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**Passacaglia and Chaconne:
Interpretation of Tempo in Theoretical Sources
of the 18th Century**



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Abstract. There is a lot of information about the chaconne and passacaglia in ancient documents: treatises, prefaces to music publications, musical dictionaries and reference and encyclopedic publications of general vocabulary of the last quarter of the 17th and 18th centuries. At the same time, this information is very contradictory and is often subjective. Articles devoted to these genres are found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, in the *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, in the *Neu eröffnete musikalische Bibliothek, oder Gründliche Nachricht nebst unpartheyischem Urtheil von musikalischen Schriften und Büchern* by Lorenz Christoph Mitzler, in Nathan Bailey's *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, which has gone through many editions, in Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, and even in the first edition of Jacques Ozanam's *Dictionnaire Mathématique*, etc. Of course, the authors of special musical dictionaries in the 18th century (Sébastien de Brossard, Johann Georg Walter, James Grassino, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, etc.) do not ignore the chaconne and passacaglia. Very valuable, objective materials about the tempo of the performance of chaconnes and passacaglia in the 18th century are contained in the works of ancient European musicians – authors of various kinds of pre-metronomical systems for fixing the tempo of the performance of musical works (Charles Masson, Michel L'Affiillard, Louis-Leon Pajot (Comte D'Onzembray), Raoul-Auger Feuillet, Jacques-Alexandre de la Chapelle, Johann Joachim Quantz, etc.).

Keywords: passacaglia, chaconne, interpretation of 18th century music, genres of 18th century instrumental music, pre-metronomical systems for recording the tempo of performance

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Старинная музыка
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Научная статья

**Пассакалия и чакона:
трактовка темпа
в теоретических источниках XVIII века**

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Аннотация. Сведений о чаконе и пассакалии в старинных документах — трактатах, предисловиях к нотным изданиям, музыкальных словарях и справочно-энциклопедических изданиях общей лексики последней четверти XVII–XVIII века немало. В то же время сведения эти весьма противоречивы и зачастую носят субъективный характер. Статьи, посвященные названным жанрам, обнаруживаются в «Британской энциклопедии», в «Словаре Французской академии», в «Энциклопедии» Дени Дидро и Жана Лерона Д’Аламбера, в «Музыкальной библиотеке» и во «Вновь открытой музыкальной библиотеке» Лоренца Кристофа Мицлера,

в выдержавшем множество переизданий «Универсальном этимологическом английском словаре» Натана Бэйли, во «Всеобщей теории изящных искусств» Иоганна Георга Зульцера и даже в первом издании «Математического словаря» Жака Озанама и т. д. Разумеется, не обходят вниманием чакону и пассакалию авторы специальных музыкальных словарей (Себастьян де Броссар, Иоганн Георг Вальтер, Джеймс Грассино, Жан-Жак Руссо, Георг фон Вильке, Хайнрих Кристоф Кох и др.) и теоретических руководств XVIII века как в части выбора темпа (Шарль Массон, Мишель Лаффийяр, Луи-Леон Пайо [граф Д'Онсамбрей], Рауль-Оже Фёйе, Жак-Александр де ля Шапель, Иоганн Иоахим Кванц и др.), так и в сравнении аффекта исполнения (Иоганн Маттезон, Мишель Пиньовет де Монтеклер, Мишель Корретт и др.).

Ключевые слова: пассакалия, чакона, интерпретация музыки XVIII века, жанры инструментальной музыки XVIII века, дометрономические системы фиксации темпа исполнения

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Introduction

The passacaglia and chaconne, representing two genres (or more precisely, types of musical composition) having a similar structure, are regularly found in operas, ballets and various collections of Western European chamber, organ and keyboard music of the Baroque and Galant eras. Due to their similarities in composition, tempo and metro-rhythmic terms, many scholars note difficulties in clearly distinguishing between the genres of passacaglia and chaconne. According to Viktor Abramovich Zuckerman, “the genres of chaconne and passacaglia developed in parallel and became so intertwined that attempts to differentiate them precisely ran into contradictions and were doomed to failure; suffice it to say that there were cases of double naming.”¹ “In many ways, their names are synonyms,” writes the authoritative Russian researcher Yuri Semenovich Bocharov in his book “Genres of Instrumental Music of the Baroque Era.” [1, p. 92–93]

However, was everything as simple in former times as it may seem to us today? Do contemporary practicing musicians have sufficient grounds to attempt some kind of conceptual unification of the two genres in terms of tempo and character (affect) of performance, regardless of the title of the piece prescribed by the composer? In the present work, we will cite numerous disquisitional sources from that time to argue that, despite the ostensible similarity of the passacaglia and chaconne throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the interpretation of these types of musical composition in Western European countries was different — both in terms of affect and tempo.

German Sources of the 1730s–40s

“Die Ciacona, Chaconne, mit ihrem Bruder, oder ihrer Schwester, dem Passacaglio, oder Passecaille” reads the title of one of the paragraphs of the treatise by Johann Mattheson *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739).² However, in the following paragraphs, Mattheson lists significant differences in the character and tempo of performance of chaconnes and passacaglias, which provide grounds for classifying them as independent types of musical composition. The author of the treatise

¹ Zuckerman, V. A. (1974). *Variatsionnaya forma* [Variation Form]. Muzyka, p. 132.

² Mattheson, J. (1739). *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* [...]. Hamburg: Christian Herold, p. 233.

qualifies the chaconne as, in principle, a slower and more thoughtful composition than the passacaglia. He also notes that the passacaglia “nimmer zum Singen gebraucht wird”³; the consequently faster movement is organically inherent in dance genres. Similar information is found in the treatise *Kern Melodischer Wißenschafft* (1737)⁴ published by Mattheson two years earlier. Three years after the publication of *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*, the same paragraph was included without citation of the source in *Curiöses Reit=Jagd=Recht=Tantz=oder Ritter=Exercitien=Lexicon* (1742) by Valentin Trichter.⁵ The author of the article “Chaconne” in the second volume of *Musikalische Bibliothek* (1743)⁶ Lorenz Christoph Mizler also cited this passage. In the latter case, a direct reference is made to the authoritative opinion of Mattheson. The text from Mattheson’s treatise also appears in the second edition of *Allgemeines Lexicon der Künste und Wissenschaften* (1748)⁷ by Johann Theodor Jablonski, although again without indicating the source.

French Sources

Other characteristics of the tempo of performance of these forms in French dictionaries and treatises. “La PASSACAILLE est une Piece de Musique à trois tems, composée de Couplets, à peuprés comme la Chaconne” is reported in 1691 in *Dictionnaire Mathématique* by Jacques Ozanam.⁸

Jean-Pierre Freillon Poncein indicates in his manual for teaching wind instruments (1700) that the tempo of a chaconne is set “on three fast beats or one and a half slow beats [à trois tems legers, ou à un & demy, lent].” The passacaglia, in turn,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mattheson, J. (1737). *Kern melodischer Wißenschafft* [...]. Hamburg: Christian Herold, pp. 123–124.

⁵ Trichter, V. (1742). *Curiöses Reit=Jagd=Recht=Tantz=oder Ritter=Exercitien=Lexicon*, [...]. Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Gleditsch. Sp. 1726.

⁶ Mizler von Kolof, L. Ch. (1743). [...] *Musikalische Bibliothek Oder Gründliche Nachricht nebst unpartheyischem Urtheil von alten und neuen musikalischen Schrifften und Büchern*, [...]. Zweyter Band, [...]. Leipzig: Mizler, p. 101–102.

⁷ Jablonski, J. Th. ([1748]). [...] *Allgemeines Lexicon der Künste und Wissenschaften Zweyter Theil von P bis Z*. S.l., s.n., s.a. [Königsberg und Leipzig: Hartung], p. 782.

⁸ Ozanam, [J]. (1691). *Dictionnaire Mathématique, ou Idée Generale des Mathematiques*. [...] Paris: Estienne Michallet, p. 665.

according to the author's explanation, should be beaten "slower than the Chaconne, and three beats per measure [Passacaille à trois temps, un peu plus grave que celle de la Chaconne]." ⁹ Later, a similar point of view was expressed in the treatise *Methode De Musique Selon Un Nouveau Système* (1728) by Démotz de la Salle. He writes that the passacaglia is beaten on three slow beats ("Passacaille à 3 Tems graves"), while the tempo of the chaconne is set on three fast beats ("Chaconne à 3 Tems legers"). ¹⁰

Sébastien de Brossard in the famous *Dictionnaire des termes grecs, latins et italiens* (1701) states that the chaconne is a composition for obligato bass in four measures, typically composed in the time signature of 3/2. According to Brossard, the chaconne can be written in either major or minor keys. ¹¹ According to the author, the passacaglia differs little from the chaconne other than in terms of its performance tempo and affect: the former tends to be slower, less lively, more tender, and composed in a minor key ¹². Similar information regarding the performance tempo of the chaconne and passacaglia is given several years earlier by *Le Dictionnaire des Arts et des Sciences* of the French Academy (1694). ¹³

Here we may note that de Brossard's definition is directly opposed to Mattheson's point of view as expressed above. It is difficult to establish the reason for such a difference in the interpretation of the terms *chaconne* and *passacaglia* in historical documents published within a time span of only a little over thirty years. However, we hypothesise that the reason for this may be connected with the absence of a single codified tradition of interpreting the genres of chaconne and passacaglia in the first half of the 18th century rather than any transformation of aesthetic principles and practices of interpreting these types of musical composition.

⁹ Freillon-Poncein, J.-P. (1700). *La Veritable Maniere D'Apprendre A Jouer En Perfection Du Haut-Bois, De La Flute Et Du Flageolet, Avec Les Principes De La Musique Pour La Voix Et Pour Toutes Sortes D'Instrumens*. Paris: Jacques Collombat, p. 55.

¹⁰ [Démotz de la Salle]. (1728). *Methode De Musique Selon Un Nouveau Système. Très-court, très-facile & très-sûr*. Paris: Pierre Simon, p. 170.

¹¹ Brossard, S. de (l'Abbé). (1701). *Dictionnaire des termes grecs, latins et italiens, dont on se sert fréquemment dans toutes sortes de Musique, & particulièrement dans l'Italienne*. Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, p. 13. In the present work, we used the first edition of the dictionary (1701). The second edition (1703) is less complete (for example, it lacks an article on the term *Allemande*), is in folio format, and has no pagination. The main text of the 1705 edition, which is identical to the first, was apparently printed from the same engraving plates. See [2, p. 424–426].

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹³ *Le Dictionnaire des Arts et des Sciences*. (1694). Par M. D. C. de l'Académie Française. Tome Quatrième. M – Z. Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, p. 175.

Brossard had a significant influence on the interpretation of terms in German and English sources. James Grassineau in *Musical Dictionary* (1740), when describing *the passacaglia*, provides an accurate English translation of the text from de Brossard's dictionary¹⁴. Although mentioning in passing that the chaconne is a type of sarabande, he does not discuss its affect or the tempo of its performance.¹⁵ Half a century earlier, we may find a similarly somewhat disparaging definition of the term in the work of Jacques Ozanam, who states with complete certainty that the chaconne is nothing more than a sarabande composed of variations (verses) on *basso ostinato*.¹⁶

In *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732) by Johann Gottfried Walther, a rather lengthy article is devoted to the chaconne.¹⁷ While a large part of the article discusses the etymology of the term, it repeats information from de Brossard's dictionary and from the treatise *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre* by Mattheson (1713), where in the article entitled "Chaconne" it is noted that the passacaglia is more difficult to perform; the tempo of both genres is not discussed in this work by Mattheson.¹⁸ We may note that Walther, like de Brossard, emphasises that the chaconne can be composed in either a minor or a major key. However, in the article *Passacaglia*, Walther provides definitions of its tempo and affect in comparison with the chaconne. These are borrowed from de Brossard's dictionary with reference to the latter's authoritative opinion.

The author of the article *Ciacona* (*Ciacona*, Italian, *Chaconne*, French) in the sixth volume of the fundamental 64-volume *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (1733)¹⁹ by Johann Heinrich Zedler does not provide any information about the differences in the performance of the passacaglia and chaconne, instead referring the reader to the French dictionary of general vocabulary by Antoine Furetière (1690): "Chaconne. [...] A musical piece or dance (Air de Musique,

¹⁴ Grassineau, J. A. (1740). *Musical Dictionary; being a Collection of Terms and Characters, As well Ancient as Modern; including the Historical, Theoretical, and Practical Parts of Music [...]*. London: John Wilcox, p. 175.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

¹⁷ Walther, J. G. (1732). *Musicalisches Lexicon Oder Musicalische Bibliothec, [...]*. Leipzig: Wolfgang Deer, p. 164.

¹⁸ Mattheson, J. (1713). *Das neu-eröffnete Orchestre, oder universelle und gründliche Anleitung [...]*. Hamburg: bey Benjamin Schillers Wittwe im Thum, p. 185.

¹⁹ Zedler, J. H. (1733). *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste, [...]*. Sechster Band, [...]. Halle und Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler. Sp. 1–2.

ou danse).”²⁰ In the article “*Passacaglio, oder Passagaglio, Passacaille*”, Zedler notes with reference to de Brossard’s dictionary that the passacaglia is actually the same as the chaconne, only generally slower.²¹

A brief but important remark is found in the treatise *Principes de musique* (1736) by Michel Pignolet (Pinolet) de Montéclair. In this work it is stated that the passacaglia and sarabande are performed at a slow tempo, while chaconnes and minuets should be played *con moto* (lively). At the same time, the *passepied*, according to de Montéclair, is a very fast piece, i.e., faster than the passacaglia, sarabande, chaconne and minuet.²² In an earlier treatise by the same author, entitled *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre la Musique* (1709) and dedicated to “M. Couperin” we find two items presented on the same page with the following titles and performance instructions: “Passacaille. Grave (Passacaglia. Slowly)” and “Chaconne. Gay (Chaconne. Fast).”²³ In the anonymously published treatise by Borin Borin *La Musique Theorique et Pratique, dans son ordre naturel: Nouveaux Principes* (1722), a fragment of a passacaglia from *Armide* by Jean-Baptiste Lully is given with the remark *Grave* (*Illustration 1*).

In his short dictionary of the French language [*Manuel Lexique, ou Dictionnaire Portatif des Mots François*] (1755)²⁴ Antoine-François Prévost notes the slower performance tempo of the passacaglia as compared to the chaconne. The same explanation is found in *Manuel Lexique, ou Dictionnaire Portatif des Mots François dont la Signification n’est pas familiere à tout le monde* (1755)²⁵ by Jacques Lacombe. We find exactly the same justifications in *Dictionnaire De Musique* (1768)²⁶ by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and in a number of other French reference and encyclopaedic publications of that time.

²⁰ Furetiere, A. (n.d. [1690]). *Dictionnaire Universel, Contenant generalement tous les Mots François*. [...] Tome Premier. S.l., s.n., s.a. [The Hague & Rotterdam: Arnoud et Reinier Leers]. Pagination is missing.

²¹ Zedler, J. H. (1740). *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, [...] Sechs und Zwanzigster Band, [...] Leipzig und Halle: Johann Heinrich Zedler. Sp. 1151.

²² Montéclair, M. P. de. [(c. 1736)]. *Principes de musique*. Paris: l’auteur, s.a., p. 117.

²³ Montéclair, M. P. de. (1709). *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre la Musique*. [...] Paris: l’Auteur, Foucault, p. 37.

²⁴ Prévost, A.-F. (1755). *Manuel Lexique, ou Dictionnaire Portatif des Mots François dont la Signification n’est pas familiere à tout le monde*. [...] Première Partie. Paris: Didot, p. 605.

²⁵ Lacombe, J. (1755). *Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts*, [...]. Nouvelle Édition. Paris: Jean-Th. Herissant, Les Freres Estienne, p. 495.

²⁶ Rousseau, J. J. (1768). *Dictionnaire De Musique* [...]. Paris: Duchesne, p. 372.

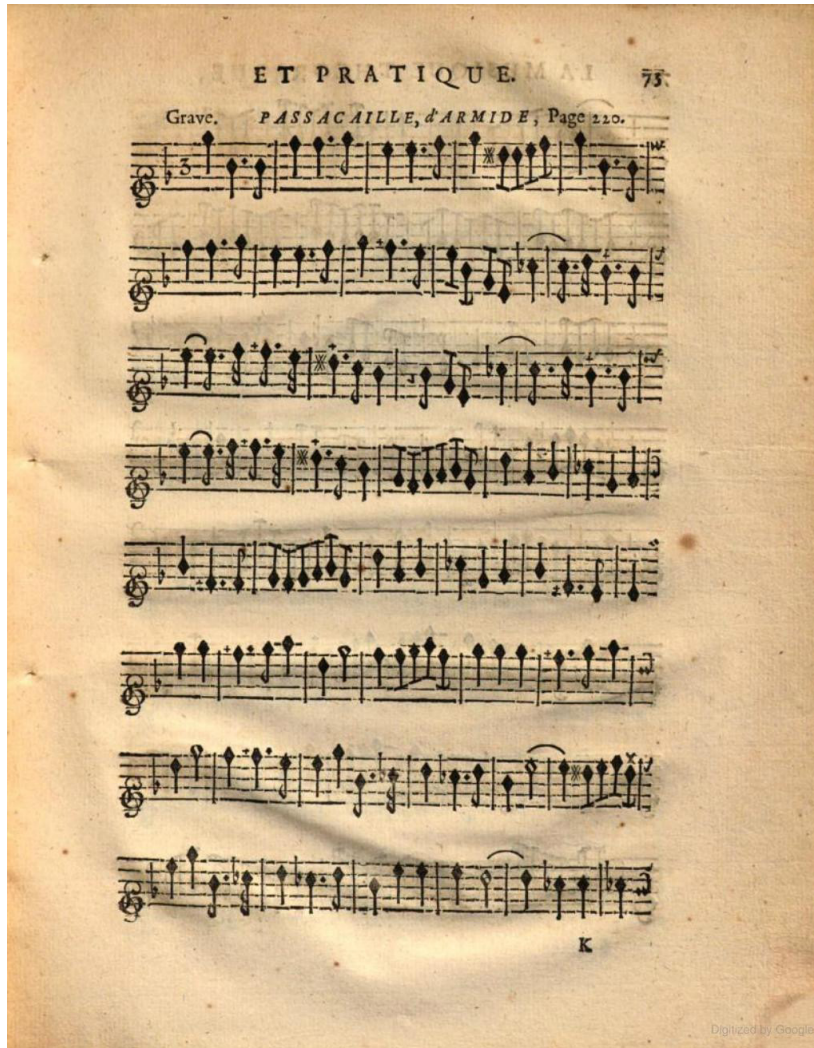


Illustration 1. J.-B. Lully: Armide — Prologue
[Borin]. *La Musique Theorique et Pratique, dans son ordre naturel:
Nouveaux Principes [...]*. Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, 1722. P. 73.

A different point of view is expressed by the author of the corresponding article in the *Encyclopédie* (1777) of Diderot and D'Alembert, who states that the chaconne can be played either fast or slow — that is, its tempo characteristics are ambivalent. However, the passacaglia is not mentioned at all in this article.²⁷

²⁷ Diderot, D., D'Alembert, J. le Rond. (1777). *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers. Nouvelle Édition. [...]* Tome VI. Geneve: Pellet, p. 766.

At the same time, in the treatise *Éléments de Musique, Théorique et Pratique* (1759), D'Alembert states that the passacaglia hardly differs from the chaconne other than being slower and more delicate.²⁸

British and Dutch Sources

In the British Isles, the genres of chaconne and passacaglia were treated in a generally similar manner to French encyclopaedias and dictionaries. For example, the author of the article “Passacaglia” in *Dictionary*, appended to the anonymous *Rules* (c. 1730)²⁹ and to the anonymous collection of various compositions *Apollo's Cabinet* (1756), reports that it is approximately the same form as a chaconne, the only difference being that its movement is slower and more down-to-earth.³⁰ The same, for example, in the seventh edition *An Universal English Dictionary* (1737)³¹ by Nathan Bailey, in the first³² and second³³ editions of John Hoyle's musical dictionary (1770, 1791), in *A Complete Dictionary of Music* by Thomas Busby (1786): “Passacaglio (Ital) A kind of Chaconne, but somewhat graver and more delicate than that air. [...] Passacaille. (French) A kind of Chaconne of a tender and slow movement.”³⁴

²⁸ D'Alembert, J. le Rond. (1759). *Éléments de Musique, Théorique et Pratique, suivant les principes de M. Rameau*. Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert; Lyon: Jean-Marie Bruyset, p. 169.

²⁹ Anonym. ([c1730]). *Rules; Or a Short and Compleat Method for Attaining to Play a Thorough Bass upon the Harpsichord or Organ*. By an Eminent Master. [...] To which is added, a Dictionary, or Explication of such Italian Words, or Terms, as are made use of in Vocal, or Instrumental Musick. London: J. Walsh, s.a., p. 25.

³⁰ Anonym. (1756). *Apollo's Cabinet: or the Muses Delight*. An Accurate Collection of English and Italian Songs, Cantatas and Duets, Set to Music for the Harpsichord, Violin, German=Flute, &c. with Instructions for the Voice, Violin, Harpsichord or Spinet, German-Flute, Common-Flute, Hautboy, French-Horn, Basson, and Bass-Violin. Also, A Compleat Musical Dictionary, [...]. Volume I. Liverpool: John Sadler, p. 246.

³¹ Bailey, N. (1737). *An Universal English Dictionary*, [...]. The Eighth Edition, with considerable Improvements. London: D. Midwinter et al., Pagination is missing.

³² Hoyle, J. (1770). *Dictionarium Musica: Being a Complete Dictionary*: [...]. London: Printed for the Author, p. 74.

³³ Hoyle, J. (1791). *A Complete Dictionary of Music*. [...]. London: H. D. Symonds, J. Dale, Miller, and J. Sewell, P. 105.

³⁴ Busby, Th. (n.d. [1786]). *A Complete Dictionary of Music. To which is prefixed, a familiar introduction to the first principles of that science*. London: R. Phillips. Pagination is missing.

Egbert Buys, in the second part *A New and Complete Dictionary of Terms of Art* (1769), characterises the passacaglia as “a kind of Air somewhat like a *Chacon*, but of a slower or graver Movement.”³⁵ In the first part of the dictionary, Buys states that the chaconne is a type of dance in triple time signature; however, the dictionary does not provide definitions of the tempo of performance or the affect of the chaconne.³⁶ An anonymous author of the *Verhandeling, over de Muziek* published in 1772 in The Hague indicates that “PASSACAILLE, PASSACAGLIO. Soort van *Ciacona*; een zacht en langsaem Muziekstukje, in de maet van 3/4 or 6/8, hebbende verscheide verandering, waer van de bas voor ieder vaers de zelve is; het begint altoos met eene volle maet, en de beweeging is wat *Andante* of *Allegro moderato*.”³⁷ In the terminological musical dictionary written by Joos Reynvaan (1795), the terms *chaconne* and *passacaglia* are essentially treated as synonyms. The tempo of performance (as well as the affect³⁸) of the chaconne is defined by Reynvaan using the Italian terms *Moderáto* and *Andante*.³⁹

³⁵ Buys, E. (1769). *A New and Complete Dictionary of Terms of Art*. [...] *The Second Volume [H-Z]*. Dat is: Nieuw en Volkomen Konstwoordenboek. Amsterdam: Kornelis de Veer, p. 205.

³⁶ Buys, E. (1768). *A New and Complete Dictionary of Terms of Art*. [...] *The First Volume [A-G]*. Dat is: Nieuw en Volkomen Konstwoordenboek. Amsterdam: Kornelis de Veer, p. 309.

³⁷ Anoniem. (1772). *Verhandeling, over de Muziek*; [...]. Gravenhage: Jan Abraham Bouvink, p. 328.

³⁸ Musicians of the 18th century were well aware of the limitations of the polysemous Italian terminology. In the second half of the century, theorists of musical art — for example, Friedrich Wilhelm Marburg in the second edition of *Anleitung zum Clavierspielen* (Marburg, F. W. (1765). *Anleitung zum Clavierspielen, der schönern Ausübung der heutigen Zeit gemäß entworfen* [...]. Zweyte verbesserte Auflage. Berlin: Haude und Spener, pp. 16–17), Georg Friedrich Wolf in *Kurzer aber deutlicher Unterricht im Klavierspielen* (Wolf, G. F. (1783). *Kurzer aber deutlicher Unterricht im Klavierspielen*. Göttingen: H. W. Grape, pp. 25–26), Johann Ernst Altenburg in *Versuch einer Anleitung zur heroisch=musikalischen Trompeter= und Pauker=Kunst* (Altenburg, J. E. (1795). *Versuch einer Anleitung zur heroisch=musikalischen Trompeter=und Pauker=Kunst*. Halle: J. Chr. Hendel, pp. 99–100) and many others — have repeatedly attempted to “distinguish” the meanings of tempo and affect within the Italian terminology system. However, each time the result was, at the very least, unconvincing. An analysis of historical materials directly related to the aforementioned insoluble — and, therefore, very interesting — problem is presented in our previous articles: [3; 4; 5].

³⁹ Reynvaan, J. V. (1795). *Muzijkaal Kunst-Woordenboek, behelzende, de verklaaringen als mede het gebruik en de Kracht der Kunstwoorden, die in de Muzijk voorkomen* [...]. Amsteldam: Wouter Brave, p. 131.

German Dictionaries of the Last Third of the 18th Century

The tempo differences between the passacaglia and chaconne during the 1770s–1800s were generally indicated in accordance with earlier sources. The author of the article (Johann Abraham Peter Schulz) *Passacaglia* in the encyclopedia entitled *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* (1779) and published under the editorship of Johann Georg Sulzer describes the passacaglia as a kind of chaconne in very slow movement. He refers the reader to the suites of Handel Georg Friedrich Händel, as well as to the famous passacaglia from *Armide* Jean-Baptiste Lully.⁴⁰ In *Kurzgefaßtes Musikalisches Lexikon* (1787) Georg Friedrich Wolf defines the tempo of the chaconne as moderate (“mäßig”).⁴¹ The author of the dictionary characterises the Passacaglia as a genre characterised by “very slow movement (die Bewegung ist sehr mäßig).”⁴² Like Schulz in Sulzer’s encyclopaedia, Wolff refers the reader to the suites of Georg Friedrich Händel for an introduction to the best examples of this type of musical composition.⁴³ In the anonymous⁴⁴ *Musikalisches Handwörterbuch* published in 1786 in Weimar and Jena, a somewhat unusual definition of the term chaconne is found: “Eine Art französischer Tanz= und Lieder=Melodien⁴⁵ in der Geschwindigkeit einer Tanz=Menuett.”⁴⁶ The dictionary refers to the passacaglia as “eine Art französischer Tanzmusiken, welche ein klein wenig geschwinder, als eine Tanzmenuett vorgetragen sehn woollen.”⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Sulzer, J. G., [Schulz, J. A. P., Kirnberger, J. Ph.]. (1779). *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste* [...]. Dritter Theil. Zweyte verbesserte Auflage. Leipzig: M. G. Weidmann, p. 395.

⁴¹ Wolf, G. F. (1787). *Kurzgefaßtes Musikalisches Lexikon*, [...]. Halle: Joh. Christ. Hendel, p. 33.

⁴² Ibid., p. 118.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Bibliographers at the Library of Congress have attributed the authorship of the dictionary to one Johann Georg Leberecht von Wilke.

⁴⁵ The translation here of the term *Melodien* as piece may cause some confusion for the contemporary musicologist. However, it seems that there is a direct analogy here with the 16th–18th-century terms *Air* (English, French) and *Gesang* (German), by which early musicians named all types of musical compositions, including instrumental pieces. See the special article by Yuri S. Bocharov [6].

⁴⁶ [Wilke J. G. L. von]. (1786). *Musikalisches Handwörterbuch oder kurzgefaßte Anleitung, sämtliche im Musikwesen vorkommende, vornehmlich ausländische Kunstwörter richtig zu schreiben, auszusprechen und zu verstehn*. [...]. Weimar: Carl Ludolf Hoffmann; Jena: Johann Michael Mauke, p. 24.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 83.

In the fundamental *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802) by Heinrich Christoph Koch, no information is given about the tempo and other performance characteristics of the chaconne; in the corresponding article of the dictionary, there is only a reference to the works of Mattheson.⁴⁸ However, in the article on the Passacaglia it is stated that the latter is “ein kleines Tonstück zum Tanzen von etwas langsamer Bewegung, und von ernsthaft angenehmen Charakter.”⁴⁹

Valuable and objective information about the tempo of performance of chaconnes and passacaglias in the 18th century is contained in the works of old European musicians who invented various kinds of systems for applying tempo information to musical works prior to the invention of the metronome (Charles Masson,⁵⁰ Michel Laffillard,⁵¹ Raoul-Auger Feuillet,⁵² Louis-Léon Pajot, Comte D’Onzembray,⁵³ Jacques-Alexandre de la Chapelle,⁵⁴ Johann Joachim Quantz⁵⁵ and others). We present the tempo instructions of the above-mentioned ancient authors, recalculated in accordance with the Winkel – Mälzel metronome scale.

⁴⁸ Koch, H. Chr. (1802). *Musikalisches Lexikon, welches die theoretische und praktische Tonkunst, encyclopädisch bearbeitet, alle alten und neuen Kunstwörter erklärt, und die alten und neuen Instrumente beschrieben* [...]. Offenbach A. M.: Johann André. Sp. 312.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Sp. 1139.

⁵⁰ Masson, Ch. [(c. 1710)]. *Nouveau Traité Des Regles Pour La Composition De La Musique* [...]. Quatrième Edition, revûë & corrigée. Amsterdam: Estienne Roger, s.a.

⁵¹ L’Affillard, [M.] (1705). *Principes tres-faciles pour bien apprendre la musique*, [...]. Cinquième Edition revûë, corrigée, & augmentée. Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard

⁵² Feuillet, R.-A. (1701). *Choregraphie ou l’art de décrire la dance* [...]. Seconde édition, augmentée. Paris: l’Auteur, Michel Brunet.

⁵³ Pajot, L.-L., Comte D’Onzembray [D’Onsebray, D’Ons-en-Bray]. (1735). Description et usage d’un Métromètre ou Machine pour battre les Mesures et les Temps de toutes sortes d’Airs // *Histoire de l’Academie Royale des Sciences. Année 1732*. Paris: De l’Imprimerie Royale, pp. 182–195.

⁵⁴ La Chapelle, J. A. de. (1737). *Suite Des Vrais Principes de la Musique* [...]. Livre Second. Paris: L’Auteur, Boivin, Le Clerc, Duval, De Baufre, Roussel.

⁵⁵ Quantz, J. J. (1752). [...] *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* [...]. Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voss.

	Passacaille (M.M.)	Chaconne (M.M.)
Masson, 1697		Chaconne légèrement ♩ = 120
L'Affillard, 1705	♩ = 106	♩ = 157
Feuillet, 1701	♩ = 100	♩ = 150
Pajot (D'Onzembray), 1735	Passacaille de Persée [Lully] ♩ = 95	La Chaconne des Arlequins des Fêtes de Bacchus & de l'Amour ♩ = 53
De la Chapelle, 1737	♩ = 63	♩ = 121
Quantz, 1752	♩ = 160	♩ = 160

Conclusion

Numerous testimonies in 18th-century musical works confirm the long European tradition of interpreting the passacaglia as a slower and more “gentle” composition as compared to the chaconne. However, it goes without saying that there were other points of view. In this connection, it may be fairly observed that Johann Mattheson, in addition being an influential music critic and composer in his own right, was a profligate “provocateur”, who often put originality and publicity at the forefront to the detriment of reliability; thus, not all of Mattheson’s reasoning accurately reflects the real practice of his time (and earlier times, about which he also wrote).⁵⁶ Thus, uncritically following the advice of this undoubtedly outstanding musician and scholar can lead a 21st century performer in a direction far removed from a historically accurate interpretation of early music, a tendency that may be currently observed in the creative community of “authenticists.” An analysis of documents and materials from the 18th century convinces us that the model of interpretation of J. S. Bach’s *Passacaglia* BWV 582 that is widely accepted today as a standard has little in common with historical reality, while the longstanding and largely forgotten “romantic” solution proposed by Alexander F. Goedicke,⁵⁷ is more likely to correspond to the actual state of affairs.

⁵⁶ Another striking example of a similar type is Mattheson’s interpretation of the meaning of the term *con discrezione* used to connote diametrically opposing meanings in two different treatises [7, p. 54].

⁵⁷ Bach, J. S. (1929). *Passacaglia for organ, arranged for large orchestra by A. Goedicke*: score | Bach, J. S. *Passacaglia für Orgel. Für grosses Orchester bearbeitet von A. Goedicke*. Score. Moscow: Music Sector of the State Publishing House; Vienna, Leipzig: Universal Edition AG.

The above indications from the old masters and individual documents of the era mentioned here demonstrate significant differences in the interpretation of tempo in the genres of chaconne and passacaglia by musicians of the 18th century. At the same time, from our point of view, such information can be of considerable practical use to instrumentalists and conductors working in the field of historically informed musical performance — provided, of course, that the specific musical material is each time understood and presented in the context of an extremely specific historical, geographical and stylistic context.⁵⁸

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⁵⁸ As Yuri Bocharov rightly notes (see, for example: [8, p. 5 and further]), not all modern researchers adhere to the historical context in strict chronology. Moreover, some contemporary researchers use terms and concepts arbitrarily and outside of a historical context. From this misuse of terminology arise numerous misunderstandings both of a specific and a conceptual nature.

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