

Reconstructing *La Gillotte* from the manuscript *Instruction pour dancer les dances*

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[The following paper is an account of a workshop on the reconstruction of 'La Gillotte'] [Editor]

[*Instruction pour dancer les dances* is an anonymous manuscript that was discovered some fifteen years ago in the Darmstadt Library and has since been reprinted, with extensive explanatory text.¹ The manuscript can be dated to between 1560 and 1590 and contains descriptions of seventeen dances. *La Gillotte* is the eleventh dance in the collection and is described as being for "four gentlemen and four ladies dancing in a circle, as with the other branles". The *Instruction pour dancer* does not contain any music, but it has been possible to identify a number of the choreographies with tunes in the extensive collection by Michael Praetorius under the title *Terpsichore* published in 1612. In particular, the music for *La Gillotte* is assumed to be the piece by the same name *Gilotte* (but different spelling) that occurs as the 7th of a set of gavottes in the first section of *Terpsichore* (Fig.1)] [Editor]



Fig. 1 Cantus part-book of *Terpsichore* (1612) showing '7. Gilotte' at the bottom of the page

The Gillotte consists of patterns between four men and four women:

"La Gillotte a six passages qui se suiuent dont y en a quatre gentilhommes et quatre damoyelles dansant tout en rond comme les autres branles"

[La Gillotte has six passages following with four gentlemen and four ladies dancing in a whole circle as in the other branles]

The Gillotte is described in the *Instruction pour dancer* as a gavotte.

The music found in *Terpsichore* is a gavotte with a refrain and a passage. The choreography proposes six 'passages' or repeat sections of the dance, but it actually includes more, with several passages repeated by the ladies.

Although *Instruction pour dancer* dates from the same period as Arbeau's *Orchesographie*, the dance description here for the gavotte does not at all look like that of Arbeau, nor do the steps. We do not see this kind of dance anywhere in *Orchésographie*.²

We do not know to what or to whom it owes its name of 'La Gillotte': the only step used is the *pas de la gavotte*³, but the author, probably Anthoine Emeraud⁴, frequently explains that the dancers are supposed to use the first three steps of the gavotte and to finish with the last steps of the gavotte.^{5&6} We may therefore suppose that the first three steps are the three *favoritz*⁷ before the two small steps on the spot. The second one could be the second described step, the "retour", retiring with the right foot back, doing a pose, three steps forward and a small jump.

Step Realization

The following is a decoding of the step description for the gavotte presented in *Instruction pour dancer*⁸:

The gavotte has 11 'pas' spread over two sections: one composed of 3 "favoris" - left side, left foot, right foot, again left foot - 2 small steps - without moving - and the other composed of a "retour", retiring the right foot, doing a pose (counted for 1 step), 3 steps and "relevé"⁹ and then a small jump (joined feet) = one step¹⁰

We have to specify several "actions" called steps, that compose the pas de gavotte: one is "favoris", which could be a jump on one foot and a step on the other one. "Relevé" could be a half-point on toes.

Dance realization

The spatial arrangement has four couples in square formation, with two couples facing each other. The dance is described as consisting of six "passages", which is interpreted to mean six "figures", (though not all are necessarily of equal length).

Here is a descriptive realization of the dance:

1) R = refrain (tune)¹¹ : twice times la gavotte all in a circle¹² (*whoever wants to begins*)

1st couplet¹³: half a turn by the right arm dancing 3 steps of the gavotte (which ones? - there are two suites of steps) and finish with the gavotte step.

8 measures: half a turn by the left arm and makes lady jump.

8 measures: (second passage)¹⁴ left hand with the right-hand lady (his own partner) exchange places in a half turn with the first step, and in place, second step and back with the right hand and second step, and make her jump.

2) R: refrain (tune): 2 times la gavotte all in a circle

3rd couplet¹⁵

8 measures : right arm with the lady on the left to exchange places in half a turn with the first step, and on the spot, 2nd step and again with the left hand and 2nd and next lady until his own partner ?? and make her jump.

3) R: refrain (tune): 2 times la gavotte all in a circle

4th couplet:

The leader says : « change places ! » on the left-hand side with the steps of the gavotte: four times to change, each time with the first step to change and take back your place and make your lady jump.

4) The ladies will do the same as for the men (perhaps on the other side with the left arm)¹⁶

R: refrain (tune): 2 times la gavotte all in a circle

same couplet as for the 3rd

5) R: refrain (tune): two times la gavotte all in a circle

5th couplet¹⁷: with the first step, men go to the middle and back by their left to their partner with the second step.

And once more and make your lady jump.

6) The ladies will do the same¹⁸ (the same, except that ladies come back by their right shoulder twice, and the second time men make them jump.

7) R: Refrain (tune)

6th passage¹⁹ : this is a repeat of the first passage, each with his own lady.

There are many questions that arise from the text:

The number of the passages are only counted for the men's patterns but not for the ladies doing the same; so there are more than 6 passages to do musically: the third, fourth and fifth passages are repeated by the ladies, so there are 6 plus 3 for the ladies repeating phrases, making 9 passages altogether. Notice that the last passage is the same as the first one, but the taking of the right arm is not repeated on the other side (left). How shall we do it for regular music?

The 3 pas de la gavotte: are they the first "three favoritz" of the description, or the "three pas relevez" of the second described steps? Indeed, the gavotte has 11 steps, 5 in the first part, and six in the second part.

Realization with music

We can next attempt to match the choreography as described in *Instruction pour dancer* with the music presented in Praetorius' *Terpsichore*, in which the Gilotte follows the six gavottes which close the first suite of branles.

7. Gilotte from M.Praetorius
Terpsichore

Fig.2 Transcription of *Gilotte* from Praetorius' *Terpsichore*

Step structure

The music opens with 4 measures in *alla brève* (ie. 'cut common' or 2/2 time)

The 11 component steps of the gavotte are to be created over 4 measures of *alla brève* time:

first part or first step	second part or second step
3 favoritz	retirade
	pose
2 small steps on the spot	3 steps "relevez" (double rhythm)
	small jump
4 measures in <i>alla brève</i>	4 measures in <i>alla brève</i>
= 5 steps	= 6 steps counting the pose
5 + 6 = 11 steps include also musical pulsations and beats	

A = 4 measures

B = 8 measures

R = Refrain (AA) before each passage (B)

Musical cut : AA BB x 8 times

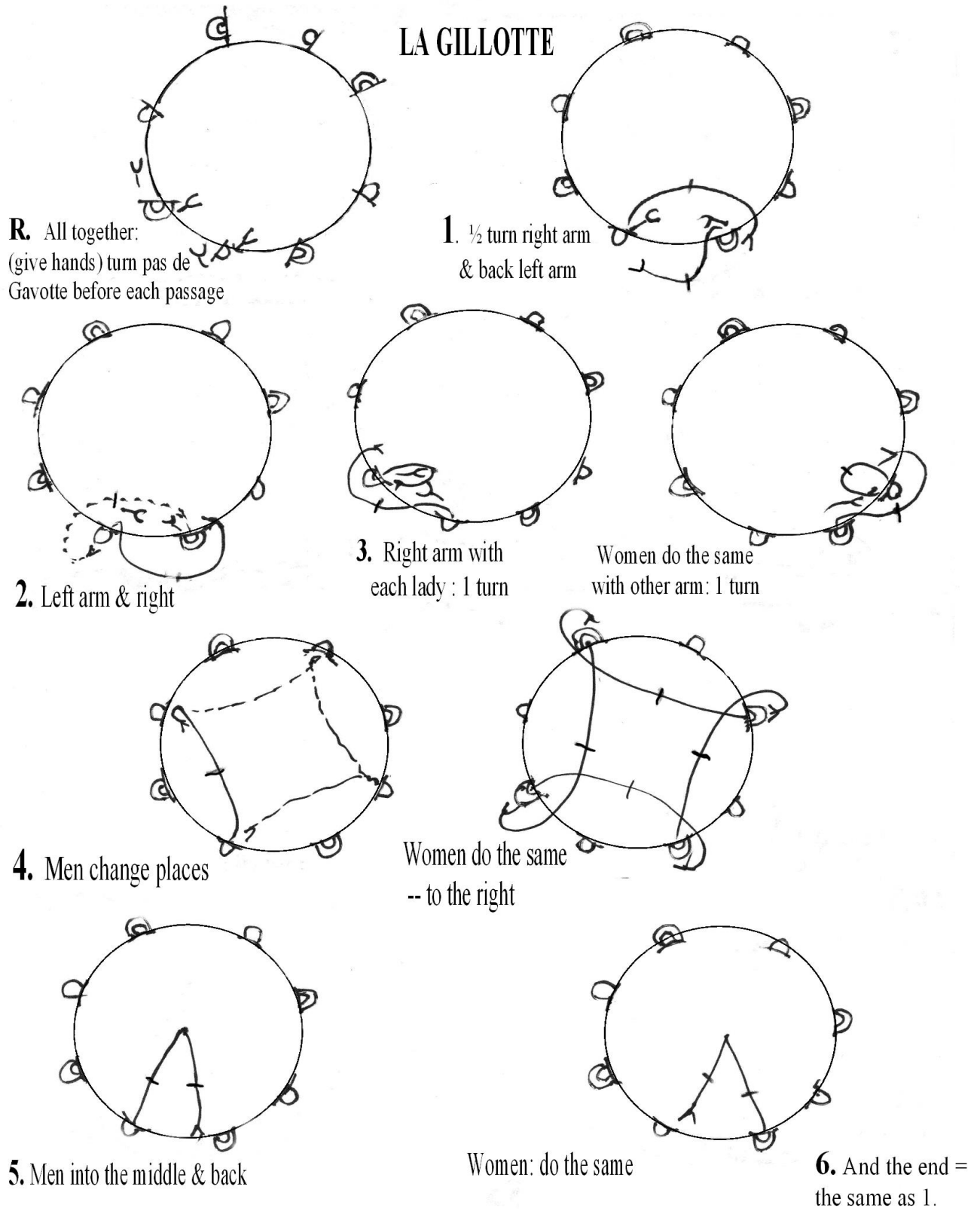


Fig.3 Diagram of the 6 'passages' that make up the Gillotte choreography

Dance structure :

1 st passage	2 nd passage	3 rd passage	4 th passage	5 th passage	6 th passage
AA : R		AA : R	AA : R	AA : R	AA : R
B : right and left arm <i>drawings R, and couplet 1</i>	B : left and right arm (lady partner) (other side) <i>drawing 2 couplet 2</i>	BB : 1 turn with each lady (lady left) <i>drawing 3</i>	BB : men change places <i>drawing 4</i>	BB: middle and back <i>drawing 5</i>	BB : ½ turn right and left hand <i>drawing 6</i>
		Women, the other side AABB <i>drawing 3 bis</i>	Women, the other side AABB <i>drawing 4 bis</i>	Women, the same other side AABB <i>drawing 5 bis</i>	
8, 8, 8 measure	8	(8, 8, 8, 8) x 2	(8, 8, 8, 8) x 2	(8, 8, 8, 8) x 2	8, 8, 8, 8

Notes on this diagram:

[The ‘drawings’ refer to the diagrams in Fig.3 above. Ed]

1. The first and second passages seem to be musically together : the first passage takes the Refrain (AA) and B and the second, B, going only for arms in opposite direction and with opposite arms, where as the other passages are to be done back completely by women in the opposite way (AABB). The other *couplets* take BB.

2. The dance is sometimes written as Gilote or Gilotte (music) or Gillotte (Instruction).

3. We distinguish in the paper, the *Refrain* from the *Couplets* that establish the *Passage*.

The word *cadence*: « la fin de la cadence » in each passage seems to signify the end of the phrase. The man is systematically directed to make “his” lady jump at the end of (the “cadence” of each passage.

What is interesting is that Mersenne, later on, describes some figures of the Gavotte²⁰ as the same for each pattern as some in the Gilotte: giving arms and changing partners.²¹

This dance is one of the social dances described among the dances of *Instruction pour dancier*.

The two steps of the gavotte are used to allow the choice of favorite patterns and to permit uncertain couples to change places, between men and women. This is surprising for French dances because it is the first mention of circle or square with four couples crossing: We know that it was already known in England since the sixteenth century in English choreographies. It is the only case of this formation (if we except *La Bohesme*, which also uses four couples).

Notes

¹ *Instruction pour dancier, An Anonymous Manuscript*, éd. par Angene Feves, Ann Lizbeth Langston, Uwe W. Schlottermüller et Eugenia Roucher, Freiburg, Fa-gisis, 2000.

² *Orchesographie et Traicté en forme de dialogue par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre & practiquer l'honneste exercice des danses*, par Thoinot Arbeau demeurant à Lengres, 1688 : « La Gavotte n'est qu'un recueil et ramazun de plusieurs branles doubles »

³ “ dansant les troys de la gavotte” for instance (7r) l.4 p.73, “and will finish the steps of the gavotte.” l.6, id.

⁴ In the Preface of the collection of music *Terpsichore*, Musarum Aoniarum, 1612, Praetorius writes that he has got French dancing music from the dancing master Anthoine Emeraud, working at the court of Braunschweig and Lünebourg for the young Duke Friedrich Ulrich.

⁵ In the Preface of the collection of music called *Terpsichore*, Musarum Aoniarum, 1612, Praetorius writes that he has got French dancing music from the dancing master Anthoine Emeraud.

⁶ See p31 of *Instruction pour dancier, An Anonymous Manuscript*.

⁷ « il fault faire troys favoritz du coste gauche lun du pied gauche et lautre du pied droict et encores ung du pied gauche et puis faire deux petitz pas sans bouger et apres faire retour du pied droict en arriere faisant une pose et ferez apres troys pas relevez du pied gauche et apres un petit saux voila la gavotte finye. »

⁸ op cit.: It seems that there are two distinct parts to the gavotte step: one of five actions: p.51 « La Gavotte a onze pas: il faut faire trois favoris du côté gauche, l'un du pied gauche, et l'autre du pied droit et encore un du pied gauche, et puis faire deux petits pas sans bouger »; followed by one with six actions: « et après retour du pied droit en arrière faisant une pose et ferez après trois pas relevés du pied gauche et après un petit saut voila la gavotte finie »; making eleven actions in all to complete one gavotte step.

⁹ This *retour* seems to be like the reverence of Arbeau or « Riverenza alla francese : la Riverenza, che io ho posto in alcune mutanze alla Francese, se fa in questo modo, cioe del dritto mettendo il piede manco dietro al calcagno del dritto calando, allargando alquanto, le ginocchia come usano la maggior aprte di francesi. *Libro di Gagliarda*, P11, Livio Lupi, Palerme 1607, documenté par Louis Taurines.»

¹⁰ We find this jump with two feet together also in the Bourree and in the Pavanne.

¹¹ We could call the 'refrain' (or tune) these 2 times with the steps of the gavotte before each of the 6 passages.

¹² « Il faut dancier tous ensemble deux fois la gavotte »

¹³ « il prandra la damoiselle par le bras droict en dansant troys pas de la gauche et la fera tourner demy tour et dauant sadamoiselle acheuera les pas de la gauotte et il prandra du bras gauche et luy fera faire encores demy tour faisant la mesme chose comme il a fait du bras droict la faisant saulter a la fin de la cadance la remettant en sa place » (7r) p.73, l. 3-4

¹⁴ « Pour le regard du deuxieme passage il fault faire tout de mesme le premier reserue quil fault prandre sa damoyselle du bras gauche et la ferez tourner comme auez fait le premier commancant » (7r) p.73, l.12-13-14

¹⁵ « Le troysieme passage tout ensemble il fault dancier deux foys la gauotte et celluy qui a commence prandra la damoiselle qui est a sa main gauche (20) et bras

droict la fera tourner un tour dansant les troys pas de la gauotte et la laisser en sa place acheuant les pas de la gauotte deuant la damoyselle et apres en suiuant prandrez l'autre damoyselle et luy ferez faire un mesme (25) tour que auez fait faire à la premiere et ainsy continuerez a faire tourner les autres damoiselles jusques a la vostre et la ferez tourner et puis la ferez saulter a la fin de la cadence /

Tous les autres gentilzhommes en feront tout de mesme et apres quilz auront acheue les damoiselles commenceront tout ainsy que les gentilhommes ont fait reserue que les damoyselles prendront les gentilshommes du coste droict a celle fin de venir a son gentilhomme pour quil la face saulter a la fin de la cadence / »

¹⁶ et les damoyselles feront apres ayant danse toutes ensemble deux foys la gauotte

Le cinquieme passage tous ensemble il fault dancier deux foys la gauotte et apres tous quatres gentilhommes yrez au consert qui est donner en la dance tous quatre ensemble faisant les troys pas de la gauotte et ung petit saulx et reuiendrez en votre place en tournant pour acheuer les pas de la gauotte et ferez encore une foyz tous ensemble entree en la dance faisant les troys pas et un petit saulx et reuiendrez en tournant a votre place acheuant les pas de la gauotte et puis faire saulter tous ensemble chacun sa damoyselle a la fin de la cadence

¹⁷ les damoyselles en feront de mesme comme les gentilzhommes ont fait apres auoir dance deux foys tous ensemble la gauotte les damoiselles yront au consert par deux foys et a la fin les gentilzhornmes les feront saulter chacun sa damoyselle

¹⁸ « les damoyselles en feront de mesme comme les gentilzhommes ont fait apres auoir dance deux foys tous ensemble la gauotte les damoiselles yront au consert par deux foys et a la fin les gentilzhornmes les feront saulter chacun sa damoyselle » (8r) p.77, l. 10 and following ones.

¹⁹ « Le sixieme passage vous danserez tous ensemble deux foys la gauotte et apres tous ensemble prandrez chacun sa damoyselle par le bras droict comme auez fait le premier commancant en dansant tousiours les pas de la gauotte et a la fin ferez saulter chacun sa damoiselle pour finir la fin de la gauotte » (8r) p.77, l.16 and following ones.

²⁰ « Le sixième (branle) s'appelle La Gavote, c'est à dire la danse aux chansons : sa mesure est binaire assez grave, et se peut rapporter au mouvement choreobacchique u u u - -, il a huit pas, quatre mesures et seize mouvements :.. Il fait la conclusion des Branles ; (description comme la Gillotte de Instruction pour dancier, figures avec le bras et changement de partenaire)

²¹ « apres avoir esté dancé une fois, ou deux en rond » : after having been danced once, or twice in circle, « celui qui a commencé le Branle à mener », the one who began the Branle à mener (or branle de Poitou),« & l'ayant prise sous le bras droit, il lui fait faire un tour & puis un autre du bras gauche avec chacun huict pas » : and having taken her under the right arm, he makes her do a tour and then other one of the left arm with each eight steps... or « il la remet en sa place, et reprend la sienne ». Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, Livre second, proposition XXIV, « Le Sixieme s'appelle la Gavote ».