

Jean (-Baptiste) Cappus – the forgotten violist: an inventory of his life and works

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Marin Marais, Forqueray and Sainte-Colombe have become part of the standard French repertoire for the solo viol. Although the name of Jean (Baptiste) Cappus often appears in books that cover this repertoire, not many viol players nowadays are familiar with his music or his life. Recently discovered archival material will help shed some light on this French viol master's life and works.

My intention in presenting this brief essay is to introduce this obscure violist and composer. In doing so I am presenting uniquely the starting point for researchers to further their study of Cappus' life and music. As a viol player I will provide a detailed analysis of the only known published bass viol music that we presently have and discuss some of the various technical points that are specific to this composer. In the Dijon archives I likewise have endeavoured to discover all I could about Cappus and his family.

This patient and meticulous research has unearthed hitherto unknown aspects of Cappus' genealogy and biographical data, which will be presented in detail.¹ As presented here, this is strictly biographical and leaves a large margin for further research concerning Cappus' education and musical activity, which at the present time we have not even begun. My co-author Yvan Beuvar will write about his known vocal works, and in Appendix “A” will describe the only cantata presently known by this composer.

Life and family

Jean (Baptiste) Cappus was born on the 6th of October 1689 and was baptized five days later in the Saint Etienne Church in Dijon.² Coincidence has it that this particular church and the Saint Médard Parish were the same as Jean-Philippe Rameau's, who had been baptized here 6 years earlier.³ In all the archival documents I have discovered his name is presented as ‘Jean’ and not ‘Jean-Baptiste’. Jean uses the second name only on his 1730 book of viol music.⁴ In general he is just referred to as ‘Mr Cappus’ or ‘Sr. Cappus’. I will refer to him as ‘Jean’ therefore throughout the rest of this article. As for his surname ‘Cappus’ the final ‘s’ is most probably pronounced as indicated by the particular spelling of his name in the 1724 edition of the *Mercure de France*.⁵

¹ Research conducted at the Archives départementales de le Côte d'Or in Dijon

² F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MIO9R032_0127 - 11 October 1689 This church is actually the Musée Rude which houses the municipal library.

³ F-Dad, FRAD021EC 239/028 – 25 September 1683.

⁴ Although the Royal Privilege in the same book refers to him only as ‘Jean’.

⁵ *Mercure de France* – 1730 November, page 2528, ‘Le 12. On chanta un Divertissement intitulé Les Plaisirs de l'Hyver, de la composition de M. Capuce, Maître de Musique de l'Académie de Dijon; qui fut fort applaudi. Cet Auteur vient de donner au Public un Livre de Pièces de Viole qui est fort goûté.

Jean was the youngest son of the family, having two older brothers and three sisters. His father François Cappus is named on his marriage act as a 'Maitre Chantre' (singing master) and the son of the legal counselor Maitre Blaise Cappus, Baillif for Parlement at Aix en Provence.⁶ François Cappus – was referred to shortly after his death as a 'good organist who had a healthy appetite, he died at a ripe old age'.⁷ He was also a singer at Dijon Cathedral, and was appointed to an official post starting in 1683 at least, to 'sing at all the important events'.⁸ A dozen of the father's vocal compositions have survived and we will discuss them later in this article.⁹

Jean Cappus' mother Anne Hervelin is reported as being deceased in 1692, when Jean was only three years old, and she was buried at the Saint-Etienne church on 12 March 1692.¹⁰ His father subsequently died 14 years later, in November 1716, and was buried in the same church.¹¹ On 17 October 1729, aged forty, Jean married a young woman who was a salesman's daughter from Paris, Marie-Michelle Dotée.¹²

Two sons were born from this union with Michelle Dotée. Louis was born on 20 May 1742¹³ and Nicolas, who is mentioned as being a minor in his marriage act on the 30 January 1753.¹⁴ On 12 March 1751 Jean Cappus was buried in the crypt of the Saint-Etienne church, having passed away two days earlier.¹⁵

In 1734, Jean Cappus received the privilege to direct the theatre in Dijon, the very first Opera house in the city.¹⁶ His son Nicolas exercised the profession of a salesman in the line of his maternal grandfather,¹⁷ and we find traces of this same family in Dijon as late as the 19th century¹⁸, where a Cappus is noted as creating artificial flowers as never seen before.¹⁹ The Cappus family is cited regularly as a 'contractor to make Indian chiffons as well as taffeta', and

⁶ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R028_0368 - 13 December 1682.

⁷ 'musicien et marchand, a épousé la fille de François Dumas (...). Son père était musicien, son grand-père bon organiste et gros mangeur, mort vieux' this was transmitted to me by the musicologist Michel Cuvelier but remains to be confirmed, I include it just for the anecdote.

⁸ Il était chantre à la cathédrale, et appointé à ce titre depuis 1683 au moins, pour chanter 'à toutes les grandes fêtes', 'aux musiques extraordinaires' ou à 'tous les offices solennels' (sic) Archives de la Côte d'Or : G 1536, fabrique, comptes 1676-1699.

⁹ The airs published by Christophe Ballard in 1693 (RISM 1693-2), 1694 (RISM 1694-2 & 1694-3), and 1699 (RISM 1699-2), as well as the ballet "Henrici Julii Borboni primi é Regio Sanguine principis laudes" [BNF, Tolbiac, RES-YF2599] should be attributed to his father, François. RISM has erred by attributing to 'J.-B. Cappus' an identity given only as 'M. Cappus'.

¹⁰ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R033_0347 - 12 March 1692.

¹¹ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R045_0157 - 18 November 1716.

¹² F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R051_0340 - 17 October 1729.

¹³ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R058_0149 - 20 May 1742.

¹⁴ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R064_0329 - 30 January 1753.

¹⁵ F-Dad, FRAD021_239_5MI09R063_0469 - 12 March 1741.

¹⁶ Joëlle-Elmyre Doussot, *Musique et société à Dijon au siècle des Lumières*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1999.

¹⁷ He is mentioned as being a salesman in the act listed above - 30 January 1753.

¹⁸ Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettre de Dijon Années 1847-1848 – Dijon Frantin, 1848 – 139.

¹⁹ #18 – 'Fabrique de fleurs artificielles d'une rare perfection, par M. Cappus de Dijon'.

receives the rights to do so, renewed regularly.²⁰ The Cappus family was therefore a dynasty of well established musicians in the city of Dijon and contributed to its musical development throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.

Jean Cappus published two books of *Pièces de Violle*, but only one is known to have survived. A 'Troisième suite de pieces de différents auteurs pour le dessus et le par-dessus de violle, mises en ordre par Mr. Cappus' is listed in a private collection which also has pieces by Marin Marais and Caix d'Hervelois, including 21 by Cappus, 5 from his first book of *Pièces de Violle*.²¹

His first book of *Pièces de Violle* was published in Paris in 1730. Traces of his well established reputation are documented on the title page. Here he is mentioned as 'Pensionnaire de la Ville de Dijon' (resident (artist) for the city of Dijon) and 'Maître Ordinaire de la Ville de Dijon' (Ordinary Master for the city of Dijon). His employment as musician for Louis-Henri, prince de Condé (dit Louis IV, ou M. le Duc), duc de Bourbon, governor of Burgundy (1710-1740) is also mentioned in his only other known theoretical publication *Etrennes de Musique* that we will discuss later in this article.

Jean Cappus also composed vocal works, some of which were staged. In 1728, 'Le retour de Zephire, divertissement mis en musique...' was published in Dijon. Then, in 1729 his divertissement 'Les Plaisirs de l'Hiver' was presented in Versailles to the Queen. A solitary cantata *Sémélé* also exists, conserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.²² He worked regularly also as a composer for the Jesuit College in Dijon, where most probably he continued in his father's steps, and for whom he composed music for plays which we no longer possess; only the text has survived.²³

Two books of 'Airs Sérieux et à Boire' were published in 1732, by Boivin although no extant copy is presently known.²⁴

His son Nicolas, as we have seen held the same job as his grandfather – a salesman who was also a musician. In 1760 he published a book of arrangements for the treble viol of works by his father, and is mentioned as being housed at the place Royal Dijon.²⁵

Jean Cappus rented the Hôtel de Barres in Dijon in 1734, which nowadays is the square Carrelet de Loizy. Here he directed many productions up to the

²⁰ F-Dad, C 3233, C 3356, C 3364, C 5630.

²¹ Certainly published in 1742 or earlier by his son Nicolas, this manuscript is described in detail in 'le Bulletin de l'atelier' d'études du CMBV, n°9, 1999-2000', in an article by Michel Cuvelier.

²² *Sémélé* ou la naissance de Bacchus. Cantate à voix seule avec symphonie – F-Pn, D-6899 (7).

²³ 'La reconnaissance du Parnasse', 1740 ; *Codrus*, tragedy in latin, *Le Joueur*, comedy in French 1743 ; *Louis IX, roi de France, captif en Egypte*, 1746 ; texts at the F-Pnlr and at the F-Dm.

²⁴ Mentioned in the "Bibliothèque des auteurs de Bourgogne, par feu M. l'Abbé Papillon", published in 1745.

²⁵ *Pièces De musique - Mises en ordre par monsieur - Capus Musicien de L'académie de Dijon et premier musicien du Concert - Le prix est de [?] par Suite - et Se vend Chez le dit Sieur capus - Qui loge au Logis du roy place Royal a dijon -L'an 1760 à Dijon – F-LYm, Ms. 6719.*

time of his death.²⁶ A curious narrative of his conducting is given by Lantin Damerey in 1838 : ‘Rameau played the harpsichord, and Cappus directed the orchestra with such vanity equal to a general of the army at the head of his troops. His wife took over when it was needed’.²⁷

Works

Here we will provide a chronological catalogue of his works that are now known. Details of some will be discussed later in this article:

CAPPUS, including Jean-Baptiste (1689 - 1751)²⁸

- 1693** An air in XXXVI. ‘livre d’airs de différents auteurs à deux et trois parties’²⁹ Paris, Chr. Ballard, 1693. 1 vol. in 8°, 76 p. RISM Recueils imprimés XVIe – XVIIe S – 1693²

(‘J.B. Cappus’ = error)

Printemps, gardez-vous bien [p.74] 1 singer and continuo

- 1694** (1) Six airs in le XXXVII. ‘livre d’airs de différents auteurs à deux et trois parties’³⁰ Paris, C. Ballard, 1694. 1 vol. in 8°, 77 p RISM 1694²

Vous estes insensible au tourment [p.43] 1 singer and continuo

Je meurs (bis) tous les jours [p.46] 1 singer and continuo

Quand, pressé par l’excès [p.48] 1 singer and continuo

Amour, avant que ma constance [p.51] 1 singer and continuo

Taisez-vous (bis) tendres mouvements [p.54] 1 singer and continuo

Que ces vastes forests solitaires [p.56] 1 singer and continuo

- 1694** (2) Two airs in ‘XX. recueil de chansonnettes de différents auteurs à deux et trois parties’³¹ Paris, C. Ballard, 1694. RISM 1694³

Que l’amour est charmant [p.60] for three voices

Quand le feu fait sentir [p. 64] one singer with a recitative for bass “air à boire”

- 1699** Four airs, in ‘Recueil d’Airs sérieux et a boire de differents auteurs’, for the year 1699³²

Paris, Christophe Ballard, 1699. RISM 1699²

Vous cachez avec soin vos peines [93, p.189]

Pour n’être point pilote téméraire [95, p.192]

Reviens, affreux Hyver [108, p.210]

Que l’amour est charmant et doux [124, p.240] three voices

²⁶ Mémoires de l’Académie des sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon, Imprimerie - Jobard 1923 – ‘La Première Salle de Spectacle de Dijon (1743-1828)’, 289–304.

²⁷ Rameau touchait le clavecin, et Cappus qui battait le mesure d’un air de vanité égale à celle d’un général de l’armée à la tête des ses troupes. Sa femme y doublait les rôles, lorsqu’il en était besoin. In “Les Deux Bourgognes” by Lantin Damerey, 54–62, Dijon, 1838.

²⁸ It is evident that the works dating from 1700 or earlier should be attributed to his father, François Cappus

²⁹ RISM 1693-2 F-Pn, Réserve, RES VM7-283 (28).

³⁰ RISM 1694-2 (‘J.B. Cappus’ error) F-Pn, Réserve, RES VM7-283 (29).

³¹ RISM 1694-3 1 vol. in 8°, 77 p. F-Pn, Réserve, RES VM7-302 (20).

³² RISM 1699-2 In-fol. obl., 244 [292] p. F-Pn, VM BOB-11592 et VM7-532.

s.d. Vous cachez avec soin vos peines, bergers...

Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MS RES 2355 'Pièces de musique et airs' (Houdard de la Motte, Antoine)³³

77 oblongs folios, 185 x 250 mm), second page numbered 34, only the melody, identical to the 'première du recueil' of 1699

1700 (1) Henrici Julii Borboni primi é Regio Sanguine principis laudes, Ballet en deux parties, mêlé de chant
(‘La Musique est de la composition du sieur Cappus. Le Sieur Hervelin fils a réglé les pas de danse’] (The music is by le Sieur Capus, Le Sieur Hervelin the younger is the choreographer)
Dijon, Collège de la Compagnie de Jésus, imprimeur-libraire : Jean Ressaye [1700]³⁴

1700 (2) Three airs ("Cappus"), in 'Recueil d'Airs sérieux et a boire de differents auteurs, pour l'année' 1700³⁵

Paris, Christophe Ballard, 1700 RISM 1700²

Que Bacchus est charmant ! [8, p.18] air à boire

Voulez-vous savoir qui des deux [19, p.38] air à boire

Le berger Tircis [p.178] vaux-de-ville

In-fol. obl., 242 [292] p.

1722 Le Temple de la gloire, cantata for the honor of the illustrious house of the Counts of Saulx, princes of Tavanès, which was sung at the Jesuit College in Dijon by the students of the same, in presence of M. Henri-Charles de Saulx, Count of Tavanès, lieutenant general for the King in Burgundy, Dijon, 1722. The accompanying booklet mentioned by Milsand has no named composer, but everything (place, institution and the dedicatee), leaves us to believe that Cappus is indeed the author.³⁶

1724-1746, Several works composed for the College of Dijon, whose booklets are mentioned by Milsand, and texts preserved at the BM Dijon, may well have Jean Cappus as a composer:

-*Le génie de la Bourgogne*, cantata, which will be sung in the College of Dijon (...) to honor and in the presence of the Lord Comte de Tavanès. Dijon, 1724.

Booklet mentioned by Milsand, op.cit. p. 499, without the name of the composer, kept at the BM Dijon.³⁷

-*Heroic idyll*, sung (...) May 6, 1730, in the presence of Mgr le Duc, governor of Burgundy, holding the states of the province.³⁸

³³ On line at: <https://archive.org/details/MS2355>.

³⁴ 16 p.F-Pnlr, RES-YF-2599 'en l'honneur d'Henry-Jules de Bourbon, 5ème prince de Condé, à l'occasion de la naissance de Charles, comte de Charolais, fils de Louis III, 6ème prince de Condé' (in honor of Henry Jules de Bourbon, 5th Prince of Condé, at the occasion of the birth of Charles, son of Louis II, the 6th prince of Condé). (source: BNF) Capus is cited as the composer, and 'Petrus Capus' as an actor (source: BM of Dijon, shelfmark 51689). This 'Petrus Capus' is unknown from our genealogical research.

³⁵ F-Pnt, VM7-533.

³⁶ F-Dm L51767.

³⁷ F-Dm, 3 copies: S1769, Virely 729 (II), Breuil III-36..

³⁸ F-Dm, L11399.

-*Récits mêlés de musique* (...), the 1st of May 1733, in the presence of Mgr le Duc, governor of Burgundy, holding the states of the province.³⁹

-*Récits mêlés de musique* (...), the 1st of May 1736, in the presence of Mgr le Duc, governor of Burgundy, holding the states of the province, Dijon, Augé, 1736.⁴⁰

-*Idyll*, part of which will be declaimed and the other sung (...) the 1st of May 1739 in the presence of Mgr le Duc, holding the states of the province, Dijon, Augé.⁴¹

-*Heroic idyll*, part of which will be declaimed, the other sung (...) June 13, 1742, in front of the Duke of Saint-Aignan, governor and lieutenant-general for S.M. of the provinces of Burgundy, Bresse and Bugey. Dijon, Augé, 1742.⁴²

1728 Le retour de Zéphire, divertissement mis en musique...chanté pour la première fois le 7 mars.⁴³

1729 Te Deum [pour la naissance du Dauphin]
Lost score, whose record of its performance is the only trace discovered.⁴⁴

1730 (1) Etrennes de musique contenant une méthode courte et facile pour apprendre cet art en très peu de temps.⁴⁵

1730 (2) *Premier livre de pièces de viole et la basse continue*.⁴⁶

1730 (3) *Les Plaisirs de l'hiver*. Divertissement en un acte, représenté devant la reine, au château de Versailles, le 13 novembre.⁴⁷

Dijon, J. Sirot, s.d. [in 8°, 8 p.]⁴⁸ [only the booklet is conserved]

1732 (1) *Premier recueil d'airs sérieux et à boire* (lost)⁴⁹

1732 (2) *Second recueil d'airs sérieux et à boire* (lost)⁵⁰

1732 (3) *Sémélé, ou La Naissance de Bacchus*. Cantate à voix seule avec simphonie.

Prélude et 9 pieces Paris, Boivin, Le Clerc, Cappus, 1732.⁵¹

1733 *Second livre de pièces de viole* (lost)⁵²

³⁹ F-Dm, L51771.

⁴⁰ F-Dm, 2 copies: 51772, Virely 727 (II)..

⁴¹ F-Dm, L11399..

⁴² F-Dm, L11399..

⁴³ D. Herlin (Dict. Marcelle Benoit) - Dijon, imp. De A. de Fay, 1728 [in 4°, Pièce] F-Pn, RES-YF-2394, et F-Pn, THN-99 [text only].

⁴⁴ D. Herlin (Dict. Marcelle Benoit).

⁴⁵ Paris, Leder, Boivin, l'auteur, 1730 [in 4°, 18, 32 p.] FétB. US-Cn Case 3A 773. Fétis signalled n edition from 1747; facsimile edited by Minkoff in 1989.

⁴⁶ RISM C 927 FétB Paris, F-Pn, VM7-6286 online on Gallica.

⁴⁷ FétB - Herlin (Dict. Marcelle Benoit).

⁴⁸ F-Pnla 8-YTH-14327; F-Dm, I-6184 (2).

⁴⁹ FétB indicated by Papillon in 1745 Paris, Boivin, 1732 [in-4° oblong].

⁵⁰ FétB indicated by Papillon in 1745 Paris, Boivin, 1732 [in-4° oblong].

⁵¹ RISM C 925 FétB indicated by Papillon in 1745 FétB [In-fol. 1 folio limin., 18 p.] in Gallica F-Pn, D-6899 (7).

⁵² FétB wrote (error) 1736 indicated by Papillon in 1745 as well as the music printer Ballard's inventory after death Paris, Boivin, 1733 [in 4° oblong].

1734 One air published in the 'Mercure de France', in December, 1734). - [Paris], s.n., (1734).

Ah! J'entends que la foudre gronde⁵³

1740 *La Reconnaissance du Parnasse*, ballet mixed with stories and songs, which will be danced to the solemn distribution of these awards, August 12, 1740, Dijon, Augé, 1740.⁵⁴

1742 or before (?)

Troisième suite de pièces de differens auteurs pour le dessus et le par-dessus de violle, mises en ordre par Mr. Cappus [comprises pieces by Marais and by Caix d'Hervelois, but also 21 by Cappus, of which five are from his *Premier livre*]⁵⁵

1743 *Codrus*, tragedie en latin, *Le Joueur*, comedie en françois [programme donné le 7 août 1743]

The choreography by Mr. Chaliès, the music by Mr. Capus.

Dijon, Collège de la Compagnie de Jésus, chez Arnauld Jean-Baptiste Augé, seul imprimeur du Roi...1743.⁵⁶

1746 *Louis IX, roi de France, captif en Egypte*

(The choreography is by Mr. Chaliès. The music is provided by Mr. Capus)

Dijon, Collège de la Compagnie de Jésus, imprimeur-libraire : Pierre Desaint, 174.⁵⁷

1760? *Pièces de musique misent en ordre par monsieur Cappus*, musicien de l'Académie de Dijon et premier musicien de Concert. Le prix est de 14 s par suite et se vend chez ledit sieur Cappus qui loge au logis du roi, place Royal à dijon l'an M.DCC.LX. A Dijon (*si*).⁵⁸

First Book of Pièces de Virole.⁵⁹

Jean Cappus' *Pièces de Virole* was published in 1730. The book is dedicated to His highness the Count of Tavane Brigadier of the Royal Army, his first lieutenant commander in Burgundy.⁶⁰ Here Cappus is described as being a 'Pensionary of the city of Dijon for Music, Master Ordinary of the Academy'⁶¹

⁵³ RISM C 926; GB Lbl, 297.b.6. On-line: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6337429s/f159.item..>

⁵⁴ For the Jesuit College of Dijon, reported by Milsand, *op.cit.* p.499] Booklet kept at F-Dm, 51998. There is no mention of the name of the composer, but, in all likelihood, it is Jean Cappus.

⁵⁵ ms, private collection, copy at the CMBV.

⁵⁶ F-Pnlr, RES-YF-2630.

⁵⁷ 7 p. in 4° F-Pn, RES-YF-2732 (39) D. Herlin (Dict. Marcelle Benoit).

⁵⁸ BM de Lyon, ms.FM 6719, 100 p., 19 x 24,5cm. Printing error? The date is posthumous to Jean (-Baptiste) Cappus who died in 1751; most certainly published by Nicolas, Jean (Baptiste) Cappus' son.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Dunford has recorded the complete Book of Cappus' viol music (label Astres disques on CDBaby) available on all platforms (iTunes/Amazon/GooglePlay).

⁶⁰ Monseigneur le Comte de Tavane Brigadier des Armées du Roy, Son Premier Lieutenant General Commandant en Bourgogne.

⁶¹ Pensionnaire de la Ville de Dijon pour la Musique, Maître Ordinaire de l'Academie.

Cappus' *Pièces de Viole* are mentioned in the 'Mercure de France' in November 1730, which adds additionally that they were well appreciated.⁶²

The book contains thirty six pieces arranged in four suites:⁶³

- 1 G-major (10 pièces)
- 2 D-minor (8 pièces)
- 3 D-major (8 pièces)
- 4 A-minor (10 pièces)

The organization follows the classic order of a French suite. Each suite opens with a Prélude (or a Fantaisie) followed by an Allemande, Rondeau or Gavotte, which takes the place of the antiquated Courante, with a Sarabande, Menuets, Musettes and Giges interspersed within.

It is clearly evident from the style, technique as well as the use of symbols for ornamentation that Cappus' was intimately familiar with Marin Marais' works. For the moment one can only conjecture what connection there was between the two men. Perhaps Cappus' just studied Marais' works with great diligence? Or perhaps while in Paris Cappus' met or studied with the great master? This particular point may be revealed in the future by more research.

This intimacy with Marais' music and particular notation, specific for the viol, is particularly manifest in the use of the symbol 'e'. Only Marais and his son Roland are known to have used it. Neither Caix d'Hervelois, Forqueray, nor Morel use this symbol, but only Marais and his son Roland. Marais writes:

“The most beautiful pieces infinitely lose their taste if they are not performed in the proper style, and not being able to give an idea of this taste with ordinary musical notation I was obliged to add new symbols which were capable of entering my wishes towards those whom perform my pieces. “e” for example, signifies that one must express or swell the bow stroke by pressing more or less on the string as the piece requires and this sometimes at the beginning of the beat or on the dot as the mark indicates. In this manner we give a soul to the pieces with which they would be too uniform.⁶⁴

Here is an example of the use of the symbol “e” from the G-major Suite, Sarabande La Niquette :

⁶² See footnote 5.

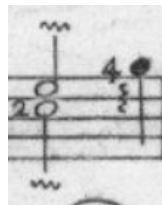
⁶³ There are always two Menuets with the first played *da capo*. I therefore count the two each time as one piece.

⁶⁴ Marin Marais, *Pièces de Viole* Livre III 1711: 'Les plus belles piece perdant infiniment de leur agrément, Si elles ne son exécutteés dans le goût qui leur est propre, et ne pouvant donner une idée de ce goût en me servant des notes ordinaries j'ay été obligé de supléer de nouvelles marques capables de faire entrer dans mes veüës ceux qui jouëront mes pièces – e – p. exle signifie qu'il faut exprimer ou enfler le coup d'archet en appuyant plus ou moins sur la corde Selon que la piece le demande et cela quelque fois sur le commencement du tems ou sur la vailleur du point comme la marque le désigne. De cette maniere l'on donne de l'ame aux pièces qui sans cela seroient trop uniformes.'

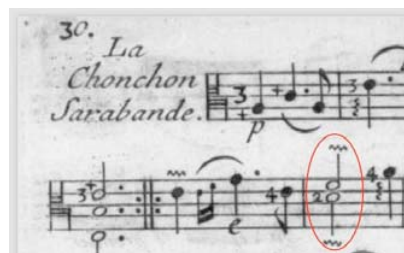
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Manifest as directly inspired from Marais' works and symbols are the two kinds of vibrato described by Marais with the corresponding signs, the two finger variety “flattement” and the little finger alone “plainte”. Both of these use the same symbols as Marais represented by a wavy line that is either horizontal or vertical. The horizontal one will represent a two finger vibrato while the vertical one a single finger (most often the fourth finger). Here is an example with both in the same bar:



What is rather unique to Cappus' technique (and personally I have never seen in other French viol music) is the use of a whole tone for this *flattement* in Cappus' music exemplified in the previous example. Here it is in context in from the a minor suite the Sarabande “La Chonchon” :

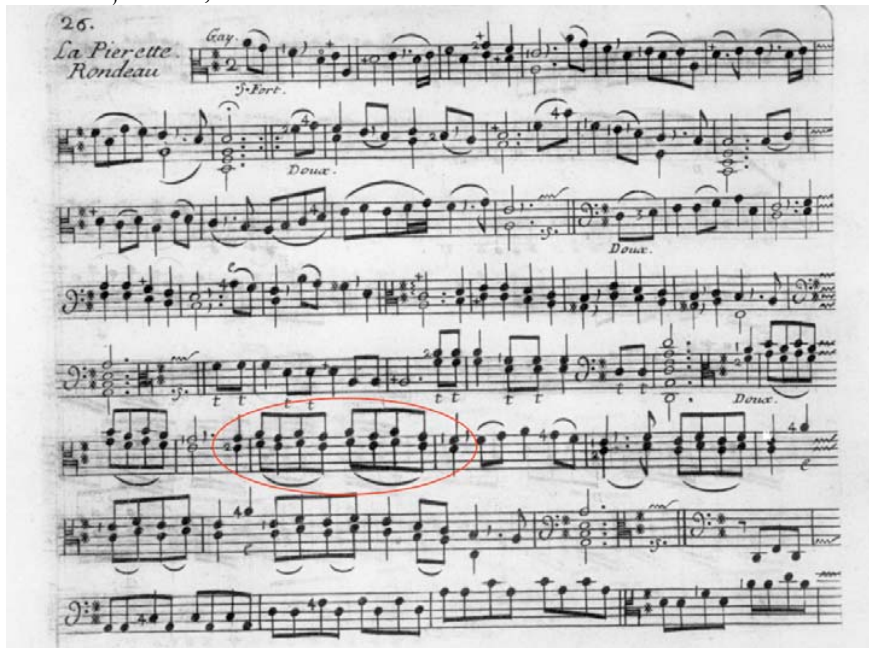


Given that with the fingering specified the lower note of the third, the d must be played with the second finger as specified, the higher note of the third, the f is played with the first. As there is a clearly intentional double *flattement* symbol indicated by the double □ the lower d can be performed with third finger pressing tightly against the second finger as described in Rousseau.⁶⁵ As for the higher note the d, the only finger left available is therefore the fourth and will produce a whole tone *flattement*.

⁶⁵ Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* – 1687, 104: ‘Le Batement se fait lors que deux doigts estant pressez l’un contre l’autre, l’un appuye sur la corde, & le suivant la bat fort legerement. Le Batement imite une ceratine agitation douce de la Voix sur les Sons...’

Cappus' fingering is original and uses many of Marais' systems of *tenués* or holds. Passages in scales use the *nouveau port de main* developed according to Jean Rousseau⁶⁶ invented by Sainte-Colombe, which in essence is what 'cellists have inherited as left hand technique. For chording he uses the old *ancien port de main* as one uses playing a lute or guitar nowadays. This having been said, many passages show that Cappus was also a master violinist as well as being a violist and certainly had either very large hands and also had great agility and flexibility in his left hand technique.

Here one has a clear example of this flexibility, in this case the fourth finger in the D-major Suite, *la Pierette*:



The lower note of the third is played on the second a string with the middle finger as indicated. So therefore the top of the third, the g is played with the first finger. In the following bar one must also perform the top a of the third, with the third finger, and the only possibility is to perform the lower f# with the fourth finger if one wants to respect the slurs. This involves an in-habitual (for violists but habitual for violinists) extension of the fourth finger. This indeed challenges the violists flexibility with a typical weak finger.

Another manifestation of this flexibility is a particularly curious and non-typical shift in French viol music.

Here is an example from the D-major Suite, Gavotte *la Manon* :

⁶⁶ Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* – 1687, 29-32.



The very last note a thirty-second note, and to boot under a slur is performed with the index finger. The preceding note as well. So one must slide quickly from one note to the other rather than what one would expect from French viol masters. That is to play the last note on the third string in the same position with the fourth finger therefore no shifting is necessary.

The places and names

We can glean something of Cappus' milieu from the titles of the pieces. As one would expect, most of the places and persons mentioned have some relation to his native Burgundy.

The Duke for whom this book is dedicated is surely Charles-Henry-Gaspard de Saulx, Viscount of Tavannes, Knight of the orders of the King, Lieutenant General of the Duchy of Burgundy, Brigadier of the armies of his Majesty.⁶⁷ The fourth piece of the G-major suite names him specifically 'Le Comte de Saulx'. *La Gazette de France*⁶⁸ indicates the death of his wife, Elisabeth de Mailly du Breuil on the 21st of February 1728, in her 27th year. The fourth piece of the d minor suite "Gavotte La Contesse" is perhaps a reference to her or the Duke's new bride?

Other titles show firmer roots in Burgundy. The 'Gigue La Puligni' in the G-major suite refers to the village Puligny, now known as Puligny-Montrachet in the Côtes de Beaune wine region; 'Raton', the title of the Gigue in the d-minor suite is a well known family name in Irancy (Yonne) in the XVIIIth Century.

⁶⁷ Vicomte de Tavannes, Chevalier des ordres du Roi, lieutenant général du duché de Bourgogne, brigadier des armées de sa Majesté.

⁶⁸ *La Gazette de France*, Vol. 3, 261.

The allusion in 'La Bourguignotte',⁶⁹ from the d-minor suite which imitates a hurdy-gurdy to Cappus' native land is obvious; "La Chonchon" the Sarabande in the a-minor suite is still a well known family name in Joux-la-Ville (Yonne); The gavotte in this same a-minor suite "La Bierre" is an allusion to the town of Bierre-les-Semur.⁷⁰ The very last piece of the book, "La Mongey", certainly can be associated with the family Mongey, du Pont-de-Vaux, who issued many a councilor to the Burgundy Parlement. "La Pierrete" the rondeau that completes the 4th Suite, perhaps was Pierrette Gauthier, widow to the Lieutenant General of the Dijon Province, who in 1722 left an important sum to the Jesuit College in Dijon.⁷¹

The Dramatic Works

The *Retour de Zéphire, a divertissement* that was sung for the first time on the 7th of March in 1728 has only survived as a booklet, edited in Dijon. This is also the case for the *Plaisirs de l'hiver*, which was performed 'in the Queen's presence, in the Versailles castle' on the 13 of November 1730 and mentioned (as previously noted in the *Mercure de France* the same year.

For the time being, *Sémèle* is the only cantata which has been passed down to us in its complete form. Published in Paris, by Boivin and Le Clerc, in 1732, it is composed for "voix seule avec simphonie" (solo voice with accompanying instruments) and basso continuo. Under the subtitle of *La naissance of Bacchus* (the birth of Bacchus), the cantata celebrates the 'amiable God of grapes' which confirms, as if needed the roots of this music in Burgundy. It is composed of a Prelude followed by eight movements (5 airs and 3 recitatives). One must mention the 'violonchele' (*sic.*) specified for the basso continuo and a Prélude (on page 12). Even if it is plausible that Jean Cappus knew the opera with the same name by John Eccles, with the libretto by W. Congreve (1707), the tragedie lyrique by the same name by Marin Marais (1709) was most certainly familiar to him. In appendix A we will enter into much more specific detail about this cantata.

The provincial musical life was particularly animated by the Jesuit Colleges, in Dijon as elsewhere.

The musical taste of the Jesuits for the show, in all its forms, was manifested as early as the end of the sixteenth century (...) These shows provoked in the small provincial towns an interest that sometimes matched that aroused in Paris by the representation of ballets at the court.⁷²

Several booklets have come down to us, some mentioning Cappus' contribution explicitly, with others suggesting it.

⁶⁹ Name of a small helmet used by the infantry since the 16th century.

⁷⁰ François Chartraire. Parlemenry consular, tresorer for the provence of Burgundy was the Count of Bierre.

⁷¹ In 1683, the College of Jesuits gave a 'Acknowledgment' composed in Latin verses by Fr. Cl. Perry, turned into French verse by his nephew Sir Perry, and presented to Madame Pierrette Gautier for a silver altar front. given to the college church of Dijon. Dijon, Ressayre, 1683. Text reported by Milsand (*op. cit.*) and kept at the BM Dijon, old shelf number 11375.

⁷² McGowan, M M., *The Art of Court Ballet in France, 1531-1643*, Paris, CNRS, 1978, Chapter XII: The Contribution of the Jesuit Fathers to Ballet, 205-227.

As for the other works obviously, François (the father) signed the music of the one of 1700 (Henrici Julii Borbonii laudes ...) like others who followed - without mentioning the name of the musician. From 1722, it can only be Jean (The Temple of Glory, cantata, 1722, several booklets without mention of the name of the composer for the years 1724, without dates, then 1736, 1739, 1740 and 1742), *Codrus, the Player*, 1743, *Louis IX, King of France, captive in Egypt*, 1746. Concerning *Codrus, tragédie en latin et Le Joueur, comédie en français* (1743) and also *Louis IX, roi de France, captif en Egypte* (1746), written for the Jesuit College in Dijon, we only possess the librettos. These former compositions have an important choreography - the choreography is by Mr. Chaliès,⁷³ indicated in the librettos.

The Airs

Starting in 1693 and 1694, airs are published signed by “Mr. Cappus”, these airs are falsely attributed to Jean (Baptiste) Cappus in RISM (1693-2 and 1694 2) – which are published in ‘airs de différents auteurs à deux et trois parties...’ by Christophe Ballard. The first ones are for a single voice and basso continuo, the rest have ones for three voices. In total sixteen airs ‘Sérieux et à boire’, *chansonnettes*, and *vaux-de-ville*. It would not be too bold to attribute all of these to Jean's (Baptiste) father François.

Jean (Baptiste)'s works are not represented until the year 1732, where two books figure and one where he is the only composer published by Boivin. Unfortunately, at the present time not one has been unearthed. The solitary air that survives was published in the *Mercur de France* in December 1734 entitled ‘Ah ! j’entends que la foudre gronde’.⁷⁴

The Pedagogue

“A New Year's gift of music containing a short and easy method to learn this art in a very short time By Mr. Cappus Ordinary of Music to S.A.S. Monseigneur le Duc”⁷⁵ was published in 1730.⁷⁶ The example we now have, reprinted by Minkoff editions in 1989, has a handwritten phrase on its title page ‘Ce livre est à l'usage de Sr Magdelene Emée ce 8 septembre 1736’. Its miniature size (in-8, 32 p.) was frequent at this time.⁷⁷

Besides basic musical skills such as reading different clefs, time signatures, fermatas and other symbols as well as rhythmical values, Cappus spends almost a quarter of the book entering on detailed information on how to perform notes inégales. This treatise is therefore invaluable to the musician seeking an understanding of how notes inégales were applied to 18th century French

⁷³ ‘Les pas de danse sont de la composition de Mr. Chaliès.’

⁷⁴ RISM C926.

⁷⁵ *Etrennes de Musique contenant une méthode courte et facile pour apprendre cet art en très peu de Temps Par M. Cappus Ordinaire de Musique de S.A.S. Monseigneur le Duc.*

⁷⁶ Fétis signals a reprint in 1747, not found yet; Minkoff published a facsimile in 1989.

⁷⁷ For example Jean Rousseau, 64 p. in 1683, 38 p. in 1691; Delair, 61 p. in 1690; Boyvin, 16 p. in 1700; Saint-Lambert, 68 p. in 1702 and 64 p. and 1707 ; Levens, 92 p. and 1743; Roussier, 66 p. and 1769 ; Baillon, 63 p. and 1781.

music. The book concludes with a handy transposition table using the system of different clefs to transpose as was common for instance in Rousseau's *Rousseau Traité de la viole* published in 1687.

I hope that with the research tools provided in this brief essay other musicians and researchers will now be able to continue this adventure on this totally disregarded composer. One important issue to underline is that the three books were printed; the Second Book of *Pièces de Viole* in 1733, as well as both the 1732 prints of the Premier & Second recueil d'airs sérieux et à boire, so with a little diligent hunting in private collections and archives they may eventually turn up. I might mention that with the sheer quantity of vocal music for Divertissements as well as for plays there is much hope that the actual music is still extant. I rest assured that with a little perseverance and science more of this wonderfully inventive composer's music will be unearthed and appreciated anew.

Appendix A

Sémélé ou La Naissance de Bacchus – Cappus' only surviving Cantata

Cantate à voix seule avec symphonie

Se vend à Paris chez le Sr Boivin, Marchand, rue St Honoré, a la regle d'or le Sr le Clerc, Marchand, rue du roule, a la Croix d'or le Sr Cappus a Dijon.

Avec Privilège du Roy

Le prix broché 2 lt

This cantata is among one of the last of its kind, the success of its genre put the *Tragédies Lyriques* in the shadows at the beginning of the century.⁷⁸

Source: The volume which can be consulted on-line (Gallica), is conserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and is the only copy known.⁷⁹ The work contains 19 pages of music, perfectly written and engraved.

The history of *Sémélé* :

The stories are abundant, but can be summarized as follows :

The young priestess of Zeus (Jupiter), Sémélé, was observed by the one who met her many times, never appearing in his divine form. Hera (Junon) was jealous, so therefore took the appearance of Sémélé's old Nanny so that the God would show himself as he really was, to therefore prove that he was indeed the master of Olympus, all the time knowing that no mortal could possibly survive such a vision. Zeus therefore tries to dissuade but in the end realizes the wish. Sémélé totally shocked, only has enough time to save what was going to be her child and places the child in her thigh until birth. This is how Dionysos (Bacchus), is born twice. Later, he searches for his mother in hell, with his father's permission. He then leads Sémélé to Olympus where she becomes immortal under the name of Thyroné.

Sémélé in Baroque Music:

Without making an exhaustive list of works inspired by this story, here are several examples from this period:

(1) *La tragédie à machines* (lyrical tragedy with machines for the décor) made by Claude Boyer, *Les amours de Jupiter et Sémélé* would now have a great following. Its composer, Louis de Mollier, writing about music (described by La Laurencie, as one of the creators of French Opera) for the *Théâtre du Marais* on 1 January 1666.

(2) The *tragédie à machines* which continues to be the inspiration of the opera by Johann Wolfgang Franck, (Hamburg, 1681), text by Johann Philipp Förtsch.

⁷⁸ Antony, James R., *La musique en France à l'époque baroque*, Paris, Flammarion, coll. Harmoniques, 1981 [the 'cantate française', chapter 23, 466-485, is the richest synthesis on the genre]. The original edition: *French Baroque Music (from Beaujoyeux to Rameau)*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, London, 1974, then revised by W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 1981. The same author provides the article 'cantate', 105-107, in the *Dictionnaire de la musique en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, published under the direction of Marcelle Benoit, chez Fayard, 1992.

⁷⁹ RISM A C925.

- (3) For a play by W. Congreve, John Eccles, wrote a masque in 1707 which was never performed, but, as published, inspired Handel (See No. 9 below).
- (4) The year 1709 saw the creation of the tragédie lyrique by Marin Marais, *Séméle*, with the text by Houdar de la Motte, after Boyer.
- (5) Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre leaves us a spectacular *Séméle*.⁸⁰
- (6) Georg Philipp Telemann's *Jupiter and Semele* a lost opera, with libretto adapted by Boyer.
- (7) Antonio de Literes writes his zarzuela *Jupiter y Semele o El estrago en la finezza* (Madrid, c.1718).
- (8) Johann Adolf Hasse gives *La Semele ov. La Richiesta fatale*, on a text by F. Ricciardi (Naples, Autumn 1726).
- (9) Georg Friedrich Handel takes up anew the theme of Eccles, after Congreve, as *Semele*, a secular oratorio, performed at Covent Garden in 1744.⁸¹

The work

The booklet has no identified author and may be by Jean Cappus himself. The same is true for the music. But one should not exclude that in his abundant production for the Jesuit College in Dijon this work might have been included. The cantata is in eight parts, including the seventh, titled 'air vif', which is particularly complex. The French spelling has been modernized in the footnotes.

1. Prélude in E major, consisting of 18 bars writing naturally for 'tous' (all) that including the solo instruments (simphonie) and the basso continuo *modérément*, in a common time (C) time signature.
2. Recitative also in E major, 8 bars in length with a d#¹ to f#¹ range, for voice and bc, again in common time (C).

The text a quatrain is the following :

*You who from the god of wine receive the power
Fauns, sylvains, unite,
God of the forests, run to all,
To honour Bacchus and sing his birth.*⁸²

The program is clear: The birth of Bacchus. One must not forget the numerous *airs de coeur* which are Bacchus-inspired songs, nor the Burgundian origins of the author.

3. Air Tendre, in E major, 140 bars counting the da capo (18 + 43 + 36 + 43), written for the "flute and violin" with, before the repeat, the

⁸⁰ Cantates françaises, livre III, ca.1715.

⁸¹ HWV 58.

⁸² 'Vous qui du dieu du vin recevez la puissance.

Faunes, sylvains, unissez-vous,
Dieu des forêts, accourez tous,
Pour honorer Bacchus et chanter sa naissance'.

indication “viol” for the 5-bar motif which directly follows the voice, then voice and BC, always in triple time. One should note the imitative writing and a few symbolic motifs on the words “folâtrer”, “rire” and “boire” (sport - laugh and drink). The tessitura is from d' to g#".

*Kind God of grapes seize our souls,
Spread your sweet flames,
To give us happy destinies.
Banish the crazy glory,
Let's chase the love of our hearts,
Let's leave all our ardour
To sport, laugh and drink.⁸³*

4. Recitative in C-sharp minor, 14 bars in length: in common-time, except for two triple-time bars. Tessitura g' to f#".

Retrace the errors where the Queen of heaven, under borrowed features, made your mother fall. You take pleasure, she said, to the sovereign of gods. You are worthy to please him: but why does he make a mystery of a love that does you honour. I am afraid, nymph, I confess; I am afraid - a profane layman. Do not try to deceive you with a false address.⁸⁴

This recitative marks the beginning of the story.

5. Air léger - (Instrumental Prelude consisting of 19 bars) in E-minor of 115 bars counting the da capo (19 + 28 + 40 + 28), in 3 time (3), tessitura: d' to g".

Glory has its attractions in charming hearts, but, mistress, it often lacks tenderness which lovers expect. Glory and love animate us constantly. Love is our softer inclinations; glory has its enchantments. Glory and tenderness are the perfect lovers.⁸⁵

6. Recitative, in E Major, 12 bars in common time: C, for voice and BC, tessitura from f#' to f#".

*Juno is still talking, but already the princess is very suspicious:
to prove your ardour. You find everything possible - you swore it to me
by the terrible river. Fulfil your oath.⁸⁶*

⁸³ 'Aimable Dieu des raisins empare toi de nos ames,
Reponds y, reponds y les douces flames
Nous aurons d'heureux destines
Bannissons la foile gloire, chassons l'amour de nos coeurs
Bornons roubles nos ardeurs a folatrer rire et boire.'

⁸⁴ ,Retraçons les erreurs où la reine des cieux
Sous des traits empruntés fit tomber votre mère
Vous plaisez, lui dit-elle, au souverain des Dieux,
Vous êtes digne de lui plaire :
Mais pourquoi fait-il un mystere
D'un amour qui vous fait honneur ;
Je crains nymphe, je le confesse
Je crains qu'un profane imposteur
Ne cherche à vous tromper par une fausse adresse'.

⁸⁵ 'La gloire a des atraits charmante, des coeurs elle est souvent maitresse, ce n'est pas toujours la tendresse qui forme les neuds des amants. Que la gloire et l'amour nous animent sans cesse; l'amour fait nos plus doux penchants la gloire a ses enchantements la gloire et la tendresse sont les parfaits amants.'

One should note the literal figurative note painting in the tormented bass on 'vous me l'avez juré'.

7 – Air vif -

(a) Prélude, in E minor, 4/8 time signature, 22 bars, tessitura d#' to g"

*Take the lightning in hand, powerful master of the world
As shown in the eyes of Juno at this moment
May my eyes kindly respond to them
I'm expecting from your love this brilliant homage.⁸⁷*

(b) Recitative, in E minor, triple-time signature, followed by common-time (C), 8 bars, tessitura d'-g"

*To dispel this sad desire,
The God truly emits his pain
Insensitive to the desire to preserve his life
Semele wants to see him in all his grandeur.⁸⁸*

(c) Prélude, vite, 'tous' (all) for the subject, and 'violonchele' written above the staff of the BC part, 12 bars in E major in common-time (C), Virtuostic piece illustrating the marvellous apparition of Jupiter, quick demisemiquavers in the 'cello part.

(d) (air), always with solo 'cello, very virtuosic, 18 bars, in E major in 4 time, range d'-g".

*What brilliancy, what fires, what thunder,
Give me help,
Ah! I perish, great God,
Have you come to this place
By your burning thunderbolts to declare war on me?
You triumph, Juno, the horrors of death
Spread on my eyelid.
Hurry for pity to end my fate
But leave my son the light.⁸⁹*

⁸⁶ 'Junon parlois encore et déjà la princesse des cruels soupçons: Se laisse déchirer, cher auteur de mes maux, venez me rassurer, Pour prouver votre ardeur, vous trouvez tout possible, vous me l'avez juré par le fleuve terrible, accomplissez votre serment'.

⁸⁷ 'Prenez la foudre en main, puissant maître du monde
Tel qu'aux yeux de Junon montrez-vous à l'instant
Qu'à mes yeux empressés votre bonté réponde
J'attends de votre amour cet hommage éclatant'.

⁸⁸ 'Pour dissiper cette funeste envie,
Le Dieu fait vraiment éclater sa douleur
Insensible au désir de conserver sa vie
Sémélé veut le voir dans toute sa grandeur.'

⁸⁹ Quel éclat, quels feux, quel tonnerre,
Prêtez-moi du secours,
Ah ! je péris, grand Dieu,
Êtes-vous venu dans ce lieu
Par vos foudres brûlants me déclarer la guerre?
Tu triomphe, Junon, les horreurs de la mort
Se répandent sur ma paupière.
Hâte-toi par pitié de terminer mon sort

The dramatic sense is underlined by the virtuosity of the figures.

(e) Recitative “doux” “lentement” in the minor, with frequent time signature changes, 16 bars in E-minor, tessitura d'-g"

*You who rule the universe
And who makes the sky, the earth and the waves shake,
Jupiter: keep for the rest of the world
The fruit of our loves.
That a hundred different people
Stand in a deep peace under his laws.
May he be the father of pleasures.
Admire everywhere
His triumphant valour.
It's dying Semele
Who forms these desires.
Receive his last sighs.⁹⁰*

A “just” expression, touching with descriptive note painting in the BC.

8. Air louré, with a prélude (and postlude), E minor, in 6/4 time (with frequent juxtaposition of double and triple time), 20 bars, in E-Major, tessitura d#'-g#".

*Lovers: that a heavy chain
Make you moan in your best days,
Bacchus offers his help.
Break the knot that enchants you.⁹¹*

Mais laisse à mon fils la lumière.’

⁹⁰ ‘Vous qui régissez l’univers
Et qui faites trembler le ciel, la terre et l’onde,
Jupiter, conservez pour le repos du monde
Le fruit de nos amours.
Que cent peuples divers
Se rangent sous ses lois
Dans une paix profonde
Qu’il soit le père des plaisirs
Qu’on admire partout
Sa valeur triomphante.
C’est Sémélé mourante
Qui forme ces désirs.
Recevez ses derniers soupirs.

⁹¹ ‘Amants, qu’une chaîne pesante
Fait gémir dans vos plus beaux jours,
Bacchus vous offre son secours.
Rompez le noeud qui vous enchante’.