

## EIGHT GAULTIER COURANTES IN *VIEIL ACCORD*

### Introduction

In the history of baroque lute music, no family achieved greater importance than the Gaultiers (spelled alternatively “Gautier,” “Gauthier,” or even “Gothier”). Its members included such illustrious players as Ennemond (or “Vieux” Gaultier, singled out by Mary Burwell's teacher “as the sun among the stars”), Denis (“Gaultier of Paris excellent for his composition and his play extremely polished”), Jacques (the “English” Gaultier “for the goodness of his hands the most swift”), and Pierre (“Gaultier of Rome” who was “esteemed for his learning and the gravity of his playing”). The author of the Burwell Tutor was probably an English pupil of Ennemond and has tentatively been identified as John Rogers. He tells us that Denis’ “touching [was] very delicate” and that the hands of the “English Gaultier” were “the neatest, and most even that ever were.” Other than these enthusiastic lines, we have little contemporary information about the Gaultier playing style.

Among the oeuvre of this redoubtable French family are a number of pieces written in Renaissance tuning, the so-called *vieil accord*. The majority, some 21 pieces, can be found in the lutebook of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (Fitzwilliam Museum Music Ms. 689), although others appear in Berlin 40165, Basel F. IX. 53, and in the lutebook of Joannes Aegidius Berner de Rettenwerd (Prague IV. G. 18). All deserve to be better known than they are. The authorship of this group of pieces is unclear as, indeed, is much of our knowledge about the Gaultier family. Both Thurston Dart and Wallace Rave have suggested that Jacques is the most likely candidate.<sup>1</sup> Dart's speculations are based largely on Jacques’ English associations and are only concerned with the works in the Cherbury manuscript. Lord Herbert, however, spent much time on the Continent (he served as French ambassador from 1619 until 1624) and there is no reason why he couldn't have collected much of his music during that period or couldn't have heard Vieux Gaultier or even the young Denis. As for Jacques himself, he left France for England about 1617 after killing an opponent in a duel. He became a member of the King's Musick in 1619 and served until 1648.

Identification of the composer of the *vieil accord* pieces remains purely speculative. Indeed, considering their variety, there is no assurance that all these pieces are by the same composer. The Prague manuscript contains a courante attributed to “D.G.,” who might prove to be Denis Gaultier. Identification is hindered by the fact that, with one exception, all these pieces appear to be *unica*. The one exception is the Courante on folio 37 of the Cherbury manuscript which appears in a version for solo guitar in Foscarini's *Terzo Libro* (page 42). This is not the only possible connection between Giovanni Paolo Foscarini and the name Gaultier. In 1659, the Bolognese guitarist Giovanni Battista Granata attacked in print “certain *professore*” who saw fit to “despoil the prints of Bartolotti, Piccinini, Gottieri, Monsu de Fò, Foscarini, and others.” “Gottieri” is likely a corruption of “Gaultier,” a theory that gains credence when one notices the spelling “Gothier” in the Prague manuscript. This latter manuscript is rather a curiosity as the Gaultier pieces are all written in Italian tablature together with works by Bocquet, Perichon, Messengeau, and John Dowland. The later baroque music of the various Gaultiers is of no help in identifying the composer(s) of the present group as its style is quite different. Dating the music is also frustrating. Lord Herbert's manuscript bears a number of dates, the earliest being 1619, the latest 1640. The Prague manuscript contains two dates: 1623 and 1637. The Basel manuscript is undated, but contains pieces in *vieil accord* on only its opening pages. Barring other evidence, we might suggest that the pieces in the present edition date from the middle 1620s.

This music is of great interest as it represents a transition from the Renaissance style to that of the French Baroque. The style is somewhat reminiscent of the courantes found in Robert Ballard's books of 1611 and 1614. The music, however, is pithier, offers greater variety, and has more melodic cohesiveness. Like Ballard before him and Denis Gaultier after him, our composer shows a decided fondness for the courante. Of the 32 Gaultier pieces in *vieil accord* examined, fully 24 are courantes. Within the confines of this form, however, considerable freedom is exercised. The music may or may not contain a double. Section lengths may be as short as 12 measures or as long as 22 (those of Ballard tended to be much longer). The music may require only one diapason or as many as four. A wide variety of keys is used including such adventurous ones as E-flat minor and B-flat minor. The Renaissance art of diminution gives way to textural variation. Baroque elements are found, such as the explorations of the bass register and the hints of *style brisé* in the doubles. Some of this variety is suggested in the following table of the eight Courantes in this edition.

<i>Ms./folio No.</i>	<i>Key</i>	<i>Repeats</i>	<i>Phrase Lengths</i>	<i>Diapasons</i>
PRAGUE				
f. 17v-18	F minor	AA'BB'	12 12 12 12	2
f. 50	A minor	AB	14 16	4
f. 65v-66	G minor	AA'BB'	14 14 14 14	4
BASEL				
f. 18v-19	G minor	A B	15* 16	3
CHERBURY				
f. 37	F minor	AA'BB'	18 18 18 18	1
f. 40v	E-flat major	AB	22 22	2
f. 65	C major	AB	16 16	3
f. 49v-50	B-flat minor	AA'BB'	12 12 16 14**	3

\*Measure nine missing in ms.

\*\*The first two measures of the double are missing in ms.

The courante was a dance much favored by French baroque lutenists. About half the known works of Vieux Gaultier in D minor tuning are courantes, and Dufaut (Granata's "Monsieur de Fò"?) and Denis Gaultier also favored the form. Looking back from the standpoint of the eighteenth century, Johann Mattheson could write in his *Der Volkommene Capellmeister*:

The masterpiece of the lutenists, especially in France, is generally the Courante, upon which one can employ his efforts and skill in good purpose. The passion or emotion that should be brought out in a Courante is that of sweet hope. For we find in this melody something courageous, something desirous, and also something delightful, all of them, parts of which hope is composed.

The tempo should be stately and not fast. Charles Masson summed up the spirit of the French Courante in a single word, *gravement*.

Of the eight pieces presented here, only the Courante from the Basel manuscript contains ornamentation, but performers will at least want to add trills before cadences. They might also wish to experiment with *notes inegales* in the doubles. As an example of the sort of thing that might be done in performance, editorial suggestions in the baroque style have been added to Courante VI. As with most manuscript sources, errors and omissions are present in the originals. These have been corrected in several places, but identified in footnotes. The three Courantes from the Prague Ms. have been transcribed from Italian to French tablature in the interest of uniformity. Lastly, measures have been reconstructed in Courantes IV and VIII to make the phrases of the doubles balance the principal strains. This last – the Courante “son adieu” – is a particularly lovely piece. It might be reasonable to view it as an eloquent swan song to the phenomenon that was the Renaissance lute: *ultimum vale*.

-Peter Danner

<sup>1</sup> Thurston Dart, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Lute-Book," *Music & Letters* 38 (1957), pp. 136-148 and Wallace Rave, "Some Manuscripts of French Lute Music 1630-1700: An Introductory Study," unpublished dissertation, University of Illinois, 1972, pp. 39-51.

<sup>2</sup> Giovanni Battista Granata, *Soave Concerti de Sonate Musicali*, Bologna, 1659.