According to Riepel, the Italian word *monte* meant “a mountain to climb up onto,” *fonte* meant “a well to climb down into,” and *ponte* meant “a bridge to cross over.” I have already discussed the rising pattern of the Monte in chapter 7 and the descending pattern of the Fonte in chapter 4. Here I will discuss Riepel’s several interpretations of the “bridge” created by the Ponte.

Riepel’s archetypal Ponte, like his Monte and Fonte, can be found immediately following the double bar in a minuet, which would be the ninth measure in Riepel’s many minuet examples. As we have seen before, he presented only a melody for his prototype:

**Ex. 14.1**  Riepel, a Ponte melody, to begin at m. 9 in a minuet (1755)

This melody emphasizes the tones of the dominant triad in C major (or possibly the tonic triad in G major) in measures 9 and 10. Descending appoggiaturas in measure 11 help lead the melody down from the High 2 of D5 to the 1–3 of F4 and E4 in measure 12, resulting in a small cadence in the main key of C major.

Any number of basses could accompany this melody. Indeed, the point of Riepel’s frequent and extended demonstrations of the *ars combinatoria*—meaning the seemingly infinite variation and recombination of preexisting patterns—was to reinforce the motto
that he printed at the end of each of his books: “Music is an inexhaustible sea.” From these limitless possibilities I offer the following bass, written in smaller notes to show that it is not by Riepel. While it is just one of many possibilities, this bass is very close to the default case presented in numerous galant minuets:

**ex. 14.2** Riepel’s prototype of the Ponte melody with a likely bass

![Ponte melody with a likely bass](image)

Beneath this score, two separate annotations suggest a fading sense of the bass as ① in the previous context, G major, and a growing sense of the bass as ⑤ in the following context, C major. The same change of tonal orientation is implied in the upper voice. Modulation of this type is implicit rather than explicit, and depends almost entirely on the listener’s experience and expectations.

After mastering the basic schemata of the Monte, Fonte, and Ponte, Riepel’s student volunteers to try his hand at the *ars combinatoria*. The student begins by exploring variations on the Monte and Fonte. Then he announces his intention “to play around a bit with the Ponte as well.” The result is a series of twelve melodic examples. I will present each one in combination with its presumed bass and annotate its pertinent features. The student offered the following melody as his first variation on the Ponte:

**ex. 14.3** The student’s first Ponte variant

![Ponte variant](image)
In place of the prototype’s rising melodic triads, the student establishes a melodic axis on D₅, which is likely perceived as ♪ in G major initially and later as ♩ in C major. He also transfers the harmonic rhythm of the prototype’s last measure (a strong dominant chord on the downbeat followed by a weak tonic chord on the third beat) to both measures 10 and 11 of his new Ponte.

In considering the first variant, the student remarks that to avoid having two cadences on the dominant “one after the other” (the first would be the cadence just before the double bar), he would close his second Ponte with a tonic cadence:

Ex. 14.4 The student’s second Ponte variant

As one can see, the Prinner fit his aims nicely, providing a weak tonic chord on the last beats of measures 11 and 12. The student declares his foregoing example “also good” and promptly proceeds to write a third Ponte:

Ex. 14.5 The student’s third Ponte variant

Measures 9 and 10 are identical to the previous example. But in measure 11, the previous melodic leap up a fifth has been extended to a full octave, from whence a stepwise descent
leads to a cadence in G major. In evaluating his third Ponte variant, the student admits that it is “not nearly as good as the previous one.”

At this point in the dialogue the teacher enters to praise his student’s efforts. The student, flattered and encouraged, responds with nine more Pontes. Be forewarned that Riepel’s concept of “Ponte” becomes more perplexing with each new example. The student’s first new phrase, fourth overall, begins with that same emphasis on a repeated D5:

ex. 14.6  The student’s fourth Ponte variant

Two important features have changed, however. One is the form—the Ponte’s two halves now closely resemble each other, as indicated by the horizontal braces. The other is the harmonic rhythm—it is slower, with weak tonic measures replacing weak tonic beats. Moreover, these two changes will permit an inner voice to iterate ⫯ as an internal pedal point, which will bring the student’s fourth Ponte very close to the Fenaroli schema (see chap. 16). Without going into the details of the Fenaroli here, that schema’s overall “feel” is often of sequential ascents, frequently in canonic imitation. Riepel’s student seems to have that tradition in mind as he proceeds to compose his fifth and sixth Pontes.

For his fifth Ponte, the student now makes the second half of his melody an exact transposition of the first half, which would enable him to form a canon between the soprano and alto voices. Again, only the melody is given in the treatise; the bass and alto parts are my reconstructions of a typical galant texture:

ex. 14.7  The student’s fifth Ponte variant
This fifth Ponte sets up a strong expectation for upward motion every two measures at the interval of a third. That is, the melodic ❷ in measure 9 (viewed in C major) leads up to the ❹ in measure 11, which strongly implies a ❻ in measure 13. The student's continuation (ex. 14.8) validates that implication and rises all the way to the octave C6 before descending to the minuet's final cadence in C major:

**ex. 14.8** The melodic continuation of the student’s fifth Ponte variant

The student's sixth Ponte, with its sequence of three tied notes, looks rather different from the previous two variants. It is, nevertheless, built on the same design:

**ex. 14.9** The student's sixth Ponte variant

This sixth Ponte leads into exactly the same continuation and cadence shown earlier for the fifth Ponte. But whereas the student's fifth Ponte had a sequence of ascending two-measure modules, his sixth has a sequence of one-measure modules. The explicit suspensions of the tied notes and the more obvious and earnest rising sequence suggest some styles of church music. Riepel, as author, has his fictional student propose ever new examples of Pontes. In imagining these new styles, it is quite possible that Riepel needed to think beyond the chamber style of his minuets. If one adds to the above melody a bass similar to those given to the fourth and fifth Pontes, an explicit inner pedal point on ❾ in the tenor voice, and a series of 2–3 suspensions caused by a sequentially rising alto voice (a Corellian “leapfrog” passage), the resulting four-part texture would not be out of place in a mass or motet by any number of galant chapel masters (ex. 14.10).
Having perhaps temporarily exhausted the possibilities of the Fenaroli-style Ponte, the student moves on to still other combinations. For his seventh effort, he follows his initial repeated D₅ with a tonic version of measure 10 adapted from his teacher’s prototype, leading then into another Prinner:

For his eighth Ponte he returns to the idea of a two-measure module:

But instead of single measures alternating between dominant and tonic harmony, he writes two measures of primarily dominant harmony followed by two measures of
primarily tonic harmony. Note that measures 11 and 12 now are only one step higher than measures 9 and 10.

Ascending triadic motion on dominant harmony was an important feature of the teacher’s prototype (ex. 14.1). The student borrows that idea for his ninth Ponte, but instead of beginning on G₄, he begins on his favorite D₅, as he has done in all his previous Pontes. The student also reintroduces the prototype’s High ❷ Drop and ensuing Comma:

ex. 14.13  The student’s ninth Ponte variant

The prototype’s implied pedal-point bass on ⑤ (ex. 14.2) would also fit nicely with the ninth Ponte, further strengthening the example’s close connection with the teacher’s model.

The student then remarks that he could vary the preceding Ponte so that it ends with a half cadence, “depending on whether it pleases or pains the ear.” The result is his tenth Ponte:

ex. 14.14  The student’s tenth Ponte variant

He follows this with an eleventh Ponte that retains the half cadence (in C major), begins even higher (on G₅ instead of D₅), presents a Do-Re-Mi opening (in G major), and
closely copies the ascending eighth-note scale from the second measure of the teacher’s model (see ex. 14.15). Indeed, if one equates Do-Re-Mi as the first three steps of the scale with Do-Mi-Sol as the first three “steps” of the triad, then the first three measures of this Ponte are a very close copy of the teacher’s prototype.

**ex. 14.15** The student’s eleventh Ponte variant

![Music notation for ex. 14.15](image)

The student’s twelfth Ponte begins even higher, on B₅, retains echoes of a Do-Re-Mi opening, but shifts the High 9 Drop earlier to measure 10 and closes with a Prinner:

**ex. 14.16** The student’s twelfth Ponte variant

![Music notation for ex. 14.16](image)

At this point the teacher cries “Cease!” (“Höre doch auf!”). The student, undaunted, offers to write some bad examples in order to demonstrate his ability to distinguish good from bad. Bad Montes and Fontes appear first, followed by one bad Ponte. The examples seem to be judged primarily by whether they repeat, in measure 12, the G cadence that ended the minuet’s first half, which is a fault in Riepel’s opinion. Here is the “bad” Ponte, whose beginning matches the student’s ninth Ponte and whose ending matches his first:
ex. 14.17  The student’s “bad” Ponte

Following this deprecated Ponte, the student proposes an example that seems “quite good, notwithstanding the fact that it belongs to neither the Monte nor the Fonte nor the Ponte”: 9

ex. 14.18  The student’s melody claimed to be neither Monte, Fonte, nor Ponte

When I first read this passage and saw the example, I fully expected Riepel, in his fictional role as teacher, to interrupt and correct his student. I thought he would tell the student, “Your example begins in the main key but goes on to present a perfect Fonte.” But Riepel does not intervene. Instead, the student is allowed to reinforce his assertion by showing how the teacher’s three cardinal patterns should properly begin the second half of a minuet. Note that, for a proper Ponte, the student reverts to the prototypical ascent through the tones of the dominant triad:

ex. 14.19  The student’s prototypes for beginning a Monte, Fonte, and Ponte

The student goes on to demonstrate that even the introduction of embellishing variations (ex. 14.20) does not detract from the correctness of the way each pattern begins. For the Ponte we see a further emphasis on the tones of the dominant triad.
The student’s openings for an elaborated Monte, Fonte, and Ponte

The matter rests there for several pages of dialogue. When the student returns again to the Ponte, he writes one that is almost an exact copy of the original minuet’s opening theme, transposed to the dominant key:

The student’s new Ponte

In measures 10 and 11 this Ponte shares with many of the student’s “Fenaroli” examples an alternation between strong dominant chords and weak tonic chords. But those earlier examples did not include a melodic F♯, and their phrases, not explicitly “in” G, were instead possibly “on” G. That is, the previous examples began on a G chord in what quickly becomes the context of the key of C major, while this example reinforces the sense of being in the key of G major. One wonders what has become of the “bridge” (It., ponte) function.

In a later section on the expansion of phrases, the student reverts once more to a close copy of his teacher’s prototype for a point of departure:
He then expands this phrase through a combination of extensions, repetitions, variations, and insertions:

**EX. 14.23** The student’s expanded Ponte

Measures 9 and 10 are unchanged from the model (cf. ex. 14.22). Measure 11 extends the upward motion of measure 10 and leads back to a repetition of measure 10 in measure 12. A further upward extension in measure 13 leads to a half cadence in measure 14. After a brief rest, the student begins anew with a Fenaroli-type Ponte like those he had developed in his first Ponte exercises. He repeats measures 15–16 in measures 17–18 and then closes with the exact High \( \mathcal{H} \) Drop that ended his model. The expansion and extension remain in C major, not G major.

Much later in the same treatise, the relationship between Ponte and key is given a further twist when the fictional teacher identifies the following phrase as a Ponte:

**EX. 14.24** The teacher’s Ponte in a minor-mode minuet

The student, perplexed, remarks that this Ponte seems “borrowed from C major,” and the teacher agrees with him. The phrase begins the second half of a small Andante in the key of A minor. In its first half, the movement modulates from A minor to C major. The Ponte, which begins with its trademark ascending triad, then might build a “bridge” from the key of C major back to the main key of A minor. The addition of a bass voice (ex. 14.25) can help to clarify how such a modulation would have been possible.
Riepel, unfortunately, does not make clear how he, or his fictional interlocutors, heard that passage. If he heard no modulation, then once again the function of the Ponte as a bridge between keys would be in doubt.

Considered as a group, Riepel’s numerous examples of the Ponte seem to represent two principles occasionally at odds with each other. On the one hand, he presents the abstract idea of a bridge that links two keys. The first key occurs just before the real or imagined double bar, and the second key returns at some point during or immediately after the Ponte. In that sense the Ponte has no intrinsic key itself and no necessary structure. Whether a given Ponte is in or on the dominant would be immaterial as long as its bridging function remained. On the other hand, the great majority of Riepel’s Ponte examples strongly emphasize the dominant triad or seventh chord of the main key, often with rising movement. This is especially true in the initial measures.

When, in the next treatise in his series, Riepel begins by reminding the student of the three cardinal patterns, he presents a Ponte that returns to the prototypical emphasis on the tones of the dominant triad or seventh chord. But he also introduces a likely Converging cadence that, while related to the student’s examples with closing Prinners, is unique among Riepel’s Pontes. I have added a bass to clarify the Converging cadence:

ex. 14.26 The teacher’s Ponte in a later chapter
One has the impression that, given Riepel’s “inexhaustible” invention, each new presentation of the Ponte would be likely to include some new feature or relationship. When Riepel ventures into his chapter on “deceptive” composition, even the seemingly more stable schemata of the Fonte and Monte begin to dissolve in a deep sea of variation and transformation. At times, it seems that all that remains of a schema is a characteristic opening gesture or cue. That observation, of course, is not without importance for understanding galant music and the categorizations of one of its practitioners. The setting up of musical expectations was crucial, whereas those expectations could be realized, frustrated, delayed, or deflected according to artistic strategies that varied considerably in different locales and contexts. Yet rather than follow Riepel to the far shores of schema dissolution, let us ourselves exclaim “CEASE!” and turn back to examine two small repertories for more empirical evidence concerning Riepel’s “three cardinal patterns.”

**Two Repertories**

At the location following the double bar in a minuet or similar movement, how well does Riepel’s prescription for a threefold choice of Monte, Fonte, or Ponte conform to actual eighteenth-century practice? To evaluate that question with reference to the first half of the eighteenth century we can turn to our galant Everyman—Wenceslaus Wodiczka. As mentioned in chapter 4, there are five minuet movements distributed among the six sonatas of his Opus 1. Let us take them as our sample of probabilities toward the end of the 1730s.

The first minuet opens in the key of C major and then modulates to G major by measure 8, just as in Riepel’s model minuet. In measure 9, following the double bar, Wodiczka writes a clear four-measure Fonte:

**Ex. 14.27**  Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 2, mvt. 3, Menuetto, m. 9 (Paris, 1739)
All the features of the common Fonte are present: the opening in D minor, followed “one step lower” by the same passage in C major; the \( 7-3 \) melodic dyads; the support of two \( 7-1 \) basses, and the characteristic minuet scansion of the dyads crossing the weak metrical boundary between beats two and three.

His third sonata contains two minuets, one in the major mode and one in the minor mode. The first begins in the key of G major and modulates to D major by measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Wodiczka writes a clear four-measure Monte:

**Ex. 14.28** Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 3, mvt. 3, Menuetto I, m. 9 (1739)

Note that this Monte, with local foci on C major and D major, is highlighting IV and V in the main key of G, not in the immediately prior key of D.

The second of this pair of minuets begins in the relative minor (E minor) and modulates to G major by measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Wodiczka writes an extended eight-measure Fonte:

**Ex. 14.29** Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 3, mvt. 3, Menuetto II, m. 9 (1739)

The minor-then-major keys of the Fonte are in relation to the “second” key of G major, not the main key of E minor. Or as Riepel’s student would put it, the Fonte is “borrowed” from the major mode.
In Wodiczka’s fifth sonata, a minuet begins in the key of A major and modulates to E major by measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Wodiczka writes a clear four-measure Ponte that returns to A major:

**Ex. 14.30** Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 5, mvt. 4, Menuetto, m. 9 (1739)

In his final sonata, a minuet begins in the key of F major and modulates to C major by measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Wodiczka writes what I believe Riepel would have considered a Ponte. As with the student’s eighth Ponte, this phrase begins with a repeated initial melodic tone that is 5 in the preceding key and 2 in the main key:

**Ex. 14.31** Wodiczka, Opus 1, no. 6, mvt. 3, Menuetto, m. 9 (1739)

The melody of example 14.31 begins by sounding all the tones of the dominant triad; it features two measures of primarily dominant harmony followed by two measures of primarily tonic harmony; and it forms a bridge between the preceding key of C major and the following main key of F major. Though it is some distance from Riepel’s own prototype,
this Ponte would seem to validate Riepel’s general prescriptions. That is, the choices made by Wodiczka corroborate the utility of Riepel’s “threefold example.” Moreover, Wodiczka’s usage provides a reasonable general estimate for the relative frequency of these schemata in that particular context: there are three Fontes, one Monte, and one Ponte. Wodiczka’s phrases also confirm Riepel’s notion that a Monte, Fonte, or Ponte should, in a minor-mode movement that modulates to the relative major before the double bar, take its tonal bearings from that relative major key. This is in contrast to a major-mode movement, where these schemata take their tonal bearings from the main key of the movement. In galant music, “major” became the norm and the standard of reference.

To evaluate the situation in the second half of the eighteenth century we should perhaps look to a more mature and cosmopolitan composer for a sample repertory. In a letter to the Baron d’Hermenches, her secret male correspondent, Isabelle de Charrière asked him to obtain some music for her. “What I especially love are fine trios or quartets in the style of Campioni and Pugnani.” Even today these works can be difficult to obtain. But Gaetano Pugnani (1731–1798), an important pupil of Somis who became famous in both Paris and London, did write a set of violin sonatas during the later 1760s or early 1770s that have been reprinted, and they contain a number of movements that are like minuets in form and style (though titled Amoroso or Andante esprezzo).

In Pugnani’s second sonata, an Amoroso begins in the key of C major and remains in C major through measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Pugnani writes a clear four-measure Prinner with a High Drop:

Can a modulating Prinner be considered a Ponte? The phrase bears scant resemblance to Riepel’s prototype Ponte, though the student’s Pontes did include smaller Prinners. Yet this modulating Prinner does serve as a bridge from the previous key, C major, to the new key that follows, G major. Of course the situation where the first half of a movement does not modulate is one that Riepel had never envisioned.
In Pugnani’s third sonata (ex. 14.33), an Amoroso begins in the key of D major and modulates to A major by measure 16. In measure 17, following the double bar, Pugnani writes two four-measure statements of a Ponte, though not of a type specifically notated by Riepel. Its two phrases are definitely on the dominant chord of D major, with a drumlike pedal point on 5, an alternation of tonic and dominant measures, and a melody that descends from 6 to 3. This eight-measure Ponte corresponds to the larger dimensions of this Amoroso, whose double bar, as noted, does not appear until the end of measure 16.

ex. 14.33  Pugnani, Opus 8, no. 3, mvt. 3, Amoroso, m. 17 (ca. 1771–74)

In Pugnani’s fourth sonata (ex. 14.34), an Amoroso begins in the key of E major and modulates to B major by measure 8. In measure 9, following the double bar, Pugnani writes a four-measure Fonte with the typical melodic descents of 6–6–4–3.

ex. 14.34  Pugnani, Opus 8, no. 4, mvt. 3, Amoroso, m. 9 (ca. 1771–74)

His fifth sonata (ex. 14.35) presents an Andante espressivo instead of an Amoroso. The movement stays in the key of A major for the first twenty-four measures. In measure 25, following the double bar, Pugnani writes an ornate four-measure modulating Prinner complete with the la-to-sol flourish and an ornate extension of the High 2 Drop.
In his sixth and final sonata, Pugnani reinstates an Amoroso. The movement begins in the key of B♭ major and modulates to F major by measure 11 (Riepel would have objected to the odd number). In measure 12, following the double bar, Pugnani writes a hermaphrodite Fonte (note the starred flat), with the normal roles of bass and soprano inverted:

In this small repertory, Pugnani does not use the Monte. Indeed, by the 1770s the Monte was showing its age, with Riepel and others mentioning its possibly pejorative nickname “cobbler’s patch” (Schusterfleck). Pugnani does use the Fonte in its more colorful guise, and he does use the Ponte, at least once. But whether one also ought to think of Pugnani’s modulating Prinners as Pontes depends on how one interprets Riepel. If one favors Riepel’s most abstract notion of a bridge, then these Prinners do function as bridges between keys. If one favors Riepel’s prototypes as his true intention, then a Prinner is a Prinner, not a Ponte.

I have presented so many instances of the Ponte not so much because of its intrinsic importance—it usually fulfills a subservient role—but because of the light it sheds on faultlines in Riepel’s discourse, between viewing a phrase in terms of what it does and viewing it
in terms of what it is, however that might be defined. As mentioned before, Riepel and other eighteenth-century music scholars had difficulty conceiving of a phrase as a composite of other patterns. His preference was to describe a phrase as a unitary Ponte, rather than as, say, “a triadic ascent on tones of the dominant triad followed by reference to the Fenaroli, leading to a High 2 Drop and a tonic cadence.” Nevertheless, the examples by Wodzička and Pugnani show that, for much of the eighteenth century, Riepel’s “threefold example” of Monte, Fonte, and Ponte was very much on target as a description of general practice within a specific musical context. Because Riepel’s experiences were concentrated in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, it is hardly surprising that his schemata—his abstractions of those experiences—fit the earlier Wodzička somewhat better than the later Pugnani.

If Monte and Fonte have their roles and construction tightly bound together, the Ponte, as described through the voices of Riepel’s idealized teacher and student, shows that different constructions can serve the same role. In keeping with the general approach of this book, I will favor structure, labeling as “Ponte” those phrases that highlight a dominant pedal point and the tones of the dominant triad or seventh chord. Yet as we will see in the following chapter, where Galuppi introduces a tonic Ponte, the structural emphasis can at times oversimplify actual practice. Such cases help us to appreciate Riepel’s dilemma as a writer on galant practice and to value his prolix but rich explication of what he held to be a schema of great significance. His inventory of Pontes, whether or not one believes them to fit a single schema, constitutes the largest corpus of phrases to have been categorized by an eighteenth-century musician. That he was a successful, long-serving maestro di capella at one of the wealthiest courts in Europe gives his opinions added weight.