

SERIOUS, GROTESQUE, OR SCENICAL?
THE PASSAGALIA OF VENÜS & ADONIS AND DANCING ON THE
LONDON STAGE 1700-1740

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This is a revised and extended version of the paper given at On Common Ground on 24 February 1996.

During many day courses and summer schools over the past twenty-five years, members of the Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society have reconstructed dances of the early eighteenth century from the Beauchamp-Feuillet notations which survive. During this same period, important research has been done on the technique of what is today universally referred to as “baroque” dance. Practical reconstruction of the ball dances has encouraged researchers to begin to develop an understanding about how these would have been presented at court or at public balls. However, research work has hardly started on the much more difficult surviving dances which were intended for performance on the stage, particularly the London stage.

Research into the performance style of early eighteenth-century theatre dances involves both the detailed analysis of the surviving notations and a thorough exploration of the theatrical, cultural, social and political context within which they were performed. Such work must be done if we are to understand what these dances meant to contemporary audiences, and how dancers conveyed those meanings. In this paper I can do no more than begin the process of analysing two dances by Anthony L’Abbé surviving from the repertoire of the dancer-actress Hester Santlow - the *Passacaille of Armide*, a duet for two women, and the *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis*, a solo. I will use John Weaver’s writings on “serious”, “grotesque” and “scenical” dancing to provide a context for my discussion of these dances.

Two Passacailles Published in London

Both the *Passacaille of Armide* and the *Passagalia of Venüs and Adonis* were published in Beauchamp-Feuillet notation in *A New Collection of Dances, Containing a Great Number of the Best Ball and Stage Dances*, a compilation of dances choreographed by Anthony L’Abbé, notated and published in London by the dancing-master F. Le Roussau during the 1720s.¹ The circumstances in which the dances were notated, and the reasons for the publication of the collection, are as yet unknown; despite its title all the dances it contains are clearly stage and not ball dances and many of them are of considerable difficulty. They were apparently choreographed over a period of more than twenty years and, like the collection itself, none of them can be dated with certainty.²

No fewer than four of the thirteen dances in the collection are associated with Hester Santlow. *A New Collection of Dances* is thus an important source of evidence for her technical abilities as a dancer, and can also tell us much about her performance style. The four dances comprise a solo *Menuet*, a deceptively simple dance which is technically more difficult than it appears on the page and makes interesting use of stage space, the *Chaconne of Galathee*, which she danced with Delagarde³ (this dance was

the subject of a lecture-demonstration given by Jennifer Thorp and Ken Pierce during the 1993 Dolmetsch Summer School),⁴ and the two passacailles I am going to explore today.

The dancing-master Anthony L'Abbé is well known: he trained as a dancer in Paris, came to London to dance in 1698, and in 1714 became dancing-master to the granddaughters of George I.⁵ L'Abbé's French background shows in his choice of music for both of the *passacailles* which Hester Santlow, an English dancer trained by a French dancing-master,⁶ performed. The original contexts for these two dances are worth looking at to see if and how they might have influenced the performance style of the English dancers who performed L'Abbé's choreographies.

The music for the *Passacaille of Armide* comes from act V scene 2 of Lully's opera *Armide*, which had been first performed at the Académie Royal de Musique in Paris in February 1686. The scene depicts an entertainment conjured up by the sorceress Armide for her lover, the Christian knight Renaud, which is provided by "Les plaisirs. Troupe d'Amants fortunez, & d'Amantes heureuses".⁷ The scene begins with the *passacaille*, after which an "Amant fortuné" and an accompanying chorus sing of the pleasures of love; the *passacaille* is repeated towards the end of the scene and marks the turning point of the drama, which in the ensuing scenes moves swiftly to a tragic conclusion. The dancers in the 1686 production, and the first revival of 1688, are unknown. The next known revival was in 1703, when Mlle Subligny danced an "amante fortunée", and when the opera was revived in 1713 and 1714 Mlle Prévost took this same role: the sources indicate that both ballerinas danced solos.⁸ In late 1701 or early 1702 Mlle Subligny visited London, where she apparently danced a solo by Pecour to the *passacaille* from Lully's *Armide* which L'Abbé may well have seen.⁹ It is likely that L'Abbé was familiar with Lully's tragédie-lyrique; he may even have danced in the 1688 revival, the year of his debut at the Académie Royale de Musique.

The music for the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* is taken from Henri Desmarets's opera *Venus et Adonis*, which was first performed at the Académie Royale de Musique in April 1697. Although it was subsequently performed elsewhere, the work was not revived in Paris until 1717 when it was again presented at the Académie Royale de Musique. The *passacaille* occurs in act V scene 5, in which the people of Amathonte are celebrating Adonis's triumph over the monster which had been terrorising them. At the end of the scene a female member of the chorus calls to Venus who "de retour de Paphos descend de son Char au milieu des dances, & des acclamations du peuple";¹⁰ the *passacaille* ends the scene and, as in Lully's *Armide*, marks the transition from happiness to the tragic dénouement of the opera. There is no record of the dancers in the original production,¹¹ although it is possible that L'Abbé took part in it - shortly before he came to London for the first time. In the 1717 revival the people of Amathonte were danced by "Le Sieur D. Dumoulin, Les Sieurs Dangeville, Pecourt, Pierret, Dupré, Guyot & Maltaire" - presumably Dumoulin danced the central role in the *passacaille*, with the others forming a danced chorus around him. No choreography survives for either the first performance or any of the revivals.

It is possible that L'Abbé brought music scores of both works (or at least the dances) with him when he came to London. He would certainly have come with a thorough knowledge of the staging practices for dancing at the Académie Royale de Musique, as

well as experience of performing Pecour's choreographies for the operas of Lully and other composers, and he must often have seen the leading French ballerinas dancing in such works. He would inevitably have drawn on these influences when he came to choreograph for English dancers on the London stage.

Dancing on the London Stage

The London theatres L'Abbé came to work in were very different from the Académie Royale de Musique in Paris, both in repertory and in staging conventions. They were small; audiences were generally about 500 to 1000 and the stage area available to dancers at Drury Lane was probably less than 30 feet deep by 25 feet wide.¹² They were also intimate; dancers came close to the audience on the forestage and the audience sat even closer to the dancers in the stage boxes and on the stage itself.¹³ The auditorium remained fully illuminated throughout the performance, which doubtless encouraged the liveliness of the audience: a visitor in 1698 wrote that they "sit together all in this Place [i.e. the pit], Higgleddy-piggledy, chatter, toy, play, hear, hear not".¹⁴

The repertory of the London theatres was extremely mixed. By the 1720s a typical bill would open formally with a prologue, followed by the mainpiece of the evening, either a comedy or a tragedy, after which came a light-hearted epilogue. These might be followed by an afterpiece, usually either a farce or a pantomime, but occasionally a "dramatick Entertainment in Dancing". Between the two pieces, and between their acts, came the entr'acte entertainments, which might include music, singing, dancing, or speciality acts. The whole evening presented an enormous variety of entertainments, juxtaposed without much regard to order or taste.

A preliminary survey of named dances in *The London Stage* for the period of Hester Santlow's career (1706-1733) reveals over 360 individual titles for solos, duets and group dances. A handful are, or may be, dances that we know from surviving Beauchamp-Feuillet notations, for example Isaac's *The Union* which was performed at Drury Lane in 1707.¹⁵ For the majority of dances we have little more than titles and the dancers' names to go on. Dances with a "national" flavour were among the most popular - Hester Santlow included a 'Dutch Skipper', a 'French Peasant', and a 'Spanish Dance' in her repertoire at various times. Just as popular were dances associated with characters of the *commedia dell'arte*, particularly Harlequin and Scaramouch - Hester Santlow was closely identified with a 'Harlequin' dance, as the well-known portrait now in the Theatre Museum shows. Alongside these "character" dances were other "generic" dances such as the *chacone*, the *passacaille*, and the *menuet* - all of which were in Hester Santlow's repertoire.

Both music and choreography survive for the *Passacaille of Armide* and the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis*, as well as the names of the dancers, but it is difficult (if not impossible) to identify when and where they were actually performed on the London stage. Hester Santlow danced the *Passacaille of Armide* with Mrs Elford, about whom very little is known.¹⁶ She was billed as dancing at both Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields between 1700 and 1706, and was evidently a fine serious dancer for she quite frequently partnered L'Abbé. Her stage career overlapped with that of Hester Santlow during the period between 28 February 1706 (Hester Santlow's debut at Drury Lane) and about 13 June 1706 (when Mrs Elford was billed at the Queen's

Theatre for the last time, dancing a “*Chacoon and Passacail*”). The surviving advertisements give no hint that Mrs Elford and Hester Santlow ever danced together, but in 1706 performances went on into July and August at both Drury Lane and the Queen’s Theatre, and it is possible that they danced the *passacaille* together during the summer season when dancers could change theatres more freely and advertisements were even less informative than usual. The Drury Lane company moved to the Dorset Garden Theatre for the summer season, and two performances of operas were advertised as including dancing “By the best Performers”, *Camilla* on 1 August and *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* on 8 August 1706¹⁷ - the *Passacaille of Armide* may have been danced in an entr’acte to one of these, although it seems unlikely that a French *passacaille* would be introduced into a performance of an “Italian” opera. Presumably Le Roussau notated this dance some years after it had ceased to be performed on the stage.¹⁸

A performance date for the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* poses as many problems. Hester Santlow is first billed as dancing a solo *passacaille* at Drury Lane on 5 April 1720, although the dance is not described as “new”, suggesting that she had danced it before; the only other occasion on which she is similarly billed is 15 April 1726. However, she is named as “Mrs Santlow” on the notation, which suggests a date before her marriage in 1719,¹⁹ and it is possible that she first performed the dance in 1718. Desmarests’s opera had been revived in Paris in 1717, which may have renewed interest in the music although the score does not seem to have been re-issued. On 7 and 23 October 1718 the Drury Lane company were summoned to Hampton Court to play before King George I, and both performances included “Entertainments of Dancing” by Hester Santlow among others.²⁰ L’Abbé, the royal dancing-master, may well have provided one or more dances for these occasions and it is likely that he would have created a new dance for the company’s leading dancer. Hester Santlow had recently danced Venus in John Weaver’s successful *The Loves of Mars and Venus*,²¹ so a dance which again associated her with the goddess was likely to be popular. By 1719 L’Abbé was involved with the Royal Academy of Music at the King’s Theatre and thus less likely to choreograph for the rival company at Drury Lane. There are of course many other dates on which Hester Santlow could have performed the *Passaglia*; on many occasions (including her benefit performances) she was billed merely as dancing with no indication of particular dances.²² In view of the period within which *A new collection of dances* is likely to have been published, 1718 and 1720 are possible dates for Hester Santlow’s performance of the *Passaglia*. However, a date as late as 1720 could mean that Le Roussau had to notate this long and complex dance almost as L’Abbé choreographed it.

“Serious”, “Grotesque”, and “Scenical” Dancing

At present we know too little about the dances in the repertory of the London theatres to categorise them.²³ Occasionally dances were advertised as “serious” or “comic”, and sometimes as “grotesque”. John Weaver first dealt with what he called “the Modern Dancing” in chapter VII of *An essay towards an history of dancing*, published in London in 1712 in which, after declaring that he would confine his remarks to dancing in England, he defined “*Theatrical or Opera Dancing*” as follows:

Stage Dancing was at first design'd for *Imitation*; to explain Things conceiv'd in the Mind, by the *Gestures* and *Motions* of the Body, and plainly and intelligibly representing *Actions*, *Manners*, and *Passions*; ...²⁴

Weaver emphasised "*Positions, Gestures and Movements*" as the means, and the representation of "*Passions, Manners and Actions*" for "a skilful Representation of any *Character*, whether *serious* or *grotesque*" as the purpose of stage-dancing. For him the meaning of a dance resided in the character, the story, and the emotions represented by the dancer. Weaver also referred to "the *Address* of the Body, and just and regular *Movements* of the Arms" as more important than the feet and steps. His description of a good performance as "altogether Artificial" and his emphasis on the word "Imitation" provide a key to the performance style of the time.

When he came to "serious" dancing, Weaver began by comparing it to "Common-dancing" (dancing for the ball-room) only to say that:

altho' the Steps of both are generally the same, yet they differ in the Performance: Notwithstanding there are some Steps peculiarly adapted to this Sort of *Dancing*, viz. *Capers*, and *Cross-Capers* of all kinds; *Pirouettes* [sic], *Batteries*, and indeed almost all Steps from the Ground.

Weaver makes clear that the vocabulary of serious dancing was more extensive and more difficult than that of common-dancing and indicates that the steps they had in common were performed with more energy and force on the stage.²⁵ Weaver also writes "But the most *Artful* Qualification is a *nice Address*", and he declares that the French dancer Desbarques (with whom Hester Santlow danced *The Union* in 1707) was "The best Performer of this *Dancing* [i.e. serious dancing] that ever was in England ... who had a certain *Address* and *Artfulness* in his *Gestures*".²⁶ When he returned to the subject of genres in *The history of the mimes and pantomimes* (London, 1728), Weaver did not materially alter his definition of serious dancing but added merely "such *Dancing* shall represent any *Character* that is either *Natural*, or belonging to ancient *Fable* or otherwise".²⁷

Weaver established his personal view of grotesque dancing in *An essay towards an history of dancing*:

Grotesque Dancing is wholly calculated for the Stage, and takes in the greatest part of *Opera-Dancing*, and is much more difficult than the *Serious*, requiring the utmost Skill of the performer ...

Although he does not describe or list any of the appropriate steps he insists that they encompass "all Steps used in *Dancing*" and that "the Master must take peculiar Care to contrive his Steps, and adapt his *Actions*, and *Humour*, to the *Characters* or *Sentiments* he would represent or express". Weaver says of the grotesque dancer "his Perfection is to become what he performs", adding that he must "be capable of representing all manner of *Passions*". Weaver's description of grotesque dancing differs in degree rather than kind from his description of serious dancing. He underlines its importance by choosing as his model "Mr *Joseph Priest* of *Chelsey*, ... the greatest Master of this kind of *Dancing* [i.e. grotesque dancing], that has appear'd

on our Stage” - an English example for a type of dancing to which Weaver attached particular importance. By the time of *The history of the mimes and pantomimes* in 1728, Weaver’s definition of grotesque dancing had changed:

By *Grotesque Dancing*, I mean only such Characters as are quite out of Nature; as *Harlequin, Scaramouch, Pierrot, &c.* tho’ in the natural Sense of the Word, *Grotesque* among Masters of our profession, takes in all *comic Dancing* whatever.²⁸

Weaver makes plain that he has been forced to adopt a definition which reflects the common usage of the theatre of his time. He adds that such grotesque dancing portrays “only ... such Characters where, in lieu of regulated Gesture, you meet with distorted and ridiculous *Actions*, and Grin and Grimace”.²⁹

When he came to define scenical dancing in *An essay towards an history of dancing*, Weaver linked it explicitly to grotesque dancing:

Scenical Dancing, ... differs from the *Grotesque*, in that the last only represents *Persons, Passions, and Manners*; and the former explains whole *Stories* by *Action* ...

Weaver further confused the issue by referring to the *commedia dell’arte* characters Harlequin, Scaramouch and others in the context of scenical dancing, describing them as “these modern *Mimes* inimitable”. What Weaver meant by “Scenical Dancing” was “dramatick Entertainments in Dancing” such as his *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, created five years later in 1717 but probably already in his mind.³⁰

Hester Santlow was John Weaver’s ballerina, and took the leading female role in each of his “dramatick Entertainments in Dancing”. In the preface to *Anatomical and mechanical lectures upon dancing*, published in London in 1721 when she was at the height of her powers as a dancer, he paid her the most handsome of compliments:

we have, at this Time; a better Set of Performers in ENGLAND, than, perhaps, it could ever boast of before; yet we may value our selves, that we have a Dancer in the Person of Mrs. *BOOTH*, where Art and Nature have combin’d to produce a beautiful Figure, allow’d by all Judges in our Art to be the most graceful, most agreeable, and most correct Performer in the World.³¹

In his final phrase Weaver was undoubtedly referring to Hester Santlow’s mastery of “Address”.³²

Two Passacailles danced by Hester Santlow

Having looked at various aspects of the context within which L’Abbé created these two dances, it is time to turn to the Beauchamp-Feuillet notations themselves. For now, I cannot do more than examine a few aspects of these very complex dances: I will be undertaking a detailed analysis elsewhere, which I hope will be published in due course. I will look at two short sequences from the *Passacaille of Armide*, and two from the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis*, to see what the notations can tell us about the performance style of these two dances.

[The discussion was accompanied by danced demonstrations of the two sequences from each *passacaille*; Jennifer Thorp very kindly agreed to dance the right-hand side of the duet.]

Both dances are long and technically demanding: the *Passacaille of Armide* has 149 bars of music and is in triple time throughout - it is the only duet of such a length for two women which survives in notation;³³ the *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis* has 209 bars of music, of which the first 64 are triple time, the next 80 duple time, and last 65 return to triple time - it is the longest but one of the notated dances, and the most complex of the surviving solos for a woman.³⁴ The step vocabulary of both dances includes many “orthodox” steps which can be found in Feuillet’s *Choregraphie* (Paris, 1701),³⁵ alongside others which are variants or ornamented versions of these, and some of which bear no resemblance to steps either notated or described in any of the French or English treatises which survive from the early eighteenth century. The *Passagalia* uses a slightly more extensive range of vocabulary and includes some very complex *pas composés*, although the *Passacaille of Armide* has several very demanding passages of steps incorporating jumps, beats and turns. The notations, of course, give only the steps; arm, head and body movements must be devised with the help of other sources by whoever is reconstructing the dance. Feuillet implies that the performer has a degree of personal choice for the arm movements, for he says (in Weaver’s translation) “the Carriage and *Movement of the Arms* depend more on the Fancy of the Performer, than on any certain Rules”.³⁶ In the context of a staged performance this could be interpreted to include some form of gesture, although I will not discuss this in the present paper.

The *Passacaille of Armide* (see illustrations 1-2) opens with the two dancers progressing steadily downstage, their focus to downstage centre. In bar 9 they cast out and begin to travel upstage, during which their focus changes several times between downstage, upstage, and each other. Bar 20 begins a sequence in which the dancers’ focus moves between upstage and downstage. The vocabulary in the whole of this sequence is relatively simple, based mainly on variants of the *coupé*, *pas de bourée vite* and *contre-temps* which nevertheless incorporate beats, turns, and variations in timing.

The *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis* (see illustrations 3-4) is quite different. In the very first bar the dancer turns her back on the audience. She immediately turns round to travel downstage, but her progress is interrupted by steps backwards. When she finally arrives downstage centre (in bar 8) she begins a series of quite unusual steps: bar 10 has a *pas composé* of two *pas de bourée ouverts* (the second step of each is onto the heel) followed by a *jetté chassé*; bar 11 has *pas composé* of a *coupé battu* followed by a *demi contre-temps tortillé*, which again steps onto the heel. In bar 13, the dancer begins a figure in which she travels around the stage with simpler steps (mainly *contre-temps* and *fleurets*), facing each side of the stage in turn

[Bars 1-25 of each dance were demonstrated]

In the second sequence from the *Passacaille of Armide* (bars 85-117, see illustrations 5-6) the two dancers begin by circling the stage in opposite directions, passing one

another upstage and again downstage and mostly facing outwards. There are differing degrees of turn for each of them in the *fleurets* which begin the figure (bars 86 and 87), which seem not to be notational errors, and the second *plié* signs are placed differently in the *pas de bourée vîtes* which are used for much of this figure (note bars 94-97) indicating possible differences of timing. On completing the circle, the dancers travel downstage with a dynamic combination of steps based on *pas sautés* and *pas battus*. This is followed by a sequence of more sustained steps, using *contre-temps*, *fleurets* and *pas de bourée* (some of these incorporate *pas glissés*), in which the dancers' focus alternates between downstage centre, stage left and stage right and each other. In the next sequence the steps become simpler as the emphasis moves to the figure traced by the dancers, in which they first draw away from each other, then come together and part again, ending with a full turn *piroüette* and a *pas assemblé*.

The duple time section of the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* (see illustration 7) begins as the dancer, who has ended the previous section facing upstage, makes a half-turn to face downstage again. She then dances a figure which takes her sideways in a shallow curve to left and right across the stage; the vocabulary is generally simple, based on *fleurets*, *pas de bourée* and *pas de sissonne* with variant forms of these to add visual interest and rhythmic variety. The steps then become progressively more complicated, with the addition of turns (for example to the *jettés* and *pas de sissonne*), culminating in another surprising sequence (bars 84-87). Steps similar to these variants of the *contre-temps battu* can also be found in notated "peasant" dances.³⁷

[Bars 85-117 of the *Passacaille of Armide*, and bars 65-89 of the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* were demonstrated]

The final triple time section of the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* also opens with the dancer facing upstage and making a half turn to face downstage. Alongside a generally simpler vocabulary based around *coupés à deux mouvements*, *fleurets* and *contre-temps* (which nevertheless include a variety of beats and turns), it too contains its share of surprising steps. In this final part of the dance the dancer makes much use of directional changes which allow her to pay attention to every part of the stage. The first half of this section is calmer, but the final 33 bars of the dance include some very difficult passages which pose particular problems for the dancer towards the end of such a lengthy and demanding solo.

Conclusion

What does all this tell us about performance style? I am conscious that I have said nothing about gesture, facial expression (there is no evidence that dancers on the London stage wore masks), the influence of the *commedia dell'arte*, or the relationship between dancing and acting in the London theatres. However, even the narrow range of evidence I have considered reveals that the *Passacaille of Armide* and the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis* are very different dances, despite their shared musical form.

The *Passacaille of Armide* is probably the earlier of the two, perhaps by several years. In 1706 L'Abbé had only recently settled in London, and he choreographed the dance for an established dancer known for her skill in the French style and a young French-trained dancer, at a time when French dancers were strongly influencing dancing on the

London stage. It is not unlikely that L'Abbé designed the dance principally for Mrs Elford, with whom he had often danced, but his reasons for creating a duet for two women (rather than a solo, following the French practice in the opera, or a duet for himself and Mrs Elford) are impossible to guess - perhaps he merely wished to choreograph for two outstanding English exponents of the French style of dancing. This *passacaille* is close to its French antecedents in both steps and figures. The focus of the dancers is predominantly to downstage centre (a real or notional "presence"), with passages where the dancers face or turn away from each other; relatively little attention is paid to the surrounding stage area. This dance is certainly capable of expressing the "passions" to which Weaver so often refers, but there is little evidence of what these emotions could be from the notation of the dance. The music itself is dramatic - reflecting the action relating to the scene in Lully's opera - but the steps, where they depart most radically from basic vocabulary, are virtuosic rather than expressive. This *passacaille* fits very easily into Weaver's category of "Serious Dancing", which he described as needing "Air and Firmness, with a graceful and regulated Motion of all Parts", and it is interesting to note that he also said:

It must be allow'd that the *French* excel in this kind of *Dancing*; and Monsieur *Pecour* (as I am inform'd) in the *Chacoone*, or *Passacaille* ...³⁸

Pecour was surely L'Abbé's model when he choreographed the *Passacaille of Armide*, and French performance style is thus a useful context to explore in the reconstruction of this dance.

The *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis*, partly because it is a solo, seems very much more personal to Hester Santlow. If it is as late as I suggest, L'Abbé would have had ample time to absorb the English style of stage dancing and he would have been choreographing for a leading English dancer. The steps and figures of the dance reflect the conventions of the London stage: there are several passages in which the dancer travels around the stage, or turns from one side to the other, as if she is dancing to an audience which virtually surrounds her. The *Passagalia* uses many *pas composés* far removed from Feuillet's *Choregraphie*, some of which can be related to "character" dances surviving in notation,³⁹ hinting that Hester Santlow may be performing a series of characters drawn from her popular entr'acte dances. Another interesting feature of this dance is the use of a *coupé* with a half turn to begin each section (a similar device occurs within the sections); as the dancer turns back to face downstage she has an opportunity to change character or perhaps "passion". An obvious character for Hester Santlow to represent (and one which would allow the "imitation" of a range of emotions) was Venus; if the *Passagalia* can be dated to about 1718 she could have referred to her own performances as Venus in John Weaver's *The Loves of Mars and Venus*. The source of the music for this *passacaille* reinforces the idea: although the dance in its original context was not designed for performance by Venus, it was followed by a solo sung by her and it may have been meant to prefigure the emotions Venus expresses as she sings. The *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis* seems far more English than the *Passacaille of Armide*, and shows us an early eighteenth-century English ballerina at the height of her powers. It can easily be described as "grotesque", in the sense of Weaver's 1712 definition of the genre. With its variety of steps and figures, and its implicit variety of characters, is it in some sense an English version of the famous *Caractères de la Danse* of Françoise Prévost?⁴⁰

These are early conclusions, and with further analysis I may well change my views. Practical reconstruction has greatly influenced my thoughts on both of these *passacailles*, and it is a research method which should not be overlooked - although it is fraught with danger. For those able to master the technique, the ability to recreate these dances in one's own body provides the possibility of unique insights. For all of us, the opportunity to see reconstructions by skilled and knowledgeable dancers can immeasurably help our research work. Practical reconstruction leading to public performance by gifted specialists of dances such as the *Passacaille of Armide* and the *Passagalia of Venüs & Adonis* is the only way we can restore the heritage of early dance to the wider dance world.

REFERENCES

¹ In her introduction to the facsimile of this collection, Carol Marsh suggests that it should be dated between 1721 and the death of George I on 11 June 1727. See: L'Abbé, A. *A new collection of dances originally published by F. Le Roussau. London c1725*. London: Stainer & Bell, 1991, xiv.

² Carol Marsh dates the dances over a period beginning in 1699, the earliest possible date for the *Loure or Faune*, and ending in May 1722, when Denoyer (named as dancing the final three dances in the collection) was performing in London. She ascribes a date of 1706 or later to all the dances associated with Hester Santlow. See: L'Abbé, A. *Op. cit.*, xiii-xiv.

³ Delagarde (also referred to as Legard) was perhaps Charles Delagarde, whose first appearance in London seems to have been at the Queen's Theatre on 12 December 1705 and who was also a dancing-master and notator. For details of his performances and other aspects of his career see: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *The London stage 1660-1800. Part 2: 1700-1729*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960; Scouten, A. H. (ed.) *The London stage 1660-1800. Part 3: 1729-1747*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961; Highfill, P. H., Burnim, K. A., Langhans, E. A. *A biographical dictionary of actors actresses, musicians, dancers 16 vols*. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973-1993, entry under Delagarde, Charles.

⁴ The *Chaconne of Galathee* is one of the dances analysed in Thorp, J. and Pierce, K. Taste and ingenuity: three English chaconnes of the early eighteenth century. *Historical Dance* 1994, 3 (3), 3-16.

⁵ For summaries of L'Abbé's life and career see: L'Abbé, A. *Op. cit.*, x-xi; and Goff, M. Dancing-masters in early eighteenth-century London. *Historical Dance* 1994, 3 (3), 19.

⁶ In 1704 Hester Santlow was apprenticed to René Cherrier who was apparently French and, like L'Abbé, had danced at the Académie Royale de Musique in Paris, although he seems not to have trained there. Cherrier made his debut in London on 14 December 1703 in a concert at the Drury Lane Theatre. For details of Cherrier's career see: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*; Highfill, P. H., Burnim, K. A., Langhans, E. A. *Op. cit.*, entry under Cherrier, René.

²¹ The first performance of this “dramatick Entertainment in Dancing” took place on 2 March 1717 and it was given seven times that season. It was revived for 18 performances in 1717-1718 and a further seven in 1718-1719. See: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*

²² In the attempt to establish possible performance dates it may be significant that Lincoln’s Inn Fields, known for its rivalry with Drury Lane which included copying the latter’s repertory, advertised “A new *Passacaille* by Miss Francis” for the first time on 19 March 1719. See: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*

²³ An attempt at categorisation was made by Emmett L. Avery in *The London Stage*. This now needs extensive revision. See: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*, cxxxii-cxxxv.

²⁴ The italics are Weaver’s own. Since Weaver’s works are all reproduced in facsimile in *The life and works of John Weaver* by Richard Ralph, page references will be supplied from this rather than the original editions. Quotations from chapter VII of *An essay towards an history of dancing* may be found in: Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 649-665.

²⁵ Weaver writes: “the *Common-Dancing* has a peculiar softness, which would hardly be perceivable on the Stage; so *Stage-Dancing* would have a rough and ridiculous Air in a Room”. Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 655.

²⁶ Desbarques (referred to by Weaver as “Desbargues”) made his debut in London at the Queen’s Theatre on 6 November 1705, when he was billed as “newly arriv’d from Paris”. He danced regularly in London until 1708. For his performances and details of his career see: Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*; Highfill, P. H., Burnim, K. A., Langhans, E. A. *Op. cit.*, entry under Desbarques.

²⁷ Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 731-732.

²⁸ Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 732.

²⁹ Ralph, R. *Op. cit.* 732.

³⁰ The link Weaver makes between scenical and grotesque dancing is made more interesting by his declaration, in *An essay towards an history of dancing*, that “I could wish this kind of *Dancing* [i.e. scenical dancing] were now encourag’d in *England*, since I am certain the *English* in a little time would at least arrive to so much Perfection ... they would without doubt excel all that has been perform’d in this kind by the *Moderns*.” Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 666.

³¹ Italics reversed. Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 869.

³² Contemporary definitions of “Address” include: “Skill”, translated as “Adresse, industrie, habileté” in Boyer, A. *The royal dictionary abridged. Part II. English and French*. 3rd edition. London: D. and J. Brown et al., 1715,; “nice Carriage in managing Business” in Kersey, J. *A new English dictionary*. London: Robert Knaplock, and R. and J. Bonwicke, 1713. In *An essay towards an history of dancing* Weaver described “Address” as “not, as some are willing to believe, an Air, or Manner, natural to some; ... but a Perfection acquired with Judgment, and altogether Artificial”. Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 655.

³³ Little, M. E. and Marsh, C. G. *La danse noble: an inventory of dances and sources*. Williamstown: Broude Brothers, 1992 lists six other duets for women, see 1750, 2820, 2880, 2900, 4200, 6160. All were choreographed by Pecour and the longest of them, an *Entrée de Deux* to music from Destouches’s opera *Issé*, has 88 bars of music.

³⁴ The longest surviving solo is the *Passacaille pour une femme*, choreographed by Pecour and danced by Mlle Subligny to music from Gatti’s opera *Scylla* (1701), which has 217 bars of music. This dance was published in: *Recueil de dances contenant un tres grand nombres des meillieures entrées de ballet de Mr. Pecour*. Paris: Feuillet,

1704, 20-35. More complex than the *passacaille* from *Scylla* is the solo danced by Mlle Subligny to the *passacaille* from Lully's opera *Armide*, see note 9, although even this difficult dance is less technically demanding than the solo for Hester Santlow.

³⁵ For a definition of an "orthodox" step for the purposes of analysis, based on Weaver's translation of *Choregraphie*, see: Thorp, J. and Pierce, K. *Op. cit.*, 11.

³⁶ *Orchesography*. London: H. Meere, and P. Vaillant, 1706. Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 281.

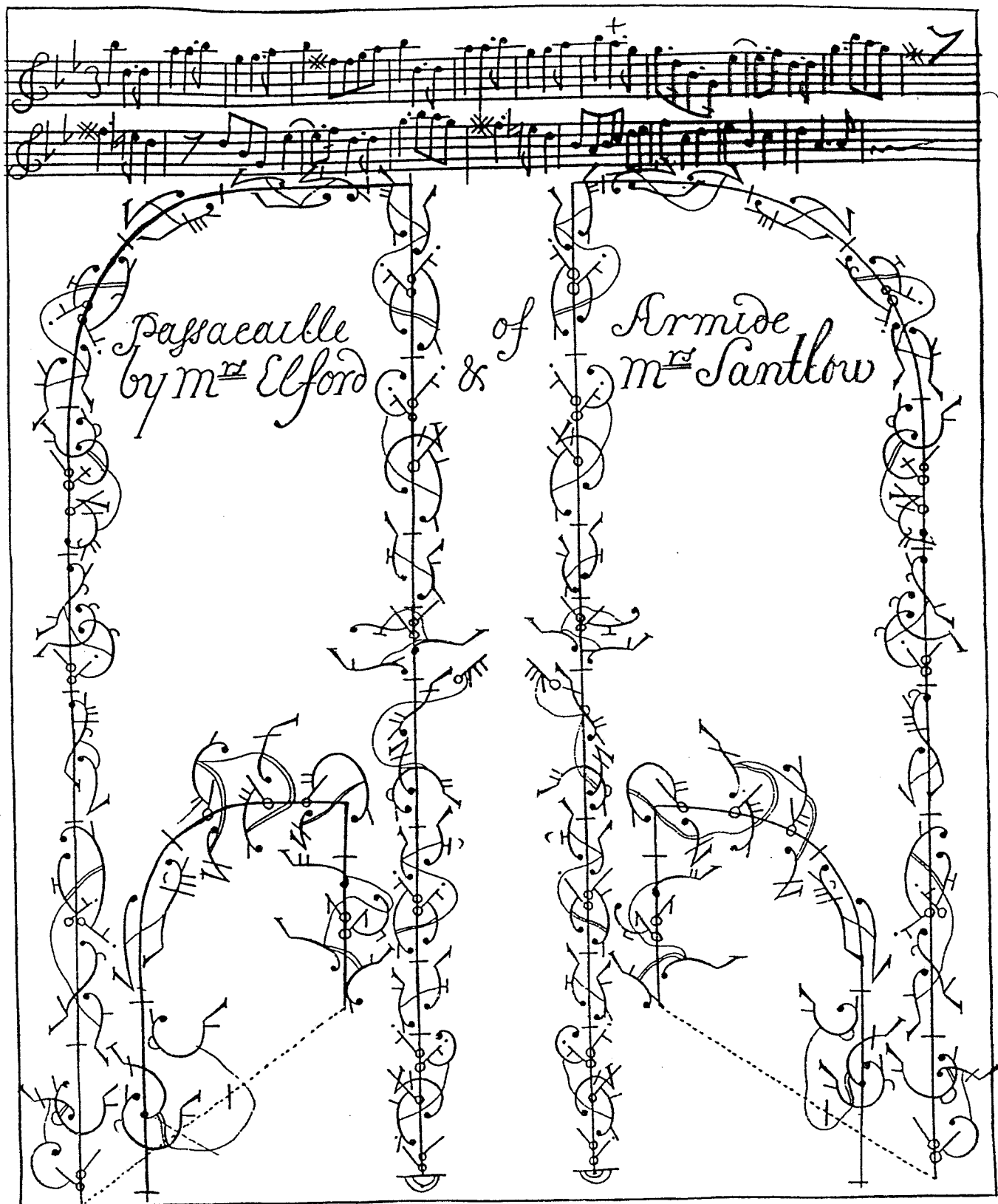
³⁷ There are three solo "peasant" dances (all for men) surviving in notation, see Little, M. E. and Marsh, C. G. *Op. cit.*, 3040, 3060, 5320. The first of these dances includes variants of the *contre-temps* with a bound incorporating a beat; the second and third dances include *pas composés* of two *demi contre-temps battus* in a bar. All these steps are similar to those in the *Passaglia*.

³⁸ *An essay towards an history of dancing*. Ralph, R. *Op. cit.*, 656, 658.

³⁹ The similarity of some steps to those found in "peasant" dances has already been remarked upon; see note 38. Bars 132 and 136 (towards the end of the duple time section) contain variants on the *pas échappé* or *saillie* similar to those found in the surviving 'Harlequin' dances. See Little, M. E. and Marsh, C. G. *Op. cit.*, 1880, 1980, 2760. The last two of these incorporate *saillies* to second position, and the last (a *Chaconne Darlequin* by De La Montayne) incorporates a sequence of *saillies* to fourth position.

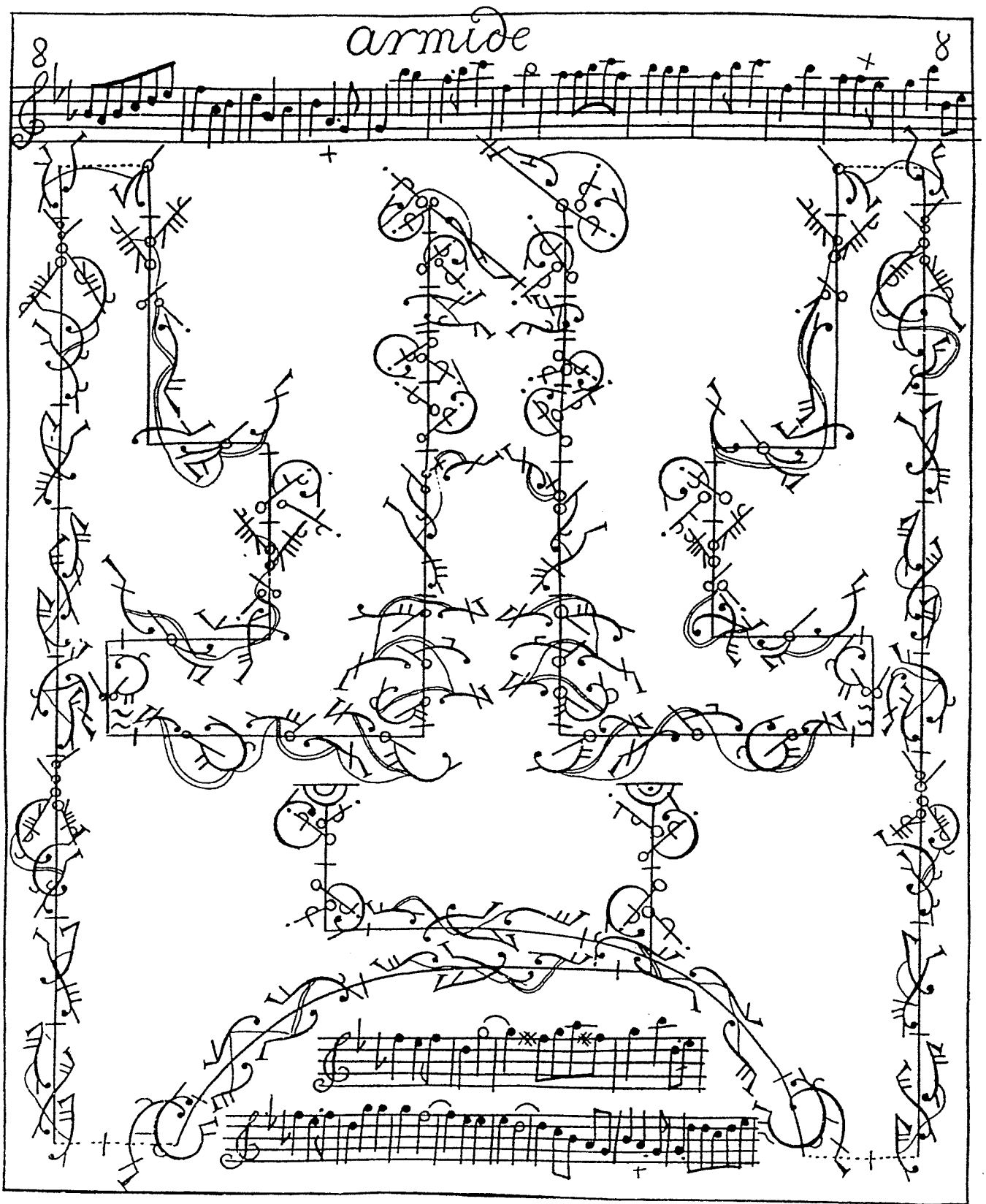
⁴⁰ Jean Féry Rebel's music *Les Caractères de la Danse* was published in Paris in 1715. Either then or within the next few years the ballerina Françoise Prévost created a suite of dances to accompany it. See: Aubry, P. and Dacier, E. *Les caractères de la danse*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1905. The first mention of the dance on the London stage appears some years later, in an advertisement for a performance at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre on 27 November 1725 which says "*Les Caracteres de la Dance* [sic], in which are express'd all the different Movements in Dancing, by Mlle Salle." Avery, E. L. (ed.). *Op. cit.*

ILLUSTRATION 1



The first plate of the *Passacaille of Armide*, showing bars 1-20.
(By permission of the British Library Board)

ILLUSTRATION 2



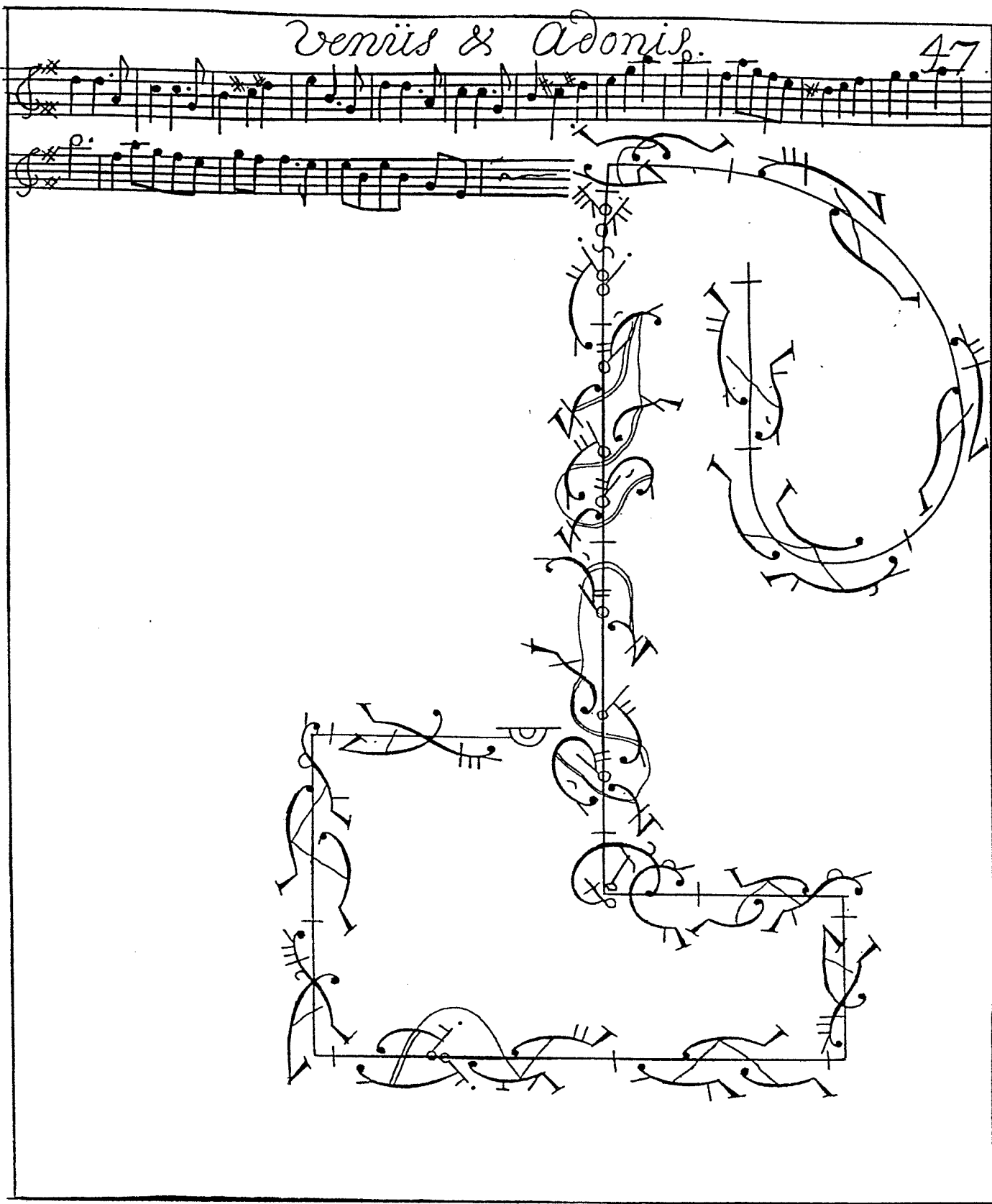
The second plate of the *Passacaille of Armide*, beginning at bar 21.
(By permission of the British Library Board)

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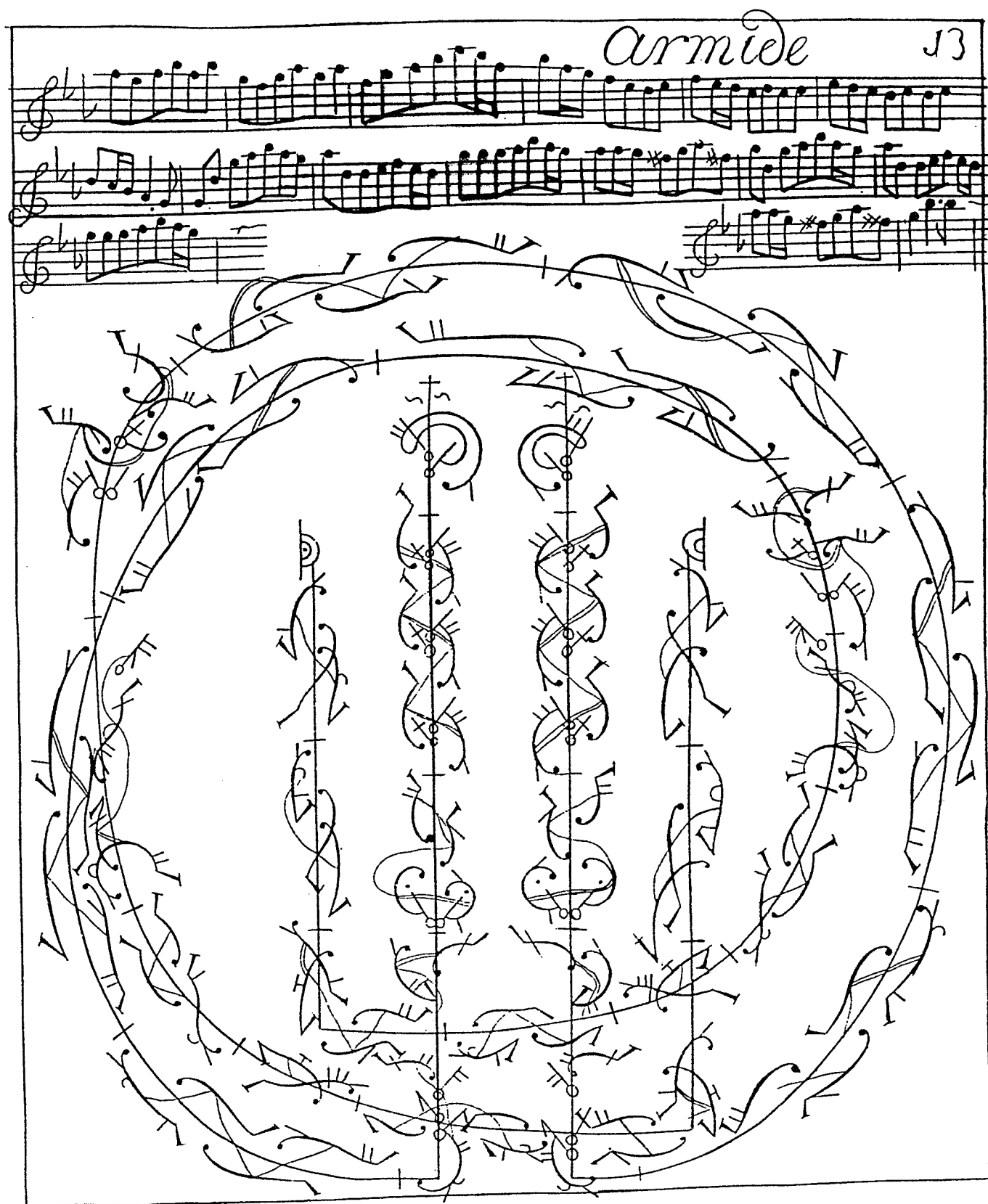
Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis
performed by *M^{rs} Santlow*

The first plate of the *Passaglia of Venüs & Adonis*, showing bars 1-17.
(By permission of the British Library Board)

ILLUSTRATION 4

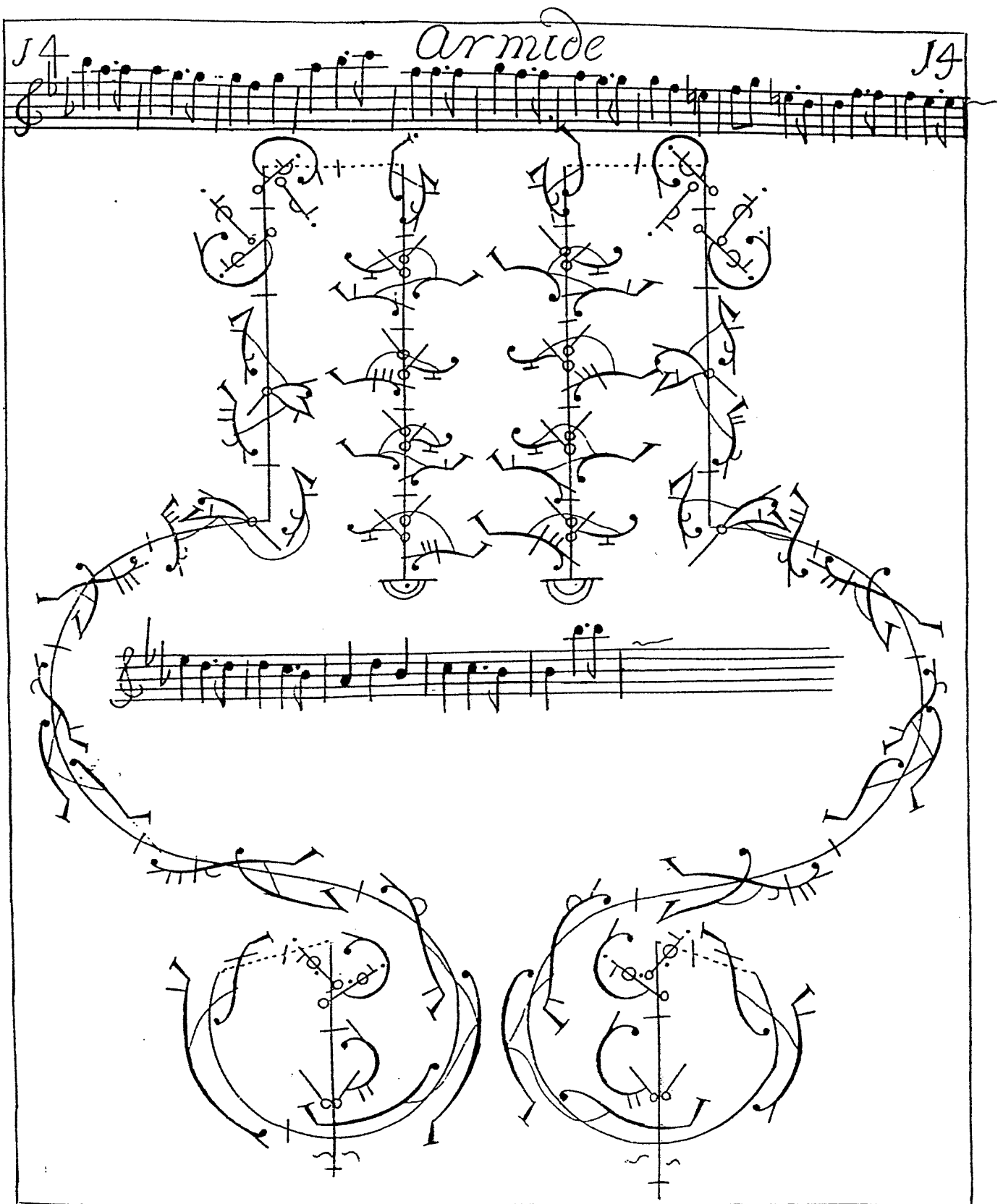


The second plate of the *Passaglia of Venus & Adonis*, beginning at bar 18.
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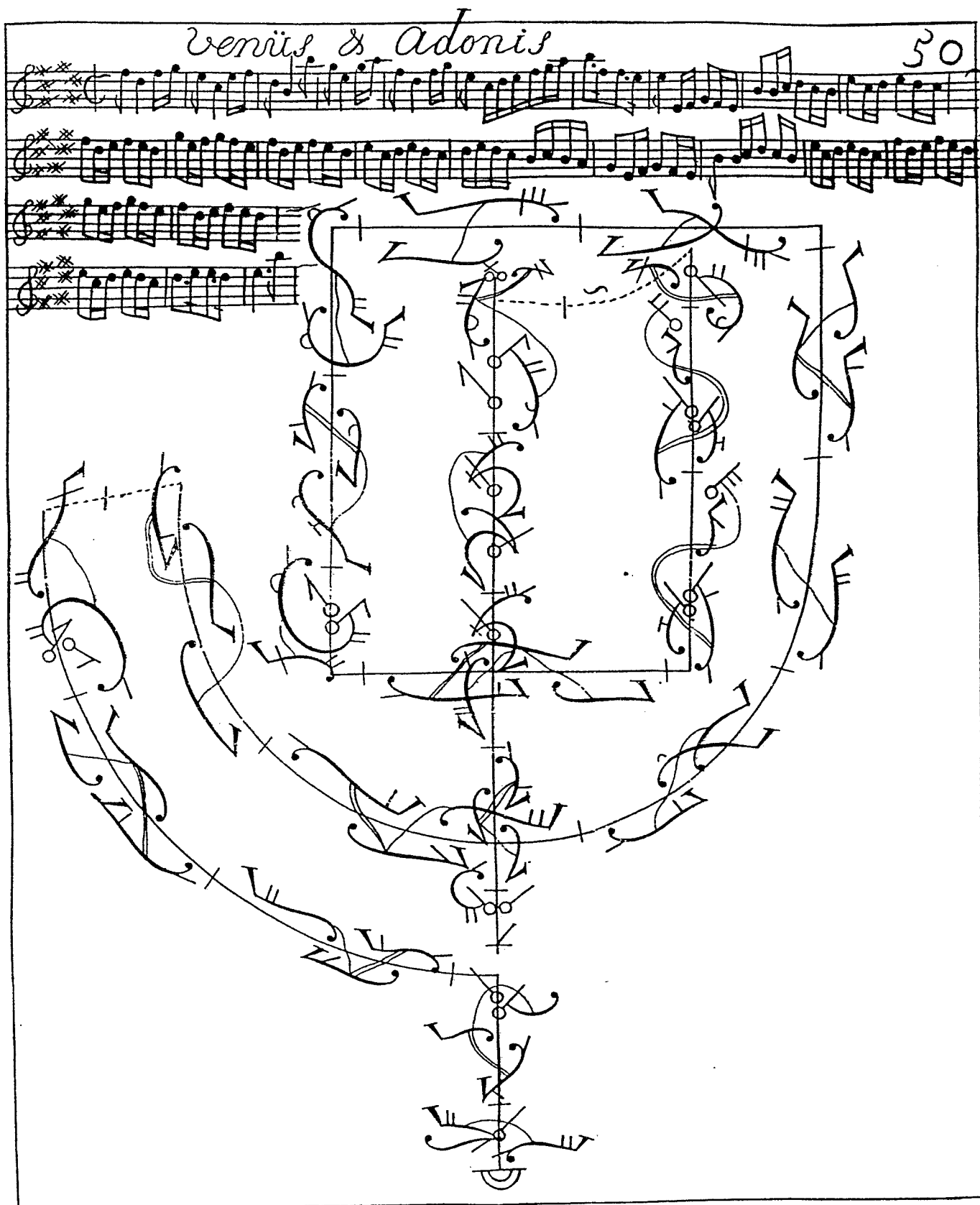


The seventh plate of the *Passacaille of Armide*, showing bars 86-101.
(By permission of the British Library Board)

ILLUSTRATION 6



The eighth plate of the *Passacaille of Armide*, showing bars 102-117.
(By permission of the British Library Board)



The fifth plate of the *Passaglia of Venus & Adonis*, showing bars 66-89. The *coupé* with a half turn referred to in the text comes in bar 65, on the previous plate.
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