

moves from F-natural down to E, then up to F-sharp.

Measure 4 of each reveals a similar transition in the writing over the bass, as it ends its first phrase and begins the second.

The half-cadence to D in measure 7 of each is made harmonically incomplete – or delayed – by adding C-natural (the seventh of the chord). Adding weight to this similarity is the fact that neither composer uses this device again at this place in any other division.

A significant upward leap occurs after the first chord in measure 9 of each.

As the opening division, this seems a likely place for Marais to be imitative of the source. In fact, as the variations progress, Marais's become more “French,” with 9/8 suspensions and *bon goût* ornamentation. Both sets of divisions, however, do use chordal writing idiomatic to the viol in half of their variations.

Marais’s “Sujet diversitez” is the only piece from the division genre in his entire collection of works (over six hundred pieces). While he and his contemporaries were fond of the Chaconne and Passacaglia, bass lines for these were generally written out and often varied, as in Marais’s “Couplets de Folies” (*Second Livre de Pièces de Viole*, Paris, 1701). Significantly, Marais chose to keep the “Foreigner’s” ground in its original form – unfigured and unvaried – and to do so at a time in France when divisions upon a ground were improvised but not written down.

The viol virtuoso André Maugars (1580 - 1645) had raised the popularity of divisions upon a ground to its peak in France a generation earlier. In his *Traité de la viole* (Paris, 1687), Jean Rousseau praised Maugars especially as an improviser of divisions upon a ground, a practice which thrived in England and Italy, where Maugars spent many years of his life, all before Marais was born.

With the knowledge we have of Baltzar’s background, can we propose that he wrote the variations for violin? Perhaps one of Marais’s “Foreigners” transcribed them for viol – certainly a common practice at the time. Whether Marais heard Baltzar’s piece on violin or viol, I believe he heard it or saw it and that it was indeed Baltzar’s piece.

## Conclusion

The mystery of the “Foreigner” which Marais left for us is one I cannot claim to have solved. The uniqueness of the ground itself; the challenge Marais admits he was presented by writing in the style of foreigners; the fact that this style was foreign to France at the time and that Marais chose to preserve the original ground; Baltzar’s background in lute and *scordatura* playing; and, finally, the similarities in the very first variations of each piece – all these do, however, lend support to my argument that Thomas Baltzar’s work was that to which Marais refers in his preface to the bass part book of his first book of pieces for viol.