

2006

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Recommended Citation

Churchill, Sara-Anne (2006) "Monsieur de Saint-Georges' 'Règles pour l'accompagnement': A Translation and Commentary," *Performance Practice Review*. Vol. 11: No. 1, Article 1. DOI: 10.5642/perfpr.200611.01.01
Available at: <https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol11/iss1/1>

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Monsieur de Saint-Georges' 'Règles pour l'accompagnement': A Translation and Commentary

Sara-Anne Churchill

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Introduction

Many eighteenth-century French keyboard continuo treatises are well-known today by scholars and performers alike. For the purposes of this article, a keyboard continuo treatise is a document which offers instruction regarding the realization of a figured bass at the keyboard. In France, between 1689 and 1764, at least fifteen such documents were produced. These treatises survive in printed and manuscript sources. Many are surprisingly accessible, as publishers have offered facsimiles of such treatises as Dandrieu's *Principes de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin* (1719), Gervais' *Methode Pour l'Accompagnement du Clavecin* (1733), and Dubugrarre's *Méthode plus court et plus facile que l'ancienne pour l'accompagnement du clavecin* (1754).

^[1]There are substantially more printed continuo treatises than manuscript sources available to us, but the latter have not been entirely ignored by scholars. In addition to those available in facsimile, a number of the French continuo treatises have been translated into English, including those of Saint-Lambert, Delair, and Corrette. ^[2]These sources have proven invaluable for both scholars interested in the history of theory and baroque performance practice, as well as harpsichordists learning to play directly from figured bass. ^[3]

Although the majority of the treatises written between 1660 and 1800 are accessible, there remain a neglected few that have yet to be studied. One such manuscript treatise is Monsieur de Saint-Georges' continuo book (Paris, Bn, Vm⁸ 1139). In their catalogue of French

¹ For more information about these treatises and others, see Fig. 8/Table 3.

² Gordon Samuel Rowley, "Le Maître de Clavecin pour l'Accompagnement: Michel Corrette's Method for Learning to Accompany from Thoroughbass: A Translation and Commentary" (Phd. dissertation: University of Iowa, 1979); Monsieur de Saint-Lambert, *Principes du clavecin* (Paris, 1702), trans. Rebecca Harris-Warrick as *Principles of the Harpsichord* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Denis Delair, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le théorbe et le clavessin* (Paris, 1690), English trans. Charlotte Mattax (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

³ For a comprehensive list of French continuo treatises, see Robert Zappulla, *Figured Bass Accompaniment in France* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

harpsichord music, Bruce Gustafson and David Fuller mention this treatise.^[4] They describe the manuscript's physical characteristics, provide an estimated date of compilation, and speculate as to its connection with the presumed author/copyist, Monsieur de Saint-Georges. The manuscript contains a continuo instruction section, followed by solo harpsichord pieces by several different composers. Gustafson and Fuller list the musical works contained within the manuscript, supplying titles and composers where possible (see page 4). This source has almost certainly received less attention than it deserves. Indeed, the latest book on this subject, by Robert Zappulla, deals almost exclusively with printed sources.^[5]

Some have taken the name Saint-Georges on the opening page as evidence of a connection with Chevalier de Saint Georges, or Joseph Boulogne (c. 1739-1799), a violinist, composer and famous fencing master of partial Creole descent. Gustafson and Fuller assert that “[i]f the ‘Mr. de St. Georges,’ of the ownership signature, is Joseph Boulogne de Saint-Georges..., this might have been his study book; if true, the book is startlingly retrospective.”^[6] They suggest a date of copying after 1713, since the manuscript includes selections from François Couperin's *Pièces de clavecin, premier livre*, published in that year. But Joseph Boulogne could not have copied the manuscript before 1751, when he would have been in his teens, making his authorship or ownership questionable; moreover, the name Saint-Georges is hardly uncommon. The issue of authorship will be considered in greater detail below.

That this continuo treatise has remained relatively inaccessible is somewhat surprising: it has never been published in facsimile, in a French modern edition, or in English translation. Neither has it received comment in the scholarly literature (beyond that cited above). Considering the availability of even the short continuo treatises of François Couperin and Jean Henry d'Anglebert,^[7] one would think that twenty-two folios containing substantial figured bass exercises would have come to the attention of musicologists working with other French keyboard treatises. I shall rectify this situation by offering an English translation of the text of the St. Georges “Règles pour l'accompagnement,” along with a discussion of its possible origins, its author/compiler, its connection with Monsieur de Saint-Georges and its place amongst other French continuo treatises.

⁴ Bruce Gustafson and David Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music, 1699-1780* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1990), 304.

⁵ Zappulla, *Figured Bass Accompaniment in France*.

⁶ Gustafson and Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music*, 304.

⁷ François Couperin, *Règles pour l'Accompagnement*, facs. ed. (Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 1996). Jean-Henry d'Anglebert, *Pièces de Clavecin* (Paris, 1689); facs. ed. in *La musique française classique de 1650 à 1800*, ed. Jean-Saint Arroman (Courley, France: Fuzeau, 1999).

Description of the Manuscript

According to Gustafson and Fuller, the manuscript contains fifty-eight folios, is in oblong quarto format, and measures about 19.1 by 24.3 cm. It was written on undated grape water-marked paper, with parchment-covered boards.^[8] The “Règles pour l’accompagnement” occupy the first twenty-two folios, followed by a set of figured bass preludes in almost every key, which were most likely intended as exercises wherein one might practise the concepts introduced in the preceding text. Following these preludes, we find more keyboard music by such composers as Louis Couperin (c. 1626-1661), François Couperin (1668-1733), Jean-François Dandrieu (1681/2-1738), Thomas Bertin de la Doué (c. 1680-1743), and Jacques Hardel (d. 1678). While the attributions in the source and concordances identified by Gustafson and Fuller serve to identify most composers, a few pieces remain anonymous. Of particular interest are an anonymous “folies d’espagne” and a suite by Dandrieu, both of which contain fingering most likely added at a later date.^[9]

Table 1. Inventory of Vm⁸ 1139 (From Gustafson and Fuller, page 304)

No.	fo.	
1	1 ^r -22 ^v	Regles pour l’Accompagnem.-
2	23 ^r	Prelude En C sol ut majeur, ton naturel [C]
3	23 ^v	Prelude En C sol ut mineur, ton qui n’est point naturel [c]
4	24 ^r	Prelude En D la ré majeur, ton qui n’est pas naturel [D]
5	24 ^v	Prelude En d la ré mineur ton naturel [d]
6	25 ^r	Prelude En E Si mi majeur ton qui n’est point naturel [E]
7	25 ^v	Prélude; En E si mi mineur, ton naturel [e]
8	26 ^{r-v}	Prelude En f ut fa majeur, ton naturel vite[F]
9	27 ^r	Prelude; En f ut fa mineur; ton qui n’est pas naturel [f]
10	27 ^v -28 ^r	Prelude En G ré Sol majeur ton naturel [G]
11	28 ^v	Prélude En Ge ré Sol mineur, ton qui n’est pas naturel [g]
12	29 ^{r-v}	Prelude; En A mi la majeur ton qui n’est pas naturel [A]
13	30 ^r	Prelude, En a mi la mineur, ton naturel [a]
14	30 ^v	Prelude En B fa si becare majeur, ton qui n’est pas naturel [B]
15	31 ^r	Prelude En B fa si becare mineur ton naturel [b]

⁸ Following the description in Gustafson and Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music*, 304. I have worked from a microfilm copy (AA 518 MT) of the manuscript held at the library of the University of California at Berkeley.

⁹ Ibid.

No.	fo.	
	31 ^v	[blank, ruled]
16	32 ^r	Prelude En Dé Laré [Hand B:] de Mr. De düé [Bertin de la Doué] [unmeasured] [d]
17	32 ^r	Menuet [d]
18	33 ^r	Menuet [d]
19	33 ^v	Menuet [D]
20	34 ^r	Menuet [d]
21	34 ^v -38 ^r	La feste de vuillage [Hand B:] de monsieur dandrieux Rondeau...[Gigue]...Menuet...Menuet...Double Du Menuet [Dandrieu] [D]
22	38 ^v -41 ^v	folies d'espagne...7e Ct. [d]
	42 ^r	[blank, ruled]
23	42 ^v	Noel [d]
24	43 ^r	Noel [d]
	43 ^v	[blank, ruled]
25	44 ^r	Musette [C]
26	44 ^v	Musette [C]
27	45 ^r	Menuet [C]
28	45 ^v -46 ^r	La Marche des Gris Vetus [Couperin, Fr.] [F]
	46 ^v	[blank, ruled]
29	47 ^r	Air [Musette] [G]
30	47 ^v -48 ^r	Air [G]
31	48 ^v -49 ^r	Musette [G]
	49 ^v	[blank, ruled; pasted over notated piece]
32	50 ^r	Marche des fanatique [G]
33	50 ^v -51 ^v	Les Vendangeuses [Couperin, Fr.] [a]
34	52 ^r	Gavotte [Hardel] [a]
34a	52 ^v -53 ^r	Double de La gavotte [Couperin, Louis] [a]
35	53 ^v -56 ^r	La Dessante de Mars [C]
		[The remainder of the book is written from the other end:]
36	58 ^v	Prelude [a]
37	58 ^r	1 ^r Menuet [a]
38	58 ^r -57 ^v	2 ^e Menuet [a]
39	57 ^r -56 ^v	[Gavotte and rondeau] [a] ^[a]
^[a] Ibid.		

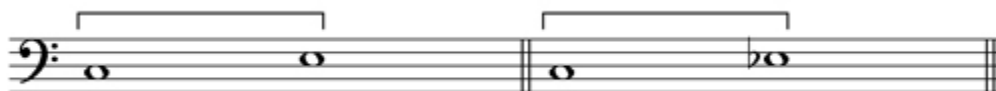
The manuscript text covers rules for realizing figured bass, beginning with the identification of intervals and progressing to a set of rules and exercises in each major and minor key. Several musical examples are given, each in a different key. Presumably the author wished to provide a basic introduction to the concept of playing figured bass, as s/he did not delve into rules of voice leading and style beyond what was necessary for basic formation of chords over the bass notes given.

Synopsis of the “Règles”

The Saint-Georges manuscript begins by stating that harmony is composed of two different types of intervals, consonances and dissonances. The owner, one must assume, already understood basic concepts about keyboard music, was able to read music and was somewhat technically competent at the keyboard. Following an explanation of contemporary concepts of consonance and dissonance, the author introduces the intervals by type. S/he begins with all the consonances. Major and minor thirds are introduced, with an example to illustrate how each is notated and a description of how many tones and semitones they contain. Most examples also include, within the staff, the numeral indicating this interval above the bass, as in figure 1.

Figure 1. There are two sorts of thirds, the major and the minor:

Example 1.

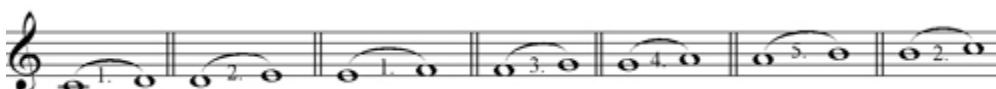


The major third contains two tones; the minor third contains one tone and a half.

The author then presents each of the remaining consonant intervals in an identical format. Before s/he addresses the dissonant intervals, the whole discussion of intervals is interrupted by a demonstration of the tones and semitones that make up an octave. Not dissimilar to a diagram used to teach young children the “recipe” for a major scale, the example provided shows each two-note grouping under a slur, a number to indicate whether it is the first, second, third of the tones and/or semitones within the scale, and a notation of whether the interval is a tone or a semitone.

Figure 2. Demonstration of the tones and semitones of the octave

Example 2.



tone; tone; semitone; tone; tone; tone; semitone;

A consideration of the dissonant intervals follows, using the same format. The section concludes with a presentation of all the intervals in the same order as they were originally given.

The next section begins with what seems in the context, a premature remark regarding the *règle de l'octave*, stating that the “octave is composed of eight degrees that rise and fall and that each have their own chord.” This might ordinarily have led to a discussion about the rule of the octave, but, instead, the author reverts to a description of the two modes. Each mode is described in terms of what makes it major or minor; with reference to the quality of the third and sixth degrees.^[10] An example for each mode, consisting of an ascending and descending scale, highlights the thirds and sixths discussed beforehand. Next, a few of the terms for specific scale degrees are introduced (mediant, dominant, leading tone), along with examples in both major and minor modes. These two examples precede the introduction of the perfect (root position) chord. The author also provides the scale degrees on which this chord is used (according to the *règle de l'octave*) and the figure used to indicate the chord. The quality of the third is discussed, as well as the omission of the octave, if one finds that the resulting chord is too high on the keyboard. A similarly laid out description of the imperfect (six-four) chord follows, accompanied by musical examples exhibiting the use of both the perfect and imperfect chords.

Finally the *règle de l'octave* is presented, referred to as “Marche des 8 degré du mode majeur.” (See page 98) Each degree of the scale and the chord that should be employed above it is introduced, along with an unrealized musical example.

Figure 3. The first degree

sur le 1er degré { L'Accord parfait;

Example 3.



1er degré;

The chords are all introduced using formal labels (petite sixte, sixte ordinaire, etc.) and, as new chords are presented, their intervallic components are provided as well.

¹⁰ It is particularly intriguing that the author of the manuscript is concerned about the sixth degree of the key, as it is not mentioned in such detail in most contemporary treatises.

Figure 4. The third degree

sur le 3e degré {La sixte mineure, l'octave et la tierce mineur cet Accord s'appelle la sixte ordinaire;

Example 4.



3e degré;

All degrees of the ascending scale are presented with their corresponding harmonies, and then the author introduces the same information for each degree of the descending scale. This section ends with extended material regarding the fourth scale degree and its place within standard cadential progressions. This information seems neither to follow necessarily from the preceding material nor to lead inevitably to the next section, contributing to my sense of a somewhat haphazard organization of the entire treatise.

Several exercises are given in the next section of the manuscript. Each key is introduced separately, first with a demonstration of the scale, ascending and descending, including indications for a chord on each degree. This exercise familiarizes the student with the chord structures within the particular key; a *leçon* follows in the same key. Next the author presents the same material, in the same format, but for the parallel minor key. The author presents all degrees of the scale in this manner. The order in which the degrees of the scale and their chords are presented is particularly intriguing:

Figure 5. Keys of the exercises

Table 2.

C sol ut mode majeur, C sol ut mode mineur (C major, C minor)
D ré mode majeure, D ré mode mineur (D major, D minor)
Si mi mode majeur, si mi mode mineur (E major, E minor)
F ut fa mode majeur, F ut fa mode mineur (F major, F minor)
G ré sol mode majeur, G ré sol mode mineur (G major, G minor)
B fa si bémol mode majeur, B fa si bémol mode mineur (B flat major, B flat minor)
E si mi bémol mode majeur, E si mi bémol mode mineur (E flat major, E flat minor)
F ut fa diéze mode majeur, F ut fa diéze mode mineur (F sharp major, F sharp minor)
C sol ut diéze mode majeur, C sol ut diéze mode mineur (C sharp major, C sharp minor)

G ré sol diéze mode majeur, G ré sol diéze mode mineur (G sharp major, G sharp minor)

The keys of A major/minor, and B major/minor are completely neglected. The pitches of the diatonic scale are presented ascending, from C to G, then the scale on each of the normal mean tone accidentals is presented, B ♭, E ♭, F ♯, C ♯, and G ♯. This selection and arrangement of keys may suggest a continued influence of standard meantone tuning, in which the remaining accidentals (the enharmonic equivalents of those given) were ordinarily not available.^[11] The subsequent section begins with additional information about the little sixth chord (*petite sixte*), describing the scale degrees on which it is commonly employed upon and problems that may be encountered during its use, such as parallel fifths and octaves.

At this point in the manuscript, the author finally introduces the set of “*règles*” referred to in the title. S/he presents twenty-one rules, each dealing with a specific chord. Detailed information follows the introduction of each chord, such as its intervallic structure, its identifying figure, its application on various degrees of the scale, and a demonstration of its use within both major and minor keys. Additional information is often provided, generally dealing with problems that may be encountered, such as parallel octaves and/or parallel fifths, confusion resulting from the use of accidentals, and awkward movement(s) of the right hand. Each “*règle*” ends with a direction indicating that one must follow the same practice in all the other keys (in some cases, merely in all the other minor keys). This section of the manuscript bears a striking resemblance to Jean-François Dandrieu’s *Principes du clavecin*, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Chords presented within the “Regles” section of the manuscript are:

- First Rule – Natural chord - third, fifth, octave.
- Second Rule – Little sixth, or major sixth – sixth, third, fourth
- Third Rule – Simple sixth – sixth, octave, third
- Fourth Rule – Fifth chord – fifth, sixth, third
- Fifth Rule – Diminished fifth chord – diminished fifth, sixth, third
- Sixth Rule – Doubled sixth – sixth, third
- Seventh Rule – Tritone chord – augmented fourth, second, sixth
- Eighth Rule – Chord of the fourth – fourth, fifth, octave
- Ninth Rule – Consonant fourth chord – fourth, sixth, octave
- Tenth Rule – Second chord – second, fourth, sixth
- Eleventh Rule – Seventh chord – third, fifth, seventh, little seventh – third, octave, seventh
- Twelfth Rule – Dissonant ninth chord – ninth, third, fourth
- Thirteenth Rule – Seventh and ninth chord – third, fifth, seventh, ninth

¹¹ Some of the scales and keys listed above are impossible in standard meantone tuning, i.e., f minor and c minor. It is the order in which the scales are presented that I find most intriguing and reminiscent of the meantone temperament.

- Fourteenth Rule – Diminished seventh chord – diminished seventh, minor third, diminished fifth
- Fifteenth Rule – Augmented seventh chord – seventh, second, fourth, fifth
- Sixteenth Rule – Augmented seventh combined with a minor sixth – seventh, fourth, minor sixth
- Seventeenth Rule – Major sixth combined with the diminished fifth – major sixth, third, diminished fifth
- Eighteenth Rule – Seventh combined with the diminished fifth – seventh, third, diminished fifth
- Nineteenth Rule – Augmented fifth – seventh, ninth, third, augmented fifth
- Twentieth Rule – Tritone combined with the minor third – tritone, sixth, major third
- Twenty first Rule – Augmented second chord – augmented second, triton, sixth

The final section of this portion of the manuscript consists of fourteen preludes featuring the chords previously presented as exercises for practice. Here, the figures are not full, as in the “règles”; instead they are presented in the usual short form, adhering to traditional notational practice.

An eccentricity of this manuscript is that it does not provide a single example of a realized figured bass. Several French continuo treatises depend on realized examples to demonstrate the structure of chords, including those of d’Anglebert and Boyvin.^[12] In the Saint-Georges manuscript the figures are usually presented in full: that is, every note required to complete the chord is indicated with a figure. As well, a number of accidentals that are naturally contained within the key signature are reiterated in the figures, as a reminder. This allows the student to learn the exercise chord by chord, concentrating solely on playing the right intervals above the bass. Since the tradition was to use a shorthand, giving only one or two figures or so per note, it seems odd that complete figures would be provided. This oddity, paired with the practice of changing the vertical order of the figures, suggests that the author was perhaps attempting to show voice leading within the exercises. The lack of realized exercises may indicate that the manual was intended for use under the guidance of a teacher.

Issues of Authorship

I am convinced that this manuscript is the work of Jean-François Dandrieu; more specifically, I believe it is an early version of his *Principes de l’Accompagnement du clavecin* of 1719. It is possible that Dandrieu compiled the Saint-Georges manuscript for a student, or that another keyboardist/teacher copied it from a similar early version of the *Principes du clavecin*. Here I will discuss the evidence in support of that hypothesis.

¹² d’Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecin*. Jacques Boyvin, *Second livre d’orgue* (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1700; facs. ed. Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 2004).

Jean-François Dandrieu (c.1682-1738) was born in Paris and lived there all his life. He and his sister, Jeanne-Françoise, were both pupils of Jean-Batiste Moreau. Jean-François became organist at Saint Merry from 1704, was employed at St. Barthélemy from 1710 and at the Chapelle Royale in 1721. He produced eight collections of harpsichord pieces, a number of compositions for organ, as well as some chamber music. His compositions for keyboard were well respected by his contemporaries and are thought today to be equal in quality to those of Jean-Philippe Rameau and François Couperin. His most influential pedagogical work has survived in the form of a continuo treatise, *Principes de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin*, first published in 1719.^[13]

When compared with a sample of Jean-François Dandrieu's handwriting, the script of the manuscript is not dissimilar. It is not impossible that it is the handwriting of the same person, but it is hardly definitive due to lack of dates for either of the samples, given below in figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6. Handwriting from François-Sappey^[14]

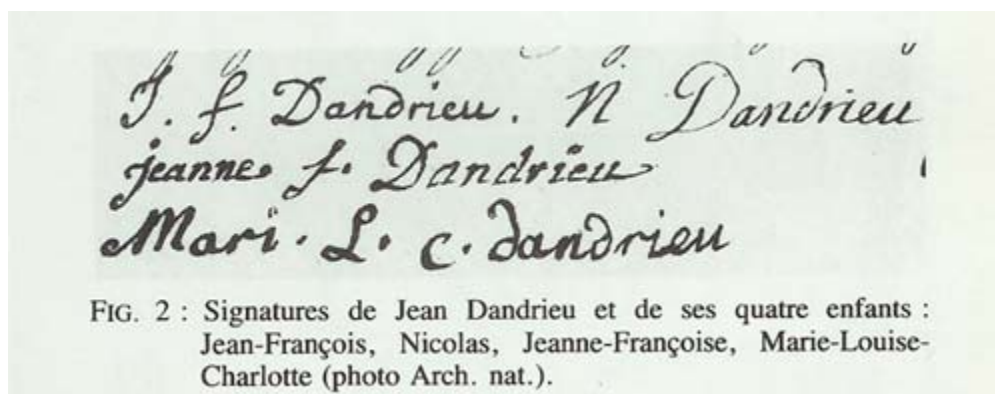
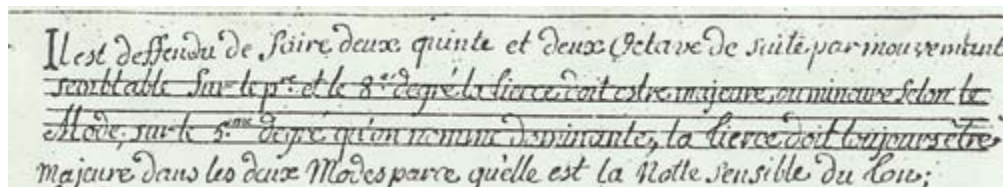


Figure 7. Handwriting in the manuscript, folio 5r^[15]



¹³ Biographical information from Brigitte François-Sappey, *Jean-François Dandrieu 1682-1738: Organiste du roy* (Paris: Picard, 1982).

¹⁴ From François-Sappey, *Jean-François Dandrieu*.

¹⁵ From Monsieur de Saint-Georges, "Règles pour l'accompagnement." Manuscript, Paris, Vm8 1139, Bibliothèque Nationale.

The last ten folios of the “règles” component of the Saint-Georges manuscript are extremely similar to Dandrieu’s *Principes*. This section of the treatise discusses rules for the composition of each chord employed in continuo playing. Dandrieu’s treatise is comprised of “tables” the first giving the chord, its components, a general description of its uses, and an exercise to demonstrate or practice it in every key. The exercise features full figures indicating the intervals to play above the bass, exhibiting in detail the construction and voice leading for each set of chords. The second table features identical exercises, but uses the more abbreviated continuo figures normally found in scores and parts of the period. The third table repeats the same exercises, but is completely unfigured. This same procedure is used for all the chords Dandrieu introduces. The *Principes de l’accompagnement du clavecin* concludes with at least thirty-six brief untitled airs for voice and continuo, presumably for practice.

In its last ten folios, the Saint-Georges manuscript employs a method similar to that of Dandrieu’s tables. Each “règle” introduces a chord, its intervallic composition, a musical example that serves as both a demonstration of the use of the chord and as a vehicle for practice, and information regarding where to use the chord and how it is indicated. The musical examples in the manuscript closely parallel those in the printed treatise. Full figures are used in this section of the manuscript, whereas the earlier exercises and later preludes employ conventional figures. The majority of French continuo treatises in this period offer realized chords to serve as an aide to students first learning to play figured bass continuo. The fact that no such exercises are realized in either *Principes de l’Accompagnement du clavecin* or in the “Règles pour l’accompagnement” is unusual, but consistent in the two sources. While it is immediately evident that the Saint-Georges manuscript is connected with the tables employed in *Principes*, it is difficult to discern which is the earlier source.

The version of the exercises in the Saint-Georges manuscript suggests that it was not copied from the published *Principes*. Only one exercise in each the major and minor mode is used to demonstrate each chord and the subsequent “règle”, whereas the Dandrieu print provides six different exercises. The voice leading is not entirely consistent with that implied in the manuscript, and the verbal text is certainly not identical. At times, in the manuscript, we find additional material introduced in connection to various chords, material that does not appear in the *Principes*. It seems likely that if one were to copy from a print for one’s own use or a student’s use, one would copy the voice leading exactly, and would want to retain all information regarding the chord, its structure and its uses. Could Vm⁸ 1139 be an earlier version of Dandrieu’s *Principes*? Jean-François Dandrieu may have prepared this particular manuscript for a student, then, while teaching, realized the usefulness of the règles, deciding that he should refine them for publication.

The fact that several of the pieces included in the repertory within this manuscript were composed by “Dandrieux” [sic] offers further support for this theory. It seems completely natural and, indeed, convenient for a teacher to include works composed by himself in a workbook for a student. Gustafson and Fuller note a change in hand for folios 53^v – 58^v, the last of the manuscript, appended to the repertoire section. This addition could have been copied by a

student at a later date and compiled with the treatise as a matter of convenience. Of course there are many other possible explanations.

The version of “La feste de vuillage” transmitted in this manuscript is also given in Dandrieu’s print of 1724, but the manuscript version does not derive from it.^[16] In fact the manuscript may be an early source for this suite. Hypotheses aside, it is undeniable that this manuscript is strongly connected with Jean-François Dandrieu in some way, either directly or at some remove.

Dating the Manuscript

Gustafson and Fuller have dated this mysterious manuscript “after 1713.” Their belief that “La Marche des Gris Vertus” by François Couperin included in Vm⁸ 1139 is copied from the published version of 1713 has led to this suggestion.^[17] Since “La feste de vuillage” is likely not a version of the print of 1724, I would propose a date between 1713 and 1724. Of course this destroys any notion that the manuscript is connected with Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, unless he acquired the manuscript as an avid young musician, and scrawled his name in the front cover.

If one supposes that the manuscript was compiled between 1713 (or earlier) and 1724, it is entirely possible that Jean-François Dandrieu was responsible for its creation, probably as a predecessor to the *Principes de l’accompagnement du clavecin* or perhaps as a later copy with the print as exemplar. The *Principes*’ appearance in 1719 may offer a likely terminum ante quem, if the manuscript, prepared for a student or patron, predates the print.

The Mysterious Monsieur de Saint-Georges

Of course the issue of the manuscript’s connection with Monsieur de Saint-Georges cannot be avoided. As discussed earlier, preliminary thoughts often lead to the idea that the manuscript was somehow connected with the composer Chevalier de Saint-Georges. Born in Guadeloupe, near Basse-Terre, Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (c.1739-1799), was the son of a noble plantation owner, Joseph-Jean-Nicolas Boulogne, and a slave, called Nanon. It was in Guadeloupe that he received his first violin lessons. His father took him to France as a young boy and ensured that he was trained in the areas of music and fencing. His fencing masters included La Böessière, while violin teachers may have included Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764), Jean-Marie Leclair, le second (1703-1777) and/or Antonio Lolli (c.1725-1802). It is possible that he studied composition with François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829).

¹⁶ Gustafson and Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music*, 304.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Saint-Georges eventually became a successful performer, for instance as the music director of the Concert des Amateurs, and a successful composer of chamber music, violin concertos and *opéras comiques*.^[18]

It is difficult to connect Chevalier de Saint-Georges to this manuscript. No direct link, besides the name, is immediately apparent. There is, however, one possibility, given the manuscript's likely connection to Dandrieu. His sister, Jeanne-Françoise (1695-1752/60), may well have been the copyist responsible for Vm⁸ 1139. Perhaps she taught Joseph Boulogne or gave him the manuscript in 1749, when he first arrived in Paris,^[19] where she was organist at Saint Barthélemy.^[20] Nevertheless, no definitive evidence exists to connect Boulogne and Jeanne-Françoise Dandrieu. Some historians have suggested that Joseph studied music and violin with Joseph Platon (1710-c.1763) while still in Guadeloupe,^[21] and therefore may have been musically educated, at least at a rudimentary level, before arriving in Europe. While there is no strong evidence to support this theory, we should note that Gossec dedicated his op. 2 to Joseph Boulogne, addressing him as "Monsieur de Saint-Georges," the exact name and spelling present in the manuscript in question.^[22]

Another possible Saint-Georges is James Francis Edward Stuart (1688-1766). He was born in London, but his family went into exile in France when he was just six months old. He continued to reside at Saint-Germain-En-Laye until mid February 1713, when the Congress of Utrecht forced him to leave. He first moved to Bar-le-Duc, in the independent Duchy of Lorraine, then to Scotland. After much moving about, he finally settled in Rome after his marriage to Clementina Sobieska in 1719.^[23]

Living at the same time and in the same general area in France, Jean-François Dandrieu may have traveled to Saint-Germain-En-Laye to instruct James at the harpsichord, or James may have consulted him in Paris on a frequent basis. James III was referred to not only as "the old pretender," but also as "Chevalier de Saint-Georges," decades before Joseph Boulogne was

¹⁸ Biographical information from: Gabriel Banat, "Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges, Man of Music and Gentleman-at-Arms: The Life and Times of an Eighteenth-Century Prodigy," *Black Music Research Journal* 10/2 (1990): 177-212.

¹⁹ Dominique-Rene de Lerma, "The Chevalier de Saint-Georges," *The Black Perspective in Music* 4 (Spring 1976): 4.

²⁰ François-Sappey, *Jean-François Dandrieu*, 65.

²¹ Banat, "Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges," 4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Information regarding James from: Martin Haile, *James Francis Edward Stuart: The Old Chevalier* (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1907).

born.^[24] The exiled court of James II, and later, James III, fostered Italian music and musicians. Mary of Modena, James III's mother, was Italian and exhibited an extreme preference for Italian music. The Stuart court employed Innocenzo Fede as "Master of His Majesty's Private Musick."^[25] Considering Dandrieu's eventual appointment at court, it is likely that he was well-known within royal circles much earlier and was especially appreciated by those whose sympathies lay in Italian music. One might readily imagine that someone would have recommended him to James as a teacher.

It is clear that several people have used the surname Saint-Georges, which makes it difficult to connect any of them directly with this manuscript. In suggesting the above hypotheses, I have limited the possibilities by date (concentrating on those people flourishing within the early to mid-eighteenth century), location (this manuscript was most likely first compiled in France and has remained there since), and the likely relationship between the manuscript and Jean-François Dandrieu.

Context

When one compares this manuscript to contemporary continuo treatises, it is immediately clear that it bears the closest resemblance to Dandrieu's *Principes de l'accompagnement du clavecin*. They share similar, at times identical, exercises, figuring and explanatory text. The two treatises use identical chord names, but these differ from those employed in most other contemporary treatises. It is probable that one was copied from the other. A comparison of the Saint-Georges continuo book to the others will be beneficial. I will compare the treatises with regard to the concepts covered, the general approach to teaching continuo, use and frequency of examples, and the use of the rule of the octave.

Figure 8. French Keyboard Continuo Treatises 1689-1764

Table 3.

1689	<i>Principes de l'accompagnement</i>	Jean Henry d'Anglebert
1689	<i>L'Art d'accompagner sur la basse continue, pour l'orgue et le clavecin</i>	Gabriel Guillaume Nivers
1690	<i>Traité d'accompagnement pour le théorbe, et le clavessin</i>	Denis Delair

²⁴ Monsieur de Voltaire, *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (Berlin: Francheville, 1751). Trans. Martyn Pollack as *The Age of Louis XIV* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1961), 253.

²⁵ Edward Corp, "The Exiled Court of James II and James III: A Centre of Italian Music in France, 1682-1712," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 120/2 (1995): 216-31.

c.1698	<i>Règle pour l'accompagnement</i>	François Couperin
1700	<i>Traité abrégé d'accompagnement pour l'orgue et pour le clavecin. Avec une explication facile des principales règles de la composition, une démonstration des chiffres, & de toutes les manières dont on s'en sert ordinairement dans la basse continue</i>	Jacques Boyvin
1707	<i>Nouveau traité de l'accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue, et des autres instruments</i>	Monsieur de Saint-Lambert
1716	<i>Traité d'Accompagnement et de Composition Selon la Regle des Octaves de Musique.</i>	François Campion
1719	<i>Principes de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin</i>	Jean-François Dandrieu
1722	<i>Principes d'accompagnement</i>	Jean-Philippe Rameau
1733	<i>Methode Pour l'Accompagnement du Clavecin</i>	Laurent Gervais
1753	<i>Le maître de clavecin pour l'accompagnement, méthode théorique et pratique, qui conduit en très peu de tems à accompagner à livre ouvert avec les leçons chantantes où les accords sont notés pour faciliter l'étude des commençans</i>	Michel Corrette
1753	<i>Traité théorique et pratique de l'accompagnement du clavecin</i>	Claude de La Porte
1754	<i>Méthode plus courte et plus facile que l'ancienne pour l'accompagnement du clavecin</i>	Dubugrarre
1758	<i>Essai sur l'accompagnement du clavecin, pour parvenir facilement & en peu de tems à accompagner avec des chiffres ou sans chiffres par les principes les plus clairs & les plus simples de la composition</i>	Charles-François Clément
1764	<i>Traité des accords, et de leur succession, selon le système de la basse-fondamentale, pour servir de principes d'harmonie à ceux qui étudient la composition ou l'accompagnement du clavecin, avec une méthode d'accompagnement</i>	Pierre-Joseph Roussier

The first continuo treatises compiled for keyboardists were generally published along with a collection of music, almost as an appendix or bonus feature. Jean-Henri d'Anglebert's *Principes de l'accompagnement* was included along with his *Pièces de clavecin*, first printed in 1689. D'Anglebert's treatise relies upon realized exercises to demonstrate how to harmonize the indicated chords above the bass. As was typical, d'Anglebert begins by introducing all intervals, then basic chords, and, finally, a number of figured and unfigured exercises. Some of these exercises are realized and several of the realizations are profusely ornamented, giving us an idea of d'Anglebert's preferred style of continuo playing.^[26]

²⁶ Jean Henry d'Angelbert, *Pièces de clavecin* (Paris, 1689; facs. ed. in *La musique française classique de 1650 à 1800*, ed. Jean-Saint Arroman. Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 1999).

Another continuo keyboard treatise published along with other music is that of Gabriel Guillaume Nivers (c. 1632-1714). This document, which is significantly longer and more in depth than that of d'Anglebert, appeared in the same year, 1689. *L'Art d'accompagner sur la basse continue, pour l'orgue et le clavecin* was published along with *Motets à voix seule, accompagnée de la basse continue*. Nivers also illustrated proper harmonization of thorough-bass through the use of partially figured and realized exercises.^[27] In contrast, the continuo method presented by Dandrieu and that exhibited in the Saint-Georges manuscript never offer realized examples.

Students relying on such manuals would likely have worked closely with a teacher. Dandrieu, and possibly other composers who chose to leave exercises unrealized, probably came from a tradition in which continuo playing was taught by means of live demonstration and mimicry. Whereas d'Anglebert most likely learned by a similar method, something compelled both him and Nivers to notate only one way of realizing a figured bass. The fact that these manuals were published implies that the composers were most likely preparing to have people using their continuo methods without the aide of a teacher. Nivers and d'Anglebert provided a guide accessible to anyone with a keyboard instrument and rudimentary musical skills. Perhaps by 1719, when Dandrieu published his *Principes*, sufficient continuo method books were available and his exercises were merely meant as a supplement. François Campion, in his *Traité d'accompagnement et de composition, selon la règle des octaves de musique*, also fails to offer the reader/practitioner any realized bass lines, but goes into great detail trying to explain to the reader how to provide ample harmonization.^[28] This leads Robert Zappulla to comment that Campion chose not to realize the exercises, “but rather to explain [the process] rather laboriously at the expense of the reader.”^[29]

The first thorough and comprehensive guide to continuo playing was presented by Denis Delair (d. after 1727) in his *Traité d'accompagnement pour le théorbe, et le clavessin*, published in 1690. This treatise is significantly longer than previous ones, totaling sixty-one pages. There are eleven chapters, beginning with such basics as scales, clefs, intervals, and transposition. Delair provided other elementary musical concepts consisting of time signatures and note values, as well as offering descriptions of all chords, from the most general to the most complex. Delair discussed both figuring and the treatment of unfigured basses, as one would expect, but also

²⁷ Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers, *Motets à voix seule, accompagnée de la basse continue* (Paris: l'auteur, 1689; facs. ed. Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 1994).

²⁸ François Campion, *Traité d'accompagnement et de composition selon la regle des octaves de musique* (Paris: Amsterdam, 1716; facs. ed. Geneva: Minkoff, 1976).

²⁹ Zappulla, *Figured Bass Accompaniment in France*, 17.

offers advice concerning ornamentation, hand distribution, and general accompaniment guidelines.^[30]

The next continuo treatise that we know of existed only in manuscript form during the composer's lifetime, the *Règle pour l'accompagnement* of François Couperin (1668-1733). Couperin most likely intended this work for an advanced student of the keyboard, as he begins by describing the standard chords, then jumps ahead to the treatment of chromatic dissonance.^[31] Earlier French continuo treatises progress through basic material, discussion of the chords, and then exercises for practice, leaving this particular continuo manual as something of an oddity.

The Saint-Georges continuo book delves into such exercises after only a short presentation of the *règle de l'octave*, having only provided the reader with a general idea of the chords to use on each degree of the scale. This information offers only figures and written confirmation of what intervals to provide above the bass. Following these preliminary exercises are the rules for each chord, as presented in Dandrieu's *Principes*, after which fourteen figured bass preludes are presented. It almost seems as though this part of the manuscript is presented in a jumbled order. Logically, the rules would be introduced before all exercises.

Another continuo treatise that, like those of d'Anglebert and Nivers, is included in a publication of other material is the *Traité abrégé d'accompagnement pour l'orgue et pour le clavecin. Avec une explication facile des principales règles de la composition, une démonstration des chiffres, & de toutes les manières don't on s'en sert ordinairement dans la basse continue*, offered to the French public in 1700 by Jacques Boyvin (1649-1706) in his *Second livre d'orgue*. It consists of four short chapters: fundamentals involving intervals, the concepts of consonance and dissonance; a written description of "all" chords and their intervallic structure; a discussion regarding the process of accompanying, the deportment of the hand; and finally transposition. Musical examples illustrating each interval, each type of chord discussed earlier, and both realized and unrealized exercises conclude the continuo section of the publication. Boyvin's insistence on the importance of dissonance within music is striking. He recalls having read an early source discussing the composition of music, in which the author claims that music without dissonance is a "soup without salt, a stew without spice, company without women, and finally, a thing deprived of all its pleasures."^[32]

³⁰ Denis Delair, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le théorbe et le clavessin* (Paris: l'auteur, 1690. English trans. Charlotte Mattax. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

³¹ François Couperin, "Règles pour l'accompagnement." (Facs. ed. Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 1996).

³² Jacques Boyvin, *Second livre d'orgue* (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1700, facs. ed. in *La musique française classique de 1650 à 1800*, ed. Jean-Saint Arroman. Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 2004), 10: "Il disoit qu'une Musique sans Dissonance étoit une Soupe sans sel, un Ragoût sans épice, une Compagnie sans femme; & enfin, une chose privée de tous ses agréments."

Monsieur de Saint-Lambert's 1707 publication, *Nouveau traité de l'accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue, et des autres instruments*, is the next continuo guidebook in a developing tradition of French publications on the subject. By far the most comprehensive manual available at this point in France, this *traité* is one of the first to discuss matters of musical taste in continuo playing. Totalling sixty-four pages, with abundant musical examples, and conveniently divided into well-organized chapters, this is still today one of the most useful sources for French continuo fundamentals.^[33]

The *règle de l'octave* is first emphasized by François Campion, in his *Traité d'accompagnement et de composition, selon la règle des octaves de musique*, first published in 1716.^[34] Campion's *Traité* is also the last keyboard accompaniment manual published before that of Dandrieu in 1719. The Saint-Georges manuscript relies heavily on the rule of the octave as well, but does not actually name it as such. If it is indeed an earlier version of the Dandrieu treatise, it could be the first example of the *règle de l'octave* used as a definitive tool in realizing French continuo. It could also help to date the manuscript, placing it sometime around 1716, but before later treatises, such as those of Rameau, Corrette and Roussier.

In 1722, Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) published his *Traité de l'harmonie*, creating a new era of theories about harmony. *Traité de l'harmonie* exposes Rameau's revolutionary theory of harmony: the fundamental bass and the invertibility of the triad.^[35] *Livre IV of the Traité, Principes d'accompagnement*, is a compilation of twenty short chapters that examines, in relatively greater detail than earlier treatises, the issues of chromaticism and preparation and resolution of dissonances.^[36]

The above description of French continuo treatises serves to place the Saint-Georges manuscript in context, in terms of both its temporal and functional place in the tradition. If it was first compiled around the time of Dandrieu's accompaniment treatise, it would be in the middle of the time in which such treatises were published, signaling the beginning of the use of the *règle de l'octave*, a pivotal point within the pedagogical timeline of continuo practice in France. Based solely on content, the manuscript fits snugly between the elementary but lengthy contributions of

³³ Monsieur de Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau Traité de l'accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue et des autres instruments* (Paris 1707; facs. ed. Geneva: Minkoff, 1972).

³⁴ Campion, *Traité d'accompagnement*.

³⁵ A fundamental bass is an imaginary bass line that is created by putting the roots of chords together in a progression. This is different from a figured bass in that it makes use of inversions of triads.

³⁶ Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* [...] (Paris, Jean-Baptiste- Christophe Ballard, 1722. Facs. ed. with commentary by Erwin R. Jacobi, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Complete Theoretical Writings*, v. 1. Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1967-73).

Delair and Saint-Lambert and the advanced approaches of Dandrieu and Couperin. The manuscript in question contains a mix of descriptive rules and numerous exercises allowing the student to practice the concepts being taught. In comparison with other treatises, it is fairly complete and must have served its purpose well.

Editorial Comments

In producing a diplomatic transcription of the manuscript, I have remained as faithful to the original as possible.^[37] In the French text, I have retained all original spelling, punctuation, capitalization and accents to the best of my ability. The musical examples provided throughout are presented exactly as they appear in the manuscript. I have kept the original clefs used in the examples, along with key signature markings. I have retained “mistakes” within the figures and notes given. All metric symbols, accidentals, and continuo figures have been preserved. Placement of continuo figures above or below the staff has been consistent with the manuscript. I have also adhered as much as possible to the original spacing of text and musical examples on each page, and have tried to reproduce the same material in a layout similar to that in the manuscript. The English translation features similar spacing, as the page breaks in the manuscript make logical sense and serve to divide the material into coherent sections.

Throughout the English translation I have tried to establish a compromise between a completely literal translation and one that is more readable. Most phrases have been translated literally, but in some instances I have found it more useful to replace the original French with a more common usage in English (for example the word “ton,” which has many equivalents in English). Punctuation and spelling are quite variable throughout the source, so I have regularized all spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation. All arabic numerals in the original manuscript (aside from continuo figures or others used in musical examples) have been written out in full. Musical terminology has been translated using standard English terms rather than literally, with the exception of some chord names. Since we have very few technical names to describe continuo figures and the chords they represent in the English language, I have chosen to translate these terms literally (i.e., little sixth chord, big sixth chord). Musical terms that are more general in meaning and often correspond to more than one term in English (i.e., ton) have been replaced with what I view to be the term most likely to convey the intended meaning in each particular context. The musical examples contain modern clefs, offering examples in treble and bass clef rather than soprano and alto clef. I have modernized accidentals, and have retained all cautionary accidentals in my edition. Whenever references are made to the formal name of a mode within the manuscript, I have been literal in my English translation.

³⁷ I believe it is imperative to include both the original French text and the English translation in this project because of the inaccessibility of the original manuscript. The brevity of the manuscript allows for an intensive investigation and translation.