

Descriptions of time-signatures from the middle to late-baroque eras

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The following is a simple collection of various descriptions of different time-signatures from the middle baroque and late baroque eras. It seems that from these descriptions, time-signatures conveyed general information regarding tempo and expression. Many pieces in $\frac{3}{4}$ for instance would probably be played faster and more sprightly than pieces written in $\frac{3}{2}$. Pieces in common time (C) probably would have been played in general slower than pieces in $\frac{3}{4}$ which is why you see Quantz in 1752 assigning for common time allegro movements 120 bpm while $\frac{3}{4}$ allegro movements he assigned 160 bpm.

While most of the descriptions in the following describe the various meters in general terms, three of the sources indicate very precise information that can be conveyed in metronomic numbers. The first of these sources comes from the famous flutist J.J. Quantz who in 1752 described the tempos of various meters in combination with tempo words in relation to the average human pulse rate. Quantz himself explicitly stated that he considered the average human pulse rate to be 80 bpm. The second source is from a French musician named Saint-Lambert in the first decade of the 18th century. He described the tempo of many meters in relation to the average walking speed of a French man. Rebecca Harris-Warrick in her English translation of Saint-Lambert's book arrived at a tempo of approximately 120 bpm for the average walking speed Saint-Lambert had in mind. Lastly, a very interesting source of tempo data comes from a type of mechanical instrument known as a barrel organ built in the 1760's by associates of Handel. Although the instrument and its barrels was destroyed in a fire in the 19th century, a detailed table of contents listing all of the pieces on the different barrels was left behind containing the length of each piece in minutes and seconds. Many of these pieces were arrangements of concertos by Handel, Corelli, and other composers. William Malloch calculated the tempos that the barrel organ probably played these pieces at and presented his findings in a very detailed chart. I have taken most of the tempos from Malloch's article and reordered them by time-signature (I only excluded the tempos from a few pieces which Malloch thought were questionable). A similar instrument survives today and can be heard here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxVUQxMaNew>

C

According to Loulie, C before a numerical sign or fraction identified the beat as slow quadruple time (Houle, 1987, p. 36).

According to Malcom, C signified a slow motion (Houle, 1987, p. 38).

According to Sperling, C means a slow measure (Houle, 1987, p. 45).

According to Kirnberger, C is a middle category of tempo, and is more lively in tempo and execution than C (Houle, 1987, p. 49).

John Playford: "First, I shall speak of Common-Time, which may be reckond three several sorts; the first and sloest of all is marked thus C: 'Tis measured by a Semibreve, which you must divide into four equal Parts, telling *one, two, three, four*, distinctly, putting your Hand or Foot down when you tell *one*, and taking it up when you tell *three*, so that you are as long down as up. Stand by a large Chamber-Clock, and beat your Hand or Foot (as I have before observed) to the slow Motions of the Pendulum..." (Donington, p. 344).

Henry Purcell: "...a very slow movement..." (Donington, p. 344).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: "C very slow motion" (Donington, p. 344).

Dean, *Complete Tutor for the Violin*: "C Very Solid or slow movement" (Donington, p. 345).

Christopher Simpson: "The Signe of [the Common] Mood is a *Semicircle*, thus, C, sometimes with a Stroke through it thus [C] (Donington, p. 345).

"The sign of [the Common] *Mood* is a *Semicircle*, thus, C, which denotes the slowest Time, and is generally set before grave Songs or Lessons (Donington, p. 345).

"But you may say: I have told you that a *Semibreve* is the length of a *Time*, and a *Time* the length of a *Semibreve*, and still you are ignorant what that *Length* is.

To which I answer ... I would have you pronounce these words (*One, Two, Three, Four*) in an equal length, as you would (leisurely) read them. Then fancy those four words to be four Crotchets, *which make up the quantity or length of a Semibreve*, and consequently of a *Time* or *Measure*: In which, let those two words (*One, Two*) be pronounced with the Hand *Down*; and (*Three, Four*) with it *Up*. In the continuation of this motion you will be able to measure, and compute all your other Notes.

Some speak of having recourse to the motion of a lively pulse for the measure of Crotchets, or to the little Minutes of a steddly going Watch for Quavers; but this which I have delivered, will (I think) be most useful to you" (Donington, 1963, p. 345).

Alexander Malcolm: "COMMON TIME is of two Species, the 1st where every *Measure* is equal to a Semibreve ... the 2nd, where every Measure is equal to a Minim...The movements of this Kind of *Measure* are very various; but there are Three common Distinctions, the first is *slow*, signified at the Beginning by this Mark C, ..." (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

William Turner: "C which denotes the slowest *Movement*..." (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

Quantz's account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

Pieces of the *adagio assai* category (Adagio pesante, Lento, Largo assai, Mesto, Grave, etc.) go at crotchet = 20 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Pieces of the *adagio cantabile* category (cantabile, Arioso, Larghetto, Soave, Dolce, Poco Andante, Affecttuoso, Pomposo, Maestoso, Alla Sicilliana, Adagio spiritoso, etc.) go at crotchet = 40 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Pieces of the *allegretto* category (Allegro ma non tanto, non troppo, non presto, moderato, etc) go at crotchet = 80 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Pieces of the *allegro* category (Poco Allegro, Vivace, Allegro) go at crotchet = 120 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Pieces of the *allegro assai* category (Allegro di molto, presto, etc) go at crotchet = 160 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Saint-Lambert's account

Saint-Lambert says C is fort grave and should be measured by the the steps of a man walking fairly slow (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 36).

Crotchet = 60 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

It is grave and slow [un mouvement grave et lent] (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Grave

Minim = 28

Adagio

Quaver = 52 ("Joys of Freedom, *Hercules*")

Quaver = 63

Quaver = 69

Quaver = 88 or 76

Largo

Crotchet = 60 ("Preludio Largo")

Quaver = 68

Larghetto

Quaver = 82 ("Andante larghetto")

Quaver = 92 ("Larghetto e piano")

Andante

Crotchet = 35 (quaver = 69) ("Andante largo")

Crotchet = 61 ("Andante maestoso")

Crotchet = 63

Vivace

Crotchet = 62

A tempo ordinario

Crotchet = 102

Crotchet = 105 ("Gavot" from a Handel concerto)

Crotchet = 108

Maestoso

Crotchet = 109

Allegro:

Crotchet = 97 ("O had I Jubal's Lyre")

Crotchet = 99 ("Allegro cosi cosi")

Crotchet = 105

Crotchet = 107

Crotchet = 107 ("Staccato ma non troppo allegro")

Crotchet = 111 ("Allegro moderato")

Crotchet = 113 ("Allemanda Allegro")

Crotchet = 123

Crotchet = 126

Crotchet = 126

Crotchet = 131

Crotchet = 132

Minim = 68

Crotchet = 139

Crotchet = 147

Crotchet = 155



♢ before a numerical sign identified the beat as fast quadruple time, according to Loulie (Donington, 1963, 1987, p. 36).

According to Malcom, ♢ is brisk (in between C and ♢) (Houle, 1987, p. 38).

According to Turner, ♢ is somewhat faster than C (Houle, 1987, p. 40).

According to Sperling, ♢ is a fast measure, but the difference is not observed by many composers. Instead, they use tempo words (Houle, 1987, p. 45).

Kirnberger places ♢ in the second slowest category but specifies that notes are played twice as fast as written (Houle, 1987, p. 45).

John Playford: "The second sort of *Common Time* is a little faster, which is known by the *Mood*, having a stroak drawn through it..." (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Henry Purcell: "...a little faster [than C]" (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: "[♢] somewhat faster" (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Dean, *Complete Tutor for the Violin*: "[♢] Quicker" (Donington, 1963, p. 345).

Christopher Simpson: "...the next is this [♢] which is a Degree faster..." (Donington, 1963, p. 345).

Michel de Monteclair (1730): "There is a time-signature marked by [♢], of which the usage is no longer well defined; it is used in different manners for lack of willingness to recognise its character" (Donington, 1963, p. 346).

Alexander Malcolm: "....the 2d is *brisk*, signified by this [♢], ..." (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

William Turner: [♢] which denotes the *Movement* to be somewhat faster than the former.

J.J. Quantz: "In four-crotchet time it must be carefully observed that when a stroke goes through the C ... such a stroke signifies, that all the notes, so to speak, become of a different value, and must be played as fast again, than is the case when the C has no stroke through it. This measure is called: allabreve or all capella. But since with regard to the aforesaid measure man have fallen into error through ignorance: it is most desirable that everyone

should be acquainted with this difference. This measure is more frequent in the galant style, than it used to be in former times” (Donington, 1963, p. 348).

Saint-Lambert’s account

Saint-Lambert says ϕ should be beaten in two (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 36). The notes go twice as fast than in common time (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 36).

Crotchet = 120 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Allegro

Minim = 105

2 (or ϕ)

According to Sperling, 2 indicates common time with four quarters to a measure, but it is beaten so quickly that two of such measures are nearly of the same length as one (Houle, 1987, p. 45).

2 is placed in the second slowest category according to Kirnberger (Houle, 1987, p. 49).

A student of Bach writes: “2..., the second way being used by the French in pieces that are to be played quickly or briskly...” (Donington, 1963, p. 319).

The third sort of *Common Time* is quickest of all, and then the *Mood* is retorted thus [ϕ]; you may tell *one, two, three, four*, in a Bar, almost as fast as the regular Motions of a Watch. The *French Mark* for this retorted *Time*, is a large Figure of 2 (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Henry Purcell: “...a brisk & airry time...” (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: “[ϕ] Brisk and light Ayres” (Donington, 1963, p. 344).

Dean, *Complete Tutor for the Violin*: “[ϕ] or 2 as quick again as the first, and are call’d Retorted Time” (Donington, 1963, p. 345).

Christopher Simpson: “...the next mark thus [ϕ] or, thus 2, and is very Fast, and denotes the Quickest Movement in this Measure of *Common Time* (Donington, 1963, p. 345).

Georg Muffat: “The measure marked thus 2 [or] ϕ , being given in two beats, it is clear that in general it goes as fast again, as this C which is given in four. It is however understood that this mesure 2 ought to go very slow in Overtures, Preludes, and Symphonies, a little more lively in Ballets, and for the rest on my advice almost always more moderate than this [ϕ], which itself ought to be less pressed on in Gavottes, than in Bourrees. However when

this measure 2 is given very slowly, and (as has been said) in two beats, the notes are almost of the same value, as with the Italians under this measure C given in four beats with speed under the word *presto*" (Donington, 1963, p. 346).

J.D. Heinichen: "The Overture Time is generally indicated by a 2 ... Its measure is properly slow and expressive...But if in certain pieces the Overture Time is meant to have a rapid movement, then instead of the slow measure mentioned, a stroked 2 or ϕ is shown, or rather, with a few people it would be shown, in distinction from the slower measure. But since such correctness is not always found, and since the signs 2, [barred-2], C or ϕ are used without discrimination, sometimes for a naturally rapid piece and sometimes for a slow one, [ϕ may often serve for the slow introduction of the overture as well as for its succeeding quick movements]" (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

Alexander Malcolm: "... the 3d is very *quick*, signified by this ϕ ..." (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

William Turner: " ϕ which is the quickest of all; the Crotchets being counted as fast as the regular Motions of a *Watch*" (Donington, 1963, p. 347).

Saint-Lambert's account

Saint-Lambert says that in 2, the measure is beaten in two like in ϕ , but the beats must go twice as fast (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37).

Minim = 120 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

2/4

According to Salle, 2/4 is leger (vivace) (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Kirnberger, 2/4 is in the second faster category with it having the same tempo as alla breve but being more playful and light (Houle, 1987, p. 49).

Lacassagne said that it was used in the the rigaudon, bouree, gavotte, and tambourin, with a tempo range from modere to tres vif (Houle, 1987, p. 58).

Quantz's account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

Allegro in 2/4 goes at crotchet = 160 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Allegro

Crotchet = 135

3/2

According to Malcolm, 3/2 was ordinarily *adagio* but could be taken *vivace* (Houle, 1987, p. 39).

According to Kirnberger, 3/2 was in the second slowest category of tempi (Houle, 1987, p. 48).

Tans'ur said that it was used mostly in church music and performed slower than the rule (Houle, 1987, p. 58).

John Playford: 'Tripla-Time, that you may understand it right, I will distinguish into two sorts: The first and slowest of which is measure by three Minims in each Bar, or such a quantity of lesser Notes as amount to the value of three Minims, or one Pointed Semibreve, telling one, two, with your Hand down, and up with it at the third; so that you are as long again with your Hand or Foot down as up. This sort of Time is marked thus 3/2" (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Christopher Simpson: "When you see this Figure [3] set at the beginning of a Song or Lesson, it signifies that the Time or Measure must be compted by *Threes*, as we formerly did it by *Fours*" (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

"Sometimes the *Tripla* consists of *three Semibreves* to a Measure, each *Semibreve* being shorter than a *Minim* in Common Time..."

"The more *Common Tripla* is *three Minims* to a Measure, each *Minim* about the length of a *Crotchet* in *Common Time* ..."

"In these two sorts of *Tripla*, we compt or imagin these two words [*One, Two*] with the Hand *down*, and this word [*Three*] with it *up* ..." (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Jean Rosseau: "With the double-triple signature [3/2], in three slow beats, two down and one up..." (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Henry Purcell: "[3/2] is commonly play'd very slow..." (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: "[3/2] Grave movement" (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

A. Malcolm: "...the triple [3/2] is ordinarily *adagio*, sometimes *vivace*..." (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Saint-Lambert's account

Saint-Lambert says the beats must be grave and exactly equal to those in the four-beat measure (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37).

Minim = 60 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

3/2 indicates a very slow tempo [un mouvement fort grave] (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

3/4 and/or 3

According to Salle, 3/4 is leger or vivace (Houle, 1987, p 37).

According to Malcolm, 3/4 could have any tempo (Houle, 1987, p. 37-38).

According to Kirnberger, the tempo giusto of 3/4 is the minuet (Houle p. 49).

According to Demotz, 3 has a measure of three beats more or less fast (Houle, 1987, p. 58).

According to Grassineau, 3 is usually played affectuoso or allegro (Houle, 1987, p. 58).

According to Mattheson, 3/4 is used mostly for merry pieces, usually minuets (Houle, 1987, p. 58).

According to Grassineau, with 3/4, the air is played in a tender affecting manner, of a moderate movement, neither quick nor slow (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

John Playford: “*The Imperfect of the More* ... is thus signed [dotted-C], and this is called the *Triple Time*. This Mood is much used in *Ayery Songs* and *Galliards*, and is usually called *Galliard* or *Triple time* and this *Triple time* is in some Lessons, as *Coranto's*, *Sarabands*, and *Jigs* brought into a Measure, as swift again, for as before three Minims or Sembriefs [sic] which a prick [dot] made a Time, in this three Crochets [sic] makes a Time, or one Minim with a prick, and this measure is knowne by this signe or mark [3-1] which is usually called *Three to one*” (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

John Playford: “The second sort is faster, and the *Minims* become *Crotchets*, so that a Bar contains three Crotchets, or one Pointed Minim; ‘tis marked thus 3 or thus [3-1]” (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Christopher Simpson: “The more *common Tripla* is three *Crotchets* to a Measure ...” (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Jean Rousseau: “With the plain triple signature [3] in three quick beats, two down, and the other up” (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Jean Rousseau: “With the signature of three to four, so called because in place of the bar composed of four crotchets, this has only three, the bar is beaten in three beats quicker than simple triple ...” (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Henry Purcell: “[3-1] has three Crotchets in a barr, and they are to be play’d slow, [3] has ye same the former but is play’d faster, ...” (Donington, 1963, p. 350-351).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: “[3] Slow” (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

A. Malcolm: “...the [3/4] is of any Kind from *adagio* to *allegro*...” (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Quantz’s account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

A piece in 3/4 marked Adagio cantabile with quavers in bass goes at quaver = 80.

A piece in 3/4 marked Adagio assai, Mesto, or Lento, in 3/4 with quarters in bass goes at crotchet = 40.

A piece in 3/4 marked Adagio cantabile and quarters in bass and has an arioso melody goes at crotchet = 80.

A piece in 3/4 with passages of semiquavers or triplets and is also marked allegro goes at crotchet = 160.

A very fast 3/4 with six notes per bar goes at dotted-minim = 80.

A piece in 3/4 marked presto goes at dotted-minim = 107.

Saint-Lambert’s account

It is beaten in 3 like 3/2 except that the beats are beaten twice as fast (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37).

Crotchet = 120 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Adagio

Crotchet = 64

Largo

Crotchet = 99

Crotchet = 120 (“Sarabanda”)

Larghetto

Crotchet = 74

Crotchet = 75

Lentement

Crotchet = 96 or 72

Vivace

Crotchet = 84

Crotchet = 119

Allegro

Crotchet = 123

Crotchet = 130

Crotchet = 130

Crotchet = 136

Dotted-minim = 52

Dotted-minim = 62 ("My Faith and truth")

Spiritoso

Crotchet = 138

Menuet

Crotchet = 137 or 171

6/4

According to Salle, in 6/4 the quarters are taken graves or slowly (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Malcolm, 6/4 was usually allegro (Houle, 1987, p. 40).

According to Kirnberger, 6/4 is in the second slowest category and is more moderately slow than the other signatures in this category (Houle, 1987, p. 48-49).

According to Mattheson, 6/4 is used for serious pieces, particularly with the slow gigue called the loure (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

According to Grassineau, 6/4 is very proper for moving, tender expressions, though some use it in very hasty motions (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

Tans'ur said that 6/4 has no meaning for Jiggs, unless for very slow ones (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

John Playford: "There are two other sorts of *Time* which may be reckoned amongst *Common-Time* for the equal division of the Bar with the Hand or Foot up and down: The first of which is called *Six to four*. each Bar containing six *Crotchets*, or six *Quavers*, three to be sung with the Hand down, and three up, and is marked thus 6/4, but very brisk, and is always used in Jigs (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Jean Rousseau: "With the signature of six to four [six crotchets] ... the bar may be beaten in two..." (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Henry Purcell: "[6/4] has six Crotchets in a barr & is Commonly to brisk tunes as Jiggs and Paspys [passepieds]" (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Anon, *Compleat Flute Master*: "[6/4] Fast, for Jiggs, Paspies, &" (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

A. Malcolm: "...the [6/4, 8/6, 9/8] are more frequently *allegro*..." (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Saint-Lambert's account

In 6/4, it is beaten in two ways: the first way when it is beaten in two beats, and the second way when it is beaten in 3 beats (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38).

When it is beaten in the second way, each beat is as fast as each beat in 3 time (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38). The crotchets in the second way are as fast as the crotchets in crossed-time (Harris-Warrick, p. 38).

When it is beaten in the first way, the notes go by much faster so that the two beats go at least as fast as the two beats in binary time [2] (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38).

In the 1st way, dotted-minim = 120 (Harris-Warrick, p. 43).

In the 2nd way, crotchet = 120 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

6/4 requires a very lively tempo [un mouvement fort gay] for pieces, especially when the measure is beaten in two.

3/8

According to Salle, 3/8 should be taken vites (fast) (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Kirnberger, 3/8 is in the second fastest category of time signatures and has a the tempo giusto of of the passepiéd (Houle, 1987, p. 47).

According to Mattheson, it is played more slowly and emotionally, and is favored in arias with the addition of adagio. It is properly used in passepieds, canaries, and other hopping dances (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

According to Grassineau, it is gay or animating (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

Tans'ur said that is mostly used for Minuets but is Gently slow (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

John Playford: "Sometimes you will meet with three *Quavers* in a Bar, which is marked as the *Crotchets*, only Sung as fast again" (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

Jean Rousseau: "With the signature of three to eight composed of three quavers, where the major has eight, the bar is beaten like that of three to four, but very much faster" (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

A. Malcolm: "...the [3/8] is *allegro*, or *vivace*..." (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Quantz's account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

An arioso in 3/8 goes at quaver = 80 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

A very fast piece in 3/8 with six notes per bar goes at dotted-crotchet = 80 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

A piece in 3/8 marked presto goes at dotted-crotchet = 107 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Saint-Lambert's account

According to Saint-Lambert, 3/8 is beaten in three (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38). The beats go twice again as fast as those of the ternary time signature, that is to say very fast (*tres vite*) (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38). It is in this way that all minuets for dancing are beaten, even though the measure is made up of three quarter notes, since they are played very quickly (*fort gayement*) (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38).

Quaver = 240 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Allegro

Dotted-crotchet = 48 ("Minuetto Vivace", C 3/8)

Dotted-crotchet = 59 ("Minuet with Variations")

Dotted-crotchet = 69 ("Minuet")

4/8

Jean Rousseau: With the signature of four to eight [four quavers] the bar is beaten in a very quick two" (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Saint-Lambert's account

Saint-Lambert says 4/8 is beaten in two (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37). Two eighths are placed on each beat (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37). These beats are twice as fast as those in binary time thus it is very fast (*tres vite*) (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 37).

6/8

According to Salle, quavers in measures of 6/8 were legers (*vivace*) (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Malcolm, 6/8 was usually *allegro* (Houle, 1987, p. 40).

Grassineau says 6/8 is for gay, lively, animating strains (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

Mattheson wrote that 6/8 is suitable for flowing melodic pieces as well as fresh and quick pieces (Houle, 1987, p. 59).

According to Lacassagne, 6/8 is very quick (Houle, 1987, p. 60).

Tans'ur says 6/8 is for moderate lively menuets or dancing casts, of equal down and up, being both lively gentle Sicilian movements (Houle, 1987, p. 60).

Jean Rousseau: "With the signature of six to eight [six quavers] ... like the six to four but quicker, or like the three to eight, making two bars of one" (Donington, 1963, p. 350).

Saint-Lambert's account

In 6/8, the measure is also beaten in two like in the 1st way of 6/4 except that the beats must go twice as fast as those in 6/4 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 38).

Dotted-crotchet = 240 (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

6/8 is twice as fast as the 1st way of 6/4, that is very fast [*tres vite*] (Harris-Warrick, 1984, p. 43).

[Saint-Lambert's tempo for 6/8 at 240 for a dotted-crotchet is extremely fast. I think it more likely that there was an error in the printing or reading of the original version of Saint-Lambert's book since all of his other tempos are physically playable and mostly correspond with other tempo accounts. At any rate, it's probably best to ignore this calculation of his description of 6/8.]

Quantz's account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

In quick 6/8 time, dotted-crotchet = 160 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Vivace

Dotted-crotchet = 138 (“Giga”)

Allegro

Dotted-crotchet = 61 (Allegro, a tempo giusto, “Sound an alarm”)

Dotted-crotchet = 78 (“The Trumpet’s Clangor”)

9/8

According to Salle, 9/8 is taken legers (vivace) (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Malcolm, 9/8 is taken allegro usually (Houle, 1987, p. 40).

According to Kirnberger, 9/8 is in the middle category of time signatures and has the same tempo as 3/4 (which has the same tempo as a minuet) (Houle, 1987, p. 49).

Grassineau says it is proper for brisk and gay pieces (Houle, 1987, p. 60).

Tans’ur said its only for very brisk jiggs (Houle, 1987, p. 60).

Quantz’s account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

A piece in 9/8 marked Allegro proceeds at dotted-crotchet = 160 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

12/8

According to Salle, 12/8 is taken legers (vivace) (Houle, 1987, p. 37).

According to Malcolm, 12/8 is taken usually allegro but could sometimes be adagio (Houle, 1987, p. 40).

According to Mattheson, 12/8 the otherwise hopping meter is widened in use to include all tender and changeable pieces, whether in church or theater vocal music and also in cantatas. Formerly this was used only for fast pieces such as gigues. Nowadays it is used to express sad and touching passions as well as merry ones (Houle, 1987, p. 46).

According to Kirnberger, 12/8 is in the middle category of time signatures and indicates a more lively tempo and execution than ♪ (Houle, 1987, p. 49).

According to Grassineau, 12/8 is fit for gay and brisk movements. Naturally quick (Houle, 1987, p. 60).

Turner said 12/8 is appropriate in very swift movements, as jiggs (p. 60).

John Playford: "The other sort is called *Twelve to eight*, each Bar containing twelve *Quavers*, six with the Hand down, and six up, and marked thus 12/8" (Donington, 1963, p. 349).

A. Malcolm: "...the [12/8] is sometimes *adagio* but oftener *allegro*" (Donington, 1963, p. 351).

Quantz's account (tempos calculated by translator Edward R. Reilly)

A piece in 12/8 marked alla siciliana goes at dotted-crotchet = 53 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

A piece in 12/8 marked allegro with no semiquavers goes at dotted-crotchet = 160 (Quantz, p. 286-87).

Bute barrel organ data (Malloch, 1983)

Largo

Dotted crotchet = 63 (Pastorale ad libitum: Largo)

Alla siciliana

Dotted-crotchet = 45

Larghetto

Quaver = 138

Quaver = 145 ("Larghetto e piano")

Presto

Dotted-Crotchet = 137

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