…

Play all the notes that the *liaison* encloses, and this is the effect of the *liaison*: one holds down the notes are after they have been played, even if their value has expired, and only releases them when it is time to release the last [note]…

This corresponds to Lebègue’s own explanation for a *tenue*, however (Example 3-10b.i). Example 3-10b.ii, from a prelude by de La Guerre, shows that convexity or concavity can depend on whether the curve appears above or below a group of notes (note also the single sustaining curve in the left hand which is convex).

Thus, to denote a sustained chord in unmeasured prelude notation, a single Type 1b curve will enclose several pitches at once, but several Type 1a curves will extend from as many single pitches. Prévost calls Type 1a curves “liaisons multiples” and Type 1b “liaisons simples,” focusing on the number of curves used, but Tilney labels Type 1a curves as “simple” and Type 1b as “complex” or “multiple note,” referring instead to the number of notes with which a curve is associated. Composers such as de La Guerre, Lebègue, and Louis-Nicolas Clérambault even use *liaisons* interchangeably with or in conjunction with sustaining curves. A single *liaison* groups the harmony, and additional sustaining curves (usually in the bass) indicate how long to let the entire chord sound.

Note also that functional conflation has already come into play, as *liaisons* indicate sustain but also show grouping. Similarly, sets of sustaining curves with

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67 Saint Lambert 1702, 13.
68 The secondary function he describes would be a Type 1a curve.
69 In manuscript preludes, chordal entities sometimes apparently lack some or have too many Type 1a curves, a problem for interpretation.
70 Prévost 1987, 89-139; and Tilney 1991, 3: 3-4. Tilney himself mentions this unfortunate crossing of terminology.
71 In the Bauyn and Parville MSS, it is a Type 1a sustaining curve that forms the long tail of Type 2 *guidons*. In this respect, the few Type 2 *guidons* that occur are unusual, since the scribes more often continue a Type 1a curve across a system break without including a *guidon* for the original pitch.
proximate ends consequently group pitches into a harmonic unit which does not participate in musical activity beyond the end of the curves. For Couperin’s preludes, left hand bass note sustaining curves often sweep upward and crossing both staves, providing an additional bounding function by separating musical events on the left from those on the right.\textsuperscript{72}

**Grouping curves (Type 2 curves)**

Gustafson categorizes grouping curves as Type 2 curves, otherwise aptly called *accolades* ("embrasures") by Chapelin-Dubar.\textsuperscript{73} They operate in three ways: (a) to link a pair of notes, as a typical two-note slur, or, somewhat in the same vein, as a *port de voix* (or appoggiatura) and the note it decorates; (b) to group several notes, as in a written-out trill or scalar gesture that likely requires no sustaining; and (c) to separate gestures from one another (Example 3-11a-c).

[Example 3-11 here.]

Curtis speculates that, very generally, Type 2a and 2b curves might imply a “legato grouping” and that the first note of a group receives a relative rhythmic accent, with implications for projecting a sense of meter.\textsuperscript{74} Moroney and Tilney recognize Type 2a curves similarly and concur with Curtis’s line of thinking.\textsuperscript{75} With regard to pairs of notes, traditional two-note slurs, in almost any musical style, are rendered strong – weak.

\textsuperscript{72} Moroney 1985, 16.
\textsuperscript{73} Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 72.
\textsuperscript{74} Curtis 1970, x.
This applies similarly to an appoggiatura or the on-beat *port de voix*.\textsuperscript{76} Alternately, pitches grouped thusly might simply be connected in legato fashion. Each end of a Type 2a curve points to one of two consecutive pitches, which may be conjunct or disjunct. Type 2b curves encompass a group of pitches; the ends of the curve bound off the first and last pitches, but do not point to them.

Despite these categorizations, ambiguous cases abound in the manuscript sources. Occasionally, a curve might seem to be placed too far from any note(s), apparently enclosing several but not pointing to any one, and yet not defining a triadic harmony: that curve might be interpreted as Type 2b; on the other hand, it might be interpreted as a Type 1a curve, carelessly placed by the scribe. And as mentioned above, *liaisons* themselves are a kind of Type 2b curve. Gustafson observes, however, that some preludes use both *liaisons* and Type 2b grouping curves, and their appearance might not be clearly distinguished.\textsuperscript{77}

The function of Type 2c curves does not necessarily translate into a graphically different kind of curve. In his examples, Gustafson views these separators as slightly more vertically-oriented lines, not pointing to or enclosing any notes. But grouping can result from implication. Both Gustafson and Moroney point out that the (collective) ends of Type 1a curves separate a harmony from subsequent ones, the curve(s) literally forming a boundary between events. Straight oblique separators figure quite prominently in the preludes by Lebègue, the first composer to publish unmeasured preludes in 1670. In Lebègue’s preludes, separators appear as right-to-left diagonal lines that are paired in

\textsuperscript{76} It must be noted, however, that Saint Lambert discusses both on- and pre-beat performance of the *port de voix* in Chapter 24 of *Le principes du clavecin*. To give an appropriate accent to a Type 2a curve, the performer would articulate a clean attack on the first note, and then finger pedal into the second note.\textsuperscript{77} Gustafson 1984, 21.
both staves. As Gustafson notes, these appear to be oblique barlines, but they cannot function as such, for very often they separate only single harmonies from each other. Among the composers who published unmeasured preludes, only Lebègue employed these event separators. 78 Kitchen notes that while a separator “acts as a further guide to the eye,” Lebègue uses them so profusely that they “spoil the musical flow,” appearing instead as numerous barriers in the score. 79 The implication here, then, is that such separators may engender inadvertent or unnecessary metrical stresses; in addition, they hinder visual grouping.

Three types of lines (Type 3 curves)

Somewhat less common than curves, at least three kinds of lines also appear in unmeasured preludes. With the understanding that these are somewhat more straight lines than curved strokes, we proceed with Gustafson’s classification and denote these lines as Type 3. Type 3a lines show coordination, specifying the placement of one or more pitches. Type 3a.1 lines counter the overall style brisé or slightly broken texture by enforcing the simultaneous sounding of two or more notes (Example 3-12). Such an alignment line is almost always vertical, with each end pointing to a note. Alignment lines cross the staves or lie between them, since such coordination between both hands is unusual in broken chord playing.

[Example 3-12 here.]

78 To my knowledge, this type of separator appears in only one manuscript prelude, in the MS Roper (Chicago, US-Cn MS VM 2.3 E 58r). With perhaps some significance, two of Lebègue’s preludes are also copied in Roper.
Example 3-13 presents one extraordinary instance, in Couperin’s Prelude 9, where three diagonal lines connect three notes in the right hand with one in the left.

[Example 3-13 here.]

Related to this alignment line is the Type 3a.2 line, or what can be called a placement line, another vertical stroke that usually crosses both staves but seems solely to point to a single note. This line specifies the sounding of a note among those surrounding it. Since it crosses both staves, the placement line also enforces a kind of coordination between the hands: here the right hand provides space for a note in the left (see Example 3-14). For Moroney and Tilney, Type 3a.2 lines indicate a local strong beat.

[Example 3-14 here.]

Although they are called unmeasured, some preludes feature what appears to be an occasional barline (aside from their use in measured sections), or Type 3b lines. They differ from Type 3a lines by not pointing to any note; as “barlines” they can be paired across staves (barlines did not conventionally cross staves at this time), or can appear alone in one staff. This kind of barline is most associated with Couperin and D’Anglebert, and perhaps not surprisingly, their interpretation differs.

80 Chapelin-Dubas (2007, 73-76) calls Type 3a.1 lines “barres de simultanéité” and Type 3a.2 lines “barres d’intervention.” She also includes a “barre d’unison,” for a unison note that is written in both staves, but this is just a specific kind of Type 3a.1 line. Coordination lines (along with the oblique slant of the pitch circles) speak to C.P.E. Bach’s notion in his Versuch that “[i]t is only rarely that all parts are struck together” (1787, 99ff.)
For Couperin, a barline indicates that a significant event occurs on the harmony to the right of the barline. In other words, it anticipates an arrival, and reads as if one has just crossed into a new measure (refer to Example 3-2a for the manuscript version). Example 3-15a, in modern notation, conveniently shows that harmonic and melodic activity continues across the barline. For D’Anglebert, a barline indicates that a significant arrival occurs on the harmony to the left of the barline. It ends an arrival, and reads as if one has finished a measure. In Example 3-15b, the first two barlines are preceded by cadential flourishes; the third signifies the end of an idea not through cadence-like activity but rather because the three-note figure in the right hand that comes after serves as an anacrusis. Interpreting these marks as similar to barlines has important implications for meter, since they highlight unequivocal local upbeat and downbeat pairs which are in no other way located clearly by the notation. For this rhythmic reason, and also because these lines appear very infrequently and should be distinguished from the conventional barline, they are denoted accenture lines.

The various notational systems and components that support them demonstrate the concern composers had in wishing to convey the appropriate style for playing an unmeasured prelude. Attesting to this are the refinements D’Anglebert made from his autograph to his 1689 collection and Lebègue’s comments recounted at the head of this

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82 Moroney 1985, 13.
83 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 74.
chapter. A particularly striking case is an anonymous prelude that appears three times in two different manuscripts. The prelude is transcribed once in quarter-note single value notation, and again in “whole note” single value notation in the La Pierre MS.\textsuperscript{84} A variant of the same prelude is found in a mostly “whole note” notation but with some melodic fragments in dotted values and sixteenths in the Bodleian MS.\textsuperscript{85} The manuscripts apparently were lesson books, and so “any notation that came to mind would [have] serve[d] for teaching purposes.”\textsuperscript{86}

Some scholars have hinted or simply assumed that single-value notation was the first method devised (likely based on its resemblance to earlier unmeasured lute tablature), and that, in response, the increasingly explicit dual- and mixed-value notations followed.\textsuperscript{87} But it remains unknown to what degree composers experimented independently or interacted in the development of these notational systems. D’Anglebert, Couperin, and Lebègue all studied with Chambonnières, although no preludes by Chambonnières are extent (if he wrote any). Contact through the royal court might have occurred among even more composers, including de La Guerre, who gained royal patronage while still a child. On the other hand, Le Roux was apparently never associated with the court.\textsuperscript{88} Even so, published scores could have served as exemplars, but Couperin’s works were never publically released. And the notational trend is not necessarily clear-cut, and indeed, publication history progresses in just the opposite direction: Lebègue’s detailed, almost conventional mixed notation appeared in 1677; the

\textsuperscript{84} Paris, \textit{F-Pn} Rés. Vmd. MS 18.
\textsuperscript{85} Oxford, \textit{GB-Ob} MS E 426. It is, of course, extremely intriguing to speculate about the transmission of this prelude.
\textsuperscript{86} Tilney 1991, 3: 19.
\textsuperscript{87} Prévost 1987, 113; Troeger 1987a, 8-9; Tilney 1991, 3: 4; and Moroney 2001, 295.
\textsuperscript{88} Le Roux 1959, v.
dual-value usage of de La Guerre in 1687 and D’Anglebert in 1689; and Le Roux’s single-value whole note preludes in 1705.\textsuperscript{89}

No method proved completely viable, and into the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, composers relied on more explicit conventional notation. In his \textit{L’art de toucher le clavecin} (1716), François Couperin resorts to fully notated music for his eight preludes there (see Example 3-16, his Prelude 2).

[Example 3-16 here]

He instructs performers to play “d’une maniere aisee sans trop s’attacher à la precision des mouvemens; à moins que je ne l’aÿe marque exprés par le mot de, Mesuré” (“in a flowing manner without too much adherence to the exactness of the meter, at least those which I have not indicated specially by the word \textit{measured}”).\textsuperscript{90} This applies to his Preludes 1, 2, 4 and 5. The other four are marked “mesuré.”\textsuperscript{91} The problem of notating unmeasured preludes may explain why no preludes by Chambonnières have survived (if he wrote any), and why some composers provided few or no preludes at all in their published collections.\textsuperscript{92} D’Anglebert includes preludes for only three of the four groups of pieces in his 1689 collection; Rameau provided one unmeasured prelude for the single

\textsuperscript{89} “It would seem…that the custom of notating these pieces entirely in whole notes ran simultaneously with the traditional mixed notation started by Lebègue and used well into the 18\textsuperscript{th} century” (Curtis 1955, 117-118).

\textsuperscript{90} François Couperin 1717, 60. The term recalls Sainte-Colombe’s use, and of course refers unmeasured playing discussed earlier in this chapter. Couperin’s statement is one of a handful about the free performance of preludes directly attributable to someone who composed them.

\textsuperscript{91} The direction “mesuré” for Prelude 7 strikes me as peculiar. Notationally, it corresponds to those that are to be played freely, and in m. 6, the direction “mesuré moins lent” (“measured, less slow”) seems redundant, or at least makes more sense to indicate a contrast to what would have been previously unmeasured playing.

\textsuperscript{92} Aside from the expectation that performers would improvise a prelude themselves, as mentioned by F. Couperin in \textit{L’art de toucher}... (p. 60). The speculation about the notable lack of unmeasured preludes by Chambonnières is Scheibert’s (1986, 141).
suite in his 1706 collection, but none for the suites published in 1724. It seems that the notational problems were insurmountable and that conventional notation was the best alternative, at least for the public’s sake.\(^9\)

Finally, the account of the development of unmeasured notation in France is not unidirectional, from free to fixed. In other words, from Froberger to François Couperin, the notation comes full circle.

**Problems in interpreting unmeasured notation**

In focusing on the problems posed by the notation of unmeasured preludes, it is important to remember that the “score” of a particular piece can preserve various kinds of knowledge about that piece. Scores can represent how a piece sounds but show nothing about how the piece is constructed or how to perform it; they can instruct the performer about what to do, but reveal nothing about sounds and silences; they can signify what to play, but specify nothing about how the work should be performed. Modern musical notation accomplishes all these things to some degree, but some detail will always be lacking and the communication to the performer will not always be absolutely clear. This is especially true in the case of the Bauyn and Parville manuscripts, which are not autograph and where the scribes did not fully understand what they were copying (if indeed, as conjectured, they derive in some degree from a Couperin autograph). There is also the question of whether discrepancies arise due to errors or variant versions, given speculation by Chapelin-Dubar that the preludes in Parville may have come from two

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\(^9\) Or, as Schenker uncharitably puts it: “Subsequently the rise of the masses made it necessary for the composer to give consideration to the incapabilities of an ever-growing number of musicians” (1979, 6-7).
sources.\(^\text{94}\) She wisely observes that “[u]ne copie n’est pas une reproduction exacte. Nous somme déjà en presence d’un premier niveau d’interprétation” (“a copy is not an exact reproduction. We already face a first level of interpretation”).\(^\text{95}\)

Vague and ambiguous notational details make both these manuscripts problematic sources for anyone who consults them. Facsimiles of these manuscripts (and sources for other relevant composers besides) are available to scholars and performers today, and while users will gain an invaluable (some might say necessary) historical perspective by working with contemporary sources, convenience and familiarity with modern notational conventions often trumps such an aspiration. But resorting to the modern editions by Curtis, Moroney, Tilney, Wilson, and Gustafson & Wolf does not necessarily eliminate the difficulties in reading unmeasured notation, difficulties which are compounded by decisions made by these same editors.\(^\text{96}\) Their decisions might lead to a subtle but nevertheless deceptive outcome: by relying solely on modern edition(s), a performer or analyst unknowingly performs or analyzes an editor’s interpretation of the manuscript notation.\(^\text{97}\) A prudent course of action, then, is not only to study any included critical apparatus, but also to scrutinize and refer to the sources themselves as a matter of course. In addition, almost all editions elucidate the editor’s policy about problems, decisions, and perhaps an underlying philosophy about the degree of clarification and “correction” taken (Wilson’s publication, for instance, attempts to reconstruct an ideal version of the “original” autograph). A few cases presented here will highlight a more thoughtful and

\(^{94}\) Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 231.
\(^{95}\) Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 5.
\(^{96}\) Moroney 1985 supersedes the previous two L’Oiseau-Lyre publications edited by Brunold (1936) and Dart (1959). Gustafson & Wolf, to be published by Performer’s Editions (Broude Brothers) is not yet available as of early 2011. I am extremely grateful to Professor Gustafson for providing copies of his 2006 galleys. Chapelin-Dubar has recently published an edition of the preludes as well (Éditions Zurfluh).
\(^{97}\) Gustafson, private communication. This is doubly compounded by Chapelin-Dubar’s previous comment; this sentiment is already expressed by Dart (1963, 18).
interactive role the performer or analyst can take with these pieces, checking and judging the manuscripts’ contexts against those presented in a modern edition.\(^98\)

[Example 3-17 here.]

To even begin to understand a prelude, interpreting curves is crucial, a task made somewhat arduous by their profusion. Since the scribes were not always consistent or careful to show the precise extent and end of a curve, an editor’s choice of a curve’s function and type will have consequences for melody, harmony, performance, and analysis. A brief look at the boxed gesture in Example 3-17 from Prelude 3 introduces four basic criteria in understanding curves: (1) shape or curvature; (2) placement; (3) type; and (4) discrepancies between the manuscripts.\(^99\) First, all the penstrokes are obviously curved here, but this will not always be the case. The longer marks in the left hand of Bauyn (Example 3-17a) look much straighter, for instance. In some locations, the spacing is so cramped that the penstrokes are very short and so appear just as or even more straight. Curvature, therefore, is relative throughout the manuscripts, and it is up to the editor how to reckon each curve in a meaningful way, appropriate to its context.

Careful assessment can lead to different outcomes. The left end of the curve labeled “1” in both manuscripts originates from the D5. In Bauyn, it seems to imply a pairing with the following A4; in Parville (Example 3-17b), however, the right end is not placed as closely to either A4 or B\(\sqrt{4}\). Without Bauyn for comparison, the curve in

\(^{98}\) The assiduous assessment of the manuscripts against modern editions forms a large part of the analytical procedure in Chapelin-Dubar 2007.

\(^{99}\) If possible. Incidentally, the title from Bauyn is followed by a “./.” symbol discussed earlier.
Parville might be read as ending on the A4 as a Type 2a two-note slur; on the B₃/₄, as a possible Type 2b curve grouping the D₅, A₄, and B₃/₄; or to neither pitch, enclosing the A₄ but not pointing to it, as a Type 1a sustaining curve.

Another common problem is shown by the curve labeled “2.” It hovers at some distance away from any notehead (although in Bauyn its right end points to C₄), and so its ambiguous placement affects its typing. It might be assessed as a Type 2b grouping curve, enclosing the three or four notes below it (in Parville, the placement of the left end is more uncertain), or, perhaps, a Type 1a sustaining curve extending from the A₄, making an F₃ diminished triad. Editors often adjust the ends of a curve or sometimes move it around to clarify how they interpret a passage; at other times, a curve from a manuscript might be omitted, or a curve added where one was not written at all.

Finally, for preludes that appear in both manuscripts, various kinds of discrepancies can arise. Within the box, Bauyn has five curves, but Parville only three. Pattern consistency can account for the two “missing” in Parville, as Bauyn has curves for each pair of descending fourths. The manuscripts also will not necessarily agree on curve placement. The curve labeled “3” groups G₄ – A₄ – F₃ in Bauyn, but in Parville the same curve—if it is the same curve—has shifted to the left. With regard to harmony, Parville’s curves emphasize the F₃ diminished triad, although the configuration of curve “3” makes it debatably either a Type 1a or 1b curve. The situation is rather more tangled in Bauyn because curve “3” is obscure enough in its placement and function to be possibly redundant within Bauyn, or contradictory against Parville.

Classifying a curve has consequences for others it might affect. One might begin, then, with evaluating curves that are less doubtful in function to give another problematic
curve a reasonable interpretation based on contextual clues. Here, interestingly, all modern editions, and even Chapelin-Dubar, ignore Parville and make curve “3” a Type 1a curve, from G4 to the following F#4. This reading follows from prioritizing the two-note slur pattern in Bauyn. First, meantone tuning intensifies the B#-F#4 pair, so stylistically it deserves emphasis. Second, since the F#4 is the accentually weak second member of a two-note slur, the G4 that comes after it must be strong, and so it cannot participate as a rhythmically weak member of an ascending figure, as it is grouped in Parville. The G4, as strong, makes the following note weak, and, when the G4 is sustained (as overlegato) through the A4, it better emphasizes the strong accent of the ensuing F#4, which is the first note of a two-note slur. This rhythmic analysis is clearly nontrivial, in light of the unmeasured nature of these preludes. Thus one further factor that also affects curve interpretation is rhythm.

[Example 3-18 here.]

Example 3-18, from later in Prelude 3, provides another useful illustration—all the more so in that the notational problems are all proximate—of interpretation and reconciling knotty differences between the manuscripts.

Box 1 shows completely different placements of two curves. In Bauyn (Example 3-18a), the lower curve appears to be a Type 2b grouping curve for the left hand. The curve above it is particularly unusual because it does not group any pitches in that staff; alternatively, if the curve were to be read as a Type 1a sustaining curve, it seems rather

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100 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 2: 162. It is another instance of the descending fourths seen in Example 2-3.
distant to point to the F3 before it. The same curves in Parville (Example 3-18b) both appear in the right hand staff, offering a plausible explanation as two sustaining curves, one for A4 and the other for F4. The Parville scribe even lengthens the lower curve with a vertical squiggle, emphasizing the separation with the ensuing right hand arpeggiation.¹⁰¹ All modern editions except Gustafson & Wolf move the curves so they become two Type 1a curves pointing to the F3 and A3 in the right hand, and ignore the apparent “grouping” curve in Bauyn. But since their edition centers only on Bauyn, Gustafson & Wolf maintain the lower curve as a Type 2b grouping curve and the upper as a Type 1a sustaining curve attached to the F4, and then supplement with an editorial sustaining curve for the A4.

In the bass nearby, the Parville scribe has placed the sustain curve quite close to the B♭₂, whereas in Bauyn the same curve begins almost as the right hand arpeggiation ends. Moving a curve and attaching it to a plausible note is a common editorial fix, and all modern versions attach this sustaining curve to the B♭₂. Interesting, too, in the lower staff is the guidon which appears in both MSS before the left hand’s descending figure. Any guidon in the middle of a line makes little sense; this Type 2 guidon simply repeats the previous D3. As Chapelin-Dubar explains, this guidon “rectifiant une tenue primitive du ré un peu restrictive, sans doute à l’occasion d’un changement de système…” (“corrects an original tenue of the D3 that was restricted no doubt by the occurrence of a system change”).¹⁰² Thus, the curve attached to the explicit D3 is actually a sustaining curve, written almost vertically because it originally appeared, cramped, at the end of a

¹⁰¹ Note that the beginning of this curve overlaps with the end of the curve stretching from the lower staff. Here, two penstrokes clearly denote two curves, unlike the questionable instance of linkage in Box 1.
¹⁰² Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 2: 180. Insofar as it stands for a pitch, the tail of this guidon thus has a Type 1a sustain function.
system, and was summarily continued by a Type 2 guidon which would have appeared at the beginning of the next system.\footnote{What is especially provocative about this extremely odd guidon is that it seems to hint at a common source or link between Bauyn and Parville.}

But modern solutions for this situation diverge. Curtis keeps the D3 curve (along with its more vertical orientation) and the guidon, remaining quite faithful to the manuscripts’ contexts. Gustafson & Wolf omit the guidon and simply attach a single Type 1a curve to the D3. Tilney attaches two curves to the D3, raising a question about their function: two (sustaining) curves for one note? Similar to Tilney, Moroney associates two lines to the D3: the explicit curve from the MSS becomes a straight line Type 2c separator, and he ignores the guidon in favor of a Type 1a curve for the D3, in the manner of Gustafson & Wolf.

In the first half of Box 2, both manuscripts have the same placement and number of curves, four. What types of curve is not obvious. Consider the first two curves lying beneath B♭3 – E4 and B♭3 – E4 – G4. In Bauyn, their curvature is more pronounced than in Parville, where they look almost straight enough to be Type 2c separators. In all of Couperin’s preludes, only Moroney includes such separators; no other editor entertains them. Since there is not a change of harmony or a new bass note, they are probably not separators, but sustaining curves. As such, they require an editorial decision about their type. The curve extending from G4 in Bauyn presents a model for a Type 1a curve: first, the left end clearly points to a notehead; second, the curve covers any other (chordal) pitches like an umbrella; and third, the right end reaches away from any other note and suggests duration. Coupled with the curve belonging to the E4 below it, the ends of both curves bound off the harmony, a result somewhat more clearly seen in Parville. Tilney
and Wilson further clarify Type 1a curves by placing them as horizontally as possible, with the right end of the curve located at just about the same space or line as the pitch being sustained. All editions except Tilney treat all four curves in the first half of Box 1 as Type 1a sustaining curves. Tilney reads the first two as Type 1b.

The second half of Box 2 shows other problems. Parville links what are two separate curves in Bauyn; perhaps this is an instance of the Parville scribe’s imprecision. Seen at the extreme right of the box is a very common discrepancy: one manuscript has a curve, and the other does not. Finally, one can debate the status of the curve beneath the scalar passagework, whether it is a Type 1 or Type 2 curve. As a Type 1a curve, it seems to point to the nearby B♭3. Moroney, Gustafson & Wolf, Tilney, and Wilson agree with this solution. Tilney, strangely, sends the curve into the space between the staves, and Wilson truncates it just before the run begins, making it quite short. Curtis takes Parville literally, making a long Type 1a curve not from B♭3, but from G4.

In none of their critical commentary do Moroney, Tilney, or Wilson even mention the omissions, additions, adjustments, or extensions just discussed. While such an intricate analysis may ultimately seem unnecessary, important practical considerations nevertheless result. For instance, consider the performance implication for the sustain curve under the scalar run in Box 2. According to the reading in Moroney, Tilney, and Gustafson & Wolf, the thumb can hold the B♭3 all the way through the run if the player applies the paired 3 -2 fingering convention of the time (the reach from B♭3 to C5 is not a problem on harpsichords, given that their keys more narrow than those of a piano). Wilson may have omitted the lengthy sustain to avoid this slight complication. But Curtis’s rendering calls for either a finger switch on the G4, or an unusual fingering for
the G₄ – E₄ – B♭₃ arpeggio. And the run itself requires restriking the supposedly already held G₄.

At times there seem to be too many curves for the number of notes, and so the editor omits a curve; conversely, there are instances in which a curve is missing but seems necessary, so one is added. Example 3-19 comes from the opening of Prelude 5. It is one of four preludes unique to Bauyn, so we cannot consult Parville for comparison.

[Example 3-19 here.]

In Box 1, each of the pitches in this three-note descending figure possesses a sustaining curve. Literally played, then, the notation indicates that all three notes D₄ – C₄ – B♭₃ will sound simultaneously. Even as an extreme case of overlegato, the resulting cluster seems quite unusual for this time period. In his re-creation of the “original” lost autograph, Wilson changes the B♭₃ to an A₃ (see the circled “1”), creating an overall D♭₆ harmony.¹⁰⁴ This makes sense in two ways. First, his reading clarifies the chord and creates a logical contrapuntal progression from the beginning of the line (G₃m – D♭₆ – G₃m). Second, changing the B♭₃ to A₃ makes the A₃ a port de voix to the B♭₃ in the ensuing harmonic resolution, and ports de voix are not at all unusual in Couperin’s preludes. But even though Wilson’s pitch alteration changes all the notes into sustainable chord tones, he removes the obvious sustaining curve from the D₄. Instead he adds one to the initial B♭₃, probably to create a melodic connection to the A₃.

¹⁰⁴ The circled “1” is Wilson’s, who notifies the reader about the original B♭₃ but does not explain his decision.
In Box 2, four curves apparently repeat the just-discussed D4 – C4 – B♭3 cluster, with an additional final G3. Since there are four notes and four slurs, a one-to-one correspondence seems inescapable. Yet here, Wilson omits the curve that would attach to the C4, thus emphatically delineating the G minor chord that resolves the preceding D♭.

[Example 3-20 here.]

Occasionally a modern redaction can introduce new errors into a prelude, possibly unknown to the performer. Example 3-20a gives system 7 from Prelude 4 in the Bauyn manuscript. The first note in the left hand, A3, has a line below it that crosses the staves. Moroney renders this line as a Type 1a curve in his edition (Example 3-20b, at the end of his system 6), but at the start of his system 7, he has included a Type 2c separator, which, as an independent entity, does not occur in the manuscript. So either Moroney has added this separator for editorial reasons, or he has curiously interpreted a single curve in two ways! As Moroney himself mentions, sustaining curves in the bass do have a secondary function as a separator, but only insofar as their upswept tails bound off all musical activity to their left from that on the right. Moroney may have changed the tail of this curve to a separator to make explicit its bounding-off function, but his score misleads the performer as to what actually appears in the manuscript. Once again, the critical commentary for this prelude makes no mention of this strange decision, instead comprising only a single remark about a pitch two systems earlier.

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105 Moroney 1985, 16.
Editors also face the problem of how to deal with apparent “extra” curves attached to a single note. Example 3-21 excerpts systems 1 and 2 of Prelude 1 from both manuscripts. At the opening, the variant cascade of chained fourths (Box 1) in the right hand features four curves that associate pairs of notes: B♭4 – F♯4, G4 – E4, F4 – C♯4, and D4 – B3. Yet, additional curves extend from the B♭4 and the F4. These curves are not redundant: the latter serve as sustaining curves, and the pairing curves are Type 2a curves functioning as two-note slurs (although the slurs for B♭4 – F♯4 and G4 – E4 are missing in Parville, Bauyn expresses consistent use).

It may seem counterintuitive that the curves do not link the notes we might expect, namely the conjunct pairs F♯4 – G4, E4 – F4, and C♯4 – D4, especially given that they are all a half-step apart. But the articulations they create are nontrivial. First, as Tilney and Curtis observe, the first note of a group explicitly circumscribed by any curve—Tilney specifies a pair, Curtis allows for more—will receive a rhythmic accent. Especially for two-note slurs, of course, this is conventional. Over a D pedal in the bass, the cascade outlines a G minor chord and then a B diminished chord. This is confirmed by the sustaining curves for the B♭4 and F4. The resulting rhythm and durations could be notated (analytically) in modern notation as shown in Example 3-22.

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106 Per conventions regarding chromatic alterations reviewed earlier in this chapter, the previous F♯4 does not carry though.
econd, the overlegato required for each curve guarantees an articulation *between* pairs—i.e., between the F♯4 and G4, E4 and F4, and C♯4 and D4—further upholding the rhythmic and harmonic scheme (for consistency’s sake, the player should also provide an articulation between the initial A4 and B♭4). Thus, from the notation itself, details about rhythm and meter arise.

The span contains another ambiguous curve, labeled “1” in Example 3-21a. Appearing near the end of system 1, the curve lies between the staves, placed a hairsbreadth just below the top staff, and then swoops into the lower staff. Simply read, it encloses the E4 and A3 in the right hand with the G♯3 and A3 in the left, grouping them as some sort of unit. But the left hand melodically maintains the descent of this two-note neighbor motive outlining, once again, fourths. As a continued gesture, why should the grouping curve bound off the first pair of the flourish? A different reading begins by noting that the E4 and A3 in the right hand, each having sustaining curves that both extend well over the melodic activity of the left hand. In Bauyn, the left end of curve “1” falls ambiguously between the D4 and E4; in Parville, it lies a little closer to the D4 (Example 3-21b). A plausible harmonic reading would be to treat this instead as a sustaining curve, actually referring back to the C♯4 in the right hand and thus delineating an A major chord. It is strange, though, that the curve crosses the staves if it were only meant to prolong the C♯4. There is still enough space for it to almost parallel the curves for the E4 and A3 without necessarily diving down to the lower staff. Although such vigorous calligraphic touches abound in both manuscripts, Moroney divests them of any meaning: they “look nice but [have] no relevance for the interpretation.”

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108 Moroney 1985, 15.
Perhaps not surprisingly, curve “1” is interpreted in two ways. For Wilson, it is indeed a sustaining curve stemming from the C♯4, and he keeps the curve well away from the lower staff. Tilney reproduces the curve’s appearance in Bauyn, but seems to treat it as a Type 1a curve that attaches to the D4. Moroney and Gustafson & Wolf also maintain the curve’s staff-crossing position, and instead define a grouping function for it by carefully placing the ends of the curve between D4 and E4 in the right hand and A3 and E3 in the left, explicitly enclosing the notes and not pointing to any. Finally, in Curtis’s edition, the curve is positioned even farther from any notes, and contrary to either manuscript, straightens out so that it more or less dangles straight down to the very bottom of the lower staff, not at all near the G♯3 and A3 in the left hand.

Consider finally the curve labeled “2” that also admits a double interpretation. In Bauyn, while it is placed directly below the D4—which already has a sustaining curve—it apparently points to the C♯4 in the right hand. It would seem strange, however, to sustain the dissonant minor second C♯4 – D4 at this point, since the right hand momentarily ceases its activity: one might expect instead a more harmonic or triadic holding over the left hand’s D2 – D3 octave. Since the paired-note gestures in the right hand (E4 – F4 and C♯4 – D4) begin a flourish (exactly as the beginning of the prelude, with regard to the curve labeled “1”) that flows into the left hand, the curve might serve as a Type 2b curve instead, grouping the rest of the flourish in the left hand. Just as with Prelude 3, the Parville manuscript provides a supplemental comparison. There, the curve lies quite close to the C♯4, again apparently as a sustaining curve. But both Moroney and Wilson astonishingly originate the curve all the way back to the previous A3, likely in the interest of harmonic clarification as speculated earlier. Tilney instead bounds off the
entire melodic gesture as a grouping curve, allowing it to trail into the space between the
staves. This is somewhat contrary to his reading for the curve designated “1,” although
the context is essentially the same: one pitch with two curves. Once again, a single
penstroke in the manuscripts has been interpreted by different editors in two ways.

An editorial policy for preludes transcribed by the author

This examination of the manuscripts and modern editions considers only a
handful of what must be innumerable other problematic and ambiguous musical
situations in all these sources for Couperin’s preludes. To make the analyses of the
preludes in this dissertation as commensurably valid and accurate as the scores of the
preludes themselves, the author has prepared new versions of Louis Couperin’s preludes
analyzed in Chapters 6 through 8. The scores adhere to the following editorial guidelines.

Pitch

If a pitch appears in both Parville and Bauyn MSS, then it appears in the
redactions.

1. The stemless white notehead is used (following Moroney 1985 and Gustafson &
   Wolf) in that it best approximates the idea of a circle simply as placeholder for
   pitch. In addition, it is unusual enough to dissociate it from the sense of a “long”
   duration as is the case with whole notes in other editions.

2. All accidentals are original, except for natural signs: contemporary practice did
   not cancel, but rather re-raised or -lowered, chromatic pitches. As hinted by
   explicit alternating accidentals in some trills, alterations apply only to the note
they immediately precede, except when that note is immediately repeated.

Courtesy accidentals are provided in cases that may be unclear.

3. Obviously wrong notes (e.g., clearly not expressing the prevailing harmony) and *Terzverschreibungen* have been ignored and/or corrected without comment.

4. Pitches and ornament symbols in brackets indicate that the item appears in one MS and not the other, and are marked “B” or “P,” depending on the source. These extremely slight variants could be plausibly entertained and are left to the performer’s discretion.

5. Since they have long been abandoned in modern scores, *guidons* do not appear.

**Curves**

Determining the function and placement of the curves demands the most energy and consideration from an editor. If a curve appears in both MSS, then it appears in the redactions. If a curve appears in only one MS, then, depending on context, it may be included or not, without comment.

1. Single curves attached to a single note have been treated whenever possible as Type 1a sustaining curves. Because both MSS are so rife with these curves, and especially because single arpeggiated harmonies are always presented with these curves in multiple, Type 1b curves (*liaisons*) have not been used. This also discounts the appearance of any Type 2c straight-line separators (e.g., in preludes by Lebège and de La Guerre and utilized in Moroney 1985).

2. Curves that extend beyond or “enclose” more than two notes have also been attempted to be interpreted as sustaining. This greatly reduces the appearance of
Type 2b grouping curves in the transcriptions. Curves that are highly resistant to configuration as a sustain curve are shown as solid curves with a “tick” through them, an editorial “dodge.”\textsuperscript{109} Such contexts include contradictory, unnecessary, or difficult sustaining patterns, or harmonic and melodic conflict.

3. All curves grouping a pair of stepwise notes have been treated as Type 2a two-note slurs, in the conventional sense.

4. All curves grouping a pair of skipwise notes have been treated as Type 1a sustaining curves belonging to the initial note. The sole exception to this occurs in contexts where there are two curves attached to the first note, such that one extends only to the adjacent skipwise note, and the other encompassing several notes beyond. Here, the shorter curve becomes a two-note slur and the other a sustaining curve.

5. Curves for three-note stepwise groups are also treated as sustaining curves, attached to the first note (behaving, admittedly, like a \textit{liaison} for a filled-in third).

6. Sustaining curves, no matter their length, are given a horizontal orientation (per Gustafson 1984). Type 2a two-note slurs follow the contour of the pitches. Only Type 2b grouping curves are angled according to the contour of all the pitches they encompass.

7. Dashed curves with a “tick” through them indicate that one MS (labeled “B” or “P”) employs a curve of different length or placement, and which offers an alternate (but usually very subtle) performance choice. This convention also applies to some ties in fugal sections.

\textsuperscript{109} Dart 1964, 21.
8. Dashed curves are purely editorial, usually given to more clearly fill out a harmony.

Lines

Any Type 3 lines are reproduced per the MSS. Type 3b lines are understood to operate as the equivalent of a right-hand barline, i.e., to indicate an accented arrival after the line.
Analytical and Performative Issues in
Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin

Chapter 4
On the Concept and Form of Preludes

The concern for form broadly divides this chapter into two parts. First, we trace the relationship of preludes with other “free” pieces. While we have seen how Couperin’s preludes were influenced by measured pieces such as tombeaux, allemandes, and toccatas, preludes have also been historically associated with other genres that emphasize aspects of fantasy, improvisation, and genius. Besides giving further guidelines about performance, this historical and conceptual survey more importantly reveals that the entanglement of pieces titled “fantasia” leads to an unfortunate dead end when attempting to compare such pieces within Couperin’s own *oeuvre*. Second, we propose steps towards a method to parse an unmeasured prelude, capable of handling various levels of form from the prelude itself to melodic diminutions. Such a formal analysis is useful in establishing a rhythmic hierarchy in a composition, with implications for rhythmic order, grouping, stress, and duration.

In France around the time of Louis Couperin

Contemporary definitions of “prelude” rarely list specific details about what a prelude is, presumably because the genre was generally considered to be improvised in nature, the product of pure musical imagination, and “free” in almost all senses of the word. Dictionaries, handbooks, and manuals by Thomas Mace, Sébastian Brossard, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, François Couperin, and Saint Lambert describe how preludes most generally function in three ways: (1) to introduce the key of measured pieces that
would come after it; (2) to allow the player to warm up; and (3) to test the tuning and condition of the instrument, whether lute, viol, or harpsichord. But while any instrumentalists are capable of the first two functions, the practical conditions of the last are not equivalent for all players. Gambists and lutenists can easily retune their strings, but harpsichordists find the same task somewhat more complicated. Henri Quittard even concludes that harpsichordists “did not have to make this test” for tuning. It is quite clear that, given such lengthy and complex preludes by D’Anglebert, Lebègue, de La Guerre, and both Couperins, “one cannot…consider these pieces as merely warming-up or tuning-up exercises…” Rather, definitions such as those touched on in Chapter 1 from François Couperin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, pertain: the preludes primarily display the composer’s or performer’s genius and imagination, and secondarily announce the key of the pieces to follow.

[Examples 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 here.]

As to establishing a key, there are two easy ways for the performer to accomplish this task: by playing chords or by playing scales. The simplest, plainest way to do so with chords is given in Example 1-1. Example 4-1 exhibits a somewhat more extravagant take. The opening of Louis Couperin’s Prelude 6 amounts to an arpeggiation of a single A minor chord, much elaborated by internal repetitions of groups of adjacent members and changes in direction. The opening of Prelude 16 in Example 4-2 illustrates

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1 Another practical consideration for the player is the matter of the acoustics of the performance space, which affects how the player will treat dynamics and sustain.
2 Curtis 1956, 60.
3 Curtis 1956, 56.
the other option: it opens with a descending G major scale, the other way to express a key. Finally, a hybrid version is presented in Example 4-3, from Prelude 10: a descending scale, from E5 to E4, expressing C major, occurs over a tonic pedal while each scale member is supported by a triad; the reduction in the analytical staves below the music score makes this clear. Other ways of combining scalar motion with chordal progressions are certainly possible, and devising ways to do so allows composers to exhibit their compositional or improvisational inventiveness and imagination. The aspect of liberty or discretion recurs generally in the writings of various authors, applicable to form, tonality, and musical material, whether in composition or improvisation. Of course, preludes transmitted in score obviously are not improvisations, and so the prelude “becomes a purely musical fantasy, a piece composed in the style of an improvisation…” The idea of “fantasy” takes on many guises in the history of music, from virtuosic and rhapsodic pieces from the 19th century by Chopin, Liszt, and Schumann, to 18th-century examples by C.P.E. Bach, to the Renaissance contrapuntal genre. Tracing definitions of “prelude” and related genres through historical documents for about a century before the early 1700s reveals unusual conflations in the transmission of the concepts of compositional liberty, improvisation, and introductory function. This search also sheds light on seemingly anomalous characteristics mentioned by some authors.

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4 Chapelin-Dubar 2007 (1: 231 and 2: 631-660) hypothesizes that Preludes 15 and 16, unique to the Parville MS, are not by Louis Couperin, but were modeled after his preludes that appear there. Chapelin-Dubar suggests either Louis’s brothers wrote them, or perhaps even an amateur music lover. Interestingly, a lengthy anonymous prelude (Curtis’s no. 12) from the same MS features extensive passages apparently lifted from Couperin’s Preludes 6, 10, and 11 (cited in Moroney 1976, 151).

5 Curtis 1956, 6.

François Couperin, Nicolas Antoine Lebègue, and Sébastian Brossard

There are very few French writings from around Louis Couperin’s time which discuss harpsichord preludes. One source comes from his nephew, François Couperin, in his famous manual *L’art de toucher le clavecin* (1716). Here are F. Couperin’s relevant statements about preludes.

I have composed the following eight preludes in the keys of my pieces in my first book, as well as the second which has recently been published. I have noticed that almost all harpsichord students can master the little prelude which heads them all. Not only do the preludes agreeably announce the key of the pieces that one will play; they also help to loosen the fingers, and also to test keyboards on which one has not already practiced.

Although these preludes are written as measured, there is nevertheless a customary taste which should be followed; I will explain. A prelude is a free composition where the imagination abandons itself to all that comes to it. But since it somewhat rare to find gifted players capable of producing one at a moment’s notice, those who resort to these regulated preludes should play them in a relaxed way without greatly adhering to the exactness of the movement, at least where I have not expressly marked with the word *measured*.

One of the reasons for which I have measured these preludes, it is for the ease which one will find them to teach, or to learn.

F. Couperin’s summary outlines the most familiar attributes about French preludes: they introduce the key of the pieces that are to follow; they spring from the
imagination and are improvised; they help performers warm up on an unfamiliar instrument; they are more easily comprehended when written in conventional notation; and most importantly, that there is a kind of prelude which is performed with a certain amount of rhythmic looseness.⁷ Unmeasured rhythmic performance might be partly attributable to the idea that, in ascertaining the instrument’s condition and tuning, the player proceeds tentatively and hesitantly from course to course, key to key, chord to chord. But the historical roots of this performance tradition contradict or temper this notion. Moroney writes that “the earlier tradition of keyboard pieces that did not conform to regular rhythmic groupings but were written in measured notation is the main line of descent for the *prélude non mesuré.*”⁸ In this same article Moroney downplays the unmeasured lute preludes that unquestionably inspired harpsichord players of the time. But even Ledbetter finds evidence that unmeasured lute preludes, too, arose from notated works that experienced “rhythmic loosening” in the early decades of the 17th century, contrary to the “traditional view that the prelude originated in a free improvisation growing out of a tuning routine…”⁹

Lebègue’s letter to William Dundass comes considerably earlier, however: the translator’s fee charge to Dundass is dated July 3, 1684. In the letter, Lebègue echoes F. Couperin’s description:

Le Prelude n’est autre chose qu’une preparation pour jouer les pieces d’un Ton, ainsi il n’est que pour tater le clavier devant toucher les pieces, et se promener dans le ton que l’on veut jouer…

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⁷ The preludes written by British composers (mentioned in Chapter 1) that emulated French practice resemble F. Couperin’s, and so are an additional source through which to study unmeasured performance of fully notated pieces.

⁸ Moroney 2001, 294.

⁹ Ledbetter 1990, 28.
A prelude is nothing other than an opening for playing pieces in a key, as well as for testing the keyboard before playing pieces, and to essay the key in which one will play…

Sébastian Brossard’s *Dictionnaire de musique* (1703) uses almost the same terminology to promulgate the features enumerated by F. Couperin and Lebègue. Brossard describes how “le pur effet du genie sans que le Compositeur s’assujettisse à un nombre fixe, ou à une certaine qualité de mesure…” ("the pure effect of genius frees the composer from a fixed number [of parts], or a definite sense of measure…"). In addition, “le Compositeur Recherche les traits d’harmonie qu’il veut employer dans les pieces reglées qu’il doit joüer dans la suite” (“the composer explores the characteristic harmonies he will use in the measured pieces which will ensue”). With these pieces “les Maîtres joüent sur le champs…comme pour tâter ou éprouver si la Clavier est en bon estat, si l’Instrument est d’accord, si les Chordes sont justes]…tâter ou éprouver si le Clavier est en bon estat, si l’Instrument est d’accord, si les Chordes sont justes” (“masters play on the spot…to test or essay whether the keyboard is in good condition, whether the instrument is satisfactory, and whether the strings are in tune”). And finally, the player “sans…à aucun dessein prémédité, donne l’effort au feu de son genie” (“without any premeditated design, performs by the fire of his imagination”). But these statements come from entries for (respectively) *fantasia*, *ricercata*, *tastature*, and *capriccio*. Some of these Brossard associates with “prelude,” yet, for *preludio*, he has:

* C’est une Symphonie qui s’ert [sic] d’Introduction ou de Preparation à ce qui suit. Ainsi les Ouvertures des Opera sont des especes de Preludes; comme aussi les Ritournelles qui sont au commencement des Scenes, &c. souvent on fait preluder tous les Instrumens d’un Orchestre, pour donner le Ton, &c. (p. 78)

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10 On pages 25, 95, 150, and 11.
It is a Symphonia which is an introduction or preparation for what follows. Thus the overtures to operas are kinds of preludes, as also the ritornelles at the beginning of scenes, etc.; often all the instruments of the orchestra are made to prelude in order to give the key, etc.

While he maintains the introductory function of a prelude and the idea of setting a key, Brossard refers instead to orchestral music, e.g., the first movements of some concerti grossi by Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713). The difference between general instrumental music and that for keyboard occurs in his entry for toccata (p. 165) a work “à peu près comme Ricercata, Fantasia, Tastatura, &c. Ce qui distingue cependant la Toccate de ces autres especes de Symphonie. C’est que 1º elle se joüe ordinairement sur des Instrumens à claviers” (“a bit like the ricercata, fantasia, or tastatura. These nevertheless distinguish the toccata from these other kinds of instrumental music. First is that it is typically played on keyboard instruments”). Compounding all these crisscrossing collective qualities is this description for yet another kind of composition:

grandes pieces, Fantaisies, ou Preludes, &c. variées de toutes sortes de mouvements & d’expressions, d’accords recherchés ou extraordinaires, de Fugues simples ou doubles, &c. & tout cela purement selon la fantaisie du Compositeur, qui sans être assujetti qu’aux regles générales du Contrepoint, ny a aucun nombre fixe ou espece particulière de mesure, donne l’effort au feu de son genie, change de mesure & de Mode quand il le juge à propos… (p. 119)

large pieces, fantasies or preludes varied in every kind of tempo and expressions, exquisite and extraordinary harmonies, simple or double fugues, etc., and all this purely according to the imagination of the composer who, without being subjected to any but to general rules of counterpoint, neither having any fixed number or particular type of meter, works by the fire of his genius, changing meter and mode whenever he chooses accordingly…

This is Brossard’s entry for suonata (given the passage of time, not the model established from the 18th century on), explicitly relating it to fantaisies and preludes. Because information about preludes is fairly scanty, it would seem, therefore, profitably revealing
to seek parallels between these genres within Louis Couperin’s own compositions for harpsichord and organ. Yet even a cursory glance at the many fantaisies from Oldham’s manuscript reveals that they have little physiognomic resemblance to the preludes: the fantaisies are fully notated, written in simple meters, have imitative openings, coordinated regular rhythms, spans of counterpoint in three or four voices, and at times homophonic sections and quite rhythmically active bass lines. Arpeggiated textures and style brisé passages are only rarely in evidence. So although scholars have related the preludes to toccatas (and recall Mattheson’s definition from Chapter 2), the fantaisie does not seem comparable at all. Why, then, do Brossard’s definitions link these pieces together?

Links to Athanasius Kircher and Michael Praetorius

Athanasius Kircher’s stylus phantasticus is occasionally mentioned in the unmeasured prelude literature because it seems connotatively related to the “fantasy” of improvisation. And indeed, Kircher even cites a Froberger work (FbWV 201) as an example of the style. These details may seem important with regard to the connection between Froberger’s toccatas and Louis Couperin’s preludes as detailed in Chapter 2. Kircher’s description of the stylus phantasticus comes from his Musurgia universalis (1650):

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11 Additionally, a sole prelude (“Prelude Autre Livre”) is fully measured, thickly imitative, and homophonic.
13 Rampe (1995, xxii) guesses that it was during Froberger’s second visit to Rome (1645) that he passed on the score of the work to Kircher, based on personal correspondence between the two men. They may have even been initially acquainted when Froberger made his first sojourn there in 1637, to study with Frescobaldi.
Phantasticus stylus aptus instrumentis, est liberrima, & solutissima componendi methodus, nullis, nec verbis, nec subiecto harmonico adstrictus ad ostenstandum ingenium, & abditam harmoniae rationem, ingeniosumque harmonicarum clausularum, fugarumque contextum docendum institutus, dividiturque in eas, quas phantasias, ricercatas, toccatas, sonatas vulgo vocant. (p. 585)

The phantasticus style is appropriate to instruments. It is the most free and unfettered method of composition, bound to nothing, neither to words, nor to a harmonic subject. It is organised with regard to manifest invention, the hidden reason of harmony, and an ingenious, skilled connection of harmonic phrases and fugues. And it is divided into those pieces which are commonly called Phantasias, Ricercatas, Toccatas, and Sonatas.\textsuperscript{14}

But Kircher’s definition does not apply without certain qualifications. First, he makes no mention of improvisation, referring to the fantastic style as a “componendi methodus.” Second, the Froberger work is not a toccata, but a fantasia (nicknamed the “Hexachord Fantasia”) in the 16\textsuperscript{th} - and 17\textsuperscript{th}-century sense of the word: a polyphonic or imitative work that is the instrumental counterpart of the vocal motet. Third, prior to the explanation of the stylus phantasticus is a discussion of stylus canonis and stylus motecticus, which for Kircher are both principally vocal genres, a contrast pointedly made by the phrase “aptus instrumentis.”

Kircher’s conclusion identifies several genres as being “fantastical” (significantly equivalent to Brossard’s list), and Gregory Barnett comments that it is the creative element that binds them together:

The style is “fantastical” not just because of its inventiveness, but also because it derives from the mind’s “fantasy” and therefore, in one Neoplatonic reading, becomes emblematic of divine inspiration. Kircher’s emphasis on freedom, from both a text and a cantus firmus, and on invention as well suits otherwise the uncategorisable range of techniques and forms in the music...\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Barnett 2005, 526.
\textsuperscript{15} Barnett 2005, 526-527.
Likewise, John Butt claims that Kircher “continues to insist that the composer adhere to the perfection of compositional rules.”

Practitioners such as Heinrich Biber and Dietrich Buxtehude infused their works (particularly sonatas) with “novel, imaginative conceptions of genre that intrigue, surprise, and awe the listener.” Unexpected and unpredictable shifts in texture and timbre, dazzling virtuosic effects, and highly imaginative depictions of affects and animals all startled and amazed audiences. Form went beyond any plain label, and design became so inventive that it was difficult to predict what would happen next. With such apparent formal disorganization, instrumental virtuosity, and mercurial shifts in mood, it is not surprising that “the stylus phantasticus has also been applied by modern scholars to the improvisatory qualities of the toccata” (despite the total lack of mention of improvisation by Kircher himself).

It is likely that both a certain latitude in interpreting *liberrima* and *ingenium*, and the similar roots *phant-* and *fant-*—further compounded the changing meaning of fantasias and fantasies.

The source for both Brossard’s conflation and Kircher’s grouping together of fantasia, ricercare, capriccio, sonata, etc., stems from the classification system set forth by Michael Praetorius in his *Syntagma musicum*, vol. 3, of 1619. Praetorius provides three general categories of preludial works: preludes that stand alone (“vor sich selbst”), namely fantasias and capriccios, fugues and ricercars, sinfonias, and sonatas; preludes for dances, namely intradas; and preludes for motets and madrigals, namely toccatas.

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16 Butt 2005, 43.
18 Johann Mattheson mentions (in addition to Froberger) Handel, Merulo, and Rossi as ideal exponents of the “fantastischer Styl” in *Der vollkommene Kapellmeister* (1739, 88-90).
“Prelude” is not used or defined as a genre, but rather as a term that indicates an introductory function. The strongest parallel to the definitions from F. Couperin, Brossard, and Kircher is that for *fantasia* or *capriccio*:

Capriccio or *phantasia subitanea*: when one undertakes to execute a fugue [subject] of one’s choosing but dwells on it only for a short time, soon changing to another fugue [subject] as it strikes him. For since no text is permitted with proper fugues, one is not bound by words; one may make as many or as few digressions, additions, abridgements, twists, and turns as one wishes. Such fantasies and capriccios are especially suited for demonstrating one’s skill and artistry; one may employ without further hesitation anything that is permissible in music, such as suspensions, [mensural] proportions, etc., as long as the mode and melody are observed and remain within their bounds…

Again, familiar words and concepts reappear: “as it strikes him,” “as one wishes,” “demonstrating one’s skill and artistry,” and “plesier.” Praetorius is ambiguous about whether he describes a compositional procedure or improvisation, but the term “subitanea,” more literally meaning “sudden,” could refer to the twists and turns that take place in the composition, or possibly *ex tempore* performance.

Both Kircher and Brossard have principally borrowed from Praetorius’s category of independent preludes. Brossard is more broad and ultimately complete, even providing a definition for *intrada* as “une *Entrée* de Ballet.” But both writers also

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19 Praetorius 2004, 38; my additions in brackets.
20 Praetorius 2001, 255.
include “toccata,” which Praetorius sets aside in its own category. Other than considering the preludial function as an essential feature for all these works, Praetorius’s definition shows why the later writers also included the toccata:

A toccata is a preamble or prelude played by an organist when he first sits down at the organ or harpsichord, before he begins the motet or fugue. It is extemporized with simple, individual chords and figurations, etc. But each player has his own manner of executing it, and treating it here at any length is unnecessary…

I have collected many splendid toccatas by the foremost Italian and Netherlandish organists—and in my own modest way even added some myself… 21

Besides specific mention of the harpsichord, other similarities communicated by later writers include preludial function, extemporization, and seemingly capricious formal plans. In citing composers from Italy and the Netherlands as models, Praetorius’s description relates to Froberger’s educational sojourn in Rome. Athanasius Kircher had settled in Rome in 1637, and he and Froberger probably met then, if not later in 1641, and a surviving letter from Froberger to Kircher establishes their association. More importantly, Praetorius’s mention of the element of improvisation is confirmed by André Maugars. In his recollections of his time in Rome, issued in Paris in 1639, Maugars reported that he saw Frescobaldi play and recommended to his readers “il faut l’entendre

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21 Praetorius 2004, 40.
à l’improviste faire des toccades pleines de recherches & d’inventions admirables. C’est pourquoi il merite bien que vous le proposiez comme un original à tous nos Organistes, pour leur donner envie de le venire entendre à Rome” (“you must hear [Frescobaldi] improvise toccatas, [which are] full of subtleties and admirable inventions. For this reason he certainly deserves your citing him as a model for all our organists, to make them want to come to Rome to hear him”).

The most important parallel lies in the concept of imagination. While F. Couperin, Brossard, and Kircher use “genie” or “ingeniosum,” which share the same etymological root, to describe *ex tempore* creativity, Praetorius’s term for spontaneous invention—“aus seinem Kopff vorher fantasirt”—is similar but not exactly the same. However, it does reveal the crux of the conflation that occurred over the period of a century: the double meaning of “fantasy” as a musical genre and also as a verb.

**Fantasy and fantasia: Thomas Morley, Tomás Santa Maria, and Thomas Mace**

When Thomas Morley—or rather, his alter ego, the Master—defines “fantasie” in the dialogue *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick* (1597, 180-181), he uses it to begin a list of instrumental compositional types. The fantasie is the first mentioned as a direct contrast to a previous enumeration of vocal works. Moreover, this overall discussion of musical genres comes near the end of the treatise, by which time the two students, Polymathes and Philomathes, have composed polyphonic pieces (or

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22 Maugars 1639, 64 (Hitchcock translation).
23 A problem also addressed in Silbiger 2005 (pp. 454-455). Indeed, Silbiger himself categorizes the fantasia both under “music of fantasy” and “music of craft.”
exercises) for up to 6 parts. The master describes the fantasie as a work in which a composer
taketh a point [subject] at his pleasure, and wresteth and turneth as he list, making either
much or little of it according as shall seem best in his own conceit. In this may more art
be shown then [sic] in any other musicke, because the composer is tide [sic] to nothing
but that he may adde, diminish, and alter at his pleasure. And this kind will beare any
allowances whatsoever tolerable in other musick, except changing the ayre [modal
structure] & leaving the key [final], which in fantasie may never bee suffered. Other
things you may use at your pleasure, as bindings with discords [suspensions], quicke
motions, slow motions, proportions [mensural changes], and what you list. Likewise, this
kind of musick is with them who practise instruments of parts in greatest use, but for
voices it is but sildome used.

What Morley writes about are the polyphonic or imitative instrumental works
written by such English composers as William Byrd and Orlando Gibbons, often for viol
consorts of sizes (there are two by Louis Couperin in the Bauyn MS). The “point” or
subject is the initial musical idea compositionally developed throughout; it corresponds to
Praetorius’s “Fugam.” The fantasia was not limited to groups of instruments. In
keyboard examples by Byrd, Peter Philips, John Bull, Morley himself and others in The
Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, sections delineated by varying melodic motives, textures,
meters, rhythmic figurations, and even double bars and number labels invite comparison
to the same procedures seen in toccatas.

Most noticeably, Morley’s description is peppered with words and phrases that
have become synonymous with the idea of compositional liberty: “pleasure,” “conceit,”
“allowances,” “tied to nothing,” and “what you list,” or desire. Earlier, the master
mentions that the fantasie (and all other instrumental works) differs from vocal pieces
because it is a composition made without a “ditty,” a melody with words (as emphasized
at the end of the definition: fantasies are more appropriate for “instruments of parts,” as
opposed to voices). The fantasie, then, is also free from a text. Because of this, the
composer can truly “wresteth and turneth as he list,” for the master has previously spent
several paragraphs advising his students “to dispose your musicke according to the nature
of the words which you are therein to express, as whatsoever matter it be which you have
in hand, such a kind of musicke must you frame to it,” explaining, for example, that “as it
will be thought a great absurditie to talke of heaven and point downwarde to the earth: so
will it be counted a great incongruitie if a musician upon the wordes ‘hee ascended into
heaven’ shoulde cause his musicke descend, or by the contrarie upon the descension
should cause his musicke to ascend.” Thus freedom in a fantasie also permits the
composer to create a “point at his pleasure,” without regard for text or, contrary to the
case of some vocal motets, a precomposed (chant) melody.

The compendium _Libro llamado el arte de tañer fantasia_ by Fray Tomás de Santa
Maria (Valladolid, 1565) is an even earlier document about fantasias. This text is
essentially an instrumental instruction manual, mostly concerned with understanding how
to perform fantasias on the clavichord (Santa Maria devotes some discussion to the
vihuela—once again, strummed and plucked stringed instruments are companions—but
only minimally). It is also partly pedagogical, such that Book I begins with such basics
as pitch and accidentals, hexachords, tactus, and note durations. As a manual, Santa
Maria also includes chapters on the keyboard and directions on hand placement and
fingering. Toward the end of Book I, and throughout much of Book II, the material is
more technical, providing a theoretical background for understanding. As such, there are

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24 Morley 1597, 177-178.
25 On the title page, his name is spelled “Sancta Maria.” Scholarship favors “Santa Maria.”
26 Santa Maria 1991, viii.
chapters on the eight church modes, the psalm tones, cadences, the consonances, and
dissonance treatment, as a rapid, species-like introduction to two-voice counterpoint.  

In Book II, Chapter XXXIII, Santa Maria, writes about two kinds of fantasias:
chordal and imitative. Both can involve two, three, or four voices, but most
conventionally a fantasia consists of four voices (63v). The chordal fantasia, which
comprises many of the examples in Book I, is mostly homophonic, with voices moving in
familiar style, with structural chords (as semibreves) falling every half measure and non-
chord tones (as breves) steadily filling in between, some faster moving minims,
suspensions, few points of imitation, and non-fugal openings. This style of fantasia is
thus much like the organ preludes, fantaisies, and plein jeux of French composers like
Louis Couperin and Lebègue. This similarity likely stems from the older practice of
basing such compositions on a chant cantus firmus. The imitative fantasia, however, is
more artful. Indeed, Chapter XXXIII is concerned with making fugal entries at the 4th,
5th, and octave. This chapter, and two others devoted to guidelines on playing polyphonic
pieces, clearly shows that the fantasia under discussion is much different than the
conception of “fantasy” in later centuries.

By the end of Book II, Santa Maria reveals that his aim, in starting from the very
basics and eventually reaching a multitude of harmonization formulae, has been to train
the reader to improvise fantasias. Earlier, for example, in Book I, Chapters XX and
XXIII, he discusses small scale improvisations such as melodic diminutions known as
glosas, samples of which are shown to fill in ascending and descending intervals of all
sizes, and trill-like ornaments called redobles and quiebros, which, by convention, were

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27 Book I, Chapter XX and Book II, Chapter II.
28 Gustafson 2005, 110.
not provided in the score but added by the performer. In Chapter XXII, Santa Maria reminds the reader how to gain benefit from performing fantasias. This includes advice “to note all the kinds of cadences used in the pieces, to understand them completely, and to hold them in memory in order to use similar ones in the [improvised] fantasy.” In a series of chapters in Book II, Santa Maria offers copious patterns and variations on harmonizing in four voices a soprano that ascends and descends a scale, in a kind of analog to the règle d’octave in François Campion’s treatise on accompaniment from 1716. Santa Maria summarizes and reviews his overall plan in Book II, Chapter LII, writing:

Despues que estuviere diestro en todas estas cosas, procure comenzar a tañer fantasia a concierto, sobre algunos passos que sean de solfa graciosa. Y de mas desto, procure tañer los passos con fugas diferentes, esto es, en figuras que se hagan en quartas, y en quintas y en octavas, lo qual en gran manera hermosea la musica.

Assi mesmo procure tomar de las obras, una voz qual quisiere, es a saber, tiple, o contra alto, o tenor o contrabajo, y tañer la con el tiple a consonancias a quatro vozes, echando las tres de su cabeza, usando para esto de las diez maneras de subir y baxar a consonancias, mezclando unas con otras, para que se hagan con variedad de consonancias, lo qual (como dicho es) levanta y hermosea mucho la musica.

After having become skillful in all these things, let [the player] then take up fantasy-playing in the polyphonic style upon various melodically pleasing subjects. Furthermore, let him endeavor to play the subjects in different [varieties of] imitation, that is, in figures that can be treated at the 4th, 5th, and the octave, for thereby music is greatly beautified.

Let him extract from compositions any of the voices he wishes, whether treble, alto, tenor, or bass, and play it as a treble with chords of four voices, three of which he extemporizes, utilizing for this purpose the ten ways of ascending and descending in chords, mingling some types with others to achieve that variety of consonances by which, as we have said, music is so greatly elevated and beautified.

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30 Santa Maria 1991, 155. This is in contrast to an earlier statement regarding composed fantasias.
In calling for the performer to extemporize an imitative work, the amount of skill Santa Maria calls for is indeed impressive. Note the same turn of phrase seen in Praetorius—“de su cabeça”—which ties Santa Maria to the lineage of writers who assign improvisation as a characteristic of fantasias, toccatas, and preludes.

We return to Louis Couperin’s temporal milieu by way of Thomas Mace’s *Musick’s Monument* (1676). Mace’s definition of “prelude” is apt and amusing, not only for its vivid language and run-on quality, but also because the author’s tone makes him seem rather exasperated with the whole idea:

> The Prelude is commonly a Piece of Confused-wild-shapeless-kind of Intricate-Play (as most would have it) in which no perfect Form, Shape, or Uniformity can be perceived; but a Random-Business, Pottering, and Grooping, up and down, from one Stop, or Key, to another; And generally, so performed, to make Tryal, whether the Instrument be well in Tune, or not; by which doing, after they have Compleated Their Tuning, They will (if They be Masters) fall into some kind of Voluntary, or Fansical Play, more Intelligible; which (if He be a Master, Able) is a way, whereby He may more Fully, and Plainly shew His Excellency, and Ability, than by any other kind of undertaking; and has an unlimited, and unbounded Liberty; In which, he may make use of the Forms, and Shapes of all the rest.

Mace’s treatise focuses principally on the lute, but he attributes the same qualities to the prelude as the authors from a century before: that they have “no perfect form or shape,” wander about tonally, test the tuning of instrument, allow the players to display their “excellency and ability,” and have an “unlimited and unbounded liberty.” The apparent degree of freedom seems to equal that of Morley’s fantaisie. Note that Mace also describes how a prelude falls into two parts: after “making trial” of the instrument’s tuning comes “some kind of voluntary, or fansical play.” By “fansical” Mace means “fancy,” an alternate, shortened term for fantasy, which would be “more Intelligible” in its use of recurring melodic motives and more metrical performance. This two-part
structure is corroborated by a unique pair of works from Fitzwilliam: a “prelude to a fancie” (piece C) and fantasia (piece LII) by William Byrd. Example 2-1, with its brief span of measured notation, might also represent a faint echo of this.  

Ledbetter has noted that “[t]he term Prelude seems originally, in the lute repertory at least, to have been interchangeable with Fantasia. Lord Herbert of Cherbury’s lute MS, for example, contains both Fantasias and measured Preludes, and there seems to be no distinction of style of technique between the two.” The confused relationship between the polyphonic fantasia and other preludial works explains, for instance, Brossard’s repeated feature of “sans s’assujettir à un certain nombre” (“without being held to a certain number [of parts]”) in his entries for capricio [sic], fantasia, suonata, and symphonia.  

The argument given here has demonstrated that similar aspects of composition, performance, and a generalized sense of liberty and freedom led to a conflation of genres and their characteristics. Eventually, the fantasia, as a piece, lost its association with the Renaissance form, overshadowed by the “fantasy” of improvisation and unbounded inventive creativity. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his Dictionnaire de musique of 1768, includes fugue and imitation among the techniques that can comprise the design of a prelude, but “qu’il ne suffit pas d’être bon Compositeur, ni de bien posséder son Clavier, ni d’avoir la main bonne et bien exercée, mais qu’il faut encore

32 Particularly given French lutenists’ even earlier adoption of English lute traditions (Mellers 1968, 188-190).
33 Ledbetter 1990, 25. Cambridge, GB-Cfm Mus. MS 689 (Herbert MS). Richard M. Murphy’s article “Fantaisie et recercare dans les premières tablatures de luth du XVIe siècle” also shows that the same genre (title) swap occurs in Italian lute sources (cited in Prévost 1987, 9).
34 A distinction glossed over even today. Tilney (1991, 3: 1) recognizes how introductory function links the preludes with the toccata and fantasia (and intonatio), but he omits any mention of the difference between fantasia’s polyphonic basis and the essential homophonic texture of the French unmeasured prelude (and toccatas).
35 A comparable discussion occurs in Prévost 1987, Part I, Chapters 1 & 2.
abonder de ce feu de génie et de cet esprit inventif…” (“that it is not enough to be a fine composer, nor command the keyboard well, nor possess a good, skillful hand, but rather must fully abound in the fire of genius and creative spirit…”). Slightly earlier, in 1762, C.P.E. Bach offered instructions in his *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen* (Part II) on the free fantasia, an essentially homophonic work involving a series of harmonic progressions capable of being summarized by a bass melody and figured bass. It is no longer Santa Maria’s contrapuntal composition.

The numerous definitions and recommendations about preludes and related genres tend mostly toward description; they offer very little in actual concrete details. In helpful contrast, and as a starting point for analysis, we can examine how two contemporary authors discussed and demonstrated how to compose freely rhythmic works. C.P.E. Bach and Friedrich Erhardt Niedt have been selected because they write exclusively about composing for the keyboard and their musical examples. Moreover, their method centers on thoroughbass, a common tradition that flourished throughout Europe at this time, and extensive diminution practice. Most importantly, diminution and thoroughbass are core principles in the theory that will be used to analyze Couperin’s unmeasured preludes, namely that of Heinrich Schenker.

**Composing a fantasia or prelude: C.P.E. Bach**

C.P.E. Bach’s more general characteristics of the free fantasia have already been recounted in Chapter 2, and the discussion here continues with more technical aspects of his instructions.

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36 About génie, Rousseau helpfully writes: “En as-tu, tu les sens en toi-même. N’en as-tu pas, tu ne le connoiras jamais” (“If you have it, you feel it in yourself. If you don’t, you will never know it”).
Bach begins by making important recommendations regarding tonality and harmony. First, he emphasizes the primacy of a home tonality. It must be established at the opening and close, especially in shorter extemporized pieces, and

im Spielen die Haupttonart im Anfange nicht zu bald verlassen, und am Ende nicht zu spät wieder ergreifen darf. Im Anfange muß die Haupttonart eine ganze Weile herrschen, damit man gewiß höre, woraus gespielt wird: man muß sich aber auch vor dem Schlusse wieder lange darinnen aufhalten, damit die Zuhörer zu dem Ende der Fantasie vorbereitet werden, und die Haupttonart zuletzt dem Gedächtnisse gut engepräget werde.\footnote{C.P.E. Bach 1762, 327.}

in playing the primary key cannot be left too quickly, and at the end neither achieved too late. At the beginning the primary key must sound for a good while, in order that one securely hears whence the playing springs. Similarly, one must remain for a while there at the close, in order that the listener is prepared for the end of the fantasy, and the primary key finally well imprinted in the memory.

Bach then provides twenty-three figured basses for the convenience of players who have not yet gained enough experience in improvisation. Thirteen of them consist of ascending (do to ti) and descending (do to re) diatonic C major and A minor scales; in other words, models apparently drawn from the \textit{règle d'octave}, although curiously Bach makes no mention of this tradition. Two other frameworks include chromatic pitches, and two further ones are not based on strictly scalar motion at all. With regard to pedal points, Bach illustrates two over tonic, and two over the dominant. Several of these formulas reveal harmonic successions that appear in Louis Couperin’s preludes. For instance, the tonic pedal pattern shown in Example 4-4a realizes practically the same chords as the opening of Couperin’s Prelude 3 (\textit{mutatis mutandis} for mode).\footnote{And similarly for Example 4-3.} Examples 4-4b-c show rather unusual resolutions that also appear in Louis Couperin preludes.
Second, in contrast to the controlling role of the primary key, a fantasy also “in mehrere Tonarten ausweicht, als bey andern Stücken zu geschehen pflegt” (“winds through more keys than other pieces usually observe”). The player can modulate to closely related (“nächstverwandten”) keys, more remote (“etwas entferntern”) keys, and finally all possible keys, depending on the time available for improvising. Most helpful in this endeavor are a further 27 figured basses provided by Bach as examples. The closely related keys are, in modern parlance, those that differ from the tonic key signature by one sharp or flat. For more distantly related keys, the examples show modulations from C to D major, E major, E♭ major, F minor, G minor, A major, A♭ major, B♭ major, and even both modes for C♯, B, and F♯. With regard to modulation in general, Bach writes that the improviser is not always obligated to cadence in a new key, but that “[e]s ist bey dem Fantasiren eine Schönheit, wenn man sich stellet, durch eine förmliche Schlußcadenz in eine andere Tonart auszuweichen, und hernach eine andere Wendung nimmt. Diese, und andere vernünftige Betrügerenen machen eine Fantasie gut” (“in improvising it is quite charming if one sets up, through a formal cadence, an evading of a different key, and takes another path. These, and other reasonable deceptions, make a fantasy artful”).

For several more paragraphs Bach addresses aspects about performance, such as variety in passagework, arpeggiations and *acciaccature*, harmonic rhythm, and even

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39 C.P.E. Bach 1762, 325.
40 C.P.E. Bach 1762, 330.
dividing figuration between the hands. The chapter culminates with the work seen in Example 4-5.

[Example 4-5 here.]

In keeping with the suggested formulas he has provided earlier, Bach includes the figured bass progression that structures this fantasy (Example 4-6). Thus Bach makes an explicit tie between a basic framework (Gerippe) and its realization as a diminished version of the chordal background. This jibes precisely with the idea that the unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin are essentially decorated chord progressions. Schenker, in his essay “The Art of Improvisation” (1925) drew from this chapter of Bach’s Versuch, speculating that improvisation involved on-the-spot Auskomponierung of mental models. He wrote: “Only the presence of mind with which our geniuses mastered the tonal material in such a way made it possible for them to reach far-reaching synthesis. Their works are in no way pieced together, but rather, in the manner of the free fantasy, sketched out spontaneously and brought up from a concealed Urgrund.”\textsuperscript{41} From this point of view, then, Schenker’s analytical method offers a way to study and understand Couperin’s preludes.

[Example 4-6 here.]

\textsuperscript{41} Schenker 1994, 19.
This analysis of chord progressions is provided by Bach himself, providing insight for the reader as he comments on his fantasy at the numbered locations. First he points out the tonic pedals at the beginning (1) and end. At (2) he indicates a modulation to the fifth. At “x” he notes a feint to E minor, accomplished by only a dominant seventh chord. He describes the move from the B\(^7\) harmony to the following C\(^\frac{3}{4}\) chord in a surprisingly modern way: “eine Ellipsin, weil eigentlich der Sextquartenaccord vom h oder c mit dem Dreyklange hätte vorhergehen sollen” ("an ellipsis, because normally a \(\frac{3}{4}\) chord on B or a triad on C would have been inserted"). A deeper abstraction is implied at (3). Here Bach employs the slur from B\(\flat\)\(2\) to G\(2\) “erklären die Einleitung in die darauf folgende Wiederholung des Secondenaccordes, welchen man durch eine Verwechslung der Harmonie wieder ergreift” ("to clarify the advancement to the following repetition of the \(\frac{3}{4}\) chord, which is again reached through an arpeggiation of the harmony"). This adumbrates a sense of hierarchy, in which, even though the A\(2\) and G\(2\) are harmonized, they are seen as “coming off” one C\(^\frac{3}{4}\) chord to reach another; in other words, a prolongation.

Clearly demonstrating Bach’s notion of artful deception detailed above, locations (4)-(6) create a quick succession of evaded “keys”: the A\(7\) at (4) resolves by fifth to a D\(^\frac{3}{4}\) harmony, but it is a D\(^\frac{7}{4}\); at (5), the D\(^\frac{7}{4}\) should move to a G major harmony, but instead a G minor sixth chord sounds at (6). Other misleading actions involving ostensible dominant

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42 In “The Art of Improvisation” (Das Meisterwerk I), Schenker analyzed Bach’s analysis. Brown 2011 more rigorously examines Schenker’s critique of Bach’s own explanations, and in addition elaborates on how Schenker related improvisation and composition through prototypes and diminutions (similarly noted in Rink 1993).
43 C.P.E. Bach 1762, 340.
44 C.P.E. Bach 1762, 340.
seventh harmonies occur first at (2), in which a D♯ harmony moves to a G♯ diminished sixth chord; second at (x), where an A major chord (with a startling G♯ seventh) is followed by a D♯ diminished sixth chord, a succession all the more jarring for the disjunct A – F♯ bass motion (if the D♯ diminished chord is grouped with the ensuing B♭7 chord, the result is a more quotidian deceptive motion); and third at (4), in which a C♯ resolves to an A♭7, even though the bass’s voice-leading is correct. These events show the kinds of unusual chord successions found in free fantasies, and that they can be explained through elision (in the first case, a missing G♯ chord), an enlarged analytical scope (in the second case, a delayed bass entry), or simply as a voice-leading chord (in the third case, the bass B♭2 descends a step to A2, and an upper voice C5 ascends to C♯5, with all other chord members held in common).

Bach’s realization of the harmonic plan in Example 4-6 is not literal, so that it is already conceptually somewhat removed from the surface of the music. For instance, the fantasy opens with a short, rapid ♯5 - ♯6 - ♯7 anacrusis gesture (as a few of Louis Couperin’s preludes do), accountable more as a V harmony, but this is not accounted for in the figures. Bach also chooses to omit the bass line at (3). Some bass octave leaps are not indicated in the figured bass. And while the durations of the notes in the figured bass are accurately reflected in the fantasy, the upper voice realization—its rhythmic activity, voicing, register, use and placement of all non-chord tones—cannot be captured completely in (a corresponding shorthand-like) figured bass. In fact, even in full score the fantasy is already incomplete, since the sections marked “arpeggio” are left to the
skill and creativity of the player. So the figured bass sketch, as a convenient, comprehensible reduction of a highly diminuted surface, can be considered even more of an abstraction of the music than one might initially believe.

Composing a fantasia or prelude: Friedrich Erhard Niedt

C.P.E. Bach was not the only author, however, to show a relationship between a composition and its underlying figured bass reduction. To mitigate the charge of anachronism—i.e., that is might be too questionable to link Couperin with C.P.E. Bach, who writes almost exactly a century after Couperin’s death—we turn to Friedrich Erhardt Niedt (1674-1708). His *Musicalische Handleitung* is a three-volume work, published (in various editions) between 1700 and 1721. Part I (1700 and 1710) is a landmark work on the rules and procedures for figured bass (*General-Bass* or thorough-bass). That Niedt’s writing reflects, at least to some degree, musical practice derived from the 17th century is supported from his depiction of apprenticeship of the time, which may very well stem from his own life. Part III, published posthumously in 1717, is somewhat of a

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45 Bach writes that the chords all have the same duration and should be arpeggiated twice; the difference in notation (i.e., the soprano as a half-note) occurs for reasons of legibility.

46 Similar “incomplete” scores that outline potential pieces are Italian *partimenti*, a fascinating albeit slightly later practice. Highly developed in Naples, *partimenti* were used to teach improvisation, and generally speaking, a *partimento* score resembles (un)figured bass, except that it “does not accompany anything except itself” (Sanguinetti 2007, 51). *Partimento* realization focused on patterns drawn from the rule of the octave, specific cadential formulae, and memorization of various schemata for upper voice activity; as such, it relates to conventional thoroughbass and diminution practice that existed throughout Europe. Robert Gjerdingen (2007b, 94-100) infers a contemporary connection to France through Nicolas Bernier, who studied with Antonio Caldara in Rome. Recent research demonstrates how the discipline of *partimenti* improvisation underlies 19th-century theoretical precepts for both Viennese theorists as well as the French conservatory (Holtmeier 2007).

47 Niedt 1989, xvii.
miscellany, presenting aspects of vocal music, church style and organ playing, and an idiosyncratic take on counterpoint.\textsuperscript{48}

Part II (1706 and 1721), titled \textit{Handleitung zur Variation}, has relevance for us in being chiefly concerned with composition. Niedt begins with melodic elaboration of simple bass lines and intervals through multitudinous cells of diminution patterns; this is also done for the right hand, and eventually both are transferred to realizations of specific figured bass configurations. The treatise advances to the writing of suite movements—e.g., preludes, allemandes, courantes, minuets, etc. Part II also includes a brief dictionary of musical terms. When Part II was republished in 1721, the chapters were rearranged and the text redacted and filled out by Johann Mattheson, whose own writings on free rhythmic pieces prior to Niedt and Bach have been recounted in Chapter 2. The 1721 edition is so thoroughly rewritten that Mattheson might well be considered a second author.\textsuperscript{49}

[Example 4-7 here.]

In Part II (1706), Chapters X-XI, Niedt describes how to compose a prelude and chaconne from the same thorough-bass.\textsuperscript{50} Chapter X is titled “Ertheilet völligem Unterricht / wie man aus einem schlecten General-Bass, könnte Praeludia, Ciaconnen, Unterricht / wie man aus einem schlecten General-Bass, könnte Praeludia, Ciaconnen,

\textsuperscript{48} As an extension of thorough-bass study from Part I, Niedt shows how at least one common tone can be preserved between SATB chords. He deems this “liegende oder Kette-Contra-Punct,” or “prepared or chained counterpoint” (Niedt 1989, 237).

\textsuperscript{49} It cannot be asserted, however, that Niedt and Mattheson were personally acquainted. More, although Mattheson also completely assembled Part III from Niedt’s notes and plans, reasons why Mattheson was chosen (or chose) to do so remain conjectural (Niedt 1989, xxi).

\textsuperscript{50} Mattheson’s rearrangement of the 1721 edition puts these as Chapters XI-XII. Mattheson also completely assembled Part III from Niedt’s notes and plans.
“The tenth chapter gives a complete lesson on how, from a plain thorough-bass, one can compose preludes, chaconnes, etc.”). Here he introduces the figured bass progression he will use (see Example 4-7a). The modulations abide by Bach’s guidelines, with visits only to the dominant (mm. 8-9) and the submediant (mm. 13-14), with the tonic quickly reestablished after each instance. Although the progression totals 16 bars in length, phrase divisions are somewhat ambiguous. The first four measures close convincingly enough with a half cadence. If four-bar hypermeter were maintained, the next phrase unit would end on the dominant of the dominant; on the other hand, a five-bar unit could be posited instead, which closes with an authentic cadence on the dominant in m. 9. The same phrasing problem occurs again for the next span: m. 13 might be a half cadence for the submediant, or mm. 13-14 comprise an authentic cadence for the submediant. Note that the harmonic plan ends on the dominant, in order to lead into the chaconne. Interestingly, J.S. Bach’s Prelude 1 in C major from *Well-Tempered Clavier* I also opens with Niedt’s first four chords.\(^{51}\)

Niedt then shows various ways to adjust the figured bass because chaconnes are in triple time, (Example 4-7b). In keeping with tradition, Niedt limits the progression to only the first four measures as the ground bass for the chaconne. He then suggests a different pattern for the trio of the chaconne, and then returns to the first four measures of the original figured bass to frame the finale of the prelude (Example 4-7c-d). Again Niedt uses the dominant close of his formal plan to overlap the end and beginning of a sectional division. Formally Niedt has composed a tripartite prelude: two outer sections, and an

\(^{51}\) I.e., I - ii\(\,\) - V\(\,\) - I. Although the third chord on B2 is unfigured by Niedt, he harmonizes it as a \$ chord. Mattheson provides an explicit “6.” We will see further parallels with this prelude in Chapter 7.
inner chaconne and trio. It is the same form as the Fantasy in C minor (H. 75/iii), which Bach mentions as an ideal example in his chapter on the free fantasy.52

Chapter XI, “Was noch mehr zum Preludiren gehöret” (“What is further appropriate to preluding”) draws on Niedt’s diminution instruction from previous chapters. He writes that “[e]s klinget sehr woll wann man im Anfang eines Preludii mit einem Lauff vom Discant biß in Bass und dann einen vollen Accord darouff anfänget” (“it sounds very well when the opening of a prelude begins with a run from the soprano a bit into the bass with a full chord thereupon”).53 Niedt’s six samples are both scalar and arpeggiated, and all occur before the figured bass actually begins. He concludes:

Dieser und dergleichen artige Maniren mehr kan ein Lehrbegieriger guter Meister Sachen nach imitiren oder wann er etwann eine solche artige Clausul und Manier höret solche also bald zu Papier zu bringen und sehen worinnen solche bestehet ich will ihm versichern er wid keinen Schaden darvon haben sondern wird befinden daß ihme alsdann mit der Zeit Inventiones selbsten gnug [sic] beyfallen werden.

An eager student can learn more of these and other such artful embellishments from works of other masters to imitate, or when he hears such skillful patterns and diminutions he can thereby quickly write them down and see how they are made. I assure him that he will suffer no harm in doing so, but will find that in time he will achieve many inventions himself.

[Example 4-8 here.]

Niedt presents his prelude in its entirety (Example 4-8).54 Although it is fully notated throughout, the texture of the outer sections, consisting of sixteenth-note scalar

52 Although Niedt’s prelude is barred throughout, Bach’s fantasy is unbarred – barred – unbarred. The piece (alternately Wq. 63/6/iii) comes from Achtzehn Probestücke in Sechs Sonaten (Berlin, 1753), published specifically as a supplement of examples for the Versuch.
53 Because the volume is unpaginated, references can only be located by chapter headings.
54 Before this, however, he first delivers a tirade on the excessive use of pedal point in organ playing, and then presents his dictionary of musical terms. His rationale is to introduce the types of suite movements
passages, sometimes with dialogue between the hands, and brief, somewhat imitative moments, recalls the alternating sections of Frescobaldi’s and Froberger’s toccatas. The central chaconne, with its homophony, series of continuous variations, and change to triple meter, furnishes appropriate musical contrast. Niedt’s prelude, then, not only mirrors the form of the C.P.E Bach’s Fantasy in F, but is also remarkably parallel to Louis Couperin’s grand preludes. Unfortunately, the comparison is slightly incomplete, for neither Niedt or Mattheson make any mention of performance practice, other than to remark that the prelude “herauskömmt je ungezwungener und natürlicher es ist” (“turns out better if it is more unforced and natural”). But the terminological relationships between fantasy, prelude, and improvisation, and above all the similarity to Bach’s fantasy, suitably ties these three works together.

Niedt continues with his method, and shows how to compose—all from the same figured bass he used for the prelude and chaconne—allemandes, courantes with doubles, sarabandes, minuets, and gigues (the progression altered for formal and metrical considerations). In this way he truly fulfills the title Handleitung zur Variation, and he (or Mattheson) even comments that “a hundred” allemandes could be written in such fashion, in addition to, though not given, gavottes, bourrées, and rondeaux. On the small scale Niedt shows “how a single motive may generate other motives, thus becoming a unifying principle in a composition.” And on the large scale, he has created

(and other concepts besides) such that their composition will follow sensibly. Perhaps not surprisingly, Mattheson’s rearrangement puts the dictionary prior any of discussion of composition.

55 Niedt may simply be subscribing to a North European tradition, as some organ works by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) fall into the same ABA form. But in a parenthetical aside suppressed by Mattheson for the 1721 revision, Niedt implies that it is indeed possible to append a trio to a chaconne, “wein doch jetzo alles Fräntisch seyn soll” (“as nowadays all French [ones] ought to be so”).

56 Niedt 1721, 122.

57 Niedt 1989, 175. His approach can also be seen as echoing Italian partimento practice (Lutz 2010, 125).

58 Niedt 1989, xxiv.
“hyper-diminutions” at the level of the composition, all from the same basic harmonic plan.\textsuperscript{59}

Since C.P.E. Bach and Niedt make use of both figured bass patterns and diminution, a parallel practice in France would ostensibly be more relevant for explaining Louis Couperin’s unmeasured preludes. Figured bass treatises abound in France, as they did throughout Europe at the time. They range from an unpublished manuscript by François Couperin, to a 6-page supplement in D’Anglebert 1689, to various chapters in Rameau’s theoretical works. Indeed, even Rameau notes the connection between thorough-bass accompaniment and composition:

Les principes de composition & d’accompagnement sont les mêmes, mais dans un ordre tout-à-fait opposé. Dans la composition, le seule connoissance de la racine donne celle de toutes les branches qu’elle produit: dans l’accompagnement au contraire, toutes les branches se confondent avec leur racine.\textsuperscript{60}

The principles of composition and accompaniment are the same, but in a completely reverse order. In composition, absolute knowledge of the root gives that of all the branches it produces; on the contrary, in accompaniment, all the branches are confounded with their root.


\textsuperscript{60} Rameau 1760, 24.
In other words, compositional guidelines flower into the details that comprise a musical work and can be traced as such, but accompaniment, as already acting at the musical surface, obscures the generative rule(s) of composition. (Rameau’s organic analogy is significant, especially in light of Heinrich Schenker’s later opposition to Rameau’s theory.)

But among the 14 French treatises on keyboard accompaniment listed in Robert Zappulla’s encyclopedic monograph, diminution practice merits barely a mention, and certainly not to the same extent for keyboard players (as opposed to other instruments) as seen in Niedt and C.P.E. Bach. Saint Lambert, for instance, notes that, in accompanying, the player may choose not to figure every bass note, especially in rapid tempos. The musical style is such that the accompanist need only harmonize the first bass

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61 In a letter to Johann Philipp Kirnberger, C.P.E. Bach famously proclaimed that his and his father’s “basic principles are contrary to Rameau’s” (C.P.E. Bach 1949, 17). On the other hand, C.P.E. Bach offers a most eloquent defense of French music in his Versuch:

Besonders ist man durch ein übles Vorurtheil wider die französischen Clavier-Sachen eingenemmen, welche doch allezeit eine gute Schule für Clavier-Spieler gewesen sind, indem diese Nation durch eine zusammenhängenden und propre Spiel-Art sich besonders vor andern unterschieden hat. Alle nöthige Manieren sind ausdrücklich dabey gesezt, die linke Hand ist nicht geschont und an Bindungen fehlet es nicht. Diese aber tragen zur Erlernung des wohl zusammenhängenden Vortrages das hauptsächlichste bey. (C.P.E. Bach 1753, 3)

Worst of all, there is a malicious prejudice against French keyboard pieces. These have always been good schooling, for this country is sharply distinguished from others by its flowing and correct style. All necessary embellishments are clearly indicated, the left hand is not neglected, nor is there any lack of held notes; and these are basic elements in the study of coherent performance. (C.P.E. Bach 1949, 31)

62 Zappulla divides over 20 French accompaniment treatises by instrument (plucked, bowed, keyboard) before exhaustively delving into their common features and general practices. Mersenne’s Harmonie universelle reflects the general lack of coverage about embellishment on the keyboard: Mersenne’s discussion draws mostly from vocal pedagogy, and his emphasis otherwise lies mostly with monophonic instruments (Cohen 2002, 544). Finally, the German (or north European) tradition of keyboard diminution treatises dates as far back as the 15th-century Buxheim organ book and other fundamenta (see Mavromatis 1999 and Christensen 2008). Johann Joachim Quantz wrote one for flute (1752). Other authors from other countries include Francesco Gasparini in Italy (1708) for keyboard, Diego Ortiz in Spain (1553) for viol, and Christopher Simpson in England (1665), also for viol.
note of each measure, or “en ne touchant que les notes principales de ces passages; c’est à
dire les notes qui tombent sur les principaux temps de la mesure” (“play only the
principle notes of a passage, that is to say the notes that fall on the strong beats of the
measure). For the contrary case of slower tempos, he offers this advice:

Quand les Basses sont peu chargées de notes, & qu’elles traînent trop au gré de
l’Accompagnateur, il peut y ajouter d’autres notes pour figurer d’avantage, pourvu qu’il
connoisse que cela ne fera point de tort à l’Air, & sur tout à la voix qui chante. Car
l’Accompagnement est fait pour seconder la voix, & non pas pour l’étouffer ou la
défigurer par un mauvais carillon.

When bass lines carry only a few notes and muddle along too much for the liking of the
accompanist, he can add a few notes to generate more activity, as long as he recognizes
that doing so does not harm the air, and above all the singing voice. For accompaniment
must support the voice, and not overpower or spoil it like an unsound bell.

Bernier, in his *Principes de composition*, discusses “embellished composition” (in two
voices) with examples of increasingly active melodic variation that appear much like
those in Niedt’s monograph (and also later *ars combinatoria* texts). Bernier does not
specify, however, whether his musical examples apply to vocal or instrumental
composition.

The idea of filling in a framework also occurs in Rameau’s *Traité* of 1722, in
which Book Three is titled “Principles of Composition.” Here Rameau takes advantage
of his new-found theory of the fundamental bass and marries it to compositional
instruction. Writing a melody over a given bass is covered in Chapters 38 and 39. Once composers know how to harmonize or figure the bass line, then, as one might expect,

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63 Saint Lambert 1707, 58.
64 Saint Lambert 1707, 58.
65 Bernier 2009, 64-77. Gjerdingen (2007b, 94-97) points out that some of Bernier’s initial undecorated
settings resemble *partimento* bass patterns.
they “may choose any of the sounds in each chord so as to form a melody…”\footnote{Rameau 1971, 321.} (This is a method familiar to any instructor who has taught first-year undergraduate theory.) What results is essentially one-to-one counterpoint, but with 7ths, 4ths, and 2nds which are not non-harmonic tones but explained as chord members. Ornamenting a melody is known as supposition—which is not Rameau’s own famous harmonic conceit—but, per Sébastian Brossard’s \textit{Dictionnaire} from 1703,

\begin{quote}
est donc lorsqu’une une Partie tenant ferme une Notte, l’autre Partie fait deux ou plusieurs Nottes de moindre valeur contre cette Notte, par degr\'es conjoints. C’est une des manières de figurer le Contrepoint que les Italiens apellent \textit{Contrapunto sciolto}, d’autres \textit{Celer progressus}, d’autres \textit{Ornement du Chant}, &c. Mais un des plus grands usages qu’on fait de la \textit{Supposition}, c’est qu’on fait passer par ce moyen les \textit{Sons} les plus \textit{dissonans} comme bons ou de moins comme propres à faire paroître ou sentir davantage les \textit{Consonans}…\footnote{Brossard 1703, 123. Rameau’s supposition involved a “sub-posed” bass note that lay a third or fifth beneath the fundamental bass for seventh chords. In this way, Rameau could explain dissonance treatment for ninth and eleventh chords, and suspensions. See Lester 1992, 108-114 and Christensen 1993, 99-100.}
\end{quote}

is thus when a part sustains a note, the other part has two or more notes of smaller value in stepwise motion against the held note. It is one of the ways to figure counterpoint, which the Italians call \textit{contrapunto sciolto}, others \textit{celer progressus}, and still others \textit{ornamentation of melody}, etc. But one of the greatest uses made by supposition is to show more dissonant sounds as good or at least more proper, to make consonances appear or seem more so…

Thus, to add notes “between beats” that bear established harmonies, Rameau describes arpeggiating through the chord tones of the harmony. This works either for ornamenting a soprano or the bass itself. Melodic activity may be combined so that both voices participate: “One of the parts may begin on the first beat while the other enters two or three beats or even one or two measures later, as taste dictates, and so on for the other parts if there are any.”\footnote{Rameau 1971, 328.}
Rameau addresses ornamenting notes that form other diatonic intervals not part of
the current harmony, couched in terms of consonant “anchoring” intervals set on
important beats.

As many notes as desired may be used between beats. So long as they proceed by
diatonic intervals, it is immaterial whether they are found in the chord, provided that the
first note is in the chord. If after proceeding by several notes in a diatonic progression,
however, a consonant interval is used to go from the last note of a beat to the first note of
the succeeding beat, then this last note must also be in the chord used using the preceding
beat.

In other words, these embellishments “fill in” gaps between chord tones. Rameau
treats smaller division in a fractal manner:

If the beats between which several notes are used proceed slowly enough so that each of
these beats may be divided into two equal beats, it would be wise also to divide in the
same way the notes used during such a beat. The first note of each division should then
be part of the chord used during this passage.

Rameau provides some additional advice in Chapter 42:

The melody of the treble may be ornamented as may that of the bass, if desired, so long
as we establish the principal beats and the note in each beat which should be part of the
chord, so that the bass will be figured properly. When doubts about the foundation of a
chord exist, we need only place a fundamental bass below the two composed parts, and
may thus see whether or not a mistake has been made and which chords the notes placed
in the basso continuo [the given bass line] should actually bear….When the bass is
figured properly, nothing is simpler than adding two or three extra parts, unless the
melody of the treble or bass is too elaborate, making the proper arrangement of these
added parts difficult. As a result, the more parts there are, the more we are obliged to
conform the progression of the basso continuo to the fundamental.

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69 Rameau 1971, 329.
70 Rameau 1971, 329.
71 Rameau 1971, 345.
Although he essentially repeats what he has recommended earlier—namely that ornamenting notes are best between on-beat chord tones—what is most marked is his insistence on an established and unequivocal fundamental bass framework.

Diminution practice of the sort presented in tabular elaborations of simple melodic gestures that flourished in Italy, Spain, England, and Germany seems not to have been codified to the same extent in France for the keyboard. Of course, the proper execution of common ornaments typically represented by a symbol was of great concern to French writers. This reflects C.P.E. Bach’s classification of ornaments (Manieren) into two types: the first, those ornaments shown by a symbol, and the second, the freer type “aus vielen kurtzen Noten bestehen” (“made of many short notes”) associated with fermatas and cadenzas. This is not to say that melodic divisions were unknown, as attested by the many doubles for dance movements that composers wrote. The lack of published handbooks may be attributable to the lacunae of any harpsichord music in the century prior to Chambonnières or the prominent status of the lute, for which instructions for the harpsichord may have been considered superfluous or irrelevant. Finally, the excessive reliance on le bon goût as justification for performer choice may have deterred authors from systematizing diminution practice. Before he begins to explain a few melodic suppositions that do not conform precisely to the guidelines he has set forth, Rameau remarks: “Good taste sometimes obliges us to break these rules…”

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72 Treatises from other countries include those by Silvestro Ganassi, Francesco Gasparini, Diego Ortiz, and Christopher Simpson. The tradition of vocal ornamentation in France, however, is well-documented (Jean Rousseau, Bénigne Bacilly, Jean Millet). Works for woodwind instruments include those by Freillon Poncein and Hotteterre; both of these texts also cover preluding, although their examples are written in fully measured notation.

73 C.P.E. Bach 1753, 52. Bach does observe that the French are well-known for meticulously notating first-class type ornaments.

74 Rameau 1971, 329.
This chapter began with an investigation of the creative and improvisational basis for preludes and related free-rhythmic genres as detailed by evidence given by many European writers. Examination of such related genres and specific instructions gave broad principles of rhythmic application and performance of French unmeasured preludes. C.P.E. Bach’s and F. E. Niedt’s instructions regarding fantasies and prelude originate in the historical tradition of improvisation; in the name of pedagogy, however, they give concrete guidelines (as opposed to the poetical or unspecific descriptions from the past) to show that such skill can be taught from two primary components: melodic diminution and a figured bass plan, or per Bach’s term, Gerippe. The former arises through embellishment patterns, called by both Manieren; the latter derives from thorough-bass tradition. Niedt, in fashioning other types of suite movements from the same Gerippe, implies a hierarchical difference between design and structure, between diminution and its underlying framework. Reversing their compositional process, we arrive at a first step in analysis: chordal reduction with figured bass, and also lay the groundwork for application of the theory of Heinrich Schenker.
The historical review of preludes and related genres presented in the previous chapter demonstrated how writers placed great emphasis on fundamental and recurring but unmeasurable factors such as improvisation, free rhythmic performance, and genius and invention. While Mace’s amusing description of a prelude apparently precludes any formal and rhythmic analysis, an approach can be taken that is based on two aspects of rhythm, order and grouping, which are applicable to all music in general. Our proposal considers the hierarchical levels of the composition itself and phrase(-like) spans. Later, we move to lower level(s) and investigate how stress (accent) and duration can be deduced from the surface of the music. We begin, however, by discussing the usefulness of Schenkerian analysis in examining Couperin’s preludes.

**Heinrich Schenker and Chapter 41 from C.P.E. Bach’s Versuch**

We have seen that in Chapter 41 of his Versuch, C.P.E. Bach describes a practice and compositional method that connects to the French unmeasured preludes through notational, stylistic, and performance similarities. The most important consequence is a chordal framework (*Gerippe*), detailed by a figured bass, that structures the piece, and melodic elaborations that embellish the homophonic texture. This scheme can be immediately abstract, giving rise to hierarchical relationships among chords that is somewhat already hinted at by Bach himself. Writers such as Arnold Dolmetsch, Howard Ferguson, and Moroney have themselves relied on chordal harmonic reduction to quickly
understand an unmeasured prelude, and Moroney and Troeger have pointed out how Couperin’s preludes fill out verticalities in parallel passages in Froberger pieces. Thus Bach’s method is an apt way to understand Couperin’s works, as a diminuted surface over a chordal scaffolding.

This texture also describes the way Heinrich Schenker conceives of analyzing a musical composition. In an essay titled “Fortsetzung der Urlinie-Betrachtungen” (“Further Considerations of the Urlinie [I]”), Schenker writes:

> The composer’s business is the composing-out of a chord; this task leads him from a background Ursatz through prolongations and diminutions to a foreground setting….It is up to the reader or player, conversely, to retrace the path from the foreground to the background. The most reliable means for solving this task is discovery and recognition of the outer-voice counterpoint.¹

Schenker’s reductive method should thus provide a fruitful way to analyze unmeasured preludes, based on the common element diminuted chords. As a matter fact, Schenker performed just this kind of assessment with a related genre: in his essay “Die Kunst der Improvisation” (“The Art of Improvisation”), he offered his own critique and analysis of the fantasia presented in Chapter 41 of Bach’s *Versuch*.²

In one sense, Bach’s chapter serves as a vehicle for Schenker to demonstrate how diminution operates at various levels in a composition. For instance, in his support for Bach’s claim of an overall tonic—i.e., monotonality—Schenker dismisses as deceptive Bach’s references to “other keys,” arguing that the modulations are really “nothing more

¹ Schenker 1994, 104-105.
² Schenker analyzes a Handel prelude (HWV 434/1) as well. Schenker referred frequently to C.P.E. Bach in many of his works, including the monograph *Ein Beitrag zur Ornamentik (A Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation)* from 1908.
than tonicized *Stufen* within a global tonic.”\(^3\) Schenker meticulously dissects numerous melodic and harmonic diminutions, all to demonstrate how these are instances of the composing out of higher-level long-term entities.\(^4\) Schenker’s analytical scope is much wider than Bach’s, though: the “prolongation” at (3) described by Bach (see Example 4-6) stretches all the way to (5) for Schenker, as a (\(\frac{5}{2}\))VII – V composing out of a dominant A *Stufe*.\(^5\) Matthew Brown notes that while “Bach recognized that these diminishations horizontalize specific harmonies, he didn’t identify the individual members of those harmonies and didn’t show how the members of one harmony connect contrapuntally with those of adjacent harmonies. Schenker, however, filled in these gaps; he unraveled the essential counterpoint of each one of Bach’s examples.”\(^6\)

Schenker summarizes the totality of the fantasia in a three-level voice-leading graph (see Example 5-1) in which he aims is to “illuminate and substantiate Bach’s plan through the Urlinie and the transformations that spring from it…”\(^7\)

[Example 5-1 here.]

Example 5-1 is striking because it shows Schenker’s focus on overall stepwise motion and descending lines in the upper voices, behaviors that are most evident at level c). This is partly due to level c) being quite close to the surface of the music, so that a harmony appears for each bass note in the fantasia. The stepwise voice-leading is also

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\(^3\) Brown, forthcoming.
\(^4\) Brown, forthcoming.
\(^6\) Brown, forthcoming.
\(^7\) Schenker 1994, 8.
partly stylistic: as Brown observes, many of the integers in the figured bass patterns that Bach presents in *Versuch* “indicate that Bach preferred stepwise strings in the upper voices.” Analogously, French accompaniment treatises are quite consistent in recommending that chords in the right hand (or upper voices) progress in conjunct motion, preferably in contrary motion with the bass.

As William Pastille details, Schenker’s early characterization of the *Urlinie* originated from the idea of melodic fluency, in which large leaps are mitigated by “interspersing melodic seconds and thirds between such leaps, or reversing direction in a second leap, or by both of these means in combination.” In various essays and monographs up through 1925, Schenker’s reductive analyses show that he depended mostly on stepwise motion in discovering the *Urlinie* for a musical passage (ranging in length from a few measures to an entire composition). Melodic fluency was not limited to the most audible upper voice, however, and the contrapuntal structure of musical spans often included similarly fluent underlying inner voice “guiding lines.” Schenker’s graphic analyses of five of J.S. Bach’s “Little Preludes” in *Tonwille* 4 and 5 result in homophonic reductions that consist precisely of braided stepwise melodic strands. Melodically fluent lines were also subject to recursive reduction, showing musical coherence over larger and larger spans, even if the highest level resulted in a simple neighbor notion.

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8 Brown, forthcoming.
9 Zappulla 2000, 87.
10 Pastille 1990, 72.
11 At the time, “*Urlinie*” was rather equivocal, possibly referring to either upper- or inner-voice activity (Pastille 1990, 77).
12 Pastille 1990, 72.
13 BWV 924, 939 in *Tonwille* 4, and BWV 999, 925, and 926 in *Tonwille* 5.
14 Pastille 1990, 74.
Melodic fluency eventually led Schenker to three significant components of his mature theory. First was the idea of the (single) *Urlinie* as the governing upper voice in a musical span.\(^\text{15}\) Second was the *Ursatz*, a two-voice setting in which “the progression of intervals is in accordance with the precepts of strict counterpoint.”\(^\text{16}\) Third was the *Zug*, or linear progression, a stepwise melodic entity that traverses the space between two members of a *Stufe*.\(^\text{17}\)

We can draw two vital analytical concepts from Schenker’s essay: hierarchical diminution and stepwise melodically fluent lines. First, adopting Schenker’s conceptualization of diminution also ushers in derivative notions such as voice-leading transformations, prolongation, motivic relations, organic unity, and even the expression of tonality.\(^\text{18}\) Each of these would augment the interpretation of an unmeasured prelude beyond a simple harmonic analysis. Second, melodically fluent lines that move between members of a composed-out chord offer a way to parse phrase(-like) segments in a prelude, once cadences have been appropriately defined from historical sources. And since uncovering the essential voice leading depends on careful observation of counterpoint, we continue toward understanding its relationship to rhythm.

The preludes analyzed in Chapters 6 through 8 thus serve as test pieces for exploring these facets of Schenkerian theory, although for a very circumscribed sample.

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15 Pastille 1990, 75.
16 Schenker 2004, 213.
17 Schenker’s regard for *Züge* can hardly be understated. In *Free Composition*, he describes them the “primary means of coherence” (p. 9), attributes a life force to them (p. 44), and considers them indispensable for understanding composition and performance. Elsewhere he baldly states: “Anyone who has not heard music as linear progressions…has not heard it at all!” (1994, 107).
18 That Schenker’s theory is a theory of tonality is the overriding thesis of Brown 2005.
A tripartite model of form

To account for order and grouping at the level of the composition, we adopt, primarily for its advantage of simplicity, a beginning – middle – end paradigm. Writers such as Gallus Dressler, Johann Andreas Herbst, and Athanasius Kircher referred to these sections as *exordium*, *medium*, and *finis*. This model was apparently first applied to music by Dressler in his manuscript *Praecepta musicae poëtcae* (1563-1564).

Regarding the initial section, “*appellamus autem hoc loco exordium initium cuiuslibet cantionis usque ad primam clausulam*” (“we call the exordium the beginning of any song as far as the first cadence”). Composers should “*adducant tonis convenientia ut sine mora aures de certo aliquot tono iudicium statuant*” (“introduce things fitting to the tones so that without delay the ears may establish a judgment of some definite tone”).

Dressler’s summary of the *medium* falls into two parts: middle sections that do not have fugues and those that do. For the first, he describes a logical network of cadences: “*simplex medium sine fugis tradere originem ex clausulis quae pro ratione toni et verborum conveniender sunt coniungendae*” (“a simple middle section without fugues hands down its starting point through the cadences, which must be conjoined in a fitting

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19 Such a notion appears as early as Aristotle’s *Poetics*. In *De musica cum tonario* by 12th-century theorist John of Afflighem writes: “Nam aliquando cantus non tantum in initio, sed etiam in medio alicuius toni cursu utitur, qui tamen in fine contradicit.” Pierre Maillart, in his *Les tons ou discours sur les modes de musique* (1610, 197), writes: “Lequel chant, combien qu’il soit ordinarement divisé en trois parties, à sçavoir, commencement, milieu, & la fin...” Wilhelm Fischer formulated a similar plan for ritornellos using a tripartite sectioning: *Vordersatz, Fortspinnung*, and *Epilog*. This is especially interesting since the analysis of the rhetorical model in Mattheson 1739 is a ritornello melody (Part 2, Chap. 14, §§ 15-22). More recent parallels can be found in Berry 1976 and Agawu 1991; see also Kramer 1982.

20 Bartel 1977, 66-67. The plan typically applied to the *dispositio* of a rhetorical argument, a rhetorical structure itself tripartite: *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*. These terms for compositional planning were introduced by Kircher in *Musurgia universalis*. The parts of the *dispositio* were expanded into six parts (*exordium*, *narratio*, *propositio*, *confirmatio*, *confutatio*, and *peroratio*) by later *musica poetica* theorists such as Burmeister (1606) and Mattheson (1739). Troeger (1987a, 118-119) cites Réné Bary’s *La rhétorique françoise* (1665) as a French source for this six-part format.

21 All English translations in the ensuing review are from Dressler 2007, 172-187.
way, according to the tone and the words”). After this he gives five compositional
guidelines to help composers shape the medium: affect, words, cadence choice, the use of
rests, and certain progressions of consonances. For media with fugues, he recommends
that the reader examine the works of other composers, such as Clemens, Gombert, and
Crecquillon.

This same mix of technical and general advice continues in Dressler’s discussion
of the finis. The composer must craft the final cadence carefully, since, as he quotes an
old saying, “in fine videtur cuius toni” (“it is at the end that the tone is seen”). He
continues: “de fine iudicandum, ubi singulae voces non solum inspirare, sed tanquam in
exoptato hospitio defatigatae tandem consistere debeant: Danda igitur est opera ut cum
iudicio recte fines consistuantur” (“a judgment must be made concerning the end, where
individual voices must not only breathe but, being wearied, finally stop as if at a longed-
for resting-place. Therefore, care must be taken to that ends are constituted correctly,
with judgment”). He concerns himself with two kinds of cadences according to the tenor,
a regular type and irregular. His descriptions highlight an intriguing distinction between
the quotidian and unusual. Dispensing with the regular cadence in one sentence, he gives
the impression that it is fairly unremarkable and easily handled by beginners. The
irregular cadence, however, “sine alicuius probati authoris exemplo temere non est
inserendus” (“must not be inserted rashly, without the example of some proven
composer”). With this warning, he notes that the irregular cadence typically occurs at the
end of the first part of a piece, “ubi secunda pars expectatur” (“when a second part is
expected”). In rare instances, the irregular cadence can even set the “final boundary.”
This implied sense of incompleteness hints provocatively at something analogous to a half
cadence. Unfortunately, the examples which Dressler intends to illustrate his points are missing from the manuscript.

Interestingly, Dressler has preceded addressing the finis with a few paragraphs devoted specifically to the cadence that closes the exordium. He remarks that “[e]xordio constituo in clausula aliqua voces convenient, ut ibi tanquam defatigatae ini perfectis consontantijs tanquam in hospitio requiescunt” (“when the exordium has been constituted, some voices come together into a cadence so that there, as if wearied, they rest in perfect consonances, as if at a resting-place”). Afterwards, they can begin a new fugue. Or sometimes right at the cadence, “aliaqua vox iacet fundamentum novae fugae quam postea usque ad clausulam reliquae voces sequuntur” (“some voice lays the foundation of a new fugue, which afterwards the remaining voices follow as far as the cadence”). He repeats this idea that the restart occurs even in slow-moving fugues (“per tardiorem harmoniam”). That Dressler expressly singles out this cadence in the exordium, and the musical activity proceeding from it, indicates that it is an articulation of particular significance.

These few quotations evidently reveal that Dressler is writing about vocal, texted, fugal composition, but by Mattheson’s time, “dispositio steps…[were] no longer applied primarily to the fugue.” Drawing on Dressler’s general outline, we can describe significant musical characteristics for the exordium, medium, and finis so that they can be applied across different preludes (a plan appears in Example 5-2). These characteristics—harmonic, melodic, textural, and more—also help to articulate the form.

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23 My thanks to Dr. Matthew Brown for his assistance in developing this schematic.
[Example 5-2]

The *exordium* opens the prelude. Harmonically, the *exordium* presents the key of the prelude, quite often over a tonic pedal or simple contrapuntal expansion (e.g., I–\(V^\#\)–I). There is typically a single voice-leading phenomenon that structures the *exordium*: for the grand or simple preludes, usually a linear progression or octave registral coupling. Contrapuntally, openings exhibit *divergent* voice-leading, working to open up the pitch space, sometimes with a rising line (e.g., an *Anstieg*). In accordance with Dressler’s recommendation, the *exordium* ideally features only one cadence, at its close: in petite preludes, the *exordium* typically progresses to a half cadence. The primary function of an *exordium* is to establish tonic.

The *medium* is characterized by increased musical activity, and functionally *works out* the tonic, marked thereby by modulations or tonicizations and sequences. The *medium* is not monolithic: there may be internal cadences that delineate phrase(-like) spans. In sometimes quite virtuosic displays, repetitions, variation, fragmentation, and other kinds of melodic transformations occur in the *medium*. So along with sequences, the voice-leading in the *medium* tends to be parallel or static.

The *finis* brings the prelude to a close, which is reinforced with *convergent* voice leading. The most clear-cut *finis* includes a predominant, cadential \(\flat\), and authentic cadence. These harmonies are often highly decorated and elaborate to clearly signal the end of the piece. Functionally, endings *consolidate* tonic, with a strong sense of closure.
Again, following from Dressler’s discussion of the cadence there, the boundary between the *exordium* and *medium* is likely to be more discernible than that between the *medium* and the *finis*.

**Cadences**

An examination of cadence types from this time has relevance for the parsing of phrase structures in Couperin’s preludes, since a cadence usually signals the end of a phrase.\(^{24}\) Discussion of cadences can be found in a number of French composition treatises that date from around 1640 to a century beyond, describing practice roughly contemporaneously with and after Louis Couperin’s career.

Earlier authors, in line with similar works on counterpoint from the previous century, tended to describe vocal, and thus polyphonic, configurations, and later writers homophonic textures more reflecting instrumental textures. Monophonically, for instance, a cadence occurs at the conclusion of a *chant*, which can be translated as “song” or “melody.” Cadence is often tied to the idea of a (spoken) phrase, and authors also make note of text, mode, and texture (sometimes monophonic, sometimes polyphonic or homophonic). The following three comments are representative, and also show how the same ideas remained almost unchanged over the course of about 50 years:

> Cadence est une conclusion de chant, qui se fait de toutes les parties ensemble en divers lieux de chaque piece, et est à la Musique ce que sont les periodes au discours.\(^{25}\)

> Cadence is the end of a song, which is made by all the parts together in various places in each piece, and is to music as are periods in discourse.

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\(^{24}\) Recall how often Dressler invokes the cadence as a section-ending phenomenon. But as demonstrated by Anne Blombach (1987), “phrase” and “cadence” are often circularly defined.

\(^{25}\) La Voye 1666, 74.
[La cadence] signifie chute ou conclusion de Chant où les Parties viennent se rendre, afin que le chant prenne son repos avec le sens de parole…la dernière des deux notes doit se trouver sur une des cordes essentielles du Mode que l’on traite.26

A cadence means the fall or end in song where the parts come to rest so that the melody takes its repose with the sense of the words… the last of the two notes must be on one of the essential notes of the mode that has been used.

La Cadence est une terminaison de chant, qu’on peut regarder comme la conclusion d’une phrase, ou d’une periode de Musique: Car comme je l’ay fait voir dans le Livre des Principes de Clavecin, la Musique a des periodes & des phrases, aussi bien que le discours.27

The Cadence is an ending in melody, which one can regard as the conclusion of a phrase or period in music; as I have shown in the Principes de Clavecin, music has its periods and phrases, just as in discourse.

When Masson writes about “le sens de parole,” he means that cadences were likely wherever the text featured a full stop or pause, as he observes that “il y a un espéce de repos, & quelque sorte de sens à la fin des paroles…” (“there is a type of repose and some sort of [similar] sense at the end of words…”).28 Indeed, Patricia Ranum defines “repose” as a pause that coincides with a caesura, or internal division in a poetic line, where a singer can take a breath.29 Marc-Antoine Charpentier associates cadences with punctuation in spoken language. The “final” cadence (equivalent to a V-I cadence parfaite functions like a period, and only where a thought is complete in meaning. The

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26 Masson 1699, 21. Masson also distinguishes the cadence both as an ornament and a “cadence” as a compositional syntactical device. Similarly, in his 1696 pedagogical treatise (mostly about singing), Loulié takes a paragraph (pp. 71-72) to explain how cadence obtained its double meaning. And not simply two: cadence could also refer to mesure (e.g., Maillart 1610, 153; Saint Lambert 1702, 25), which F. Couperin calls “the spirit and soul which must be added” to the meter of a piece (1974, 49).
27 Saint Lambert 1707, 24.
28 Masson 1699, 27. Zarlino makes the same tie between text and cadences in Le istitutione harmoniche (p. 221), both in terms of literal divisions in a text as well as marking off sections of a composition.
Phrygian half cadence “is the equivalent of : or ; or ? in discourse.” The half cadence in which the bass rises by a fifth or descends a fourth functions like a comma. Here, then, is a true hierarchy of cadential weight, given by the degree to which various punctuation marks separate clauses or ideas from another. The connection to rhetoric is not coincidental, as Catherine Cessac points out with examples from later 18th-century authors. Jean-Léonard Grimarest wrote that “creating meaningful silences and sighs within longer speeches, like one is accustomed to doing in music, makes a great effect” in tragic declamation; on the same subject, the Abbé Du Bos later imagined “tragedy whose declamation would be written in [musical] notation.”

The link to language or rhetoric, called to mind by the terms “phrase” and “period” and “discourse,” received a more extensive and extraordinary disquisition by Saint Lambert (1702):

…le chant d’une Pièce n’est pas composé sans ordre & sans raison; il est formé de plusieurs morceaux qui ont chacun leur sense complet; & une Pièce de Musique ressemble à peu près à une Pièce d’Eloquence, ou plutôt c’est la Pièce d’Eloquence qui ressemble à la Pièce de Musique: car l’harmonie, le nombre, la mesure, & les autres choses semblables qu’un habile Orateur observe en la composition de ses Ouvrages, appartiennent bien plus naturellement à la Musique qu’à la Réthorique [sic]. Quoi qu’il en soit, tout ainsi qu’un Pièce d’Eloquence a son tout, qui est le plus souvent composé de plusieurs parties; Que chaque partie est composée de périodes, qui ont chacun un sens complet; Que ses périodes sont composées de membres, les membres de mots, & de les mots de lettres; De même le chant d’une Pièce de Musique a son tout, qui est toujours composé de plusieurs reprises. Chaque reprise est composée de cadences, qui ont chacune leur sens complet, & qui sont les périodes de chant. Les cadences sont souvent composées de membres; les membres de mesures, & les mesures de notes. Ainsi, les

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Cessac 1995, 407. Although an autograph does not survive, Charpentier’s little “treatise” was copied by Étienne Loulié, probably around 1690. In 1693, Charpentier taught composition to Philippe, Duc d’Orléans, using the same guidelines. These were later consulted by Loulié, who supplied a new version to Sébastian Brossard in 1699. The analogy between cadential strength and punctuation is also invoked by Heinrich Schenker (1954a, 219).

notes répondent aux lettres, les mesures aux mots, les cadences aux périodes, les reprises aux parties, & le tout au tout. (p. 14)

…the melody of a piece is not composed without order and reason; it is made up several little units which each have a complete meaning. A piece of music somewhat resembles a piece of rhetoric, or rather it is the piece of rhetoric which resembles a piece of music, since harmony, number, measure, and the other similar things which a skillful orator observes in the composition of his works belong more naturally to music than to rhetoric. In any case, just as a piece of rhetoric is a whole unit which is most often made up of several parts, each of which is composed of sentences, each having a complete meaning, these sentences being composed of phrases, the phrases of words, and the words of letters, so the melody of a piece of music is a whole unit which is always composed of several sections. Each section is composed of cadences which have a complete meaning and are the sentences of the melody. The cadences are often composed of phrases, the phrases of measures, and the measures of notes. Thus the notes correspond to the letters, the measures to words, the cadences to sentences, the sections to parts, and the whole to the whole. (1984, 32-33)

Saint Lambert’s description comparison is interesting on three points. First, he privileges the elements of music as “more natural” to creating form than in rhetoric.

Second, his description finds almost exact parallels in books about rhetoric from the same time, e.g.:

La Période composée de Membres peut estre définie Une sort d’Elocution achevée et parfaite pour le sens, qui a des parties distinguées les unes des autres, et de plus qui est facile à prononcer tout d’une haleine. (Aristotle, Rhetoric, translated by François Cassandre, 1654)

A period made up clauses can be defined as a sort of elocution complete and precise in meaning, that has parts distinct the one from the other, and more is easy to speak in one breath.

Third, he posits a hierarchy to musical form. Ranum rectifies Saint Lambert’s description somewhat, by (1) applying it to the sung melody of an upper voice, (2) raising the
période to the level of the oration or musical piece, and (3) noting that Saint Lambert should have equated notes not with letters, but syllables.\textsuperscript{32}

Charpentier’s punctuation analogy is most important here for establishing hierarchy. According to Ranum, “punctuation marks create repose followed by silences, the comma indicating the briefest silence, the period the longest.”\textsuperscript{33} And from Saint Lambert’s analogy for rhetorical parsing, a very basic ordering can also be implied, namely that a less conclusive cadence type will probably be followed by a more conclusive one.

Common knowledge about cadences probably circulated generally, likely due to publications by previous writers. Evidence for this might be taken from such works as Denis 1643 and even as early as Parran 1639, which mention or discuss cadences but do not give details of construction or type as in later works. In such later treatises, there is some variation in the definitions of cadence types, and specific accompanying musical examples help make the authors’ notions clear. Of course French Baroque theorists’ terminology has passed down to today’s usage, and the acknowledgement of their additional categories, even though unusual by our standards, can point to formal articulations and shed light on the relationship between cadences and phrases, thereby assisting in the parsing of a prelude at different levels.

The theorists seemed to have little problem categorizing cadences, but classification constitutes only part of the complete treatment of the concept. In addition, they also discussed the principle of the cadence, which included describing its various

\textsuperscript{32} Ranum 2001, 86, fn. 2.
\textsuperscript{33} Ranum 2001, 70. This comes in the midst of several quotations from contemporary rhetorical treatises that assign varying importance to punctuation marks.
parameters, defining exceptional cases, and determining what is not a cadence. Further, they elucidated the compositional usage of cadences: partwriting, metrical placement, and even its place in a hierarchy of formal structure. After all these aspects are reviewed—even in the face of variation and inconsistency—we can then apply them as needed to the preludes, and see what kind of agreement arises between theory and practice. But Thomas Christensen raises an important issue. According to him, a cadence was an event that was not restricted to the ending of a piece or phrase. Since a cadence was an event that was defined by the specific motion of a bass or intervallic progression, it could occur at any point in the music. The high priority French theorists gave to the cadence was a direct reflection of the compositional practice that favored the clear declamation of vocal lines as well as the frequent employment of dance rhythms. Both these features entailed precise articulations of phrase structure delineated by frequent cadential caesuras.  

Christensen’s observations can be tempered, however, by the establishment of hierarchy through harmony, counterpoint, and rhetoric.

**Cadence types and their anatomy**

[Table 5-1 here.]

Table 5-1 summarizes the terms used by several authors in categorizing harmonic cadences. Modern terminology obviously derives from these theorists’ work. Roughly speaking, the *cadence parfaite* corresponds to the perfect authentic cadence, *cadence*

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34 Christensen 1993, 114.
rompuë the deceptive cadence, and the cadence attendente the half cadence.\textsuperscript{35} It must be kept in mind, however, that theorists vary in specifying the musical details of each cadence type and label; the cadence imparfaite, for example, is practically a catch-all category of irregular cases.

Theorists described cadences in several ways: by scale degrees, linear motion, vertical intervals, and textures from a single voice (or line) to keyboard homophony. As inherited from modal theory, cadences are described as occurring on the three important degrees of a mode or tone, called by Masson the notes or cordes essentielles: the final, the mediant (third above the final), and the dominant (fifth above the final).\textsuperscript{36} Melodically, some theorists differentiated cadences by conjunct or disjunct motion in one of the voices.\textsuperscript{37} Almost by necessity coupled with specific melodic motions, vertical intervals also played a part in labeling cadence types. Textural considerations depended on the treatise, whether written for singers, instrumentalists, or composers, in which case the focus was still primarily vocal. Even over a century, theorists range widely in their textural presentation of cadences. While Saint Lambert 1707 and Rameau 1722 employ keyboard texture, Bernier 1730 shows polyphonic settings that hearken back to La Voye 1656 and Nivers 1667.

With La Voye begins the general classification of cadences transmitted to this day, and for reasons of terminological familiarity his treatise serves as the basis for the survey below (including the models in Example 5-3), with comparisons to Saint Lambert 1707 and supplemented by other authors’ work. As the decades passed, writings seem to

\textsuperscript{35} “Attendente” is La Voye Mignot’s spelling, which is often corrected to “attendante” by later writers. Parran (1639, 86) mentions “cadences rompuès” in passing but provides no additional information.

\textsuperscript{36} Masson 1699, 21.

\textsuperscript{37} Masson 1699, 49-55.
indicate that a more vertical awareness of harmony began to take hold.\textsuperscript{38} This is not to say, however, that theorists had necessarily adopted what we might call a tonal outlook: a sense of functionalism, harmonic progression, and hierarchy is suggestive at best, and certainly more of a later development (e.g., Rameau’s \textit{Traité}).\textsuperscript{39} However, for convenience, consistency, and comparability, Roman numeral labels and inversion figures will be used to summarize these theorists’ works.

Although discussion of cadences for single-line melodies does occur, polyphonic prescriptions treat cadences as relationships between pairs of vertical entities, beginning with two voices, the soprano and bass. The voice-leading of the traditional \textit{clausula \textit{vera}—re – do} in the bass, \textit{ti – do} in the soprano—provides the basic framework or paradigm for cadences. The \textit{cadence parfaite}, which finds the most consistent agreement among theorists, finds its perfection in finishing with an octave between the soprano and bass.\textsuperscript{40} La Voye tells us that if the bass and soprano are both conjunct in approach, the initial harmonic interval is either a minor third or major sixth (namely, the \textit{clausula \textit{vera}}). The soprano concludes by ascending a half step or descending a step, and the bass on those scale degrees which make the necessary intervals (i.e., an outer voice framework for \textit{vii}\textsuperscript{6} – I or \textit{V6} – I). However, the bass may also have disjunct motion, by ascending a

\textsuperscript{38} See Bush 1946 for details on the development of a vertical perspective for cadences beginning in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.
\textsuperscript{39} Bush 1946, 242.
\textsuperscript{40} Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 207. Masson (1699, 50) writes: “La Cadence est parfaite, lorsque la Partie superieure vient se terminer sur une même corde avec la Basse…” (“The cadence is perfect when the upper part comes to its conclusion on the same degree as the bass…”). Conversely, “[l]a Cadence imparfaite…est celle où la Partie superieure ne se termine pas sur la même corde avec la Basse…” (“the imperfect cadence is that where the upper part does not conclude on the same degree as the bass…”). Admittedly, however, Masson’s examples are all in two voices, and the treatise itself is concerned with vocal composition.
fourth or descending a fifth (i.e., V – I).\textsuperscript{41} Saint Lambert, in his 1707 accompaniment treatise, includes an elaborated perfect cadence:

Dans la Cadence [parfaite], la Basse termine ordinairement son chant par trois notes, dont la second est un octave plus bas que la premiere; & la troisième une quarte plus haut que la second. Les accompagnemens ordinaires à la Cadence sont sur la premiere note, la Quarte, accompagnée de la Quinte & de l’Octave; Sur la seconde, la Tercie majeure accompagnée de la Quinte & de la Septième; Et sur la troisième, l’accord parfait. (p. 24)

In the [perfect] cadence, the bass typically concludes its melody with three notes, where the second is an octave lower than the first, and the third a fourth higher than the second. The usual partners to the cadence are: on the first note, the fourth, along with the fifth and the octave; on the second, the major third joined by the fifth and the seventh, and on the third, the perfect chord [a third, fifth, and octave above the bass].

In other words, Saint Lambert describes a $V^4_3$ - I. The chordal seventh in the dominant harmony’s approach appears again in Rameau’s perfect cadence, essentially $V^7$ – I.

Many of Louis Couperin’s cadences parfaites mirror Saint Lambert’s or Rameau’s descriptions; occasionally Couperin also includes a cadential $\sharp$ chord. By 1730, Bernier informs the reader that the perfect cadence is made when the soprano makes “fifth on the [bass’s] dominant and the octave on the final; or the major third on the dominant and the octave on the final.”\textsuperscript{42}

[Example 5-3 here.]

\textsuperscript{41} La Voye 1972, 63. Denis Delair’s *Traité pour le theorbe, et le clavecín* (1690, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. 1724) includes a chapter that methodically lays out ascending fourth or descending fifth bass lines for (authentic) cadences on all scale degrees for the 7 major/minor pairs of the diatonic (white note) keys, but he does not discuss cadence types at all.

\textsuperscript{42} Bernier 1964, 25-26.
The only configuration on which all the theorists agree is a *cadence parfaite* is the soprano/bass framework that makes a V – I (Example 5-3, I). The *clausula vera* tends to be *parfaite* for earlier writers, but *imparfaite* in later treatises. Both Saint Lambert and Bernier single out the *clausula vera* structure (i.e., a descending stepwise approach in the bass) as *imparfaite* (Example 5-3, IV.C). Rameau likewise discounts the *clausula vera* as imperfect by showing the “real” fundamental bass of 5 - 1, privileging root-based motion. Conversely, he writes that a conclusion can be made less perfect by inversion, putting the bass’s 5 - 1 into an upper voice. Other writers had discussed imperfection as reflected in the vertical intervals: if a bass and soprano conclusion on an octave is deemed perfect, then imperfection occurred when the voices finished in a third or fifth (see Example 5-3, IV.A & B).

Theorists observed different criteria and employed diverging terminology for irregular resolutions, which are generally understandable, in Nivers’ words, as occurring “when one of the parts or the both of them together avoid their natural conclusion.” These types of closes are especially relevant to the parsing of Couperin’s preludes since they describe configurations which modern assessments may dismiss. La Voye, along with Saint Lambert, Rameau, and Bernier, designates as a *cadence rompuë* the instance when “la Basse, se fait lors qu’au lieu de monter par intervalle de quarte à la notte qui marque la Cadence, l’on monte seulement d’un ton” (“the bass, instead of ascending a

43 Zarlino (1558, 225) deems the close on an octave or unison as “perfetta,” but *clausulae* on other intervals, e.g., on the third or fifth, were “imperfetta.” This parallel terminology is likely simple borrowing, given some evidence of the dissemination of *Istituzioni harmoniche* in France earlier in the 17th century (Zarlino 1968, xiv), and the French adherence to Zarlino’s renumbered modes from his 1571 *Dimostrazioni harmoniche* (Masson 1699, viii), which was not carried out to the same extent in other countries.
44 Rameau 1971, 67.
45 Rameau 1971, 70.
46 Nivers 1967, 24. This is practically the same wording Zarlino (1558, 225-226) uses in describing “fuggir la cadenza.”
fourth to the note of the cadence, ascends only a tone”).\textsuperscript{47} This is the typical submediant deceptive motion (Example 5-3, II.A, C, and D). But he continues: “Ou bien au lieu descendre par intervalle de Quinte, l’on descend seulement par intervalle de Tierce Mineure, & l’on ne se sert de cette sorte de Cadence ce qu’au milieu des pieces” (“Or when in place of descending a fifth, it descends only an interval of a minor third; this type of cadence occurs only in the middle of pieces”). This second kind of \textit{cadence rompuë} is the framework for a V – I\textsuperscript{6}; by specifying that it occurs only within a piece, La Voye implies that it has a different function and strength than those cadences at the end of pieces (Example 5-3, II.B). And despite Nivers’ observation about \textit{cadences rompuës}, his own examples of them do not include anything interpretable as a V-vi motion, instead showing \textit{cadences parfaites} basses (♭2 - ♭1 or ♯5 - ♯1) with leaping sopranos such as ti – mi and re – sol. Such configurations were deemed \textit{imparfaite} by Masson, who observes “que d’autres appellent rompuë” (“which others call \textit{rompuë}”) in an apparent nod to Nivers’ earlier work.\textsuperscript{48} Because there are so many different situations, \textit{rompuë} is typically translated as “interrupted” or literally as “broken,” rather than only as “deceptive.”

Couperin sometimes decorates submediant deceptive motions by sustaining a doubled root from the preceding dominant, which creates a chordal seventh in the submediant and thus impels harmonic progress through linear dissonance (e.g., Prelude 6 in Moroney 1985 from S66/L8-9/R18-25 to S64/L1-2/R1-4). But the second kind of deceptive motion is just as important for analyzing the preludes because it is a surprisingly frequent configuration, often made even more striking when the preceding

\textsuperscript{47} La Voye 1666, 76. La Voye assumes the upper voice concludes as it would for a \textit{cadence parfaite}.
\textsuperscript{48} Masson 1699, 50.
dominant is itself inverted, i.e., $V^6 - I^6$ motions. This gesture is inherited from Froberger and Frescobaldi, and is especially startling when the bass pitches form the interval of a diminished fourth or augmented fifth.\[^{49}\]

[Example 5-4 here.]

Example 5-4, from Harrison 1989, is a *Gerippe*-like harmonic reduction of systems 1-8 of Prelude 13. The exclamation points (Harrison’s own annotation) punctuate moments of unusual cadential motions, of which the first, second, and fourth are examples of this type of *cadence rompuë*. And illustrating the most general definition of avoiding a “natural conclusion,” Couperin occasionally sets up a perfect cadence in which $\tilde{5}$ is sustained through the tonic resolution in the right hand, creating a “tonic” $\tilde{4}$ chord (see, for instance, Prelude 10 in Example 7-1, S6/L4-8/R14-20).

La Voye’s third type of cadence occurs when the bass “au lieu de monter ou de descendre a la notte qui marque la Cadence parfaite [selon les regles cy dessus] l’on demeure sur la penultiesme” (“instead of ascending or descending to the note which marks the perfect cadence [according to the rules above] remains on the penultimate”).\[^{50}\] This is the *cadence attendente*, and corresponds in principle to the half cadence. La Voye’s designation “attendente,” meaning “awaiting” or “expectant,” holds, for Albion Gruber, “a definite suggestion of harmonic functionalism…[since] the voices remain on the penultimate harmony instead [italics his] of completing the authentic cadence

\[^{50}\] La Voye 1666, 76.
‘according to the rules.’” For Saint Lambert, this is a type of cadence imparfaite as it is for Nivers, who, interestingly for Gruber’s comment, finishes the soprano on 2. Rameau and Masson deem this cadence irregulière. Saint Lambert includes the Phrygian approach (Example 5-3, III and IV.D); a very conventional example of the latter appears in Prelude 6, in Moroney 1985 at S4/L9-11/R7-28.

With regard to perfect cadences, Saint Lambert reminds accompanists: “gardez-vous d’oublier que dans ce penultième accord, la tierce doit toujours être majeure” ("guard against forgetting that in the penultimate chord, the third must always be major"). When truncated into a cadence attendente, the major quality of the dominant remained for some theorists. This is implicit in Masson’s example for D-mode (A3 in the bass, C♯5 in the soprano). Bernier specifies that “the soprano ought to…make the octave on the final, and the major third on the dominant.” Marc-Antoine Charpentier, in his unpublished composition treatise from around 1690, notes that the “dominant of the minor modes has…the supertonic and the leading tone,” and among several remarks about accompaniment, writes: “Over all the dominants of the modes, place a major third unless it is marked differently, and you will be accompanying correctly.” In contrast to these comments, however, apparent half cadences on minor dominants occasionally occur in Couperin’s preludes (e.g., Prelude 7, S2/L5-6/R1-8, and Prelude 5, in Moroney 1985 at

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51 La Voye 1972, 3.
52 Saint Lambert 1707, 25.
53 Masson 1699, 54.
54 Bernier 1964, 26.
55 Cessac 1995, 408 & 411.
S2/L9-13/R11-12), as Chapelin-Dubar points out; for this playing with major and minor expectations she deems him a “coloriste.”

One further kind of cadence bears comment. In his *Traité*, Rameau describes a second type of *cadence irregulière* occurs “from the fourth note to the tonic.” To the triad formed on the fourth note Rameau adds a sixth, which is consonant with the bass but dissonant with the chordal fifth; the sixth resolves upwards to form a third with the tonic. We would label this configuration “ii⁸ – I” and call it plagal for its lack of dominant motion. Rameau himself recognized the apparent ₂ - ₁ root motion, but not only gives the two chords a fundamental bass of ₄ - ₁, he couches this *cadence irregulière* in terms of a tonic-dominant relationship:

The chord formed by adding a sixth to the perfect chord is called the chord of the large sixth. Although this chord may be derived naturally from the seventh chord, here it should be regarded as original. On all other occasions, however, it should follow the nature and properties of the chord from which it was first derived.

If we wish the note which begins this cadence to pass for a tonic and that which it ends to pass for a dominant, it is enough to use the major third on the last note. The difference of mode will then be felt only on the first note, which will be, in that case, the tonic and which may bear either the major or minor third.

Rameau is attempting to distinguish this motion from the half cadence I - V. Two of Couperin’s preludes feature this irregular cadence: Prelude 3, at S3/L11-13/R31-33 and Prelude 14, S2/L1-15/R1-5. In both cases the added sixth is treated as a passing tone, displacing the fifth which sounds immediately beforehand, in a conventional 5-6 motion. The conventional plagal motion, IV – I, is nowhere specified in any of the treatises listed.

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57 Rameau 1971, 75. In his example of this cadence in minor mode, however, the “dominant” has a minor third.
in Table 5-1, but, as cited by Chapelin-Dubar, it appears in a set of examples in Parran
1639 (see Example 8-1). However, it must be remembered that Parran is only discussing
the old church modes, and not the *tons d’église*.

Finally, Bernier concludes his discussion about cadences with the observation that
every “specific motion of a bass or intervalllic progression” is not necessarily a cadence.
He addresses the problem of *cadences fausses*:

> One must guard against confusing true cadences with those which are false, for they are
very much alike. In order to distinguish them, one must observe that every time the bass
skips from the fourth in ascending, or from the fifth in descending, from the strong beat
to the weak beat, invariably this is a false cadence. I find that often these skips even go
from the weak beat to the strong beat, but they are still false cadences. This is the reason
one must examine very closely the structure of the bass, for if it does not begin in the
mode on the note you believe to be the final, or if you do not find previous to this the
leading tone, you may be certain that this is not a true cadence.\(^{58}\)

Bernier then gives two kinds of examples. In the first, the bass falls a fifth while
the soprano has stepwise ascending pitches which make a fifth to a third (tenth). Thus the
bass acts as in a *cadence parfaite*, but the soprano does not, and the two verticalities are
set in the incorrect metrical manner of a strong beat to a weak beat (at least according to
Bernier’s barlines). In the second, the bass ascends a fourth and the soprano has a
descending third which makes a third (tenth) to a fifth (twelfth). Again the bass follows
its expected motion in a *cadence parfaite*, but the soprano markedly does not by making a
disjunct “resolution.” This configuration is preceded by an initial verticality that allows
Bernier to place the final sonority on a strong beat across the barline, illustrating the more
confounding case of a weak to strong beat *cadence faux*.

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\(^{58}\) Bernier 1964, 27.
Up to this point, a hierarchy of cadences can only be implied. All the treatises begin with coverage of the *cadence parfaite* before moving on to discussion of other types, thereby setting up this cadence as the ideal model. For instance, Rameau motivates the *cadence rompuë* as an alteration of the *cadence parfaite*. Bernier more explicitly states: “Only the perfect cadence is able to be made into an interrupted cadence.” La Voye defines the *cadence attendente* as like a *cadence parfaite*, except that one remains on the penultimate harmony. La Voye uses different note values to illustrate cadences: longs for *parfaites*, breves for *rompuës*, and semibreves for *attendentes*. For Albion Gruber, this indicates a “particular sensitivity to the different cadential ‘weight’” of each type of cadence. Arguably, however, La Voye may have done so simply to typographically distinguish each cadence from the other for visual convenience.

**Compositional recommendations**

Some authors offered instructions about the compositional employment of cadences. Bernier explicitly prescribes a cadence’s metrical placement:

> …all cadences ought to be terminated on the strong beat; otherwise they are not really true cadences.\(^{64}\)

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59 Rameau 1971, 71.
60 Bernier 1964, 27.
61 La Voye 1666, 76.
62 La Voye 1972, 3.
63 Masson (1699, 22) employs the same notational strategy when discussing monophonic cadences.
64 Bernier 1964, 25. Bernier has previously reviewed strong-weak patterns in measures consisting of 2, 3, and 4 beats earlier in his manuscript. It is, significantly, the second topic he examines (after accidentals).
In some notated examples, this sentiment is shown by the last harmony of a cadence being placed after a barline on the first, and strongest, beat of a measure.

Several authors commented on where to locate cadences. Regarding perfect cadences, Charpentier writes that they “should be used only by way of conclusion. That is why all musical compositions and with this kind of cadence.” For *cadences attendentes*, La Voye observes:

…on se sert de cette sorte de Cadence à la fin des premiers couplets, ou lors qu’au milieu de quelque piece l’on a dessein que les parties fassent toutes ensemble un silence pour bien-tôt après recommencer.

one sets this sort of cadence at the end of opening sections, or when in the middle of some piece it has a place that all the parts fall silent together in order to quickly begin again afterwards.

Masson specifies further that cadences on the dominant can “servir a la première Partie d’un Air ou d’une Ouverture” (“serve in the first part of an air or an overture”). *Cadences rompuës* are similarly found “au milieu de pieces.”

Authors also listed the three scale degrees on which cadences could occur (as carried over from modal theory):

Les Cadences dans une Partie de Basse se sont par degrez conjoints ou par degrez disjoints soit à la finale, à la médiante, ou à la dominante…

Cadences in the bass part occur by conjunct notes or by disjunct notes either on the finale, the mediant, or the dominant…

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65 Cessac 1995, 407.
66 La Voye 1666, 76.
67 Masson 1699, 55.
68 Masson 1699, 49.
Such earlier modal details are provided by Parran, who provides detailed coverage about cadences only in terms of the *notes essentielles* as terminations for psalms and plainchant. He describes the cadence on the final as “[l]a premiere et plus parfaite,” not due to any harmonic or melodic considerations but because it most clearly indicates the mode of a piece, and ends the piece as well. The cadence on the *mediante* occurs only in the body of a piece, and sometimes at the beginning, due to the behavior of certain modes. The dominant is implied to operate similarly.\(^6^9\)

Masson refines these descriptions and explicitly locates them according to formal conventions, even specifying appropriate melodic pitches.\(^7^0\)

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La Cadence qui se termine à la dominante sert à finir la première partie d’un air et d’une Ouverture, celle qui se termine à la médiane dans le Mode mineur… (p. 25)

Dans le Mode majeur, après la Cadence à la dominante laquelle finit toujours la première partie d’un air et d’une Ouverture, les cordes essentielles en continuer la second partie, sont sol si re, et non pas ut mi sol. (pp. 25-26)

Dans le Mode mineur, après la Cadence à la dominante, le Chant ne peut procéder que par la ut mi; et après la Cadence à la médiane il ne peut continuer qu’en se servant de fa la ut. (p. 26)

The cadence that ends on the dominant serves to finish the first part of an air and an Overture, and these would end on the mediand in minor mode…

In the major mode, after the cadence on the dominant, which always ends the first part of an air and an Overture, the essential notes that continue the second part are sol si re, and not ut mi sol.

In the minor mode, after a cadence on the dominant, the melody can proceed only by la ut mi; and after a cadence on the mediand can only be served by fa la ut.

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\(^6^9\) Parran 1639, 128-129. Barnett (2002, 431-433) points out Parran’s definition of a *cadence mediante* could mean either a cadence on *mi*, or generally any cadence in the middle of a piece. Evidence for the latter apparently comes in Parran’s own examples, which includes “mediant” cadences built on the third *below* the final.

\(^7^0\) These observations come from Part 1, Chapter 6, “Des Cadences dans une seule Partie” (pp. 21-26). Although the examples are all monophonic, Masson sets them in F clef, mentions that they are “propre à la Basse,” and concludes with analogous examples in G clef for the “Parte superieure.”
A particularly significant point that Masson makes is that

Le Mode majeur a deux Cadences, & le Mode mineur en a trois. Le Mode majeur en une à la finale & l’autre à la dominante. Le Mode mineur en a une à la finale, une autre à la médiane, la troisième à la dominante. (pp. 21-22)\textsuperscript{71}

This observation may seem highly suggestive of an incipient awareness of typical common practice key relations. However, Elissa Poole presents interesting evidence from early 18\textsuperscript{th}-century collections of originally monophonic vocal music published by Christophe Ballard, titled \textit{Brunetes ou petits airs tendres}. Her study indicates that the reason that Masson discounts cadences on the mediant in major modes is that they would be

usually either a half or Phrygian cadence. In functional terms it is unstable since it is approached as a dominant-functioning harmony and sets up an expectation (albeit a tonal one) for resolution to the submediant, either as the next harmony or as an actual modulation to the submediant in the subsequent phrase. The mediant cadence in major was thus more difficult to integrate…\textsuperscript{72}

Especially for C major mode, Poole finds that pieces, instead of making cadences on the mediant, make them “\textit{with} the mediant, resolving to the submediant.”\textsuperscript{73}

We can recognize how little difference there is, actually, in the cadential categories described by these Baroque theorists and our own—after all, we have inherited them—but a widened historical scope of the various types, their behavior, and syntactical usage can be helpful in determining musical spans that do not close with common

\textsuperscript{71} Indeed, for both monophonic and two-voice textures, Masson gives cadences on the mediant only for minor mode (namely D mode with finishes on F).
\textsuperscript{72} Poole 1987, 204.
\textsuperscript{73} Poole 1987, 203.
practice formulae. Ultimately, implications for rhythm are unlocked. Cadences parse musical passages at the level of phrase(-like) units, which, in turn, provide spans of tonal processes; in other words, C.P.E. Bach’s *Gerippe*. The harmonic analysis obtained in a *Gerippe* reduction locates two types of structural cues: (1) cadences, and (2) harmonic and non-harmonic tones as diminutions connecting one chord to the next, establishing a hierarchy of notes which clarify surface rhythm. Then details about rhythm—as smaller groupings, and also stress and duration—arise through the examination of the underlying voice leading behavior in these spans.

**Spans**

The extensive survey given above shows that French theorists considered cadences as indicators of closure, the strength of which depends on cadence type. The musical spans marked off by cadences are phrase-like in that they form, as defined by William Rothstein, a “musical unit” in which a “tonal motion” is completed.74 These spans are structured by an outer voice framework that obeys the rules of counterpoint.75 The bass (up to the cadence itself) may comprise harmonic progressions, contrapuntal expansions (e.g., I – V3 – I), pedals, or a combination (of several) of these. The upper voice consists of a melodically fluent stepwise descent (see Examples 6-13, 7-4, and 8-7).76 Essentially, at this level, each tone in this line arises mostly on a chord-to-chord basis.77 At *cadences parfaites*, the descent preferably ends on Í of the locally...

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74 Rothstein 1989, 4-5.
75 Schenker 1994, 105.
76 Recall the discussion of this topic earlier in this chapter.
77 In *Kontrapunkt I*, Schenker disparages Rameau’s chord-to-chord fundamental bass analyses because, in Schenker’s view, Rameau fails to observe (or is unaware) that *Stufen*, through various transformations, can appear at the foreground prolonged through several chords (Slatin 1967, 28-30).
defined tonic, and for *cadences attendentes*, a conclusion on 2. In this way, long-range melodic motions and underlying contrapuntal patterns are uncovered. Span essentially comport with the tripartite model given in Example 5-2, although insofar as the voices are themselves diminutions, divergent and convergent voice motion may vanish at higher levels.

Span analysis constitutes the next level of formal analysis after the prelude itself, with extremely important guidance for rhythmic performance. This further articulation of form is rhythmic in the sense of grouping, groupings that are more audible to listeners. As Saint Lambert writes, the prelude becomes a piece of rhetoric, and the performer might express a narrative through the traditional components of *musica poetica* or perhaps the formal processes (introductory, expository, developmental, cadential) enumerated by Wallace Berry.

The contrapuntal interaction of the structural soprano and bass in a span results in finer considerations of rhythm, with implications for order, stress, and duration. Schenker writes, for example, about rhythmically balancing two linear progressions (in contrary motion) each with a different number of tones. The coordination of these lines concerns order, and has consequences for duration analogous to 1-1 or 2-1 species counterpoint settings. And as such, the distance between chords dictates durations for connecting diminutive material. Strictly speaking, these chordal events simply mark

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78 Pastille 1990, 72.
79 Berry 1976, 4-8. For *musica poetica* analyses, see Lanzelotte 1996 (Couperin’s *Tombeau de Mr Blancrocher*) and Troeger 1987a, 118-126 (unmeasured preludes by Rameau and Clérambault).
80 Schenker 1979, 32 (§ 67) and, at lower levels, 81 (§ 227).
undifferentiated pulses. But a dissonant passing or neighbor tone (or chord), located between two consonances suggests an accented – unaccented – accented configuration (the artful shift to create an accented passing entity instead is a matter of discrétion). If a pattern of strong and weak beats is regularly maintained, a sense of meter arises.

At the surface of the music

Stress or accent becomes even more relevant at lower levels, since this element is highly performable at the surface of the music. We have already seen in Example 3-22 how Type 1a curves give rise to rhythm, as accents or stress. In a similar vein, Curtis argues that Type 2a and 2b curves imply “that the first note of the group gets a rhythmic accent.” Higher-level suggestions of meter can eventually be evoked by rhythmically shaping small spans of the music. There are at least three ways performers can introduce local accents in unmeasured preludes.

First, every bass note that supports a harmony provides a local downbeat. Following Troeger’s research, a succession of harmonies thereby creates a series of strong – weak beats (although admittedly, the criteria for a “structural chord” is sometimes elusive, given the relative ease with which Couperin manipulates the upper voices over a bass note). This is in line with Joel Lester’s account of accent, in which change in some musical parameter (e.g., duration, pitch, harmony) establishes a new event, and thus creates accent: “The change from one harmony to another is a change from one constellation of pitch relationships to another. The point at which this change

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81 Cooper and Meyer 1960, 3.
82 Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1985, 18-21.
83 Curtis 1970b, x-xi.
84 Ferguson 1975, 27.
occurs is always a point of accent in relations to the sustained portion of that harmony and of any preceding harmony."\(^{85}\)

Troeger elaborates: "[B]asic chord changes should generate ‘bar-lines’ in any realization of a prelude; this approach is supported by the related styles of allemande, *tombeau*, and toccata, in which case a chord is almost never held over a bar-line (except in cases of pedal harmony)."\(^{86}\) These chord changes provide not only (metrical) accent, but also duration, given the time lapse between chords. Two important durational consequences result from this. First, the interonset intervals between chords can be relatively equal, establishing a fairly stable sense of meter (sequences are ideal candidates for this strategy, given their replicated voice-leading patterns). Second, the interonset interval duration influences melodic activity between chords. Or, as Troeger puts it: "[B]eyond the problem of underlying meter, the player must find the rhythm appropriate to the figurations found between ‘downbeat’ chord changes."\(^{87}\) This idea is made specific in Daniel Harrison’s performance and analysis of Prelude 7 (refer to Example 6-2). From S2/L19-20/R17-18 to S3/L7/R6-9, he opts to allow the inner voice E4 – F4 – F\(^\#\)4 – G\(^\#\)4 to govern the span. He drives to the last harmony—the dominant—by giving each of the notes in the E – F – F\(^\#\) – G\(^\#\) progression an equal duration. The temporary appearance of metrical organization…endows the dominant arrival with an increased momentum. It helps, too, that this metrical idea forces the bass-clef, A-D [S3/L2-6]…to be played as an ornament, adding desirable intensity to the activity of [this] section.\(^{88}\)

\(^{85}\) Lester 1986, 26.
\(^{86}\) Troeger 1983, 343.
\(^{87}\) Troeger 1983, 343-344.
\(^{88}\) Harrison 1989, 5. See Chapter 6 for more.
Of course, a Type 3b accenture lines obviously set up a strong beat, but since they highlight a significant and specific location, they also contextually hierarchize a series of chord changes as described by Troeger. Creating a higher level sense of arrival can be employed to delineate large musical phrase(-like) spans.

Performers should weigh musical context, harmonic and melodic analysis, instrumental resonance, room acoustics, and of course taste and affect, in deciding what kind of durations to impose, and how consistently. Indeed, a relatively well-established sense of meter brings with it the opportunity to weave in both types of rubato: either as artful coordination of the hands given steady “downbeats” in the bass, or as tempo fluctuation of the overall musical fabric as interonset intervals from chord to chord become more variable (with concomitant adjustment to melodic strands between the chords). The conscientious performer can spin a truly fantastic and affecting tapestry this way, tailored with sensitive taste and discretion.

As Tilney remarks, “in many cases, ornaments grace strong beats. Thus, little by little, accents appear on the page and start to build up a rhythmic skeleton that usefully supplements the melodic and harmonic structure already established.”89 This is the second way to create rhythm and meter. The ornaments to which Tilney refers are the most formulaic types, often marked by a symbol, and codified by writers both historical (e.g., Saint Lambert 1702, F. Couperin 1716, C.P.E. Bach 1753) and modern (e.g., Donington 1977, Nurmi 1986, Troeger 1987b, Kroll 2004). Many French Baroque composers included ornament tables in their recueils. Moroney (1985, 18-19) speaks for

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Louis Couperin, and Moroney’s table is particularly helpful because a great number of these kinds of ornament are written out, rather than indicated by a sign.

By now it is taken as conventional wisdom that many ornaments should be performed on the beat, but this is not always the case. Saint Lambert (1702) expresses *ports de voix* in ambiguous notation, such that they could be interpreted to be pre-beat, and as Ruth Harris-Warrick notes in her translation, “both on- and before-the-beat examples can be found throughout the period” from Chambonnières to F. Couperin.\(^90\) Frederick Neumann takes it as a matter of course that the *port de voix* “is susceptible of infinite rhythmic variations” in terms of duration and placement on or before (a part of) a beat.\(^91\) But regardless of how a *port de voix* is performed, we can still say that the *port de voix* nevertheless points to a structural pitch that must occur on (some division of) a beat. Evidence from Couperin’s hand, however, does show care to make some obvious on-beat *ports de voix*. In Prelude 13, a series *ports de voix* in Moroney 1985, beginning at system 8, should be played on the beat, as indicated by the two-note slurs. In the same prelude (again referring to Moroney’s edition), at the end of system 4, the left hand’s G4 sounds before the right hand’s *port de voix*, again indicating an on-beat conception. This interpretation is given additional force because the G4 also separates the *port de voix* from its preparation.

In Couperin’s preludes, stenographic ornament symbols are rather spare and comprise only the most basic kinds: simple *tremblements* (as opposed to those having prefixes or suffixes), *pincés*, and very rarely a *cheute*. The Parville versions of the

\(^{90}\) Saint Lambert 1984, 87 (fn. 3).
\(^{91}\) Neumann 1978, 49ff. The controversy on ornamentation between Neumann and Donington is described in Bond 1997 (162) as “the amicable hurling of polemical rocks in each other’s general direction.”
preludes have many more than those in Bauyn, raising a question about whether and how many derive from Couperin himself.\textsuperscript{92} The most obvious written-out ornaments are tremblments (e.g., the right hand at the end of Example 3-4), with extraordinary double trills in Preludes 1, 3, and 9. Within arpeggiations appear acciaccature, which, as filling-in tones, are typically brief in duration and unaccented, as is implied by the way they are notated in the ornament tables from D’Anglebert, de La Guerre, and Rameau.\textsuperscript{93} However, since acciaccature are weak, they can impart a sense of upbeat and thus accent the note that follows. Ports de voix are usually identifiable by a Type 2a slur, and often by a repeated preparation note. Still, some configurations are ambiguous as to whether they might comprise diminished melody notes or agréments, although the implications for voice-leading, and thus counterpoint and rhythm then, might be small but not inconsequential. A generic lower neighbor in single-value notation, whether interpreted as a pincé or a melodic neighbor motion, would nevertheless give the same result: an eventual reduction to a single undecorated pitch. But ambiguities can lead to different outcomes. Consider, for instance, stepwise ascents (or descents) that span a third. Even among stenographic ornaments, this configuration has multiple origins: as a coulé on a single note; a coulé de tierce filling in a vertical third (i.e., a structural dyad); as a cheute sur une note, or acciaccatura in a chord; or even as part of a double (turn), tremblement et pincé, double cadence, or double cheute à une tierce or une note seule. In conventional notation, some of these agréments would be attached to a single note; for others, a dyad. Couperin’s alignment of events between the hands can also call for

\textsuperscript{92} Moroney 1985, 17.
\textsuperscript{93} Saint Lambert (1702, 55-56) shows them having the same duration as the other pitches in an arpeggio, but nevertheless on the weak part of a beat.
reinterpretation. For instance, he often inserts a bass note between a *port de voix* and its preparation. This would have to be written as a *suspension* decorated by a *port de voix*, and not a *port de voix* by itself, which (if on the beat) is usually played *with* the (dissonant) bass.

[Example 5-5 here.]

Tilney’s idea is nicely exemplified in Example 5-5, S2/L15-18/R9-14 from Prelude 7. In the upper staff, R10 has a *pincé*, giving the B4 a local stress. Applying as neutral a reading as possible, the surrounding notes, A4 and C5, are thus weak. In the left hand, B2 is the structural bass, and receives a stress; this is reinforced by the preceding written-out descending *port de voix* (not shown here). In Example 5-5a, all these pitches are arbitrarily represented by eighth notes (although regarding values as proportions, rather than exact durations, is more appropriate to the original notation). But by grouping the right hand’s ascent as a traditional anacrusis gesture of three eighth (or sixteenth) notes, we can posit larger beat spans with requisite accents (Example 5-5b). At this level, the B4 is weaker than the bass note which initiates the anacrusis; this is why it is wise to consider at what rhythmic level a stress occurs before assembling an interpretation around it.94 Example 5-5c presents a further level of grouping, incorporating the chord of arrival: remarkably, for all these readings, this G♯ chord always receives a strong stress. Example 5-5d goes higher, imparting a weak – strong pattern to each half note, now considered divisions of a whole note. But even at this point, meter need not be implied.

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94 In other words, accents do not necessarily “travel up” the beat hierarchy. See Komar 1971, 53-54 and Lester 1986, 17.
Examples 5-5b-d could be set in any duple or quadruple simple meter. The barlines are only provided to suggest accent patterns; if transcribed, these events could fall between or within a measure. Note that Couperin’s setting does not at all correspond to the way that such an (allemande) anacrusis and downbeat chord would be written conventionally (Example 5-5d), in which the chord of arrival appears as a single verticality. This demonstrates, in a small way, that aspects of Couperin’s notation will always resist a neat, conventional transcription.

[Example 5-6 here.]

Example 5-6, from Prelude 10 (S3/L15-16/R15-17 to S4/L1/R1-2) presents another instance where rhythm can be adduced from surface events. A phrase having just closed on a G major root position cadence, the right hand has a long string of consecutive noteheads, a written out trill: how might rhythm be applied here? Near the end of the string (S3/R24), a C4 has been marked with a tremblement. At the note-to-note level, strong and weak stresses can be applied before and after this local accent (Example 5-6a). Appropriately, the first tonic chord is considered strong, and the following E4, as weak, functions as an anacrusis. But the number of notes and strong – weak pairs are incommensurate towards the end, causing the concluding chord to finish weakly. As a matter of fact, fixing the pitches as eighth notes (Example 5-6b) shows that the last chord is actually syncopated against higher-level quarter note groupings. The problem is that the tremblement on the C4 is not simply a tremblement, but a tremblement with a suffix; in D’Anglebert’s table, a tremblement et pincé. We can then take advantage of the quarter

\[95\] All the transcriptions of this prelude (Examples 6-5 to 6-8) present this case within a measure.
note groupings and apply *duration*: as shown in Example 5-6c, granting the C4 a quarter note duration (or, rather, a proportion twice as long as the surrounding pitches) “resets” this level of accent such that the ending sonority becomes strong. The resultant accent pattern for all the quarter notes in this brief span leads to a logical performance choice. Example 5-6d shows how this span might be more conventionally notated, with the historically proper typographic ornament symbol placed over the C4. An additional bonus of this analysis is that the immediately ensuing imitation in the left hand (S5/L2-14) of this fanciful cadential tag fits our rhythmic solution precisely (Example 5-6d).

Finally, accented dissonances such as suspensions and appoggiaturas are obvious candidates for assigning local stresses. Unfortunately, the status of accented passing and neighbor tones is at times equivocal, given the undifferentiated or unclear positioning of noteheads in Couperin’s notation. In addition, melodic 5 – 6 motion might obscure whether a pitch belongs to a chord or not, and at the player’s rhythmic discretion, a non-chord tone could be played as either accented or non-accented.

Consider the opening four chords in the right hand of Prelude 10 (see the reduction in Example 7-1). Taking this segment at first as solely a vertical texture, we apply a neutral strong – weak pattern to each pair of chords (this makes sense since this is the beginning of the prelude).96 The third chord, an A minor harmony, receives a strong stress (bolstered by C2 in the left hand), which fittingly emphasizes its surprising deceptive resolution from the previous chord, a B diminished triad, which should resolve to a chord with a C root. But this root appears with the *fourth* verticality, a C dominant seventh chord. Although we can understand the intervening A minor chord as a

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96 A more chordal conception is ideal for performers, principally as a matter of grouping because this avoids thinking of the passage as 14 separate melody notes each of equal importance.
deceptive resolution, voice-leading reveals more. We can instead analyze the inner voice A4 (S1/R8) as a non-chord tone, passing between B4 (S1/R5) and temporarily displacing G4 (S1/R10) in 6 – 5 motion over the bass (its non-structural status indicated by a darkened notehead in the reduction). As to the rhythmic status of the A4 as a linear entity, a similar strong – weak stress pattern applied to this inner voice’s descending tetrachord C5 – B4 – A4 – G4 results in the A4 being treated as an accented passing tone.97

[Example 5-7 here.]

Several accents in close proximity may have unforeseen consequences. An intricate instance appears in the opening of Prelude 3, namely the boxed areas for the right hand seen earlier in Example 3-17. The span vertically reduces to two harmonies: a G minor chord built on G4, and an F♯ chord starting from C4. Collating the readings from the manuscripts, Type 1a curves give accents to D5, B♭4, and A4. Example 5-7a gives a two-voice reduction (temporarily ignoring the first F♯4 as an acciaccatura). Accents from two 2-3 suspensions produce a string of alternating strong – weak pulses: treating the initial C5 as a pick-up, a conceptual 4-beat measure results.

As it stands, this metrical interpretation is straightforward until the F♯4 acciaccatura is reinserted. A neutral equal value durational pattern (again consisting of

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97 The tetrachord is a lower voice that provides parallel thirds for the soprano, which is the main voice to project in performance. Following through with the implications of this analysis ushers in duration. By assessing the A4 as a passing tone, the number of structural chords is effectively reduced to three, against which the tetrachord must be rhythmically balanced. If each pitch in the tetrachord receives an equal duration, then the third chord, with its 6 – 5 motion, will last twice as long as the first two; or if the chords are given equal durations, then the A4 – G4 pair must be adjusted, most simply as each note having half the duration of each chord.
eighth notes for convenience), in which even the *acciaccatura* receives the same duration as all the other notes, shifts the second suspension to a weak part of a beat: this may be interesting as a syncopation, but displaces the suspension in a way that is unconventional (Example 5-7b). Since an *acciaccatura* is subordinate to structural chord tones, it can be demoted to a shorter duration such that the beat structure from Example 5-7a is maintained, yet performers can still have a choice in playing the ornament as weak or strong on the level below the established beat. These cases are shown in Example 5-7c.i and c.ii. If the descending A4 – F#4 – C4 chord is considered too staid by finishing right on a beat, performers can exercise a bit of *rubato*, as in Examples 5-7d.i and d.ii. By giving preference to the aforementioned syncopation, Example 5-7e is possible.

Further, the quicker durations (and register) aurally group F#4 – G4 – A4 together (particularly in Example 5-7e), which could lead to an inadvertent interpretation as an F#4 – A4 third filled in by a *cheute*; the curve in Parville actually makes this appear so. A more traditional solution is given in Example 5-7f: the *acciaccatura* appears simply as a small note, its ornamental status clear, but its performance implication not completely prescribed. The development of Examples 5-7c-e gives us a glimpse into the problems of attempting to reckon an unmeasured prelude rhythmically, and how strange and unusual durations and groupings can arise.
Chapter 6  
Prelude 7 in A minor

Because four editors have devised rhythmatised versions of Prelude 7, its analysis is informed in a way that is unique among all of Couperin’s other preludes. This chapter begins with an overview of previous research: a ground base of general analytical information is provided by Prévost and Chapelin-Dubar, and we also review a computer-aided analysis by Dan Tidhar. We then move to comparing and contrasting the four transcriptions: their parsing and metrical implications are of utmost interest. A voice-leading derivation of the prelude, and a formal analysis based on that reading, is then compared with the transcriptions. A few insights expounded in an analysis by Daniel Harrison are probed next. Then I present my transcription in dual-value notation, and discuss the editorial choices made for it.

Overview

Prelude 7 is a petite prelude, occupying only one page in each MS and written on four (Parville) or five (Bauyn—see Example 1-1) pairs of staves. Its tonal type is $a:\frac{3}{2}$, associated with church tone 3, and in Parville, it bears the appellation “Prelude en a mi la.” Melodic and harmonic activity express A minor. The prelude features a clear soprano melody, made obvious by much stepwise motion (both locally and as step-progressions) and registral continuity, and an accompaniment of arpeggiated chords. It is more lute-like than virtuosic, not demanding much of the harpsichordist’s technique, and
its character calls for a slow and stately performance to bring out the lyricism of the melody (as a nod to préciosité). Because the prelude is so short and lute-like in character, Chapelin-Dubar surmises that this work “soit la première tentative, par Louis Couperin, d’écriture d’un prelude non mesuré pour le clavecin, à la manière d’un prelude de luth” (“may be the first attempt by Louis Couperin to write an unmeasured prelude for harpsichord, in the manner of a lute prelude”).

Prelude 7 has been realized rhythmically by Christopher Wood, Newman Powell, Howard Ferguson, and Richard Troeger, likely because its brevity and relatively uncomplicated homophonic texture make it easier than other preludes to parse and put into conventional notation. Comparison of these settings provides insight into features that seem relatively fixed despite a wide range of other editorial choices (because of this additional data, this analysis of Prelude 7 is more extensive than any other in this dissertation).

As with all other preludes, Prévost and Chapelin-Dubar furnish some initial analytical information, providing a comparison not only of each author’s methodologies but also the aspects of the prelude they consider important to highlight. After arranging the prelude’s pitch inventory into an ascending scale, Chapelin-Dubar recommends that a “classic” meantone temperament is appropriate. She also points out two modulations, one to the minor dominant and another to the mediant. Her ensuing analysis of the notation in the manuscripts includes suggested redactions which are relevant later in this chapter.

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1 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 54.
2 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 2: 344. Chapelin-Dubar outlines various temperaments in Annex 2 of Volume 1 (pp. 238-240). In “classic” meantone temperament (“mésotonique classique”), eleven fifths from C are tempered small by a quarter syntonic comma, which locates the “wolf” fifth between G♯ and E♭. This tuning gives eight pure major thirds: C-E, G-B, D-F♯, A-C♯, E-G♯, F-A, B♭-D, and E♭-G.
Prévost also mentions the same modulations as Chapelin-Dubar. His statistics for melody, harmony, and tonality are summarized in Example 6-1. In Prévost’s interpretation, approximately a third of the melodic notes are embellishing non-chord tones or written-out ornaments. This percentage is among the three highest out of all of Couperin’s preludes; these highest scores belong to the three petite preludes. But as he mentions himself, there is no correlation between the rate of ornamentation and the length of a prelude. On average there are 9 notes between verticalities. Although the tonal immobility of 3.20 implies an average of 3 chords per tonality, Prévost’s tonal plan oddly reckons only one chord each for both non-tonic keys. Finally, the low coefficient of modulation models well the conventional notion that, for minor mode, the minor dominant and relative major are closely related keys (an a\emph{priori} assumption Prévost makes anyway by assigning these modulations a value of 1, the smallest value possible).

Prévost’s and Chapelin-Dubar’s assessments about key relations are confirmed in the reduction and analysis of the prelude, seen in Example 6-2. From the example one can also judge Prévost’s statistical notions.

For comparison, consider a rather unconventional kind of investigation. In a unique marriage of cognition, computer science, music analysis, and unmeasured preludes, Dan Tidhar (2005) constructs a computational grammar to emulate human

\footnote{Prévost 1987, 188-189.}
parsing and performance of Prelude 7. Tidhar bases his hierarchical model on a Chomskian account of grammar, Lerdahl and Jackendoff’s monumental text *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (1983), and Jacques Nattiez’ notion of the trace. But as a harpsichordist, Tidhar also builds into his model functions to account for musical phenomena such as temperament, ornamentation, figured bass, and cadences. Elucidating the multitudinous mathematical formulae and intricate proofs lies beyond the current discussion, and Tidhar’s results are not given in musical notation. But we can (perhaps admittedly naively) inspect the output of his parser, given in Example 6-3.

[Example 6-3 here.]

Tidhar defines a harmonic unit (H-expression) with parameters R, M, B, F, and C, where R is the fundamental bass (or root), M mode, B actual bass note, F figures, and C complexity (the number of events involved in the harmonic unit). Tidhar’s model finds 16 chords; Prévost also counts 16 chords but he does not present them. However, Prévost’s tonal plan gives some idea of his inventory. At the very least, each bass note supports at least one chord, and so Example 6-4 presents explicit verticalities (17) that comprise Prelude 7. In comparing Example 6-4 with Tidhar’s output, we can see that his parser “misses” a C major chord at S2/L19/R14, a subtle but nevertheless grammatical resolution of the preceding G♯ harmony. And the strong II6 at S3/L18/R14-18 is curiously

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5 Tidhar 2005, Chapter 5.
6 Intriguingly, Tidhar relates an informal experiment in which performances of the prelude, apparently computer-generated, were evaluated by human expert listeners.
7 Tidhar 2005, 86-87. The basis of Tidhar’s method is a modification of what is called the LR(k) model, or left-to-right processing,
evaluated as a “d minor 6/5/3” harmony (line 12), revealing that Tidhar’s model does not account for seventh chords.

The *Gerippe* reduction in Example 6-4 succinctly frames a provocative question: while this succession of chords invites a tonal analysis by Schenkerian means (to be demonstrated shortly), how might such an analysis parse this string of chords into sections, phrases, and other spans, if possible?

**Towards rhythm: four realizations**

A parallel comparison of the modern realizations by Wood, Ferguson, Powell, and Troeger significantly reveal rhythmic points of agreement, demonstrating that, at some level, Prelude 7 has uniformly fixed rhythmic and metric features. In addition, these scores are important because they provide clues about the rhythmic thinking on the part of four different redactors confronting the unmeasured style and notation.

[Example 6-5 here.]

In his 1952 article on unmeasured preludes, Christopher Wood views the prelude as “fall[ing] naturally in the rhythm of a Chaconne.” To capture this idea, he shapes—or, one might say, contorts—the prelude into $\frac{3}{2}$ time (Example 6-5). Wood’s claim is not entirely far-fetched; the first measure of his version does resemble that of a chaconne. The propulsive $\uparrow \downarrow$ rhythm, emphasizing beat 2, is a sometime characteristic of the chaconne; for instance, the *grand couplet* of Couperin’s Chaconne in C Major (Moroney

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8 Wood 1952, 27.
1985, no. 26) reiterates this stress pattern in every odd measure. While Baroque theorists agreed that chaconnes are cast in triple—or for Niedt, “uneven”—meter, Wood’s setting has been described as “little short of nonsense.” The primary characteristic of chaconnes is the variation principle: Brossard writes that such a piece “se repette autant de fois que la Chacone a de Couplets ou de variations, c’est à dire, de chants differens composeé sur les Nottes de cette Basse [obligeé]” (“is played as many times as the chaconne has couplets or variations; that is to say, different melodies composed over the [fixed] bass.”)

Couperin’s own chaconnes feature style brisé texture, double bars or labels indicating couplets, and melodic and harmonic structuring that make obvious phrases. A notable feature is that they often begin with either tonic or dominant harmony in position, never an arpeggiated chord rolled through both hands.

It must be admitted that Wood does not outright equate the prelude with a chaconne, but rather with the “rhythm of a Chaconne,” which emphasizes beat 2. Wood’s proposed reading fits this model for only the first two measures; thereafter the music must become quite rushed, full as the measures are with sixteenth and even 32nd notes; Couperin’s chaconnes are never so rhythmically active. No conventional chaconne rhythms appear to highlight beat 2 (consider the complexity of measures 8 and 9), and there is no detectable bass pattern or any variation thereof.

Two small notational details which affect grouping are to be praised, however: small notehead ornaments, and arpeggiated verticalities indicated by the usual rolled

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9 Scheibert 1987, 165.
10 Curtis 1956, 73. Niedt’s “uneven” notion of triple meter (1989, 136) originates, according to Powell (1959, 156), at least as far back as Michael Praetorius’s tactus inaequalis from Terpsichore (1612), in which triple time was beaten in two strokes: two for the downbeat, and one for the upbeat. This scheme is also echoed by Loulié (1696, 33) and Masson (1699, 8). But Saint Lambert (1702, 19) gives the now-familiar triangle-shaped conducting pattern.
11 Brossard 1703, 13.
12 Ledbetter 1987, 48.
symbol. These help the player greatly, for these signs indicate a hierarchy of importance to the notes. All notes do not possess the same structural weight, a conclusion obscured by the appearance of equal note values. This hierarchy sorts out melody notes from the general background. Musical continuity is further enhanced by tracing the melody notes via long-term step-progressions, à la Schenker’s early conception of *Urlinien*. Still, the arpeggiation only amount to three instances, and fairly trivial ones at that. The last instance, in m. 11, could benefit from small-note ornamentation, or even a symbol, since the D4 – C4 gesture really amounts to an *acciaccatura*.

While long-term step-progressions can help shape phrase-like spans, phrases are notationally unclear in Wood’s score. Only m. 5 resembles the end of a phrase in the most conventional sense that the melody has ceased rhythmic activity, although the lack of bass support on beat 1 may appear unusual (Wood has failed to account for a left hand sustaining curve). Within the remaining six measures, span divisions are more difficult to find. One possible candidate is m. 8, where it is the bass that comes to a momentary respite.

Wood’s interpretation is admirable in that it attempts to give the amorphous “whole-note” score a rhythmic shape in all four dimensions. While it is quite a difficult challenge to maintain Wood’s triple meter steadily, he sensibly recommends that the “notation should not be taken too literally, but be interspersed with the elasticity, unevenness, accelerations and pauses that this music seems to demand.” And after playing through his transcription, Wood suggests “that players immediately read it again in the semibreve notation, which, I venture to hope, will already seem less enigmatic than

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13 Pastille 1990, 74-77.
14 Wood 1952, 27.
at first sight…”15 Following Wood’s suggestion and reviewing the extreme contrast
between both scores, the player can soften Wood’s rigid durations with touches of rubato
and discretion, and thereby coax the prelude into a more “coherent and eloquent
whole.”16

[Example 6-6 here.]

A special section late in Newman Wilson Powell’s 1959 dissertation focuses on
the French unmeasured prelude. He reviews the different notational systems, presents
many of the same sources and quotations presented throughout Chapters 1-4 of the
current work (Frescobaldi, Lebègue, F. Couperin, and C.P.E Bach), and glances at the
single- and dual-value preludes of D’Anglebert. Having done this, he proceeds “to
reconstruct the rhythmic style of the unmeasured preludes,” but admits that “the process
must be speculative and arbitrary” due to the scanty nature of historical documentation.17
Among his examples is a setting for Prelude 7 (Example 6-6).18 Chock full of meter
changes, irregular meter, ties, triplets, and sextuplets, this profuse, complex score might
be more difficult to play than the original notation. Powell’s version strongly contrasts
with Wood’s notated metrical regularity, and the metrical implications are mystifying:
does Powell really intend the performer to obey conventional accent patterns implied by
each time signature? This confusion is compounded by the single measure of \( \frac{6}{4} \): beamed
and grouped according to the quarter note durations, it is unclear whether Powell intends

15 Wood 1952, 28.
16 Wood 1952, 28.
18 Powell also rhythmically sets Lebègue’s Prelude in D minor and D’Anglebert’s Prelude in G major.
this measure to be performed in compound time, or whether it is merely six harmonies that group together. The various meter changes might also seem to reflect some sort of grouping principle, or an expression of rubato.

Powell’s rendition also highlights another nexus of problems: namely, what to do about ornamental notes and procedures that do not necessarily require exact rhythmic realization. For instance, Powell ranks some of Couperin’s ports de voix at the same rhythmic level as structural melodic notes (e.g., the first two notes in the left hand in m. 4). He also writes out the opening arpeggiated chords as sextuplets, but arpeggiations need only be rolled with a speed appropriate for the tempo and affect of the piece. On the one hand, arpeggiations are, by their very nature, unmeasured: each individual note need not express metrical regularity or equally proportional durations. On the other, arpeggiated chords are often notated so that they appear “on” a beat, but they could be played so that either the bass or the soprano—or the first or last note—articulates the beat’s metrical accent. Moreover, their contours (especially lengthy arpeggiations such as in Example 4-1) create change, and thus accents, forming incipient metrical patterns. This can create ambiguity about the status of the arpeggiation as either a low-level ornament or a slightly higher level diminution of a melodic cell.

Powell adds three fermatas in mm. 2, 3, and 6, which may serve as vague indicators of phrases, as fermatas do in chorales. Of the first two, the second is probably more important, since it is the same location as Wood’s apparent cadence in m. 5, and the first lies too close to the beginning. The fermata in m. 6, lying between m. 3 and the end,

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19 For instance, Saint Lambert (1702, 55) shows arpégés figurés with one acciaccatura as four notes: \_/; the realization is \_/ for two acciaccature (chord tones always fall on the 1st and 3rd sixteenth notes). Either case implies a metrical accent on the last (usually top) note. But D’Anglebert’s equivalent—cheutes sur une or deux notes—are given in his ornament table as \_/ and \_/, indicative of an accented first note and weak last note.
seems at least spatially plausible as a cadence, although the harmony—a 7 chord—is somewhat questionable as a stopping point or caesura.

[Example 6-7 here.]

The third rendition is prepared by Howard Ferguson, whose abundance of notational exactitude (Example 6-7) matches that of Powell’s. Nevertheless, Ferguson’s measure groupings are smaller, both in number of chords and beat value, than Powell’s: note also m. 20, a measure of the which Ferguson indeed sets as compound time. Since so many other measures are similarly based on an eighth note beat but in simple time, a single measure of compound time seems odd, and again the value of the eighth note is more reflective of grouping than meter. He privileges the eighth note as a primary durational unit by setting the tempo with it, and carrying its duration over into quarter note meters, shown by the equivalency between mm. 2 and 3.

Despite the greater number of measures, Ferguson’s version has its own problematic issue in parsing, since so many measures only consist of one or two harmonies. There is an interesting progression in fussiness when we view the opening two measures in the renditions so far: Wood sees the chords as simple rolled chords belonging in one measure; Powell gives explicit durations to the chords but keeps them together, and finally Ferguson writes them out and separates them. Such an atomistic perspective results in relatively consistent rhythmic activity, which in turn obscures visual phrase divisions.
But what is important to notice about Ferguson’s rendition is the harmonic reduction set above his realization. Ferguson already provides durations in his reduction and the result roughly resembles D’Anglebert’s mixed notation.\textsuperscript{20} Ferguson’s example would benefit, like Powell’s, from a distinguishing of a few ornamental notes associated with a symbol (e.g., a number of \textit{ports de voix} in the left hand, as in m. 3 and m. 8) and decorative passing and neighbor tones in the vein of C.P.E. Bach’s second type of \textit{Manieren}. Ferguson is more successful with the latter, given his more liberal use of 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes for upbeat figures that are “rushed in” at the last moment (e.g., the left hand in m. 6 and m. 13).

[Example 6-8 here.]

Finally, Troeger’s 1982 thesis provides the fourth transcription (Example 6-8). Clearly the most striking difference with the previous versions is the utter regularity of common time, in keeping with Troeger’s own research on the duple basis of free rhythmic works. The second difference, although somewhat less important, is that Troeger does not indicate any arpeggiations at all. This, however, reflects the implication that arpeggiation is part and parcel of the preludial style, and is no different from a Froberger score. Third, as with both Wood and Ferguson, Troeger accounts for some ornaments with small noteheads, and brief second-class \textit{Manieren} as 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes. However, the small noteheads are almost all \textit{ports de voix}, and, in number and the conventional on-beat sense, they delineate with greater frequency local metrical accents.

\textsuperscript{20} This is precisely what Dolmetsch (1969, 293-298) does with D’Anglebert’s Prelude in G major.
Given Troeger’s metrical regularity, parsing by conventional 4-bar units as a preliminary venture might seem fruitful. The first four bars might plausibly group for the same reasons as Wood’s m. 5; it is the same location, after all. Measure 8 here is more equivocal, since it is a predominant harmony, which would more likely imply in-phrase activity. Troeger’s m. 7 corroborates with Powell’s m. 6, however; Troeger has an E major harmony on the downbeat (instead of a previous measure upbeat, as it is in Powell), hinting at a half cadence. As a consequence, however, a 3-bar phrase (mm. 5-7) occurs. Is there an elided fourth bar? This cursory analysis is surely tentative and must be approached with skepticism, of course, given the improvisational freedom that is a tenet of the preluding tradition, not to mention the problematic imposition of 4-bar structure, a concept that is itself variable in many other styles.

A group comparison

[Example 6-9 here.]

Since the transcriptions have all been cast in meter (however regular or irregular), we can examine similarities between them in this dimension. Example 6-9 presents simultaneously all the barlines from all the scores: each editor is represented by his surname initial, and line thicknesses from dashed to triple wide show how many agree with others. Strongly coincident barlines appear around the beginning and end, and fewest occur in the interior (especially system 3). This implies that beginnings and endings of preludes tend to be more conventionalized and orderly, most likely to clearly
express the key. The interiors, where composers exercise their skills more personally to develop the music in interesting ways, tend to be more irregular.

All four editors are in complete agreement at four locations (besides, trivially, the start and end of the prelude). In system 1, the barline A marks the first strong downbeat after the beginning. This makes sense harmonically: the two opening chords are simple repetitions of tonic, which is followed by a V₃ chord, which requires completion because the leading tone is in the bass. Barline B in system 2, preceded by a brief melodic link in the left hand, demonstrates that the authors read these barlines in a weak – strong beat pattern, demarcating the end of one “measure” and the beginning of another. The relationship between this barline and barline A is somewhat unusual, given that they are essentially two harmonies in a row. The last two triple-wide barlines in system 4 indicate the final cadence. The first barline, C, again preceded by a melodic gesture in the left hand, reinforces the notion that there is a weak – strong beat pair here, especially in light of the cadence. The last barline, D, carries the notion of weak – strong further, applying it to the perfect authentic cadence that ends the prelude. Of secondary rank is barline E, another weak – strong beat pair.

These four transcriptions have shown us a wide range of rhythmic notational choices, which include arpeggiations that are explicit, and not; some ornaments that have been distinguished, and not; beats that are divided regularly, and not; and metrical groupings that are regular, and not. All these decisions depend on each editor’s interpretation of the notation from the manuscripts as in Example 1-1 (although Wood and Ferguson did not have Parville to consult). The varying barlines visually manifest the two poles of rhythmic freedom described by Powell: on one hand the highly coincident
barlines give an “easily discernible” metric structure, but points of less agreement indicate a “fluctuating beat” that fits proportionally between more steadfast anchors.\(^{21}\) In the end, it must be recognized that all these ascriptions of rhythm, in its four dimensions, to Prelude 7 are completely artificial. Although Schenkerian analysis has often been charged with giving short shrift to rhythm in a tonal analysis—in which, for the most part, only pitch information is taken into account, and influence of surface rhythm scrupulously avoided or even actively defied—in the case of Couperin’s unmeasured preludes, this issue does not even arise, because the original notation has no (conventional) rhythm to begin with.\(^{22}\) Therefore, regardless of the way they have chosen to express rhythm, the versions by Wood, Ferguson, Powell, and Troeger should all reduce to the same chords (namely the progression given in Example 6-4), assuming that all non-chord tones are evaluated exactly alike, even in the face of different durations or metrical placement. Taken one step further, the same tonal derivation of the prelude would then also apply to each transcription.

Tonal and voice-leading summary

[Example 6-10 here]

Example 6-10 presents a tonal overview of Prelude 7 as a voice-leading derivation from the background to a foreground summary quite close to the surface of the music.

Example 6-10a shows the Ursatz, with an Urlinie descent from C4, or \(\tilde{3}\); perhaps

\(^{21}\) Powell 1959, 246-250.

\(^{22}\) See “A Preliminary Study” (p. 17) in Schachter 1999 for an examination of the critique that Schenkerian analysis overlooks rhythm and meter.
somewhat unusually, the *Urlinie* lies in the tenor, with a final goal at the end of the prelude to A3. The upper voices of the structural dominant are unfolded in Example 6-10b, and A3 fills in the arpeggiated third B3-G♯3 as a passing tone. The very emphatic II♭ at S3/L17/R14-18 is generated in Example 6-10c. Here, the structural ♯ (B3) is displaced over the bass’s ⁴, making space for the A3 passing tone to align with ⁵ in the bass. For the bass in Example 6-10d, the ascending fourth A2-D3 is supplemented with a C3. This note is not a third divider, but rather arises from an implied passing motion that would completely fill in the fourth; however, the intervening B3 is deleted, as in the prototype Figure 15, 3c from Schenker’s *Free Composition*.²³

At S3/R18, the goal tone ¹ apparently arrives prematurely: this A4 not only too soon precedes the final cadence, it also appears over the supertonic harmony and gives a false impression of the obligatory register. Example 6-10e clarifies the situation. The inner voice from Example 6-10a—where it serves simply as a harmonizer for the *Ursatz*—has become the soprano voice by moving to the C4 range, flipping an octave above the *Urlinie*. The mechanism of invertible counterpoint (at the octave) guarantees that this voice nevertheless remains consonant with the *Urlinie*. In addition, by the operations of repetition and displacement, A4 is configured now as a suspension over ⁵ in the bass, an accented position which will become a cadential ⁴ at the surface of the music. Schenker does the same in an analysis of J.S. Bach’s “Little” Prelude in D minor, BWV 940. In a reduction only one level removed from the *Ursatz*, Schenker moves an unsupported ³ over the ⁵ in the bass, displacing ² (and thus making a 6 – 5 motion). Schenker concludes that the ³ is “transformed into an accented passing tone,” an accent

²³ Schenker 1979, 30 (§ 57), and accompanying Figures 14.3c and d; and p. 33 (§ 73).
which 3 apparently transferred from the initial untransformed 2 - 5 dominant dyad (with the same logic, the accented fourth over 5 in this prelude could be generated instead as early as Example 6-10c). ²⁴

In Example 6-10f, 3 in the bass (C3) is harmonized as III (S2/L19/R14), consonant with the Kopfton. When the root of this harmony arpeggiates to its chordal third—or 5 in the tonic key—the bass creates space for further melodic elaboration. In Example 6-10g, the arpeggiation is filled in with a D3 passing tone and then harmonized into parallel sixths, with the tenor making a fourth-progression that moves from G3 to C4. While the last pair of notes in each voice sound simultaneously, the tenor’s initial two notes G3 and A3 ascend over C3 in the bass. This enables the bass’s three notes C3-D3-E3 to rhythmically balance against the tenor’s 4 notes G3-A3-B3-C4. The 2nd-species texture gives rise to a first inkling of rhythm. ²⁵ This stepwise pattern, applied later to the two other tenor pitches by means of delaying shifts—i.e., a 4th-species counterpoint setting—produces a 5-6 sequence at the surface of the music (of course, the sequence also prevents potential parallel fifths). ²⁶

But Example 6-10g contains a more important event. At the beginning, the Kopfton C4 and its harmonic support shift leftward. Within the gap created by the displacement, a registral transfer of the Kopfton from C4 to C5 occurs. This in fact establishes a coupling between the C3 octave—the obligatory register—and the C4 octave. C5 establishes a new soprano voice. As a replica of the Kopfton, the C5 even behaves like the Urlinie by completing a secondary descent to 1 (to A4 at S3/R13),

²⁴ Schenker 1994, 55.
²⁵ While Schenker privileges contrary motion between the soprano and bass (which also occurs here), it is the need “to create balance between the tones of linear progressions, which may differ in number, [that] leads for the first time to an intrinsically musical rhythm” (Schenker 1979, 32).
²⁶ Schenker 1979, 80 (§ 225).
including an initial interrupted descent to 2 (B4 at S2/R4).\textsuperscript{27} The interruptive 3-2 is an applied divider, or back-relating dominant, acting at a lower level.\textsuperscript{28} The dominant in this case is manifested by a minor dominant at S2/L5-6/R1-8. As Schenker explains, dividers are diatonically minor in quality in minor mode; furthermore, since this chord does not serve to cadence for the tonic, it does not require a leading tone.\textsuperscript{29} In addition, the lowered chordal third avoids a potential chromatic succession with the subsequent V/III at S2/L7-17 (i.e., a G\# in an E major dominant of A would clash with G\# in a G major dominant of C).\textsuperscript{30} And certainly the E minor chord serves as a diatonic pivot to modulate from the tonic key and to the mediant.

C5 returns over the interior III chord, which gains its aforementioned tonicizer by means of incomplete neighbors to C5 and C2 in the bass. The C5 “Kopfton” then descends to A4, fixing the harmonization of the parallel sixths in the tenor and bass, which, up to now, have nominally prolonged III. The addition of the soprano’s C5 – B4 – A4 descent, forming a voice exchange with the tenor, now prolongs a i\textsuperscript{6} harmony. This exchange provides another registral transfer to return to the original C4 Kopfton, and also reestablishes the tonic key in order to close out the prelude.

Further diminutions shown in Example 6-10h complete this derivation of Prelude 7. C5, as the replica Kopfton, receives prominence with an Anstieg from A4 at the beginning. Harmonized with lower neighbor G\#2 in the bass, the Anstieg 1 - 2 - 3, a short ascending third-progression, prolongs tonic. The concealed Urlinie in the tenor

\textsuperscript{27} Schenker 1979, 70 (§ 192).
\textsuperscript{28} Schenker 1979, 112-114 (§ 279).
\textsuperscript{29} Schenker 1979, 37 (§ 89 and § 90).
\textsuperscript{30} Schenker 1979, 91-92 (§ 248-249). See in particular Fig. 113, 2, in minor, where Schenker gives the succession of triads A minor – C major – E major. Although it is a reversal of the progression under discussion, it of course also applies to the remainder of the prelude after the tonicization of III.
participates in this prolongational structure by means of a voice exchange, which, as will
be shown later, makes the registral transfer from C4 to C5 quite literal. After the medial
III, the 5-6 sequence is now completely elaborated, even extending backward to include
the tonicizing V⁶/III chord. The subsequent descent in the soprano adds an unfolded
dominant harmony (S3/L5-10/R4-9) that firmly recaptures the tonic key. The harmonic
progression stops on a “tonic” ⅔ chord (S3/L7-13/R10-13), in effect a deceptive motion
because the bass does not resolve to Ⅰ. The lack of resolution allows for a “retake” of a
stronger predominant harmony, leading to a final cadential ⅔ chord, an elaborately
arpeggiated dominant seventh harmony, and a confirmatory tonic. The repeated tonic
chord at the end ensures a sense of closure.

**Cadences and tonal spans**

As outlined in Examples 6-10g and h, the *Urlinie* for this prelude features only
three descents that lead to cadential contexts: ⅔ - ⅔, from S1/L1/R/1 to S2/L6/R8; (⅔) ⅔ - ⅔ - Ⅰ, from S2/L17/R12 to S3/L10/R13; and ⅔ - Ⅰ, from S3/L18/R18 to the end. Of
course, these spans fit neatly into the three-part formal model of *exordium*, *medium*, and
*finis*. The *exordium* begins with a neighboring V⁶ that expands tonic harmony. With
hardly any further elaboration, a cadence on V comes next, making this *exordium* tonally
open. A 5-6 sequence underlies the *medium*, with a bass line that ascends from B2 to E3.
The *finis* consists simply of a stock cadential close: II⁶ – V⁶ ⅔ – Ⅰ.

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31 The sequence, of course, provides a location to create and project rhythm, an exploration to come later in
this chapter.
Tidhar 2005 offers analogous groupings of harmonies through R-expressions, or rhetorical relations (see Example 6-11).

[Example 6-11 here.]

In addition to bass and mode information, the expression describes relations between pairs of harmonies: plain, in which the harmony stands alone; repetition; elaboration, consisting of two identical harmonies, the second having more events; variation, in which the two events are functionally equivalent; and suspension, which is specifically the $V_7-$ resolution. This bit of programming is captured in line 10 of Example 6-11. The correspondence of Tidhar’s string is comparable with the analysis just presented.

Tidhar’s additional category “ellipsis” is a matter of pitch inventory. Line 3 refers to S1/L11-12/R13, a harmony without a chordal third. Since the quality at that point is technically unknown, it is labeled an ellipsis. Line 7 points to S3/L7/R6-8, an E major chord without a fifth. Tidhar remarks that a bare third is ambiguous, possibly implying a root position or $§$ chord. Placing “ellipsis” first in the list of parameters indicates this awareness (although Tidhar admits that the dominant E major chord is unmistakable here).

Simply as a matter of counting, the R-expression string is not a strict imbrication (which would give 15 pairs); some chords end up isolated. The two pairings labeled “variation” are particularly interesting. In line 6, the B is considered the structural bass, reflecting the status of the 7-6 suspension in the right hand (S3/R3 resolving to S3/R5), so

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32 Tidhar 2005, 93.
33 Tidhar 2005, 98.
that the chords at S3/L1/R1-3 and S3/L1-5/R4-5 are grouped together as predominants. In line 4, the E minor chord at S2/L5-6/R1-9 has been subsumed under the ensuing G\(^\flat\) at S2/L17-18/R12-14 (this reading is problematic since it bypasses the half cadence which closes the *exordium*). Tidhar has purposely programmed this relative relationship as one type of “variation.” But in also assessing the predominant pair, we can see that both these situations are really root relations of a third which contrapuntally arise from 5-6 motion. As a matter of fact, this occurs only three times among all the consecutive harmonies in the prelude, these two being the most obvious cases. The third is at S2/L19/R14 to S3/L19-20/R17-18, a root position C major chord to an A minor \(^\flat\), but as we saw with Example 6-3, Tidhar’s procedure does not locate the C major chord.

Tidhar’s analysis continues to group larger spans. His grammar next finds four cadences, all of which are on A minor. At the highest level, the four cadences, as a group, determine that the prelude overall expresses the key of A minor.

**Form and surface details**

We can easily delineate the *exordium* of Prelude 7. After a repeated arpeggiated tonic chord, the neighboring bass movement prolongs tonic with a I – V\(^\sharp\) – I contrapuntal expansion. The soprano in this expansion is an ascending linear progression \(^1\)–\(^2\)–\(^3\), which is the *Anstieg* to the (transferred) Kopfion C5 (S1/R15). After a brief linking gesture in the left hand, the fourth chord provides an harmonic change: an E minor

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34 Tidhar mistakenly calls them both “subdominant” (p. 95).
35 But Tidhar calls the relationship parallel, and his explanation is somewhat confusing (p. 95). That Tidhar created functions to output “variation” for precisely these chords shows that he must have engaged in some analysis prior to his programming.
36 Although Tidhar’s program aggregates larger and larger spans, it does not seem explicitly motivated by any Schenkerian sense of prolongation, since the theorist is not mentioned at all in the text.
dominant chord (S2/L5-6/R1-8). A move to the minor dominant is not completely out of the question in minor mode: as mentioned previously, Schenker writes that “the dividing dominant in the minor mode is a minor chord.” However, this cadence is not a structural divider because it occurs at a lower level—the Urlinie has been temporarily transferred to a higher register—but it does mimic the interrupting behavior of a dividing dominant.

Events before and after this moment also point to a cadence here. First, the left hand’s prior descending melodic lead-in reduces to A3 – G3 – F3 (S2/L1-5), in which the F3 implies IV₆, suggesting a Phrygian cadence-like gesture (see Example 6-2). Second, the subsequent melodic figure in the left hand introduces a chromatic pitch, F♯3, implying a departure from the tonic key.

This left hand link (S2/L7-16) is not without vertical implications which demonstrate a syntactically logical harmonic progression. The rising D3 – E3 – F♯3 figure (an allemande-like anacrusis) tonicizes a G major chord. This harmony is quickly destabilized by the consequent F♭3, transforming the implied G major chord into a temporary dominant seventh harmony for a C major chord. The F♭3 in the bass puts that dominant in ⁷ position, and as one would expect, it resolves to E3 as a C6. The remaining pitches in the linking figure can be easily fleshed out at as contrapuntal expansion of a C major triad, achieving a root position at S2/L15-16 (refer again to Example 6-2). The link thus serves to launch the medium’s approach to III.

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37 Rameau’s own unmeasured prelude from 1706, also in A minor, opens with the same strategy: a contrapuntal expansion of tonic followed by a cadence that establishes the minor dominant as a key area.

38 Schenker 1979, 37 (§ 89).
The B2 in the bass (S2/L17) initiates a sequential span based on 5 – 6 motion, activity that distinguishes the *medium* from the *exordium*. This 5 - 6 sequence tonicizes III only minimally, settling only a few chords later on an A minor $\overline{\underline{3}}$ (S2/L19-20/R17-18). The tonic is strongly recaptured by the ensuing cadential progression: i6 – (iv7) – ii$\flat$ – V$\flat$ (S3/L1-7/R1-9). The supertonic chord, instead of being half-diminished in quality, includes raised $\hat{6}$, as a consequence of voice-leading: the G$\flat$4 (S3/L6) of the V$\flat$ requires an approach by F$\flat$4, to avoid the interval of an augmented second.

Most ordinarily, the V$\flat$ would resolve to a tonic chord, and the chord members in the right hand voice-lead so without incident (S3/R10-13). The left hand, however, does not achieve $\hat{1}$ and remains on E3. This is a very general sort of deceptive motion: all voices except for the bass resolve correctly. Closure is evaded, since the V$\flat$ does not resolve to a root position tonic triad. Compositionally, this lack of strong closure most often results in additional musical material that eventually achieves another, more conclusive, cadence.

At this point in the prelude (S3/L7-13/R6-13), a discrepancy between the manuscripts raises a question for the analyst: exactly how does the V$\flat$ “resolve”? In the Parville MS, the curve attached to E3 (S3/L7) apparently tapers off, as indicated by the dashed *tenue*, by the end of the turn-like figure in the tenor. In Bauyn, the analogous curve rather curiously rises from the lower staff to the area *between* the staves, seemingly extending the E3 through the right hand’s resolution. While staff-crossing curves are by no means rare in Bauyn, it is difficult to surmise the scribe’s intent in not remaining below the other pitches, avoiding them as most bass note curves do. There is often ample space to extend the curve below the tenor, as nothing is written there. Too, it is not
unusual in the preludes for the bass to temporarily drop out such that the tenor becomes the lowest voice. Also, there seems to be a break in the stroke itself: perhaps this curve is actually two curves that, through negligence, have merged: one, under discussion here, belonging to E3; the other actually attached to E4 in the right hand (S3/R9). If this is true, then both Bauyn and Parville agree with regard to the E3 curve. What to do, however, with this ostensible second curve in Bauyn? If the second curve is attached to the E4, it renders superfluous the short curve *already* clearly attached to the E4.

Whatever the status of the E3 curve, the $V^7$ either resolves to a $I^6$ or a “tonic” $\hat{\gamma}$, i.e., a I chord over a pedal $\hat{5}$.

The cadence $V(\gamma) – I^6$ is described in Masson 1699 (as *cadence imparfaite*), Rousseau 1768 (as *cadence interrompue*), and La Voye 1665/1666 (as *cadence rompuë*). Regardless of the label, all these authors regard such a cadence as having an incomplete or deceptive motion in the soprano or bass, as compared with the *cadence parfaite*, in which the soprano approaches $\hat{1}$ by step and the bass moves $\hat{5} - \hat{1}$. If the dashed *tenue* were feasible, the C4 at S3/L13 would therefore become the temporary sounding bass.

But in the $V^7 – I^6$ cadences defined by Masson, Rousseau, and La Voye, however, the bass literally descends a third, and does not ascend a sixth. Also, the feint, $V(\gamma) – “tonic” \hat{\gamma}$ $\hat{2}$, is found throughout Couperin’s preludes. Thus, the longer *tenue* is preferred, along with the “tonic” $\hat{\gamma}$. In other words, the medium could have closed with a $V – I$ cadence, but Couperin, in choosing not to allow the bass to resolve $\hat{5} - \hat{1}$, creates the need for more musical material and a more confirmatory cadence.

[Example 6-12 here.]
In so doing, the prelude has reached the *finis*. The prelude concludes with a stock cadence pattern: \( \text{II}\# - V - I \) (S3/L18/S14-18 to the end). The II\# obviously signals a restart of the phrase model, further highlighting the incomplete close of the *medium*. Abstractly speaking, one can propose two elided tonic chords to delineate the *medium* and *finis*: one to replace the “tonic” \( \frac{4}{4} \) and the other to launch the *finis*, leading to the II\# actually present in the score (see Example 6-12). As a result, this recomposition makes the prelude moreaurally sectional, and shows how a “tonic” \( \frac{4}{4} \) can be considered an evaded cadence.\(^{39}\) On the other hand, the “tonic” \( \frac{4}{4} \) can be seen to merely prolongs the preceding dominant; as a result, the move to II\# is not syntactical. But an elided tonic mitigates this problem as well. And at the surface of the music, the proper resolution of unstable pitches in the right hand is enough to suggest, even momentarily, this tonic resolution and restart.

At the end, the two final tonic chords (S4/L10-16/R12-18), altered with Picardy thirds, is a typical close for Couperin’s minor mode preludes.

A deeper level voice-leading reduction reveals three linear descents from the Kopfton in this prelude, \( \frac{5}{4} \) (see Example 6-13). Each of these descents corresponds to the rhetorical structure just outlined.

[Example 6-13 here.]

\(^{39}\) The succession \( \text{V(7)} - \text{“tonic” } \frac{4}{4} \) could be added to Janet Schmalfeldt’s types of evaded cadence (1992). Although a cadential retake follows, and the final progression is clearly form-expanding, the close of Prelude 7 does not fully conform to Schmalfeldt’s “one more time” technique, since there is not a second statement of evaded material, and most importantly, no melodic repetition to instill a stronger sense of restart.
The move to the initial cadence attendente (S2/L5-6/R1-8) fits a typical interrupted motion 3 - 2, presented in the soprano at S1/R15 (C5) and S2/R4 (B4); however, as argued above, this voice is a registral replication of the actual descent in the tenor. As shown in Example 6-13, then, the tenor’s descent, labeled A, instead extends down to ⁵, or G3, going beyond ¹.⁴⁰ In the medium, the replicating soprano features a 3 - ² - ¹ descent (labeled B), where the ¹ is supported weakly by the “tonic” ⁵ chord alluded to previously. Descent C, the last, occurs in the structural Urlinie in the tenor, completing the prelude in the finis. All the descents link each section with the next by a common tone, creating smooth connections and thus an overarching continuity for the prelude as a whole.⁴¹

This is one way to think of the prelude in a unified way. A second way: the first descent overshoots ¹. The second comes up a bit short: it achieves ¹, but only weakly. And the last, finishing off the prelude, is just right. Thus, a narrative takes place, a narrative that instills a sense of momentum. With this, performers can formulate a pacing strategy for the piece, creating a grouping rhythm at the level of phrase-like spans.

Comparing this reading with Example 6-9 reveals the following. Barline A corresponds to the achievement of the Anstieg’s replica Kopfton. Hierarchically, however, it can be considered metrically weaker than barline B, which matches the long-term descent forming the minor half cadence at the end of the exordium. The medium is marked by barline E. Barlines C and D are, like barline A, higher level articulations of metrical accent. The scattering of barlines in system 3 shows the problematic nature of

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⁴⁰ The G3 is implied because a G4 in an upper voice really only serves as a harmonizer.
⁴¹ The G3 shared by descents A and B helps to explain the minor quality of the half cadence at the end of the exordium.
the “tonic” §, around S3/L7-13/R6-13. Note that the dashed line representing Ferguson and the following Powell/Wood barline delineate the “tonic” §, Ferguson harmonically and Powell/Wood melodically.

The status of the “tonic” § at S3/L7-13/R10-13 is troublesome and deserves further examination. Away from the surface of the music, the analyst must confront its contrapuntal generation: is it neighboring, passing, or cadential at a deeper level of structure? How might any of these interpretations conflict with or support its surface behavior? One answer, and its implications, will be explored below.

**Melodic figures and further considerations**

[Example 6-14 here.]

Example 6-14 shows the relationship of non-chord tones and arpeggations of Prelude 7 in great detail (almost note for note) to compare with its vertical reduction; in a sense, this voice-leading graph is an “exploded” view of Example 6-14.

Certain melodic figures recur throughout the prelude at different levels. Models are shown below the graph. Peppered profusely are accented dissonances such as suspensions, but most often *ports de voix* (Example 6-14b). These are highlighted by asterisks. Such accented dissonances always provide the player with an opportunity to make a local accent, especially if they are prepared, as given in Example 6-14b (for this reason, the ossia for the left hand in system 1 from the Parville MS is preferable to that of
Bauyn, since the prepared *port de voix* makes it easier to set an accent). A census of the accented dissonances (whether a suspension or a *port de voix*) reveals that almost every one involves a half step, giving the closes resolutions possible. Both suspensions and *ports de voix* are important metrical markers, but it should be remembered that the *port de voix* is an ornament and thus, according to F. Couperin, properly treated as a “little lost note.” This is one of the problems with the transcriptions by Wood, Wilson Powell, and Ferguson, who often obscure *ports de voix* as regular-sized noteheads, although they do ideally locate these *agréments* on strong beats. Troeger is much more observant about appropriate practice.

Derived from the *port de voix*, as an incomplete accented neighbor, is the three-note figure X (Example 6-14c). Its essential structure is a descending second, with the latter note receiving an incomplete half-step lower neighbor. It occurs at various levels: as a literal three-note succession at the surface of the music, or, as seen at the end of the second system in the right hand, a more long-term parallelism. At almost the same time in the left hand is a more decorated version, in which the first note is itself embellished with a lower neighbor (arguably a *pincé*). In its basic form, X outlines a descending second constrained to one voice. However, the variation X’ expands to the interval of a third instead of a second, and now the figure involves two voices. This can be seen in the two instances of X’ in the top system in the right hand. The first is C5 – G♯4 – A4, and the second B4 – F♯4 – G4. Both are more decorated than the given model with a lower neighbor motion. The first has the lower neighbor applied to the higher note of the motive, while the second switches the attachment to the lower pitch.

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42 Even given Frederick Neumann’s argument, and Saint Lambert’s ambiguous settings (1702, 49-51), both on- and pre-beat articulations nevertheless locate a beat.
43 F. Couperin 1717, 20.
Figure Y is not simply any generic ascending scalar fourth, but specifically derives from the allemande anacrusis figure with both (local) tonal and accentual implications. The scale degrees given in Example 6-14d pertain only to the (implied) chord of arrival (not to the overall key of the prelude), and arise from the typical allemande opening, in which the first tonic chord will have 1, 3, or 5 in the soprano. In system 3, the variation Y' in the left hand overshoots its arrival, E2 (for the final dominant of the prelude), reaching F2. The F2 is merely an upper neighbor, but is thereupon diminuted as motive X. The continued stepwise descent in the left hand at the end of system 1 could be viewed as an inversion of Y, complementing the previous ascent and with X nested within.

Rhythmically, Y implies a downbeat on the top note, as indicated by the barline in the models. This anacrusis effect is exploitable wherever Y appears in Example 6-14. The two consecutive appearances of the gesture in the right hand at the beginning of system 2 might even establish four somewhat regular beats in performance; Ferguson’s mm. 8 and 9 (Example 6-7) express this metrical plan as a pair of similarly notated measures, a more explicit rendition than in the other transcriptions. The complete bass line of system 2 is itself a deeper level expression of motive Y, and as such, too can give metrical shape to the entire passage. B2 – C3 – D3 form a weak – strong – weak drive to arrive on E3, the dominant. A weak – strong pattern even fits the harmonies defined by B2 and C3, as a tonicizer (V/III) and tonicized (III) pair. Overall, of course, this framework is abetted by the aforementioned 5-6 sequence between the bass and tenor.

More, the tonal implications of the tetrachord, as 5 - 6 - 7 - 1 for the dominant,
emphasizes that harmony’s significance, in turn further demoting the “tonic” ‡ to an even more ephemeral state.

Written out, *ports de voix* are readily indicated by a repeated note (the preparation and *port de voix* itself) and Type 2a curve. In Prelude 7, this *agrément* seems like a compositional motif, so numerous are its occurrences (refer to Example 6-2). In system 3, Couperin has written a chain of imitations that alternates between the hands: L11-13, R11-13, L16-18, and R15-18 (and, a bit later, S4/L6-8). He layers an immediately successive pair at S2/R2-4 and S2/R6-8, which decorates two pitches in a single arpeggiated chord. The *port de voix* at S2/R18-S3/R1-2 is especially articulated: here Couperin has split the ornament with a sounding bass note (S3/R1). This is an exquisite moment that could not even be expressed as a *port de voix* on a single vertical chord; it would have to be written as a *suspension*.

Somewhat fewer in number are descending *ports de voix*. Those at S2/L3-5 and S2/L15-17 are typical in that they arise from stepwise melodic motion. At other times, descending *ports de voix* are very much akin to the typical (rearticulated) suspension when they are “prepared” consonantly from a preceding harmony. These occur at S1/R7-9 (a 4-3 suspension prepared from the C4 at S1/R4) and S4/R4-6 and R7-9 (the resolutions of the previous cadential ‡ chord). The bass *port de voix* at S1/R8-9 renders the E‡ there into a suspension chord. Intriguingly, the Parville scribe adds a preparatory A2 and a *tremblement* for the G♯2, emphasizing even more the sense of downbeat for that location. As another instance of ornamental ambiguity, the combination of Parville’s additions transforms the *port de voix* and *tremblement* into a prepared *tremblement*. 
appuyé (this is how Moroney conceives it; see also the ornament table in D'Anglebert 1689).

It should be noted that all of the ports de voix so far discussed could be performed either on or before the accented pulse they decorate.\textsuperscript{44}

**An alternate analysis: Daniel Harrison**

In one of the few in-depth analyses of a Louis Couperin work, an unpublished presentation by Daniel Harrison addresses this particular prelude.\textsuperscript{45} He discusses three locations in which to project a sense of rhythm. First, as a matter of grouping, Harrison interprets the prelude as comprising two phrases, indicated by the organizational slurs above his reductional analysis (Example 6-15). The division occurs at the half cadence at the end of the exordium (per the tripartite parsing seen in Example 6-13). Harrison hears here a “resolute arrival,” set off, too, by the ensuing bridging roulade (Example 6-2, S2/L7-15).

[Example 6-15 here.]

Second, after the opening repeated arpeggiation of the A minor chord, Harrison treats the V\(\frac{3}{2}\) as a (multiple) suspension chord; as such, the chord deserves an agogic accent. “[W]hen we perceive the harmonic aspects of a suspension, we fit it with appropriate metrical garb as well,” he writes.\textsuperscript{46} The Parville manuscript nicely gives extra

\textsuperscript{44} See Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{45} I am indebted to Dr. Harrison for providing me a copy of his text and examples.
\textsuperscript{46} Harrison 1989, 4-5.
emphasis to this metrical implication by including a prepared *port de voix* for the bass (see the ossia in Example 6-2).

Third, in common with the analysis discussed in this chapter, Harrison views the first five chords of his second phrase (corresponding to S2/L17/R9 to S3/L13/R13) as a “place where projecting a sense of meter is helpful in communicating a linear structure.”\(^{47}\)

But rather than employing the ascending 5-6 voice-leading between the tenor and bass (see Example 6-3), Harrison focuses on the inner voice ascent E\(_4\) – F\(_4\) – F\(_{4}\) – G\(_4\). This line participates in every chord change, forms parallel 10ths with the bass, has a cross-relation F\(_4\) – F\(_{4}\), and moves toward the dominant. Harrison goes so far as to apply equal durations to each note, with the result that the tenor’s 4\(^{th}\) span A\(_3\) – D\(_4\) at S3/L2-5 must be played as an ornament, thereby increasing momentum for the dominant arrival. Overall, “the temporary appearance of metrical organization produces…an attractive rhetorical effect.”\(^{48}\)

Harrison confesses to a problem with accentual rhythm after this, however. Observe that Example 6-15 features a fairly extensive (Harrison himself calls it “overlong”) prolongation of the dominant at the end of the prelude. The expansion, bounded by two dominants, includes a neighboring \(^\flat\) chord, an apparent neighboring I\(_II\), and a cadential \(^\flat\). The latter two harmonies—enhanced by another short bridging figure (S4/L1-6) that approaches the cadential \(^\flat\)—convincingly prepare the second dominant to conclude the prelude. But Harrison believes that the first dominant is more structurally important, hence the plan for the impulsive drive to it just described (recall the gestural analysis of the bass line earlier). As a result, there are two dominant articulations, and he

\(^{47}\) Harrison 1989, 5.
\(^{48}\) Harrison 1989, 5.
cannot “find a way of making the second [dominant] stronger than the first without making the piece sag…”\textsuperscript{49}

What might solve this quandary is a consideration of analytical levels and performance.\textsuperscript{50} Harrison’s dominant prolongation takes place at some distance from the surface of the music. Indeed, given the number of harmonies subsumed and that only these two dominants appear this late in the prelude, Harrison’s reading would make the first dominant the structural dominant of the \textit{Ursatz}. As such, the harmony seems to deserve the emphasis Harrison describes.

Certainly observing the momentum of the chromatic climb E4 – F4 – F\#4 – G4 jibes with the importance which Schenker ascribes to linear progressions.\textsuperscript{51} Whether they pass as quickly as 16\textsuperscript{th} or 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes, such an entity “is comparable to the pointing of a finger—its direction and goal are clearly indicated to the ear.”\textsuperscript{52} In “Further Consideration of the \textit{Urlinie}: I,” Schenker exclaims: “Words cannot express the completely extraordinary quality of a performance that creates the linear progressions and diminutions out of the \textit{Urlinie}!”\textsuperscript{53} However, he also warns of confusing structural levels, recommending a careful traversal from foreground to middleground to background: “[o]nly when a very exact picture is laid out on paper do questions arise which demand clarification, especially those concerned with the smallest details of voice-leading.”\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{49} Harrison 1989, 5.
\textsuperscript{50} See Burkhart 1983, esp. pp. 105-112.
\textsuperscript{51} From the analysis of Example 6-11g, the tetrachord is a harmonizing follower to the tenor’s G3 – A3 – B3 – C4 leader linear progression.
\textsuperscript{52} Schenker 1979, 5.
\textsuperscript{53} Schenker 1994, 109.
\textsuperscript{54} Schenker 1979, 26 (§ 49).
And so, in apparent anticipation of many a questioner in classrooms almost a century later, Schenker informs us that the high-ranking significance of background events does not translate into performance:

…one can…achieve true musical punctuation only by comprehending the background middleground, and foreground. As punctuation in speech transcends syllables and words, so true punctuation in music strives toward more distant goals. This, of course, does not mean that the tones of the fundamental line need to be overemphasized, as are the entrances in a poor performance of a fugue.  

Earlier, in “Further Considerations of the Urlinie: I,” Schenker provided this picturesque analogy:

To the performer, the Urlinie is above all a means of orientation, much the same as a trail-map to a mountain climber; no more than the trail-map spares the climber the necessity of negotiating every path, stone and morass does the Urlinie excuse the performer from traversing every diminution of the foreground. It is therefore not permissible in performance to follow the Urlinie slavishly and pluck it out of the diminution, just to communicate it to the listener.

It seems that Harrison’s analysis into performance mixes structural levels. His concern for stressing the “more important” first dominant, and expressing the ensuing dominant prolongation, amounts to articulating ₂ of the *Urlinie* before the final descent to ₁: the passage “sags” due to the number of chords to be downplayed within the prolongation. On the other hand, the driving inner voice chromatic ascent takes place on a chord-to-chord level. The former is more of a background phenomenon, the latter closer to the foreground.

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55 Schenker 1979, 8. Schenker’s comparing performance with punctuation recalls the writings of Charpentier and Saint Lambert (see Chapter 5).
As Harrison himself points out, the left hand *roulade* at S4/L1-6 “forces the performer to make two dominant articulations.”\(^{57}\) This is problematic within the abstract prolongation, since deeming the intervening harmonies as “neighboring” implies a contrapuntal (melodic) continuity. But clearly this is a higher-level interpretation. All of Couperin’s compositional features—the *roulade*, the cadential ‡ (S4/L8-9/L1-3), and the deep E2 in the bass for the final V—all indicate an articulation that should not be glossed over.

Harrison is not mistaken when he suggests the dramatic approach to the dominant at S3/L7/R6-9, although the underlying linear progressions apply more effectively in performance at the chord-to-chord level. And at this level, it is helpful to entertain the notion of the “tonic” ‡ at S3/L7/R10-13. Within Harrison’s dominant prolongation, the sonority’s treatment as a neighboring ‡ makes contrapuntal sense, but at the surface of the music, its weak tonic resolution no doubt adds to the sense of “sagging.” If instead one shifts levels and considers the chord as a deceptive resolution described previously, then the pause or *caesura* that occurs will reinforce, rather than problematize, the second dominant, which is so necessary to bring the prelude to a convincing conclusion.

**A dual-value notation version**

[Example 6-16 here.]

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\(^{57}\) Harrison 1989, 5.
To conclude this chapter in a fitting manner, and to make practical use of the issues raised by the various analyses, transcriptions, and other observations made throughout, a new transcription of Prelude 7 is given in Example 6-16 (the layout conforms to Example 6-2). Emulating de La Guerre and D’Anglebert, a dual notation of stemless half-note heads and eighth notes is employed: this method imparts a greater degree of information and a sense of hierarchy to guide performer discretion. Unlike the conventional reading promulgated by Troeger and Tilney, note values are permitted a double purpose, indicating both duration and structural function. The notation corresponds to customary durational proportions, but with the understanding that the scale is quite relative, to preserve the fundamental rhythmic freedom of the prelude: strictly maintaining just two note values frees the performer to imagine only “somewhat shorter” and “somewhat longer” durations. Stemless white noteheads should be treated as indeterminate in length, as, for instance, when they form arpeggios. As such, these white noteheads also outline harmonies, whereas black notehead values almost always indicate melodic and/or ornamental pitches; in other words, the range of note values used establishes an approximate hierarchy of structural importance. The dual notation imparts a profile or “relief” to the score, counteracting the “flat” landscape of single-value notation, where each pitch appears to have as much structural weight and durational length as any other.

Three further notational prescriptions aid rhythmic differentiation. First, Type 3b “barlines” mark the two internal cadences. They are to be read as *anticipating* the cadence, just as these lines function in Couperin’s own preludes. Second, beaming consolidates groups of notes into a single, quickly comprehensible entity. Three-note
groups correspond to figure X, and as such indicate an upbeat impulse. The sense of upbeat also applies to single eighth notes. Even numbers of notes—scattered pairs, and one four-note group in system 1—are to be rendered as if the first note sounds on a local beat. Third, *ports de voix*—have been converted into a left parenthesis-like curve that fits against the left side of a note head, a symbol for the ornament used by D’Anglebert, de La Guerre, and Rameau. Making this change demotes the status of the formerly written-out pitches as (slightly higher level) apparent melodic diminutions, and simplifies the score yet again to make the harmonic *Gerippe* more visible. The reductive procedure is outlined in Example 6-17 for a span that is especially active (S2/L1-9/R1-8).

[Example 6-17 here.]

The stenographic mark easily substitutes for the *port de voix* itself as long as the preparatory note is explicit. This occurs most of the time, except for two cases. At the end of system 1, the ornamented A4 (formerly S1/R18-19) is actually an *acciaccatura* and has no preparation; the approach from G♯4 is implicit. This is in keeping with D’Anglebert’s instruction, in which the parenthesis-like symbol also represents a *cheute sur une note*, or a passing tone that fills in a third in an arpeggiated chord. Its use here is offered as an extension of D’Anglebert’s practice because his ornament table shows the *cheute* only in upward arpeggations. The situation at the end of the prelude is slightly different. In the final arpeggiated tonic chord, the C♯4 has an unprepared D4 embellishment from above (formerly S4.R15-16). The symbol’s variant placement, in which the bottom of the curve points to the notehead, rather than embracing it, derives
from de La Guerre, who did so to distinguish between ascending and descending *ports de voix* in her 1687 *recueil*.

By hewing closer to the scores in the MSS, the dual-value solution of Example 6-16 communicates about the same rhythmic discretion suggested by Couperin’s original notation but with an upgrade in guidance for performance with a modicum of hierarchy. It avoids the anti-intuitive, mathematically fussy renditions provided by the four transcribers that appear more confining and rigid. And as a more historically-based version of Prelude 7, this score comes closer to reflecting and emulating the practice set forth by the composers themselves.
The analysis in this chapter does not differ much in methodology from that of Prelude 7 in Chapter 6. However, Prelude 10, as a simple prelude of greater length, affords deeper perspectives on tonal and span analysis, and notational solutions. And rather than inspect variant transcriptions, this analysis is supplemented by examining recorded performances. As we shall see, performers/analysts do not always observe what has been claimed about the execution of the notation. Style, notation, and performance at times become incommensurate, demonstrating there remains a resistant ambiguity in Couperin’s scores.

**Overview**

Prelude 10 is a simple prelude cast in C: \( \frac{3}{4} \). It takes up two pages in Bauyn and four in Parville, at 12 and 11 systems, respectively. The prelude parses into six spans governed by descending lines, or step progressions. Several of these are indeed linear progressions, and all help to define a (local) tonic with an authentic cadence (some even end \( 3 - 2 - 1 \)), but these cadences vary in affirmative strength. The spans are easily traced at the surface of the music, typically involving movement to an inner voice. In the body of the prelude, significant modulations to the keys of dominant—with minor mode inflections—and to the submediant highlight a sense of large-scale tonal progression. The first section of this analysis describes a tonal derivation of the prelude. The second tackles the intricacies of voice-leading and counterpoint at the surface, principally
examining the structural linear progressions that frame certain spans, but includes observations about harmony, melody, motive, performance implications, and even takes into account recordings and editorial decisions regarding the manuscript sources. (A complete harmonic analysis of the prelude is provided as Example 7-1.)

Example 7-1 here.

Chapelin-Dubar notes, in comparing this prelude with Prelude 9, also in C major with C: ½, that both only make use of the chromatic pitches F♯, G♯, C♯, B♭, and E♭. The most pure thirds are available with “classic” meantone temperament.¹ Modulations traverse four key areas: F major, G major and minor, A minor, and D minor. Prévost additionally includes the inflection D major, and his tonal analysis (Example 7-2 summarizes Prévost’s statistics for the prelude) unequivocally demonstrates the intermingling of tonicizations with modulations: his index of tonal mobility counts 26 shifts of tonality!² Evidence comes in tracing his tonal analysis with the music. From S1/L1-19/R1-25, there are two tonicizations of F (IV), which Prévost considers modulations. His different perspective on tonal shifts is also shown at S2/L14-17/R18-27, where a move from a D minor ⁶ chord to a D⁷ dominant seventh goes into his tally of “modulations.” Thus Prévost’s index of tonal immobility can be understood as a rate of usage of chromatic harmonies, which, in a sense, nevertheless does measure tonal immobility, since chromatic harmonies cannot (locally) define the primary tonality of the prelude.³

¹ Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 2: 443.
² Recall Schenker’s derision of such short-term assessments in Harmonielehre, §§ 181-182.
³ But because Prévost does account for modulatory spans consisting of more than one chord, the index of tonal mobility is not strictly a ratio of chromatic versus diatonic harmonies.
Prévost’s series of “modulations” at least provides an indirect glimpse of how he determines what makes up a verticality, and although exact chord counts may not correspond to the analysis given in Example 7-1, general tonal details do not differ greatly.

[Example 7-2 here.]

With a relatively low coefficient of modulation of 1.28, the prelude visits closely related tonal areas (Prévost’s highest value of tonal distance is 2). The rate of ornamentation is slightly below the average for all of Couperin’s preludes (28.13%), as is the prelude’s harmonic immobility (the average is 7.68). While Prévost bases some of his data on different conceptions of theoretical concepts, and his formulae, as averages, flatten certain salient features of the preludes, his information is not to be dismissed as incompatible but rather taken as supplemental, presenting different aspects of the preludes. And more importantly, his work provides an enumerative baseline of notes and chords which can highlight not differences but similarities among analyses: in other words, a fundamental analytical background of harmonies which verifies that the preludes are not utterly indeterminate.

**Voice-leading derivation**

[Example 7-3 here.]
Example 7-3 shows several stages in the voice-leading derivation of Prelude 10. The first level of the middleground for the prelude (Example 7-3a) accords with the Schenker’s prototype in *Free Composition*, Fig. 15, 2c, a version of a 3-line *Urlinie*. The harmonization is given in five voices to facilitate an octave coupling generated later. In Example 7-3b, the space of the descending fifth in the bass from $\hat{1}$ to the structural predominant $\hat{4}$ is bisected with an arpeggiating $\hat{6}$. Harmonizing this note is simple, requiring only a 5-6 motion from the initial tonic chord. The forward displacement of a repetition of the initial tonic chord is shown in Example 7-3c; this tonic is parceled into a span by its own V – I cadence. The prolongation is actually generated through voice-leading, namely a descending arpeggiation of the soprano’s initial E5 to C5, filled in by D5: this is a first-order linear progression.4 Toward the end of the prelude, an upper neighbor F5 appears so that the chordal seventh temporarily fulfills its local leading-tone function. (The *Kopfton* $\hat{3}$ is repeated and beamed for illustrative reasons only, to emphasize its control over the entirety of the prelude despite upcoming lower-level activity.)

Moving to Example 7-3d, a back-relating dominant is inserted within the tonic prolongation established earlier: a notably coincident half-cadence occurs in the prelude at the surface at S3/L15/R15-17. Venturing again to the close of the prelude, the F5 becomes an incomplete neighbor as the return to E5 is suppressed. Another, but lower level, (complete) upper neighbor F5 is generated at the beginning of the prelude in Example 7-3e. This melodic diminution, supported by IV, momentarily prolongs $\hat{3}$.

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4 See Schenker 1979, 44 (§ 115).
Important to Example 7-3e are the diagonal lines which show the incipient composing-out of linear progressions, all showing movement to inner voices.

The coupling between the C4 and C5 octaves shown in Example 7-3f is composed out in two striking melodic events: the harmonized soprano descent from S1/R1 to S2/R4 at the opening, and the answering, more rapid ascent at S8/R6-13 later in the prelude. The parallelism is aurally obvious (though they proceed at different rates), and the registral difference is similarly marked because, during the entire intervening span, the soprano ranges precisely only between C4 and B♭. The bass arpeggiation to ♭6 is tonicized with its own cadence, and 2 and 7 of the structural dominant are unfolded. This level also shows the composing out of linear progressions that govern subsections of the prelude. Each progression is numbered and will be discussed in turn below. Progression 6 is indicated by a dashed bracket because it is an illusory progression, since several of its pitches—notably its first and last—are generated at different levels. The status of progression 3 is elucidated further below.

Finally, Example 7-3g, of all the stages given here, most closely approaches the surface of the music. Although not shown here, some of the linear descents are harmonized in parallel thirds: see the progression corresponding to “2” in Example 7-3f as an exemplar (the inflection B♭, embellishing this particular expansion of V, is an instance of modal mixture, a process repeated in the succeeding progression). Further melodic diminutions fill out various other cadences within the prelude. The unfolded

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5 See Schenker1979, 74-75 (§§ 205-206).
6 See Schenker 1979, 70-71 (§ 193).
structural dominant is also filled in with stepwise passing motion, and with cover tones that form the apparent fifth progression at the foreground (i.e., span 6).

Unlike Prévost’s analysis, over the course of the prelude, we find only two modulations: to the dominant and the submediant. At deeper levels, however, they of course constitute tonicizations in light of the reestablishment of C major to bring the prelude to a close. The tonicization of G forms a large-scale I – V – I for C major that extends from the beginning of the prelude to its medium (see Example 7-3c). The move to A minor is more significant, participating in a deep middleground descending bass arpeggiation to 4 (S9/L1), ultimately leading to the final cadence (Example 7-3b).

This derivation demonstrates that the tonality of Prelude 10 is expressed well through normative Schenkerian transformations, and that there are no “anomalies” that require the invoking of “modality” as a justification. Indeed, several large-scale features correspond to those found by Schenker in his analysis of J.S. Bach’s Prelude 1 in C major from *Well-Tempered Clavier I*. As seen in Example 7-3f, these include a high-level structural IV7 predominant near the final cadence, a coupling made by a stepwise 8-line that spans the first half, and a tremendous descent and ascent of the obligatory register that vividly sweeps through the entire composition.

We now examine the details of each span more closely. This aspect of the analysis of the prelude is presented in Example 7-4.

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7 Schenker 1969, 36-37. In letters to his pupil Felix-Eberhard von Cube, Schenker explained some aspects of his wordless analysis (see Drabkin 1985). The prelude well illustrates the idea of a simple underlying homophonic chord progression, a texture made explicit in the version that appears in the notebook of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach.
Span 1 (exordium)

The exordial span consists of a C harmony extending from S1/L1/R1 to S2/L5/R4. While the bass sustains a pedal C3 eventually leading to a plagal close, the soprano descends from E5 to E4: as a surface level 8-progression (in white noteheads), this movement is more of a decorative embellishment that fills in the coupling with the lower octave. The descent is completely stepwise but not diatonic: notable are B♭s which tonicize IV twice (at S1/R7-R13 and S1/L7-9/R18-25).

Soprano: E5 D5 C5 B♭4 A4 G4 G4 F4 E4
      I vii⁰ VI VI VI VI VI VI I

All the upper voices help harmonize each note of the soprano’s descent from 3 to 3, with the alto following (in darkened noteheads) in parallel thirds. This type of exordial opening involving a descending scale is found, at varying hierarchical levels, in other Couperin preludes (e.g., Preludes 3, 5, 12, and 16).

With its sustained tonic harmony, overall linear movement from 3 to 3 (establishing the obligatory register), and placid plagal close at the end (S2/L1-5/R1-4), the exordium of this prelude is tidily well-formed, stable, and clearly delineated.

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9 Schenker 1979, 74-75 (§§ 205-206). This is reminiscent of the harmonizations of soprano ascents and descents in Book 2, Chapters 11 and 12 of Fray Thomas Santa María’s Libro llamado el arte de tañer fantasía (1565). Additionally, C.P.E. Bach lists four figured bass progressions over pedals that result in descending upper voices.
10 Schenker also finds descending upper voice parallel thirds in mm. 1-19 of J.S. Bach’s Prelude 1 in C major from Well-Tempered Clavier I (Drabkin 1985, 244).
plagal motion at the beginning of system 2 stems from interpreting S2/L1-4 as a double on F3 (according to the ornament tables in D’Anglebert 1689 and F. Couperin 1716, a double begins with an upper auxiliary; in this case, the G3). This melodic turn gesture appears several times in close proximity—at S1/R26-29, S2/L6-9, and S2/R10-13—a clear instance of compositional planning, both as imitation and a connection with the next span.

In performance, the player should plan note-to-note durations and beat-to-beat spans (and thus, a tempo) that create an audible continuity of the soprano line; the sustain of the instrument will play a part in this.\(^{11}\) Note that the A minor chord at S1/L2/R7-9 results in a weak, seemingly deceptive motion (as vii\(^{-6}\) – vi), but the harmony is only apparent, created by a consonant 6-5 motion over the bass as the A\(^4\) appoggiatura resolves to G\(^4\). The use of consonant non-chord tones is one feature that characterizes Couperin’s compositional language, and performers have a choice in deciding whether to emphasize this surprising harmony, especially with regard to the tuning and temperament they choose.\(^{12}\)

The passage includes three apparent two-note slurs at S1/R11-12, S1/R14-15, and S1/R17-18. Yet Moroney and Wilson, in their recordings of this prelude, do not play these pitches with a strong – weak emphasis as two-note slurs are typically performed. Instead, they give these pairs a weak – strong pattern but nevertheless smoothly connect

\(^{11}\) This would follow from Schenker, who writes that a linear progression “is comparable to a pointing of the finger—its direction and goal are clearly indicated to the ear” (1979, 5). As argued by Sonia Slatin (1967, 195-197), this sense of direction relates to “das fliegende Ohr,” “the capacity to foretell from the immediate musical moment what the future moment must, of necessity, be”; similar is the idea of Fernhören, or “hearing ahead at a distance.”

\(^{12}\) Another soprano 6-5 motion occurs in the exordium of Prelude 3 in the same harmonic context.
the pitches, observing the more general notion that Type 2a curves imply a legato articulation.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Span 2 (medium)}

Besides finishing with an octave descent to E4, the end of the exordium is also melodically signaled by a short ascent to G4 (S2/R5-8), which reverses the previous contour and establishes a new soprano line. The concluding E4 from the first span now becomes an inner voice, which initiates (or continues with) a genuine linear progression to G3 (S3/L15); unlike span 1, the following voice lies above.\textsuperscript{14} As the span progresses, the tenor and bass assume a 5-6 voice-leading pattern between (S2/L9-10 to S3/L1), which provides contrary ascending motion support for the descending line in the upper voices.\textsuperscript{15} The goal now is a modulation to V, which is established at S3/L15-16/R15-18 and summarily marked with a highly decorated repetition of the new key’s tonic chord. The shift to V occurs at S2/L12-17/R14-17 with a direct modulation based on $\hat{4} - \#4 - \hat{5}$ in the bass, harmonized unsurprisingly as IV – V$\flat$/V – V.

Interestingly, the initial inflection of the new key area is G minor. Ultimately $b\hat{6}$ and $b\hat{3}$ are melodic, not harmonic, entities. E$\flat$4 (as $b\hat{6}$) enters at S2/R24 as a half-step approach to D4 ($\hat{5}$). The E$\flat$4, as a melodic chromatic inflection, and A3 from the V$\flat$/V chord at S2/L16-17/R25-27, set up a tritone which resolves as expected to the D4-B$\flat$3 dyad at S3/R2-3. Because the tension and release of a tritone resolution is so compelling, this ploy convincingly captures the new key. As for B$\flat$ ($b\hat{3}$)—seemingly foreshadowed in

\textsuperscript{13} See Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{14} All leading linear progressions are designated by white notes; followers by dark notes.
\textsuperscript{15} Schenker 1979, 81 (§ 227).
S1—its presence in coloring G as a tonal center reflects a somewhat more harmonic
effect than the use of E♭, and the G minor inflection recurs even more dramatically in
span 3.

Span 2 provides an example where style knowledge aids analysis. The three
harmonies from S3/L4-5/R4-5 to S3/L8-10/R8-14 show an apparent retrogression: V –
IV7 - V7. This gesture has nothing to do with vestiges of modality or nescience of later
common practice harmonic language. First, the unusual middle chord is not a chord at
all, but a sonority resulting from the confluence of linear motions in all the voices.16
Second, in Baroque music, it is sometimes seen at authentic cadences that the Š in the
bass (the root of the dominant) is decorated by a lower neighbor 4. In this instance,
Couperin has harmonized the 4 with upper voice activity.17 The analysis of these chords
as a dominant expansion is augmented by understanding it as a compositional idiom built
on stylistic convention. Further, knowing the origin of this dominant expansion
associates it with a cadence, thus reinforcing its placement (locally) at the end of a
phrase-like unit.

**Span 3 (medium)**

Couperin continues to play with the mode of G throughout the next span, in which
the starting pitch, D4 at S4/R1, overlaps harmonically with the end of the previous span.
The D4 moves to the tenor voice and descends to A3 at S5/R11. As a prolongation of a

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16 For similar 3-chord prolongations, Schenker writes that such a “truly contrapuntal way of
writing...seems to produce independent chords and even endows the middle one with its own figures.
Insignificant as the example may appear, it suffices to indicate the decline of our musical sense” (Schenker
1979, 81 and Fig. 98b).
17 Incidentally, Schenker notes this Š - 4 - Š cadential bass configuration with an example from Fux in
Counterpoint, Vol. 1, Part 2, Chapter 3, §3.
G-Stufe, the final pitch of the progression should be G3. A twist comes, however, with a deceptive motion at S5/L7-8/R14-18, and interestingly, Couperin omits G3 there. For this reason, the bracket continues as a dashed line in Example 7-4. At this point, the A3 is prolonged in a brief stretch that interlocks with span 4. At S6/L5-8/R18-20, a cadence reconfirms the home tonality. G3 then resurfaces to complete span 3.

To return to its start, span 3 begins after the reiteration of the new tonic at the very beginning of system 4, the bass imitating the flourish just heard in the right hand at S3/R15-29. This flourish is a written-out tremblement on F3. The F3 makes a passing G3 chord, which proceeds, as expected, to a C♯ chord at S4/L14-15/R3-4. Now comes an instance of one harmony “melting…into another.”18 The C♯ chord is at first not voiced completely, its chordal fifth G4 only anticipated as the last pitch in a brief stepwise ascent. This is a stock anacrusis gesture, and the delayed arrival of the G4 is actually a written out suspension, making a local downbeat.19 But by the time the G4 is actually heard at S4/R6, a B♭3 has entered in the tenor (passing from C4 to A3) and, with the bass E3, results in an E diminished triad. Given an implied D4 in the alto from S4/R3—plausible given the attached sustaining curve—the harmony momentarily becomes an E♯7, or ii♯7 of D. Staggered voice leading continues the subtle transformation of harmonies as the tenor steps down to A3 and the alto similarly to C♯4 via a D4 appoggiatura, creating an A dominant seventh chord—i.e., V7/V. All of this activity qualifies as an extended predominant area, eventually reaching a D major triad (S4/L19-20/R10-11), led to by a three-step descending fifths root motion (E to A to D).

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19 Not the non-chord tone, but the ornament. See F. Couperin 1974, 34.
Careful performers will prudently weigh the cumulative aural effect of all these events. First, the conversion of the C⁵ into E⁹ requires the alto D⁴ at S4/R3 to be sustained clearly. Second, a pacing concern arises, since the D⁴ will link to the ensuing D⁴ - C⁶ appoggiatura (S4/R7-8), and in order to convey this ornament properly, the gap between the E⁹ and its A major triad resolution should not last too long. Third, although a sustaining curve extends the bass E₃ from S4/L14 to S4/L19, that pitch may very well have faded, making the tenor A₃ (S4/L17) the apparent bass for the V⁷/V chord (S4/L17/R8-9). Nonetheless, its status as an inner voice is confirmed by a passing motion through G₃ to F₃ at S4/L20, where the literal bass again reasserts itself. This ambiguous aural flip-flopping of the functional tenor and bass is found throughout Couperin’s preludes, more evidence of his playful and calculating compositional skill.

The D major triad, as V of G major, is summarily weakened by the bass’s move to C₃, resolving to the minor tonic ⅆ chord at S4/L24-25/R18-21, which is ultimately a simple arpeggiation from the G chord that opens system 4. Although the bass has quickly descended from G₃ to B♭₂ (the leading progression has only traversed a third, from D⁴ to B♭₃), this 6-progression can be seen instead as an inversion of a root to third arpeggiation.²⁰ A special feature of Couperin’s voice leading of this portion of span 3 is the explicit contrary motion between the tenor and soprano involving the pitch classes G, A, and B♭. This contrapuntal structure therefore expands even more the role of B♭, which first appeared as a tonicizing passing tone at S1/R11, and then inflected cadential activity in the dominant key at the end of span 2.

²⁰ Schenker 1979, 77 (§ 214) and Fig. 89, 4.
From the end of system 4 and crossing to system 5, the next three chords form a conventional $i^6 - ii^6 - V^7$ progression, still in the dominant. During the last two chords, the linear progression descends to A3 (S5/L5). Couperin continues to maintain the minor mode, as set forth in the first medial span. Despite the emphasis on B♭ as we have seen, this is still merely flavoring, however—i.e., the extended modulation of the dominant over these spans 2 and 3 remains nevertheless couched firmly in the key of the prelude, C major and not at all C minor—which is confirmed by the consequent deceptive motion to an E minor chord at S5/L7-8/R14-18.

This chord is approached by a decidedly conspicuous V$^7$ at S5/L4-6/R4-13, made emphatic by ornate arpeggiation in the right hand and, in the left hand, the very low D2, especially noticeable not only by its register but also by the Type 3a.2 line which deliberately marks it to be played alone, making an outstanding aural (and metrical) accent.21 Clearly preparing the listener for a significant cadence, the bass of this elaborate dominant slides up by a step and resolves deceptively to the (major mode) submediant. It would seem that span 3 might end now with a G3. Couperin, however, does not provide a G3. Its conspicuous absence comments cleverly on the deceptive motion here.

Moroney and Wilson make surprising performance choices at this location which do not at all observe the analysis made here. Moroney bypasses the deceptive motion in favor of playing the notes as they are literally laid out in the Bauyn MS (Example 7-5).22

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21 The extensive melodic activity essentially creates a written-out ritardando for the cadence, conforming to the notion that a slowing of tempo often marks a cadence (Hudson 1994, 7-8). Certainly this should make the upcoming deceptive motion all the more surprising.

22 Moroney 1989, disk 2, track 13, 0:54-1:00.
The copyist has written the left hand’s D3 and E2 directly beneath D4 and C4 in the right hand. Moroney approximates this and gives ostensible harmonic clarity by playing the D3 with the right hand’s following three pitches, “resolving” the D7 to a G♯ major triad, and consequently demoting the E2 as a passing tone because it does not possess a sustaining curve. Given his suggestion that the “notation must generally be read obliquely,” the G♯ harmony is a curious choice, especially since his own score does not show any such alignment of the pitches involved.\textsuperscript{23} While he does stretch the tempo a bit—hinting that this is an important moment—the lack of conclusive stable harmonic event renders this juncture aurally confusing.

Wilson’s performance similarly decelerates at the D7 but then hurriedly continues to an E-based harmony, the E2 granted a Type 1a curve that has been moved a considerable distance to the left from its original placement in the Bauyn MS. Wilson heightens the deceptive motion, however, by editorially suggesting—and playing—an astonishing G♯4 at S5/R15. This alteration creates an E7 chord, and the next three chords (from S5/L9-13/R19-27 to S6/L1-2/R1-6) do prolong A minor. Wilson offers no explanation for anticipating this tonicization. In light of contemporary theorists’ definition of a submediant cadence rompué, Wilson’s alteration seems outside of the style and unnecessary.

\textsuperscript{23} Moroney 1985, 12. Even more curiously, there is a system break that puts the E2 on a completely new line, which would hardly encourage such a performance.
Had this cadence resolved authentically to a G chord, the linear progression
would come to an end, which is why G3 appears only parenthetically and the remainder
of the progression sketched with a dashed bracket in both Examples 7-3f and 7-4. At this
point, the final descent to G3 is held in abeyance by an arpeggiation (or unfolding),
supported by a voice exchange, of a D-\textit{Stufe}. The harmony first sounds as the D\textsuperscript{7} at
S5/L4-6/R4-13 and is summarily bounded with the D minor $\flat$ chord at S6/L1-3/R7-13
(see the appropriate location in Example 7-3g).\textsuperscript{24} This latter chord acts as ii\textsuperscript{6} in the return
to the home tonality at the end of the span. The earlier D\textsuperscript{7} is inflected as dominant quality
with F$\flat$ to aid the deceptive motion, but both these chords are nevertheless manifestations
of the same \textit{Stufe}: the bass of the D-\textit{Stufe} arpeggiates from D2 (S5/L6) to F2 (S6/L1), and
this third is filled in with a passing tone E2 (S5/L8). Essentially, beyond the surface of
the music, the deceptive submediant resolution can be demoted to a passing harmony.

Because the D-\textit{Stufe} prolongs A3 throughout S5/R10 to S6/R13 (it sounds
nowhere else in the span), it seems appropriate—although somewhat crude—that
Couperin simply skips the G3 in the passing submediant chord. More importantly,
though, the prolongation of A3 within this stretch is coupled with A4, initiating an
intricate linking of span 3 with span 4, to be discussed below.

G3, closing span 3’s structuring descent, appears at S6/R17, in the dominant of
the primary tonality. The approach to the cadence is a conventional—indeed, markedly
so—IV – ii\textsuperscript{6} – V\textsuperscript{7} (S6/L1/R1-S6/L5/R17). The tonic is reestablished but with an
authentic cadence so attenuated that it seems to deliberately discourage any sense of

\textsuperscript{24} Although the first chord of system 6 is an apparent root position F major chord, 5-6 motion in the alto
alters the harmony to a D minor $\flat$ chord.
repose. The bass sustains 5 from the dominant seventh chord, making this resolution (S6/L5-8/R18-20) a weak “tonic” 5 chord.\textsuperscript{25} It is a kind of deceptive close, in the sense that the upper voices resolve as they should (except that G3 does not appear and must be implied) but the bass does not. As for the unresolved falling fifth in the bass, the missing root I does eventually appear, but ten notes later, C3 at S6/L18. This distance allows for little sonic connection with G2 from S6/L5. Although the C3 is buried in an active roulade, performers can grant the note a momentary agogic accent as the melodic contour dips there.

Thus, while the linear progression that governs span 3 comes to an end, it is unstable and hardly conclusive: the finishing chord is in a hovering I position; G3, the final note of the linear descent, is missing from the tonic conclusion; and the left hand rushes through a roulade, giving only a fleeting whisper of the expected I. In preventing a premature sense of closure, this ending provides momentum to launch span 5.

\textbf{Span 4 (medium)}

Span 4 is the completion of a subsidiary descent from the (octave-transferred) Kopfton 3 (see Example 7-3e), and so features the fewest number of steps, moving from E4 at S5/R19 (implied, however, from the previous deceptive motion) and finishing with C4 at S6/R18. Functionally it reestablishes the home key. In another possible instance of compositional planning, the behavior of span 4’s predominant area in span 4 (beginning at system 6) copies that at the end of the prelude: an F major chord briefly becomes a D\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{25} Or: the tenor, which resolves the chordal seventh, finishes on E3, and by sounding in place of the sustained bass, creates a V – I\textit{\textsuperscript{6}} cadence rompuë.
\end{footnote}
minor 6 chord through 5-6 motion (S6/R1 & 8; S9/R3 & 12). Another parallelism is a temporary leading tone that creates 7-8 motion with the bass, although over different harmonies: at S5/R2-3, G#4 – A4 over A2 (ignoring the F2 in the bass), and at S9/R5-6, E5 – F5 over F2.

Span 4 is particularly interesting because it forms an interlocking descent with span 3.  They start to overlap immediately after the submediant resolution at S5/L7-8/R14-18. Amid the expansion of span 3’s D-Stufe lies another expansion that prolongs E4 from span 4. This nested expansion is reckoned as slightly interpolative in that it expands an A minor harmony in the upper voices only. More audibly, however, the interpolation is marked by the disappearance of the bass.

We begin this complex analysis by first observing that the submediant resolution at S5/L7-8/R14-18 contains a familiar trait of Couperin’s compositional style: the embellishment of deceptive submediant resolutions with a chordal seventh. Usually such sonorities can instead be analyzed as a 6 chord with a 7-6 suspension. In the most quotidian cases, the submediant seventh chord transforms into a subdominant, which helps set up a continued or reiterated progression to a more stable close that the deceptive motion did not fulfill. Couperin takes a more discursive strategy in this instance. The suspension indeed resolves as it should—D3 at S5/L7 to C3 at S5/L9—but at the moment of resolution, the bass drops out, absconding until S6/L1, where F2 registrally connects with the earlier E2 (S5/L8). And it is the suspension’s resolution (C3) that becomes the new bass. While this is plainly another example of the tenor temporarily taking over bass

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26 See Schenker 1979, 77 (§ 213) and the attendant Fig. 88, 4d.
27 By adding the 7-6 suspension, Couperin again causes one harmony to “melt” into another, instilling a slight ambiguity to an apparently straightforward cadence rompué.
function, it seems entirely appropriate that the abrupt focus on a different register and concomitant relative thinning of homophonic texture occur precisely at the start of this interpolative moment, signaling the reappearance of a much deeper, long-term structural descent.  

Now with C3 as the bass, the interpolation can be explained. The harmonies at S5/L11/R19-20 and L13/R24-26 prepare a typical $i^6 – V^\frac{3}{2} – i$ contrapuntal expansion to tonicize A minor with $\frac{3}{2} – \frac{5}{2} – \frac{1}{2}$ in the “bass.” The first chord is an A minor $\frac{3}{2}$ chord. The second chord, $V^\frac{3}{2}$, “resolves” at S6/L1-2/R1-3. Couperin very strongly indicates A minor with upper voice: the soprano first hovers around A4 (S5/R20) with neighboring anticipation G$^\#_4$ (S5/R21), and then the pitches reverse roles, the G$^\#_4$ becoming a chord tone (S5/R26-27) while the A4 (S5/R25) acts as an appoggiatura. The alto vacillates between E4 and D4, with D4, as $fa$, falling to C4 at S6/R1.

But when the actual bass reenters, it sounds an F2, confounding the completion of the expansion. This seemingly clumsy deceptive resolution camouflages Couperin’s subtle manipulation of voice-leading expectations: G$^\#$ certainly should resolve to A, and also D to C, and even B to A at S5L13 to S6/L2, but the dyad of resolution, C and A, is consonant for either an A bass or an F bass; the latter, of course, is disconcerting, especially since the literal lowest pitches form a tritone B – F (S5/L13 and S6/L1). Couperin even slyly employs the one remaining pitch that would clearly define an A minor triad, E, as a retardation (S6/R6 leading to F4 at S6/R10).

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28 Schenker (1984, 35-36) similarly explains certain passages as interpolative in J.S. Bach’s Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue and Toccata in D minor (BWV 565).
The series of upper voice pitches serve to prolong A4 at a dyadic minimum: from E4 and A4 at S5/R19-20, to D4 and G♯4 at S5/R24 & 26, and finally C4 and A4 at S6/R1 & 3. As such, the A4 is a replicate of span 3’s A3, a connection established when both pitches appear at S6/R7 and 13, which happens to be the terminal harmony of the enclosing prolongation for the D-based Stufe. Indeed, A3 only recurs at this point, having last sounded in the D7 at S5/L4-6/R4-13: the deeper level relationship between these two harmonies, despite the intervening musical material, could not be more clear.

When the A3 descends to G3 at S6/R17, as a ii° – V7 – I progression modulating back to the home tonality, the previous link between A4 and A3 technically creates parallel octaves at the surface, because both pitches fall to their respective G’s (the upper voice to G4 at S6/R20, the lower to G3 at S6/R17). Couperin masks the problem by the simple conceit of omission: he leaves out the A4 over the dominant seventh at S6/L4-5/R14-17, allowing the G3 to sound, and then ignores the G3 (now a doubling) in the tonic resolution, where the soprano finishes on G4. But when the voices in the right hand move to I (S6/R18-20), the G4 is ♯ in the soprano, which would make a cadence imparfaite or irregulière. This further contributes to the unsteadiness of the “tonic” ♯; eventually it teeters and then practically topples into the left hand’s roulade, moving into span 5.

**Span 5 (medium)**

Although span 4 recaptures the tonic key, span 5 quickly modulates to the submediant. The perfect authentic cadence for A minor at the end of the span is unmistakable, with richly-voiced chords, bass in the C2 octave, scalar ascents and large
contrary leaps in the left hand (performers should build momentum by emphasizing \( \hat{3}, \hat{4}, \) and \( \hat{5} \) at S7/L11, L18, and L26, respectively), obvious division between right and left hand activity, a cadential \( \hat{6} \) (S7/L26/R12-15), and octave-arpeggiated tonic arrival (S8/L1-2/R1-5).

The structuring linear progression, like span 3, begins with an (harmonic) overlap at the end of the previous span. Overall, the E4 at S6/R19 descends to the inner voice A3 at S8/R5. The majority of chords in this span clearly express A minor, especially throughout system 7. But at S6/L25-26/R21-22, a D\# would seem to imply a resolution to a G-based harmony. Instead, the next chord is E\#, or V\# of the submediant key, with a G\ in the bass. The D\# is a textbook example of a harmony “altered” due to melodic considerations. In A minor, the diatonic quality of the seventh chord built on \( \hat{4} \) is a minor seventh chord; in \( \frac{3}{2} \) position, the bass would be F. Because of this inversion and the progression to V\#, however, the bass is raised to F\# in order to avoid an augmented second with the leading tone G\#. The result is a dominant-seventh quality IV which functions as a typical predominant chord, not a secondary dominant; the seventh acts as an appoggiatura to the B in the E\#. Essentially the progression is IV – V – i, and so is contextually different from the unusual major submediant deceptive resolution in Wilson’s performance described above.

**Span 6 (finis)**

The sixth and final span is launched with a sensational scalar ascent from E4 to G5 (S8/R6-20), the last three notes artfully spaced apart by arpeggiations and *rubato* hand coordination to dramatically spotlight the culminating pitch. This *tirade* also resets
the range of the span’s structural linear progression for its ultimate descent to C5 at the end of the prelude, since span 5 has finished below that pitch. It is also an accelerated, ascending version of span 1, neatly compensating the registral descent there.

To explain the linking of spans of 5 and 6 requires an analytical decision. Two paths reasonably lead the A3 at S8/R5 to G5 at S8/R20. The first is most direct: by means of an octave transfer (manifested by the E4 – E5 *tirade*) A3 immediately proceeds to G5. This explanation has the advantage of uniting both spans into a larger continuous unit through a simple descending step motion.

On the other hand, the ascending scale makes the E4-E5 octave (S8/R6-13) quite salient. The E4 originates from S8/R3, an inner voice in the A minor chord that concludes span 5, and thus establishes a common tone overlap seen in other spans. However, the E4 does not connect directly to the ensuing descending linear progression from G5; an extra (passing) note is required to close the gap of a third (along with the octave ascent). The fallout for this explanation is that, of all the spans in this prelude, span 6 would uniquely achieve the starting pitch of its linear progression with an ascent, E4 – F4 – G5—a local *Anstieg*, so to speak, that is easily emphasized in performance. Remarkably, this gesture is replicated three times pitch-for-pitch elsewhere in the span at various levels: as decorated note-to-note adjacencies at S10/L6, 8, and 10; as structural chord roots at S8/L8, S9/L1, and S9/L3; and as an expanded version with a chromatic passing tone F♯3 in the tenor at S9/L4, L5, L7, and S9/L1. And a fourth version with inverted contour in the bass a S6/L6-8 makes a voice exchange with the original instantiation in the soprano.
Some analysts may consider it advantageous to have such a performable result as that given in this second account. On the other hand, recourse to an Anstieg might be considered an unnecessary upkeep cost when compared to the more simple and straightforward (abstract) descent from A3 to G5 in the first explanation, which, admittedly, is probably unhearable. Regardless of the preferred but different outcomes of these two interpretations, the most relevant factor is their shared basis in an octave transfer which regains the obligatory register.  

However the link with the previous span might be performed, span 6 structurally opens with the C♯ chord at (S9/L8-9/R20), in which, as in the exordial span, an inner voice passing B♭3 momentarily tonicizes IV (S9/L1/R1-3) before progressing to a V⁷ chord (S9/L3/R15-17). The V chord is then prolonged by inner voice activity to S10/L1-2/R1-5. For this portion of the span, the bass and tenor provide contrary motion support with 5-6 motion, a feature previously seen in span 2. The soprano simply descends in a linear progression G5 – F5 – E5 – D5. 

This linear progression seems to finish with C5 at S10/R9. But it is clearly premature, and the harmonic support is an unstable ♭ chord. The upper voices resolve appropriately to members of a tonic triad from a V⁷, but what results is another “tonic” ♭ chord (as in span 4) because the bass sustains a pedal G2-G3 octave. This “tonic” ♭ chord might be mistaken for a cadential ♭ chord, given its location, but its behavior is more akin to a deceptive motion, i.e., voice-leading that lacks closure. This activity thus continues.

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29 Analysts must occasionally weigh the advantages and costs of alternative accounts, as here, and the evaluative criteria used to come to such conclusions lies beyond the scope of this document. See Brown 2005 (pp. 12-24), and Schachter, “Either/Or” in Schachter 1999 (pp. 121-133).
to prolong the dominant, with the C5 participating, at a deeper level, in an unfolding between D5 (S10/R3) and B4 (S10/R17) (see Examples 7-3f and g).

Despite the abstract prolongation of the dominant in systems 9 and 10, the bass provides relief at the surface of the music at S10/L6-10 with the previously mentioned E – F – G gesture. This gives the effect of a predominant before yet one more V7, which is signaled as the last cadence with a 4-3 suspension (a *cadence parfaite* as described in Saint Lambert 1707; see Chapter 5), upward and downward arpeggiation of the harmony in the right hand, and by G1 (S10/L11) in the left hand, the lowest note in the entire prelude. The soprano’s linear progression finally descends to C5 with the tonic chord resolution at S10/L13/R20-23. The repetition of this chord is a typical conclusive gesture, reminiscent of the *révérence*, the final bow to one’s partner in a dance.

In span 6, performers and analysts will encounter two pitch discrepancies between the manuscript sources in S6/L3-7/R15-30. Which one is correct, and which in error? On what information, and how, would an analyst, performer, or editor choose a solution? The analysis just presented leads to plausible, musically effective decisions.

The two problems are each boxed in Example 7-6.

[Example 7-6 here.]

Arrow “1” shows that the Parville MS (Example 7-6a) has G3 (for what would be S9/L4) in the tenor; in Bauyn (Example 7-6b), the note is E3. This is an instance of a *Terzverschreibung* problem defined in Chapter 3. Purely on a harmonic basis, either E3 or G3 fits as part of a C♭ arising from passing motion in the upper voices. Nevertheless,
the E3 in Bauyn is to be preferred. First, the E3, for consistency, continues the overall scalar ascent in the tenor. Second, and somewhat related to such rising stepwise motion, is the maintenance of the 5-6 motion between the bass and tenor established at S8/L8-9. Finally, the tenor’s ultimate goal is G3 at S10/L1. If Parville were accepted as is, the G3 arrives too early, dulling the anticipation implied by the tenor’s ascent, especially as it progresses through the sustained dominant harmony (the G3 at S9/L6 is a decorative appoggiatura, which is not insignificant, as we will see).

Arrow “2” points out that while Parville has a single A3, Bauyn, very curiously, has an F3-A3 third. But just as with the initial assessment of arrow “1,” any of the pitches conform to the current sonority, a passing F₃ over the G pedal in the bass, and so these notes are not obviously incorrect. But for essentially the same reasons just stated, the A3 can be discounted. First, it breaks the shape of the tenor’s descent. Second, the tenor has had a single line presentation throughout; the dyadic configuration has little to do with this, with no similar voicings before or after. Finally, the A3 would preempt another A3 at S9/L14, a particularly important A3, in light of the context of the suspenseful dominant expansion.

The A3 at S9/L14 is the last note heard before the tenor achieves its goal pitch, which has been very effectively set up by drawing out its arrival, long anticipated since the beginning the system 9. Despite the F♯3 at S9/L7—a temporary leading tone, heightening tension in its chromatic state—the G3 is delayed further by an excruciatingly decorated roulade at S9/L8-14. This embellishment sustains the F3 with double neighbor motion, and at the last moment, the A3 finally does fall to G3 at S10/L1, paralleling the G3 appoggiatura at S9/L6. In other words, the ornament first overshoots the G3, then
lands. If the A3 had sounded at S9/L4, it would have given away this intensifying gesture.

In sum, the dominant is expanded during the tenor’s ascent D3 – E3 – F3 – F♯3 – G3. Upper neighbor appoggiaturas slightly delay the sounding of the last two pitches, and the final pitch is delayed even more by the insertion of a roulade. Performers should consider how articulation and timing can take the best advantage of the suspense-building details, especially since this passage comes at the end of the prelude.

In particular, the “tonic” ♯ chord at S10/L1-2/R9-11 merits a careful touch. A tonic resolution seems inevitable after such a lengthy dominant expansion, but listeners will only hear an “authentic cadence” that fails to satisfy. As is usual for this idiom, the upper voices achieve completion, but the left hand does not, lingering on a 5 - 5 octave, withholding the expected 1. And though the crucial ti - fa tritone resolves correctly, the tonic triad in the right hand is literally in § inversion, giving only a weak sense of completion. If the bass G2-G3 octave has not yet faded from hearing—i.e., S10/R1-11 must be played quickly enough—performers should ideally pause and wait for all the sounding strings to blend together, allowing the unstable chord to emerge subtly and disquiet astute listeners. As a result, the climactic final cadence—even in having only an implied predominant at S10/L8—is made more effectively conclusive.

Even given performance suggestions informed by some analysis, recordings by Moroney and Blandine Verlet nevertheless demonstrate idiosyncratically chosen strategies. Moroney makes a submediant deceptive motion by bringing the A2 at S10/L3
much more to the left; as before in span 3, he has interpreted Bauyn as it literally appears
(Example 7-7).  

[Example 7-7 here.]

While Moroney’s reading does result in a submediant harmony with an apparent 7-6 suspension, the context is rather exceptional compared to Couperin’s typical deployment of this technique. The suspension should resolve over the same note, producing a subdominant harmony in 9 position. But here the bass immediately moves to its melodic restart gesture, and what would be the seventh—G4 at S10/R9—does not “resolve” until S10/R18, over a completely different bass note.

Blandine Verlet offers a strange equivocation. She seems to regard the A2 as part of the left hand’s roulade, but plays the note early enough to give just a hint of a submediant deceptive motion before the left hand plows through the roulade, during which the right hand completes its downward arpeggiation of its C5 chord. So just as Moroney pulls elements to the left, Verlet pushes them to the right. Verlet’s slight hesitation after the A2 is insufficient to produce a cadential pause—if she means to create a deceptive motion—and the note practically drowns out the right hand. It sounds as if the left hand has blundered in, abruptly truncating the dominant expansion and any notion of resolution. And by jumbling S10/R10-12 and S10/L3-10 together, Verlet relinquishes

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30 Moroney 1989, disk 2, track 13, 2:00-2:07. From the Parville MS, such a resolution is impossible: with a staff break right at S10/R11, the left hand’s roulade—including the A2—appears on a completely new line.
the opportunity to provide the listener with the sense of a restart by isolating the E – F – G figure in the bass, which would more emphatically set up the final cadence.

**A dual-value notation transcription**

[Example 7-8 here.]

Just as with Prelude 7, a dual-value notation version of Prelude 10 is provided in Example 7-8. Corresponding to the parsing determined by the analysis of the prelude in this chapter, several Type 3b lines have been added to the score. Note that these lines obey Couperin’s usage: they indicate the *approach* of a significant metrical event, not the conclusion of one. These lines at least visually divide the prelude’s unrelieved strings of “whole” notes that run from staff to staff into discernible sections.

Many anacrusis figures in allemandes appear as beamed groups of three eighth notes; the odd number indicates that they should be played with an upbeat impulse (i.e., the performer can imagine an implicit eighth rest before each group). In contrast, even numbered groupings of beamed eighths begin on a sense of a downbeat. Beamed groups consisting of more than 4 notes do not need to maintain a strict alternation of strong and weak (or weak and strong) accents; their unorthodox appearance invites performers’ discretion. Very long *roulades* (e.g., S3/R18-24 and S7/L19-25) which would be beamed into an odd grouping start with a lone initial pick-up eighth note for visual expedience. Such stress patterns can be very subtle, such as at S2/R21-24.

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32 See Chapter 3.
The cases just discussed operate on a note-to-note level of accent. Other *roulades* and groups which are prefaced with more than one eighth note convey a higher sense of accent, at the level of the beat. For these, indicated upbeats or downbeats “shade off through time” from the initiating group of eighth notes to the arrival of the ensuing, usually larger, group.\(^{33}\)

Stemless white noteheads (not whole notes, as in some other editions) are durationally indeterminate, and some are left purposely ambiguous as to their function as melodic or chordal. This is done partly to avoid cluttering up the score with too many single flagged eighth notes, and partly to encourage rhythmic freedom. Precedent for this comes from D’Anglebert’s published versions of his preludes.\(^{34}\)

The few sixteenth notes that appear are suffixes to *tremblements* (called a *tremblement et pincé* in D’Anglebert’s ornament table), and have not been consolidated in order for the note count labels in Examples 7-1 and 7-8 to correspond as closely as possible for comparison (the labeling is now slightly inaccurate because some notes have already been subsumed into ornament symbols). With regard to reducing the quantity of notes, we saw that Prelude 7 included a good number of pitches which were consolidated under the *port de voix* symbol. Given its length, Prelude 10, perhaps somewhat strangely, contains much fewer *ports de voix*.

With one exception, all curves are either Type 1a sustaining curves or Type 2a two-note slurs (although, as detailed at the end of the *exordium*, their performance is not necessarily strong – weak). The exception, at the end of system 1, is a Type 2b curve that groups the last 6 notes of the right hand. No curve should be construed as a tie. Dotted

\(^{33}\) Schachter 1999, 82.

\(^{34}\) See Chapter 3, Example 3-9.
curves are editorial suggestions. All Type 3a alignment lines are original, and, other than a handful of *ports de voix* and the *cheute* at S3/R15-16, no other ornament symbols have been added. Bracketed items labeled with a “P” derive from Parville and not Bauyn; as slight variations, they are optional.
Like our rhythmic investigations of Preludes 7 and 10, the analysis in this chapter includes a parsing of Prelude 14 into spans using the same procedure in Chapters 6 and 7. However, this chapter primarily focuses on exploring the expression of E-based tonality at the cusp of the 18th century, for which Prelude 14 was specifically selected.

Overview

Prelude 14 is a simple prelude with tonal type e: ƒ#. In the Bauyn MS, the prelude occupies one page and one system, totaling 7 systems. It has been more compactly fit onto one page (6 systems) in the Parville MS.

Because this prelude comes late in the grouping by church tons, the anonymous organizer of the Bauyn MS felt that it did not correspond to ton 4, even though, according to Jean Denis, this ton would have final E.¹ Both Moroney and Chapelin-Dubar instead treat the prelude as transposed D mode, or ton 1.² From an analysis of the pitch inventory, Chapelin-Dubar argues for a modified meantone tuning, giving 5 pure thirds (as opposed to 8, in conventional meantone) appropriate for the pitches CŒ, FŒ, and GŒ.³ Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, among all the other well-known unmeasured prelude composers, Couperin is the only one who wrote a prelude in this tonality.

¹ As pointed out in Dodds 1998 (p. 215), E-based pieces in various church key ordered collections were located in different places (sometimes unlabeled) and occasionally, as here, last.
³ Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 2: 615-616.
Certainly one of the most extraordinary harmonic highlights of this prelude is that the bass features only one obvious dominant-tonic authentic cadence, at the end. Several internal cadences are plagal (with A – E bass), a type not addressed by any of the treatises reviewed in Table 5-1. However, cadential models from Antoine Parran’s *Traité de la musique*… (1639) cited by Chapelin-Dubar show that a descending fourth in the bass was considered a proper cadence for the final of E mode, whether authentic or plagal (see Example 8-1). These authentic and plagal types of closure patently manifest “the tension between the older modal tradition and the modern notions of the minor mode” surrounding E-based pieces, as claimed by Michael Dodds. Another unusual harmonic aspect of the prelude is the regular appearance of D major chords, sometimes to help express tonicizations of A major, and other times as VII, a major dominant function chord. This latter cadence pattern does not conform well to the list of types presented in

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4 Chapelin-Dubar 2007, 1: 212-213. Regarding Example 8-1, Parran’s numbering of E modes (*cinquième* and *sixième*) follows the French tradition of starting the modes from C, not D (and curiously, for all other modes, Parran’s cadence order is dominant, mediant, final). Chapelin-Dubar goes so far as call this a “cadence de substitution,” but confusingly claims that Parran does so to avoid employing D♯ and A♯ at the cadence. She quotes Parran (1639, 129):

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mais donnez vous de garde d’user de b♭ mol aux Modes où une des trois chordes ou Cadences se trouvoient à la fausse Quinte, ou à la fausse Quarte de tel mol, comme au Premier & Second, au Cinquieme & Sixieme, à l’Unzieme & Douzieme.
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But Parran has been discussing borrowed cadences within a composition (roughly, a kind of modulation), including those created by transposing a mode up a fourth (“ou au Diatesseron de la Finale du Mode primitif”). Hence transposing C up to F, E up to A, and A up to D all require B♭ to reproduce the intervallic structure of the original mode. This has nothing with D♯ and A♯ in E (or A) Phrygian.

For a compendium of E-mode cadences from several German treatises from the 17th to 19th centuries, see Burns 1995, Appendix 1.

Table 5-1 and its attendant discussion. Schenkerian analysis is not inapplicable, though, since the final cadence is conventionally authentic (i.e., providing a necessary element for a tonal Ursatz), and techniques of alternative closure will be addressed by applying the work of Lori Burns.

[Examples 8-1 and 8-2 here.]

Prévost’s tonal summary appears in Example 8-2. The rate of ornamentation, 25.63\%, indicates that approximately 1 of every 4 notes is a non-harmonic tone; this is the second-lowest rate among Couperin’s preludes, and, as Prévost comments, makes verticalities quite evident. This prelude, and Prelude 12, having the lowest rates of ornamentation, apparently demonstrate that relatively brief works suffer from little melodic development; however, Prelude 6, with 1,035 notes, has a rate not much different: 26.28\%. Thus length and melodic embellishment are independent of each other. Prelude 14’s index of harmonic immobility, 6.10, ranks as the lowest of all of Couperin’s preludes. Here, this statistic and the rate of ornamentation are congruent, although generally speaking this is not the case. The tonal immobility score of 2.78 comes quite close to the average for all the preludes (2.48), and falls among the bottom third among them individually. This datum does establish a correspondence with the

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6 Superficially it could be considered a cadence rompüe, but to do so within the tonality of Prelude 14 is syntactically problematic, since these VII chords are neither prepared to nor ever resolve “correctly” to a G-based harmony.

7 Prévost 1987, 188.

8 Prévost 1987, 189.

9 Prévost 1987, 224.
length of a prelude, as shorter ones generally do not have as much latitude to change keys—and distantly, at that—as longer preludes.\textsuperscript{10}

The coefficient of modulation, at 1.38, also does not differ much from the mean for all preludes (1.42), and reflects mostly close key relations. Although Prévost reads 13 modulations in Prelude 14, his tonal plan shows only three visited keys: A minor, G major, and D major. While none of these relationships to an E tonic is unusual, the latter two may raise questions about levels of dominant/tonic hierarchy.

For comparison with Prévost’s findings, Example 8-3 gives an harmonic analysis of Prelude 14.

[Example 8-3 here.]

Subsuming certain harmonies as contrapuntal or expanding rather than structural gives considerably fewer chords than Prévost’s 39. As for modulation, the presence of several \( D^7 \) harmonies would seem to hint at G major tonicizations, but none resolve in such a dominant-tonic relationship. An extended tonicization of A major (with inflections for mixture) takes place from S2/L17/R24-29 to S3/L8-9/R15-19, and also arguably continues into a large part of systems 4 and 5 (see the alternate harmonic analysis).

E-mode pieces are particularly problematic in Schenkerian theory.\textsuperscript{11} The most basic reason, as pointed out by Lori Burns, is that while the chord of nature in E minor is arpeggiated in the bass as \( E – G – B – E \), the typical harmonic structure of a Phrygian

\textsuperscript{10} Prévost 1987, 253.
\textsuperscript{11} The mode will simply be referred to as “E mode” or “Phrygian” instead of a number to offset confusion between the modal system that begins numbering on D (in which the E modes are 3 and 4) and that adopted by the French, which begins numbering in C (in which E modes are 5 and 6).
mode piece is E – A – C – E. Therefore, a pure E-Phrygian piece violates the tonic-dominant relationship on which Schenkerian tonal theory is founded. An overall Ursatz level I – V – I structure is nevertheless eminently obvious in Prelude 14, and the structural voice-leading of some Burns’ prototypes are helpful guides in analyzing some harmonic behaviors in Prelude 14, reflecting in some part Dodd’s tonal/modal “tension” mentioned earlier.

[Example 8-4 here.]

Contrapuntal progressions that expand tonic via the predominant appear in Example 8-4a (Burns’ Example 14). Burns even allows for nested plagal expansions, as seen in d), the fourth progression, where an A chord is prolonged by its own plagal motion. Example 8-4b (Burns’ Example 16) is particularly intriguing not only for its soprano descent from 3, but also in proposing an intervening ♭ chord between VI and IV. This plagal cadence illustrates very clearly Burns’ point that these progressions can be problematic in the Schenkerian system, namely that the Bassbrechung does not “prolong the tonic by unfolding its triad…but rather by unfolding a descending fifth progression.” In other words, the (fragmentary) bass in Example 8-4b, in a more tonally strict sense, technically expresses A minor, not E minor. Burns maintains, however, that the explanatory power of these prototypes is appropriate because (among other points) “they assert fundamental structures that relate audibly and logically to the

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13 Burns 1995, 45.
foreground structures of the final plagal cadences.”

Burns’ analytical research also uncovered the recurrent use of VII in E mode pieces, and not solely as the familiar “Phrygian cadence” based on the traditional clausula vera with 2 - 1 in the bass and 7 - 1 in the soprano. As a matter of fact, a D-based harmony for VII (i.e., without the tonal leading tone #7) should not be considered surprising, for the interval F – D in its cadential approach can be consonantly harmonized in three parts only with an inner voice A.

VII in root position in a cadential motion appears in Example 8-5a. Burns’ further collation of this practice is seen in the elaborations in Example 8-5b and even Ursätze in Example 8-5c-d (the double-beamed bass voices reflect the “depart[ure] from traditional Schenkerian paradigms”):

[Example 8-5 here.]

Burns remarks that the Ursätze in Example 8-5c-d are not meant to imply or model modern E minor in any way:

The chromatic alteration that would be necessary to “correct” E-Phrygian into E minor would not be applied only to an inner voice, but would affect the Urline, specifically the Phrygian 2. Such an alteration would contradict the Phrygian identity in the fundamental outer voice structure itself. Thus, the Phrygian Urline are commonly descents from 5 and 3 in which the Phrygian 2 acts as a descending leading tone…

But even despite the e: # signature for Prelude 14, the outer-voice settings in Examples 8-4 and 8-5 nevertheless match some patterns found in the prelude, as will be shown.

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14 Burns 1995, 46. Burns’ other reasons are more specific to the Phrygian mode.
16 Burns 1995, 56.
The correspondence is striking, especially given the chronological span that separates the prelude and Bach’s harmonizations. Thus it could be argued that Couperin imported Phrygian-style progressions into this transposition of ton 1, with adjustments for the two-sharp signature: for instance, in comparison with Burns’ models, VII in Prelude 14 will be major quality, and Burns’ finding of heightened emphasis on 6 is greatly reduced since the triad built on C♯ is diminished. But both Robert Frederick Bates and Almonte Howell report the transposition of ton 1 up a second as fairly typical. However, as Bates mentions, Jean Denis was troubled by the out-of-tune D♯ at cadences. Howell even asserts that E-transposed ton 1 is “true E minor” since such pieces end with a perfect (authentic) cadence, instead of a Phrygian cadence (as untransposed E-based ton 4 pieces would). However, he (like Bates) makes little or no mention of internal cadential progressions.

[Example 8-6 here.]

It must be noted, however, that in *Free Composition*, Schenker addresses the several guises of VII in § 246 (pp. 89-90) and Fig. 111. Of relevance to this prelude is Schenker’s derivation of illusory VII chords that arise from passing motion from IV to I (see Example 8-6a). When the initial IV is omitted, apparent VII – I progressions obtain. Since all IV – VII (– I) motions in the prelude are explicit, Schenker’s analytical elision is not employed here. But the models in Schenker’s Fig. 111, d1 stimulate more prosaic

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17 Burns 1995, 50-51. All the Ursätze in Example 8-5c cannot apply.
19 Bates 1986, 50.
20 Howell 1958, 113.
voice-leading variants (Example 8-6b) that help to explain why numerous appearances of D(7) chords in this prelude are analyzed as VII(7) and not V7 of G-based harmonies. This latter more conventional view no doubt induced Prévost to name G as a tonicized key area (see Example 8-2), although such resolutions from these harmonies never occur during the course of the prelude.

In contrast to the presentation of the analysis of Prelude 10 in Chapter 6, we reverse the procedure for Prelude 14. While we still begin with an overview of the spans, we next examine the details of each span, and then finally begin at the foreground and reduce the surface to uncover the Ursatz.

Span overview

[Example 8-7 here.]

Example 8-7 presents the descending progressions that govern each of the four spans that comprise Prelude 14. Open noteheads indicate governing progressions, preferred for their descents to 1 (whenever possible), and darkened noteheads auxiliary lines. Pitches are given in the same staff as they appear in the score for the convenience of the reader, although admittedly long-range linear continuity would be more comprehensible with some registral adjustments.

Span 1 simply prolongs the tonic harmony. The upper auxiliary voice features an upper neighbor, a gesture that recurs at various levels in the prelude. The unusual vertical intervals at the conclusion—a diminished fifth to a perfect fifth—arise due to the
plagal cadence. Span 2 is remarkable in that three descents can be traced. The principle descent begins from 3 (like that in span 1) and features an incomplete neighbor (A4 in system 3). Although this descent given in the bass, analysis will demonstrate that it acts as the structuring soprano voice. The cadence for span 2 is somewhat problematic, with a seeming “wrong note” (G2 at S4/L1) supporting an apparent dominant.

Of all the spans analyzed for Preludes 7, 10 and 14, only span 3 here involves no structural descent, instead consisting of a static prolongation of 5 with an upper neighbor. This is the one soprano (as opposed to other viable formulae) that fits the span’s voice-leading activity in its harmonic movement from tonic to a minor-inflected dominant. Span 4, on the other hand, is shaped by a full descent from 5 to 1.

Even though each pitch’s structural location is given only approximately, the staggered coordination between the voices in spans 1 and 2 is indicative of vague rhythmic activity in terms of order and duration; musical activity escalates at cadences. The reader is reminded that all these descents are local only to the span which they govern, and so generally assert nothing about their participation in or give an indication of the overall Urlinie for the entire prelude.

Span 1 (exordium)

[Example 8-8 here.]

Example 8-8a is a very surface-level reduction of the exordium, which comprises span 1 and is set in the lute-like tenor range of the harpsichord. The governing 3-line
descent is heard in the tenor voice, and overall, every voice remains in the register it begins (unlike, as we shall see, in later spans). The scalar descent (S1/R4-7/L3-7) that follows the opening chord is a filling-in of a repetition of the tonic chord (see Examples 8-8b and c); in other words, it is an embellished version of the repeated chord opening of Prelude 7. The soprano features an incomplete neighbor tone F♯4 (S1/R10) before resuming its descent from E4 to B3. Towards the end of the span, ascending thirds in the right hand consist of passing tones that connect the alto and soprano. But a quick glance at the bass here reveals a dismaying tonal anomaly: no dominant scale degree appears at the conclusion. And although the bass models a plagal cadence with descending fourth motion, the harmony supported by ♯4 is not even IV.

Example 8-8b verticalizes more harmonies in the span. The awkward bass motion of the V/VII♭ – VII♭ pair (S1/L8-9/R8-9 and S1/L12-13/1015) has been seen previously: it is another instance of a dominant first inversion chord which resolves to its tonic harmony, also in first inversion (as in Example 5-3, the leading tone is transferred to resolve to the appropriate pitch).21 The insertion of the tonicizing applied dominant offsets surface parallel octaves created by the bass and the aforementioned incomplete neighbor F♯4 in the soprano. The D major resolution is initially rendered ambiguous by C♯4 – D4 at S1/R13-15 in the right hand (as 5 - 6 motion), although the C♯4 is eventually evaluated as an ornament, namely a *port de voix*. The soprano’s overall tetrachordal descent from E4 to B3 appears more clearly at this level. The passing tone D4, unsupported so far in the reduction, will help solve the problem of the span’s cadence.

21 The two chords could be analyzed, per the last pattern in Example 8-6b, instead as IV♭ – VII♭.
Example 8-8c reveals the two-part structure of span 1. The first portion is structured by an arpeggiation in the bass from I to I\(^6\), covering the entirety of system 1. The third in the bass, E2 to G2, is filled in by F\(^\#2\). Thus the VII\(^6\) ultimately is a passing chord, a contrapuntal configuration corresponding to the last progression in Example 8-5b. The \(\frac{2}{3}\) inversion of its tonicizer can itself be considered an inversion from \(\frac{2}{3}\) position, which would make a smoother voice-leading connection to the opening tonic chord.

The second part of span 1 is the cadential conclusion. In Example 8-3, the penultimate harmony at S2/L1-2/R1-4, literally II\(\frac{6}{5}\), is parenthetically analyzed as IV with 6 - 5 voice-leading, such that the resolving fifth (A3-F\(^\#3\) to A3-E3) is essentially elided with the final tonic chord. But by realigning D4 at S1/R20 with this subdominant-flavored harmony, we establish a \(\frac{6}{5} - \frac{3}{5}\) progression that corresponds to the last two chords of Example 8-4b (although the example is initiated from VI, a tonic approach also suitably harmonizes \(\frac{2}{3}\) in the soprano). Couperin artfully compels instability here by lowering \(\frac{6}{3}\) to C\(\frac{4}{5}\) (S1/R4) and sustaining \(\frac{2}{3}\) (F\(^\#4\)) in the tenor, powerfully demanding resolution both melodically as le and re, and harmonically as a tritone: the ensuing tremblement on the F\(^\#4\) amplifies the tension.

Further removal of nonstructural pitches and harmonies in Example 8-8d shows two descents from \(\frac{3}{3}\) to \(\frac{1}{3}\) in the tenor: the primary descent for the entire span, and a secondary descent in the voice-exchange that contrapuntally expands the opening tonic. The treatment of the IV\(\frac{6}{3}\) chord as essentially a passing entity abstractly isolates the subdominant as the penultimate harmony, giving a conventional plagal cadence to finish off the span. The essential voice-leading in Examples 8-8e and f suggests that the soprano’s descending tetrachord is a movement to an inner voice, and that an even deeper
structural E4 soprano is conceptually sustained throughout the span. This results in an inversion of the *exordium* of Prelude 10, where now the pedal is in the soprano, while descending motion occurs throughout the remaining voices.

**Span 2 (medium)**

[Example 8-9 here.]

The beginning of the *medium* is marked by the upward octave registral shift, followed by an arpeggiated soprano descent from G5 (S2/R6-23) that is in surprisingly flamboyant contrast to the sober linearity of span 1. That span’s slow soprano descent ranges only a fourth and remains entirely in the tenor tessitura. Nevertheless, the soprano of span 2 ends on the same pitch as span 1: B3 (at S4/R1). Example 8-9a.i is an undifferentiated, non-hierarchical reading to clarify the verticalities in the span. What is intriguing about span 2 is that both the soprano and the bass have stepwise descents which together form an attractive series of parallel sixths. The bass’s descent starts from E3 (S2/L16) and stretches for practically the entirety of the span. The soprano’s starts a little later from C4 at S2/R29; curiously, however, in the midst of its descent, a scale degree is apparently skipped. Between G4 (S3/R14) and E4 (S3/R19), F♯4 is surprisingly omitted at the surface of the music. This missing connection is disconcerting because the line is so aurally conspicuous, with the approach and remainder of the stepwise descent utterly complete. The closing cadence is also problematic because the penultimate chord
(S4/L1-4/R1) mingles both tonic and dominant pitches; G2 in the bass is especially strange.

Example 8-9a.ii details the inner workings of span 2’s opening arpeggiated descent. All the voices shift up an octave. The brief extension up to G5 in the soprano is a backwards arpeggiation from E4 (S2/R9). The E4 descends to C4, which is prolonged from S2/R13 to S2/R29. Acciaccature, raised by a half step, function as local leading tones to create a series of tonicizing dominants: E minor – E7 – A minor (accompanied by a deceptive F#.4) – C# diminished (instead of A7). The C# diminished chord should move to a D chord; in this case, a D7 at S2/L17/R14-29. The resolution (D5, given in parentheses) of the leading tone C#5 is elided to C4. Couperin presents an augmentation of this procedure in span 3.

In Example 8-9b, white noteheads distinguish structural harmonies from prolongational ones. The deep-level organizational progression exactly parallels that from span 1: I – VII6 – I6. The same outer voice framework of that previous progression in Example 8-5b applies: ³ - ² - ¹ in the soprano, and ¹ - ² - ³ in the bass. At the end, the tonic is nominally stabilized by a brief arpeggiation to ¹ in the bass (E3 at S4/L7). The motion from ¹ - ² in the bass makes the “7-Zug” merely illusory: an octave transfer (E2 to E3) creates space for the descending seventh, but the true movement is simply the ascending second from E2 to F#.2 For the comprehension of the reader, the descent begins on E3 in this example, but the bass ascent actually begins in the C2 octave.

The soprano’s descent, as mentioned previously, is oddly incomplete because of a skipped pitch, F#. As revealed by voice-leading, however, we see that even this line is an

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22 Schenker 1979, 74 (§ 206). This is not a case of a 7-line that composes out a dominant seventh (p. 77).
illusion: three separate voices combine to context for it. The soprano has the ostensible starting pitch C4 at S2/R29. However, this note is read as an upper neighbor, which prolongs the structurally initiating pitch B4 (S2/R10). From S2/R29, the voice moves down to B4 (S3/R6), and then to A4 (S3/R9). At this point the second voice (or alto), doubling the A4, assumes control of the descent (see the unison in the A minor 7 chord); the former soprano moves to an inner voice, A4 to C4. The new soprano progresses only to G4 (S3/R14) before it, too, migrates to an inner voice, namely the tenor’s A3. With the original soprano and alto now submerged in the musical texture, the remaining upper voice is laid bare, E4 at S3/R19, which has served as a common tone for the four previous chords. This voice threads its way to completion at S4/R1 on B3.

But even along this portion a further analytical knot arises. Heading into a cadential motion, the juxtaposition of D4 and D#4 at S3/R21-24 produces a startling aural effect because it is practically a direct chromatic succession (only C#4 separates them). It is all the more peculiar because the two pitches represent both flavors of 7, yet the descending line reverses their more typical order of tonicization, (i)7 - #7 - 1. Because the bass sustains 2 (F2), a clausula vera framework obtains. But the two pitches confound the analysis of the implied dominant-function harmony here in terms of quality and more significantly, the root. Which one of the pitches is structural, and which embellishing?

Schenker addresses the problem of direct chromatic successions in Counterpoint and Free Composition. First, direct chromatic successions are prohibited in the cantus firmi for strict counterpoint because they are akin to successively repeated pitches, which are already forbidden. Second, for Schenker, one of the fundamental characteristics of a

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23 Purely at the surface of the music, the descent extends back to E5 at S2/R9, but analytically, the segment E5 – C5 is generated at a lower level.
*cantus firmus:* a “complete equilibrium of the tones in relation to each other,” both rhythmically and harmonically. A chromatic succession creates a sense of a passing tone that groups three pitches together as a unit, violating the independence of the tones. Third, a direct chromatic succession “inadvertently has the detrimental effect of a ‘mixture’ of keys.” For this injunction Schenker singles out cadences, since two versions of 7 harmonically imply VII (from minor mode) and vii°, from major mode.

These proscriptions, however, apply most stringently to strict counterpoint, but in free composition, (direct) chromatic steps are a common method of tonicization (or “tonicalization”). Schenker mentions this point in both *Counterpoint* and *Free Composition.* Thus, he writes in § 249 (pp. 91-92) of *Free Composition:*

The prohibition of chromatic steps in strict counterpoint no longer holds in free composition. However, since in free composition direct chromatic successions are generally avoided (thus affording the possibility of more abundant prolongations), the prohibition is in a certain sense reestablished.

Schenker provides two examples (Fig. 114, 1 and 2) where direct successions do occur, but follows these up with further instances that illustrate the two most common ways to avoid the problem: by inserting a neighbor tone or a linear progression. Most of Schenker’s cases employ upper neighbors, but earlier in Fig. 89, 1 (and referenced in § 249), B4 and B♯4 are separated by double neighbors A♯4 and C♯5. In Prelude 14, the interpolated note C♯4 functions as a lower neighbor.

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25 Schenker 2001, 46.
26 Schenker 2001, 46-47.
27 Schenker 2001, 47 and variously in Schenker 1979, e.g., p 46 (§ 123), p. 64 (§ 177), and p. 90 (§ 247).
28 Schenker 1979, 91-92 (§ 249).
Despite the phrase “direct chromatic succession,” Schenker analyzes some examples as monophonic and other as polyphonic. The latter texture describes S3/R21-24: the variants of ſ7 occur coincidentally in two different voices. We have already ascertained that the tail end of the upper voice descent of span 2 fills in E4 to B3, and it does this by passing through D4 and C4. Since the approach to B3 (S4/1) is from C4, C4 must pass from D⁴ and not D♭⁴, or an augmented second would result. D♭⁴, as shown near the end of Example 8-9b, is part of an unfolding with ſ of the overall structural soprano (having been transferred down to the tenor). It is difficult to determine, however, which ſ7 is ultimately more hierarchically significant.

Interestingly, Schenker specifically addresses the vertical confluence of a pitch and its chromatic spelling as a diminished octave earlier in § 248.

[Example 8-10 here.]

In Fig. 113, 5 (see Example 8-10), Schenker cites a short figured bass example from C.P.E. Bach’s Versuch (Chapter 3, Section 1, § 20). Schenker calls the C♭ in the bass a “♯IV” root that must resolve to D; in other words, it supports an applied chord to V, following Oster’s hint. The actual harmony occurs with the G3-B3 third in the upper voices; the A3 - C4 third serves to prolong it. Obliquely addressing Bach’s discussion of diminished octaves in 8 - 7 motion in a figured bass, Schenker asserts that the diminished octave here, C♯2 - C4, arises as an alternative to the composing out C♯4 – B♭3 in the

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29 This difference may explain why Schenker is rather inconsistent about direct chromatic successions. For instance, when he discusses the Phrygian ſ in the fundamental line in § 105 of Free Composition, the accompanying Fig. 31 features the pair ſ♯ - ſ♭. My thanks to Matthew Brown for pointing this out.

30 See Oster’s comment in footnote *5 on p. 91.
highest voice, which would involve an augmented second. Schenker assures the reader that the diminished octavе “can be used in a composing-out process or in the realization of a figured bass, but in no way does it constitute an harmonic concept.” And in Fig. 113, 6, the diminished octave becomes an augmented unison. The upper voices present two chords, I and V, for the temporary key of C$\flat$ minor over a tonic pedal. While the flutes project V with a B$\flat$5 - D$\flat$5 third, the second violins clash with a descending run that begins with B$\flat$5. This situation mirrors precisely the brief 4-note gesture we have been probing.

The close of span 2 is as equally problematic as the incomplete soprano descent and the direct chromatic succession already examined. Just as with span 1, there is no bass dominant scale degree at all in this span, even at the end. However, dominant-oriented pitches do appear there: D$\flat$3, A3 (S4/L3 and L4), and B3 (S4/R1). But however tempting it is to assume that G2 is a Terzverschreibung for B2, no modern edition suggests such a rectification. With G2 as the bass note, E3 (S4/L2) and B3 support analyzing the chord as I$^6$, already posited as the end point of a long-range $^1 - ^2 - ^3$ tonic expansion: as such, all the voices are structurally conclusive here. Since the tritone D$\flat$3-A3 moves appropriately to E3-G3, there is a sense of tonal resolution, but taking G2 as the structural bass, these pitches must be interpreted as non-chord tones: the A3 a 4-3 suspension, and the D$\flat$3 an extremely dissonant and sustained lower neighbor.

Technically, D$\flat$3 resolves only in the tenor, but the lack of bass support or doubling (i.e., an E2) is not untypical for Couperin. This weak conclusion also supports a common

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31 Schenker 1979, 91 (§ 249). As Oster also points out, this example stems from a section in Harmonielehre (§§ 53 ff.) where Schenker aims to reconceptualize figured bass-era intervals to a smaller number of “modern” intervals in the diatonic system. This reduction is a step toward Schenker’s establishment of Stufen in the text.
chord that marks the end of span 2 and simultaneously the start of span 3, linking them almost without a break.

Flipping the soprano of Example 8-9b down into the tenor of Example 8-9c clarifies the large leaps asserted in the surface voice-leading of span 2. The ostensible upper voice descent in Example 8-9a.i has all but vanished, and it is fascinating to see how the braiding of these lines created that surface element. Now only the alto has downward motion, of a fourth; the tenor and soprano do little more than undulate, each within the interval of a third.

At this level we can parse the bass line, its actual registral deployment restored. As a higher level upper neighbor, the A4 in the soprano is flagged. It is supported by A2 in the bass, expressing IV (S3/L8-9/R13-19). The prolongation of this harmony explains the pitches that travel from D3 to B2. A2 arpeggiates backwards to C3, making a IV\(^6\) (S3/L4-5/R9-12). The tenor lends support with a chromatically inflected (C3 and C\(^\#\)) voice-exchange. Tonicizing IV\(^6\) is its dominant E\(^\#\) (S3/L1/R1-6), a kind of appoggiatura or suspension chord. Preceding this is a secondary predominant chord (S2/L17/R24-29), strange in its major-minor quality until its seventh is regarded as a neighbor tone (or considered very locally, an appoggiatura) having more of a melodic function than a rigidly stacked chordal third. At the other end of the prolongation, G2 (S3/L10), passes downward while the upper voices sustain the structurally anchoring A major triad, momentarily creating a ½ sonority. This harmony resolves appropriately to a ½ chord on F\(^\#\)2 (S3/L11/R10-24), the quality (and root) of which, as mentioned before, technically remains ambiguous: we cannot necessarily give preference to a perfect falling fifth
relation (A to D) over a diminished fifth (A to D♯), since both these intervals are possible within a descending fifths cycle for an E tonality.

Further analytical levels can be quickly comprehended due to the reductive process. Example 8-9d removes the IV/IV chord at S2/L17/R24-29, showing its melodic generator C4 (with replicate C5 repeated at S2/R13, 17, and 29 at the surface of music). The interior prolongation of IV is simplified a bit, emphasizing the voice exchange between the bass and tenor and the sustained tones in the alto and soprano. Example 8-9e reduces the prolonged IV to its generator, A4. This note is large-scale incomplete neighbor to the structural ♯3, a gesture that recurs in other spans and levels.

Finally, the deepest background reveals the tonic prolongation which shapes span 2; the outer voice reduction in Example 8-9g reveals a typical voice exchange. But the assessment of this structure remains problematic, as shown in Example 8-9f, namely at the harmonization of ♯2. We can reason through this analytical complication by weighing several facts. First, the prototypes garnered from Burns 1995 treat VII built from the subtonic as a plausible approach to tonic, both as a cadential gesture and in tonic expansions. Second, on the other hand, while Couperin undercuts the impact of ♯7 with a resolution within a tonic chord, the appearance of the leading tone in the music cannot be denied, and although its initial surface progression is unusual—as mentioned before, D♯4 to D♯4 at S3/R21-22 to R24—the (transferred) resolution is correct (D3 to E4 at S4/L3 to L7). Third, Couperin’s counterpoint is impeccable for both versions of ♯7. Their coincidence forms an extraordinary aural moment in the prelude, a fourth point to consider.
It is mostly for the latter three features that the ambiguity of $\hat{7}$ is allowed to stand in Example 8-9f. Such a rationale is paralleled in Burns 2000. While Roman numeral analysis is an easy strategy to apply, doing so, in Burns’ opinion, privileges a tonal conception. “Common cadential patterns…lead to the comfortable analysis of well-known idioms, such as dominant-tonic cadential resolutions. But theoretical and interpretive problems arise when the cadential pattern does not derive from common-practice tonal harmony.” What can happen is that a “modal pattern is evaluated using the tools of common-practice theory and therefore is judged to be lacking in something,” such as a sense of expectation, tension/release, or directionality. In the light of such a possible bias, how is one to analyze a piece of music that at times follows now tonal, now modal, procedures? Burns proposes that while Roman numerals are helpful, “an analysis that purports to explore the meaning and discursive significance of harmony must also consider the specific voice-leading of that harmony.” In this way, Burns implicitly stresses the linear foundation of Schenkerian analytical technique, even in spite of the “revisions” which address rhythm, the descending linear motion that defines the Urlinie, modality, and modality and the Ursatz. Regarding the last, Burns sometimes resists

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32 Burns 2000, 213. Although the analysis concerns a pop/rock song, Burns’ approach stems precisely from her previous work on modal Bach chorales.
33 Burns 2000, 214. As mentioned by Burns, Richard Middleton even considers VII – I as a postmodern “Other” progression.
34 Burns 2000, 216.
35 Schenker himself lays out the necessity of a linear conception of music in the first few pages of Free Composition. He writes that “[i]nstruction at least in the linear progressions, the primary means of coherence, is indispensable. Because these progressions are anchored in polyphony, we must first learn to think contrapuntally. Even though counterpoint has long existed in the West, it is not yet at home in the mind of Western man. His ear is more apt to disregard counterpoint, to follow the upper voice which is the bearer of the melodic element…At best, one hears a bass which is inactive; but when the bass goes beyond mere support and undertakes contrapuntal motion, the ear immediately turns back to the upper voice” (p. 9, emphases his). In his polemic “Rameau oder Beethoven?” (Das Meisterwerk III, 1930), Schenker, after acknowledging the horizontal and vertical axes of musical composition, states: “It is the temporal-horizontal axis of musical motion, therefore, however one may otherwise explain its laws, that alone
making relatively large-scale reductions of passages to a single controlling progression, instead choosing to highlight discontinuities, ambiguities, and contradictions in her analysis. In not consolidating the different sections of the song’s chorus into one overall structure, she comments:

That these [voice-leading] strategies are resistant to reductive notation is not something I wish to cover up for the sake of a theoretical system. Indeed, I believe that the tension between the actual music and the theoretical system is significant. I do not mean to say that the reduction is impossible or unwarranted. After careful consideration, I believe that the voice-leading pattern I have brought out in the reduction can be theoretically supported as the deeper structure of the passage. The fact that it does not conform to traditional voice-leading models, and does not appear to project a tonally unified harmonic structure, is not something to shy away from, but rather to illuminate.  

The resistant nonresolved harmonization of $7$ at this moment in Prelude 14 indeed highlights Burns’ notion of a “tension between the actual music and the theoretical system.” In a more modest sense, then, Burns’ words suitably describe the context of Example 8-9f.

**Span 3 (medium)**

[Example 8-11 here.]

Unlike spans 1 and 2, span 3 is tonally open, beginning on tonic but finishing on the minor dominant ($S5/L5-6/R17-18$). The dominant is preceded by $\text{VII}^\flat$ ($S4/L22$-

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36 Burns 2000, 235-236.
23/R16-23), giving an interesting case of a VII – V progression.\(^{37}\) When both chords typically appear root position, the bass falls by a third, so the movement F\(^3\) – B\(^2\) (S5/L2 and 6) is rather counterintuitive. The ostensible dominant quality of VII and its \(^\sharp\) position, with “leading tone” F\(^3\) in the bass, imply a root position resolution, most conventionally a G-based resolution. The ensuing harmony is indeed in root position, but it is a B chord: the “leading tone” is apparently not even a leading tone! If these chords are taken as a D\(^7\) – G progression, we can see how this bass movement mimics Couperin’s penchant for dominant \(^\sharp\) chords that move to their tonic resolutions, similarly in \(^\flat\) position. But Couperin’s voice-leading here gives no obvious indication of a G-based chord. These labels are admittedly only local for the extent of the span, and syntactically these harmonies participate in a higher-level expansion of the subdominant.

Returning to the beginning, span 3 opens with a descending fifths sequence facilitated with applied dominants. It is essentially identical to the opening of span 2 (up to inversion and chordal sevenths) but made more explicit through a fuller homophonic musical texture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>E minor</th>
<th>E major</th>
<th>A minor</th>
<th>A major</th>
<th>D(^7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Span 2</td>
<td>L14-16/R7-10</td>
<td>L14-16/R11-12</td>
<td>L14-16/R13-19</td>
<td>L14-16/R21-23</td>
<td>L17/R24-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Span 3</td>
<td>L7-11/R2-7</td>
<td>L12/R6-7</td>
<td>(absent)</td>
<td>L13-19/R8-15</td>
<td>L22-23/R16-23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A series of registral transfers throw the bass repeatedly into the soprano voice (see Example 8-11a), a transformation made rather literally audible by the sequentially

\(^{37}\) See Schenker 1979, 89-90 (§ 246) and Fig. 111. For the minor mode (in Fig. 111 and elsewhere—see Jonas’s footnote *2 on p. 90 of the text), Schenker always builds VII as a major-quality triad on the subtonic. Fig. 111, 2 from Chopin’s Étude in E minor, Op. 25, No. 5, features a D-major VII.
ascending scales at S4/L7-11/R2-7 and S4/L15-19/R10-15. With the VII\$ achieved at S4/L221-23/R16-17, Couperin creates an arpeggiation pattern based on cheute-like thirds, a decorative activity drawn from span 1 and that recalls the flourish that opens span 2 (it is also a shared melodic characteristic with Froberger seen in Example 2-3b). Brackets indicate three repetitions of the motive of a falling fourth filled in with a descending step attached to the higher pitch. This motive is most consistent and evident at the end of the span in the left hand (S5/L7, 10, and 13) and in the right hand at S5/R5, 8, and 11, drawn simply by connecting every third note (the B3 is an incomplete consonant neighbor to C5). The first appearance is more obscure since the same systematic ordering of notes is not obvious (S4/R18, 23, and S5/R3), but registral proximity, harmonic context, and melodic similarity relate it to the two ensuing versions.

In Example 8-11b, the repeated motive just discussed is further simplified, as are the sequential scalar ascents which have been reduced to vertical chords. The dissipating bass at the end of the span shows the outline of a root position B minor chord, emphasizing the closing harmony. Over this sustained chord, the soprano’s structural A4 (S5/R11), as a dissonant seventh, resolves to G4 (S5/R16), possibly misleading the listener into hearing a 7-6 suspension resolving over a G\$ chord. But the G4 is nevertheless a (consonant) passing tone, moving to F\#4 (S5/R17). The G4 is harmonized by the alto’s E4 (see the same location in Example 8-11a), creating a pedal $\flat$ chord, and resolutely not any sort of G-based harmony. In the interior of the span, C\#4 in the alto is transferred to the lower staff for notational convenience but also in keeping with Couperin’s score. Its chromatic change to C\#4 (S5/L1) should be understood as having passed through an elided D4, appropriate for the D harmony here. By removing other
voices and diminutions, Example 8-11c begins to show the essential voice-leading in span 3. The initial chromatic succession G3 – G♯3 – A3 in the tenor is an instance of tonicization, different from the D♯4 – D♯4 quandary in span 2.

The alto from Example 8-11c is transferred up in Example 8-11d to elucidate the overall 5 - 6 - 5 soprano motion that underlies the span. These scale degrees are harmonically supported by a simple I – IV – V progression. In Example 8-11e, the alto’s closing descent to F♯4 is removed, since it constitutes merely a sonority doubling. The remaining bass octave transfer from A2 to A4 is also removed, resetting the VII as a chord. As in span 2, this level of analytical remove shows that, despite the registral upheavals at the surface of the music, the structural voice-leading is very smooth and only the tenor is oscillates slightly with tonicizer G♯3 and then passing tone (as chordal seventh) G♯3. The omission symbol stands for the elided D mentioned earlier, which has been restored in Example 8-11f to show the origin of the C♯ which gives the VII its dominant-seventh quality. The VII triad appears in position to conform with the bass as it has been derived, the bass A2 conceived of as a pedal from the preceding structural IV.

More important, though, are the tones F♯ and D, which define the identity of the harmony. Stemming from reharmonized common tones (Example 8-11g), the VII chord can thus be seen as a linear prolongation of the final V.

Finally, Example 8-11h reduces even further the 3-chord structure from the previous level to the essential harmonies that anchor the span.
Span 4 (finis)

[Example 8-12 here.]

Like span 3, span 4 is tonally closed only at one boundary, its end (of course: it is the conclusion of the prelude). Span 4 begins with an auxiliary cadence that tonicizes IV, and so possesses the least harmonic independence from its previous span as any other in the prelude. Despite such tonal continuity (see the start of Example 8-12a), musical events at the end of span 3—the duration of the B minor chord compared to previous chords, the pause in right hand activity and solo descent in the left hand—divide these two spans from each other. Example 8-12a is an undifferentiated reduction that focuses on presenting the harmonies of the span.

Since the opening constitutes an auxiliary cadence, structural harmonies are not indicated with white noteheads until the end of Example 8-12b. The two initial chords reprise yet again the quirky V♯ − I6 motion, aurally underscored by the bass’s diminished fourth G♯2 − C3, an interval that is direct at the surface of the music (S6/L4-5) but indirect structurally (S5/L17 and S6/L5). The G♯2’s resolution is transferred to A3 in the alto. The scalar descent from S6/R2 to S6/L11 is incidentally verticalized at this level.

For clarity, Example 8-12c brings down the initial B3 in the alto from the previous level to the tenor in the lower staff to reveal the 5 - 1 descent that controls span 4. This level also shows that the predominant area is prolonged with a voice exchange, anchored by IV6 and II§ and filled in with a passing § (S6/L12-13/R7-8). The cadence afterwards is utterly conventional, but striking in that it features the only unequivocal
dominant chord in the entire prelude. The bass line’s approach to the cadence suggests an alternate reading in which the dominant might be prolonged by a lower neighbor, $\hat{5} - \hat{4} - \hat{5}$ (S6/L12, 14, and 16). But this would demote the II$\flat$ to a neighboring harmony, which in turn would promote IV$^6$ to a higher-level (local) structural predominant.\footnote{Such an interpretation, however, unfortunately counter the many middleground paradigms derived by Schenker in Free Composition, Figs. 14-17, that prioritize $\hat{4}$ as the approach to the dominant, as opposed to from above with $\hat{6}$.} Such an interpretation, however, unfortunately counter the many middleground paradigms derived by Schenker in Free Composition, Figs. 14-17, that prioritize $\hat{4}$ as the approach to the dominant, as opposed to from above with $\hat{6}$.

[Example 8-13 here.]

A lower neighbor $\hat{5} - \hat{4} - \hat{5}$ not an unusual embellishing melodic gesture at cadences in Baroque music below a lone dominant, and it is plausible even to harmonize the $\hat{4}$ with an appropriate harmony. As a matter of fact, C.P.E. Bach includes a variant of this (as $\hat{5} - \hat{4} - \hat{5}$) in a figured bass pattern from the chapter on writing fantasias in his Versuch (see Example 8-13a). Although Bach’s pattern is in A minor, transposing it to e: $\sharp\sharp$ provides a remarkable convenience: since Bach’s pattern modulates from I to IV, the last five chords (although the V – I is somewhat trivial) are almost exactly the same as the progression in Example 8-13b from Prelude 14. The tritone in Bach’s bass (F$\sharp$ – C$\flat$), with accompanying 6 – 6 figuring, even replicates Couperin’s similar inverted dominant-tonic successions.

The level presented in Example 8-12d differs from level c only in unfolding $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{7}$ in the dominant.

\footnote{Recall Harrison’s grouping issue in his analysis at the close of Prelude 7 (see Chapter 6).}
As has been done with all other spans in this analysis of Prelude 14, rearranging the voices better displays the essential contrapuntal structure. In Example 8-12e the $^5 - ^1$ descent is brought up to the soprano. This makes the unfolding at the close more typical in its voice leading. In the opening two chords, the surface resolution of the bass is made more direct, $G^\#3 - A^4$. Resetting the former bass highlights the appoggiatura-like origin of the first harmony as a $^3$ chord. It is simply the harmonization of two incomplete neighbors, seen in Example 8-12f. This level removes almost all the activity that comprises the voice exchange that prolongs the predominant; the aforementioned passing $^3$ unsurprisingly arises from the melodic B2 filling the third in the bass. Thus the $^3$ in the upper voice is omitted as structurally less important than the anchoring $^4$ and $^2$. Indeed, the $^5 - ^4 - ^3$ head of the soprano descent actually comes about at a lower level than the finishing $^2 - ^1$, which must correspond to the *Urlinie* for the entire preludes. The notation reflects this in the segmenting of white and dark noteheads and the incomplete beaming in the soprano and bass. Admittedly this takes the reduction beyond than the level currently under discussion.

In concluding the analysis of span 4, Example 8-12g shows how $^4$ emerges out of an arpeggiation from the structural predominant. Lining up $^\#2$ and $^7$ over V merely maintains the reductive process. Finally, in Example 8-12h, we see that, ultimately, span 4 is an incomplete descent, which matches the notion of the auxiliary cadence claimed at the outset of this analysis.
Towards the *Ursatz*

Stitching together all the span analyses gives only a partial reading of the totality of the prelude. Although the findings of the more background analysis presented here may seem to contradict the conclusions of the span analyses, the “contradiction” arises only due to the widening of the analytical scope. Thus boundaries (and thus groupings) change as more harmonies are subsumed under the control of others, but this does not at all affect the essential contrapuntal tapestry that expresses the tonality of Prelude 14.  

[Example 8-14 here.]

An undifferentiated *Gerippe* of the entire prelude appears in Example 8-14a. As Harrison comments, the scores of unmeasured preludes already seem like analytical graphs. They are reductions “in both a conventional analytic sense and in an all-too-real literal sense.” In the first sense, verticalities are fairly ready to be found. In the second, the unmeasured prelude has also reduced out rhythm, in all its most familiar aspects. The lack of the usual rhythmic indicators here is an advantage, as the analysis need not be unduly influenced by articulations that operate at lower levels, contrary to (or even mitigating) the all-too-common criticism that Schenkerian analysis injuriously neglects rhythm.

Initially, we can make use of the analyses of spans 1 and 2. The bass structures within them unequivocally support tonic prolongations, as demonstrated earlier by

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40 Harrison 1989, 1.
41 Mentioned in Burns 2000 (p. 217) and in Schachter’s famous three-part essay on linear analysis, rhythm, and meter (see Schachter 1999, 17-18).
adopting prototypes from Burns 1995. They have been linked together in the first half of Example 8-14b. The activity in spans 3 through 5, however, requires reconsideration. As already hinted by the secondary function in the Roman numeral analysis in Example 8-14b (and Example 8-3), a prolongation of IV (with some mixture) cuts across the boundaries between the spans. Grouping their harmonic elements as a larger tonal movement offsets the apparent half cadence at the end of span 3 and completes the auxiliary cadence that opens span 4. Thus the move to the minor dominant at the end of span 3 (S5/L5-6/R17-18) is more of surface event, although musical activity—the change of register, the bass’s ensuing descent at S6/L7-16—makes the division eminently performable. (The upper voices in Example 8-14a and b do not agree with the actual surface of the music because they have been copied from the abstract span analyses.)

Note that the prolongations of I and IV utilize the same bass pattern, an arpeggiation from the root of each Stufen to its chordal third. In a sense, then, the move to IV is a simple transposition. At the end of the prelude, as pointed out earlier, the authentic cadence at the end provides tonal closure both locally and globally. The final descent 2 - 1 in the Uurlinie carries over from the analysis of span 4. The same analysis showed that a nearby 3 (S6/L14-15/R9-13) emerged as a passing tone in a very local context. For this reason the pitch cannot participate in the global Uurlinie, which discounts the possibility of a descent from 5; hence the example opens with a 3 Kopfton. Just as in Prelude 7, the Uurlinie is set in the tenor.

The reduction in Example 8-14c exhibits another similarity with Prelude 7: a bass arpeggiation from 1 to 3 on the way to the structural 4. Together with the Uurlinie descent from 3, the two voices in counterpoint correspond to the paradigm listed in Free
Composition, Fig. 15c. The soprano in this level has been reduced to show how simple it is to harmonize these structural chords. The prolongation of IV is shown to derive from a middleground incomplete upper neighbor 4 in the Urline. This same voice-leading gesture also occurs in a structural capacity in the analyses of span 2 (the soprano in Example 8-4e) and span 3 (the tenor in Example 8-5g). A manifestation closer to the surface of the music is seen in the middle of span 1 (the soprano in Example 8-3a, E4 – F4 – D4). Finally, the remaining embellishing notes in the bass are eliminated in Example 8-14d. This view confirms that, on a large scale, Prelude 14 expresses E minor in an utterly conventional way.

Prelude 14 presents the tension between modal and tonal strategies in a strangely compartmentalized way. At the deep middleground, we have derived a tonal Ursatz for the prelude. Internally, analysis finds so-called modal or plagal cadential motions. But these could be explained through counterpoint and prototypes enumerated in Burns 1995.42 However, previous authors have labeled this prelude as a transposition of the first ton d’eglise, which is normally set at pitch level D. Two questions for further investigation arise from our analytical results. The first is whether untransposed premier ton preludes necessarily exhibit the same structural tonal behavior. Would such pieces similarly possess plagal motions and VII – I cadences? Or have these progressions been uniquely imported into this prelude because its tonal center is the same as “Phrygian” E-mode? Unfortunately, Couperin’s Prelude 14 is the only unmeasured harpsichord prelude (currently) known that is cast in this tonality. The second question is whether tonal

42 Burns’s E-mode research in her 1995 work centers essentially on eː½ Bach chorales. Thus her “Phrygian cadences” technically involve minor subdominants, and her VII – I motions minor subtonics. The signature of Prelude 14 makes these harmonies major. However, Stufen in Schenker’s theory maintain their function even when quality changes due to mixture. See Brown 2005, 43-45.
behavior differs between this prelude and Couperin’s (and those by other composers) E
harpsichord pieces. He wrote only three, and they all also have the signature e:♯.\(^{43}\) As
stylized dance compositions, do they behavior more “tonally” than “modally”? Such
research will contribute to the lingering issue of the change from modality to tonality in
Western European music.

\(^{43}\) Many of the organ works in the Oldham MS are in E mode, which offer another pool of test pieces. But
based as they are on precomposed chant melodies, this repertoire’s expression of tonality may be restricted
in ways that are not comparable with more “secular” works such as the preludes and dance pieces.
Selected Bibliography


———. 2007. ““My Hovercraft Is Full of Eels”; or, the Ups and Downs of Translating *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik.*” *In Theory Only* 13/5-8: 95-109.


