

# The Minuet under the Reign of Philip V

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## Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to delve into the reception of French dance in Spain during the reign of Felipe V (1700-1746), looking particularly at France's most emblematic choreographic manifestation: the *minué*. Along with the *contradanza*, the minuet was very well accepted in Spain, judging by the number of sources that have survived from this period.

In fact, everyone danced *a la francesa* in Spanish salons, and the manuals explain very carefully the steps, choreographies and protocol rules. However, what remains of the Spanish tradition? How does it coexist with the fashionable foreign repertoire? Can we speak of a new hybrid style, the fruit of the cultural interrelation between both countries?

Whether or not the aforementioned questions can be answered, the rich content of these sources provides interesting information about the most common repertoire in the courtly society of that time. The discovery of concordances with French treatises is a significant fact that denotes the circulation of a common musical-choreographic *corpus*, known and practised assiduously among the nobility.

The comparative analysis of these documents, complemented by the study of reference works by contemporary researchers, will allow links to be established that help to draw conclusions about the always complex task of recreating the Spanish choreographic heritage of this period.

## Historical Contextualisation

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the marriage alliances between the monarchies of France and Spain gave rise to rich cultural exchanges. During the first part of the seventeenth century two marriages linked the Spanish Dynasty of the Habsburgs with that of the French Bourbons. In 1615 Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip III, married Prince Louis XIII. In 1660, as a consequence of the Peace of the Pyrenees, María Teresa, daughter of Felipe IV, married the young Louis XIV.

All this leads to multiple musical, theatrical and choreographic manifestations. Songs with the text in Spanish, guitars, castanets, *zarabandas*, etc. appear in France (by) as a result of Spanish influence.

Exchanges are also made in the opposite direction, that is, from France to Spain. In 1679 Charles II married Maria Luisa de Orléans, niece of Louis XIV. In consequence, a company of about forty musicians under the direction of Farinell, composer, and Marie-Anne Cambert, harpsichordist and daughter of the founder of the *Académie Royale de Musique*, moves to Madrid. The composer will have to compose "all the music, symphonies and dances for the amusement of their Majesties"<sup>1</sup>.

This influence of French taste in the Spanish Court is further reinforced by the change of dynasty. In Barcelona in October 1701 at the wedding of the new Bourbon King, Philip V (grandson of Louis XIV), Henry Desmarests presents a *Divertimento for the marriage of the King of Spain*. Among the dances of a *momería* performed in the hall of the royal palace we

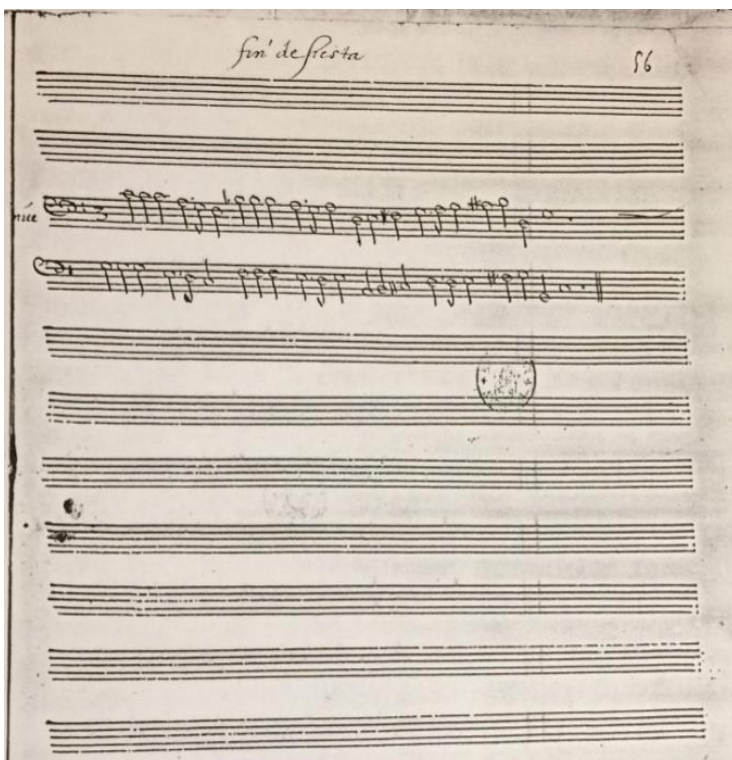
find a *minovet*, described as a "baylete that consists in forming a *lazo* (tie), changing position and crossing". Unfortunately, the music is not preserved<sup>2</sup>.

(Below are exposed) Some examples of minuets in Spain composed at the time of transition between the two centuries are shown below (see Figures 1 & 2).

The mythological drama *Muerte en amor es la ausencia* (*Death in Love is the absence*) was written for the thirty-sixth birthday of King Charles II of Spain. The Royal House commissioned the Official Court Playwright, Antonio de Zamora, to compose a *fiesta cantada* to commemorate such an important event. It premiered on November 10, 1697. *Muerte en amor* is a dramatic representation that includes the spoken word, music, theatre, dance and scenography.

In a manuscript found in the *Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid* (National Library of Spain, signature number M/1365), appears a *loa*, a *baile* and a *fin de fiesta* that accompany the mythological drama. These short theatrical pieces were usual in the palatial performances.

Sebastián Durón, official court musician and friend of Zamora, composed all the music for the mythological drama, including a symphony, the music for the *loa*, the *baile* and the *fin de fiesta*. With the exception of the accompaniment, all text and music for the four pieces has been lost (see Figure 1).



Another example of the minuet by Sebastián Durón survives (see Figure 2) and is preserved in the National Library of Spain and has the title *Hermosa fuente pura* (*Beautiful pure fountain*). This copy with calligraphy from the nineteenth century is possibly by the musicologist Francisco Asenjo Barbieri.

The musicologist dates the original work (owned by the famous nineteenth-century violinist, Jesus de Monasterio) from the early 18th century. He bases his claim on the decoration of the front-cover and on the type of paper (watermark). It is a minuet in 12/8 like an Italian Giga with text and a strophic form.

**Figure 1:** A. de Zamora and S. Durón. Minué from *Muerte en amor es la ausencia*, 1697. BNE, M/ 1365.

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*Minuet.*

1. Her mo-da fuente pu-ra, cu-yas lá-grimas es-cu-cho, el al-vay de sus  
2. Or-pe-se e-ros del pra-do, en quel ze-fi-ro ve mi-ro, bor-dando su come-  
3. sia-ca-sa e-ros te-lla-ga, en tu mi-ti-do-ros plan-dor, la ingrata hermosa  
4. Bor-dor po-bras sa-maña, del al-jo-for que te so-bro, verás como a tus

*Acompañado. Minuet.*

per-las, for-ja lá-grimas el al-vay de sus per-las, for-ja lá-grimas el al-  
ral-da, con sus pie-las su per-fec-cion, bor-dando su es-me-ral-da, con sus pie-las su per-fec-  
prenda, deste misero co-ra-son la ingrata hermosa prenda deste misero co-ra-  
Aguas, presta in-condio su afable ar-dor verás como a tus Aguas, presta in-condio su afable ar-

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**Figure 2:** S. Durón. *Minué humano Hermosa fuente pura*. BNE, Ms Barbieri.

A third example of a theatrical minuet of this period is *El sarao de la minue francés* (*The sarao of the French minuet*), by an anonymous author. It is strophic and presents the rhythmic characteristics of the French gigue or canary.

### Musical sources

The *Resumen de acompañar*, printed in 1714, is the oldest of the two music collections that are preserved for five-string baroque guitar of the Spanish composer and guitarist Santiago de Murcia.

Very little is known about the author. On the front-cover of the *Resumen* he describes himself as "Maestro de guitarra de la Reina Nuestra Señora Doña María Luisa Gabriela de Saboya" (guitar master of the queen). Maria Luisa, the first wife of Felipe V, died on February 14, 1714, before the *Resumen* was printed. In a letter to her grandmother dated July 1705, she describes in some detail how she spends her time and mentions that she is learning to play the guitar and study music. Murcia could have been at her service at that time<sup>3</sup>.

After the death of Queen Maria Luisa de Saboya, Felipe V married the Italian Isabel de Farnesio, who favored the Italian taste in the court. It is probable Isabel may have wanted to detach herself from the influences and memories of her husband's first wife.

Another important work of this author is the so-called *Codex Saldívar No. 4*. It is a manuscript of 94 pages in tablature. The *Codex* was found in 1943 in León, Mexico by Gabriel Saldívar y Silva. It does not seem likely that Murcia (will travel) would have travelled to Mexico. Probably Murcia made copies of his manuscripts for patrons who would export them to the new world.

*Resumen* contains 71 dances from the books of Raoul-Auger Feuillet and Louis Guillaume Pécour published between 1700 and 1706, and the *Codex* has thirteen of them. Murcia includes 29 minuets in *Resumen* and 17 in *Codex*. His books show the richness of Spanish and Latin American music for guitar in the 1700s and the influence of France and Italy<sup>4</sup>.

While in *Resumen* the dances of French origin predominate, in *Codex* there is a significant presence of Spanish and African-American dances. However, the minuet is the predominant dance in both collections:

Number of minuets

29 (*Resumen*)

17 (*Codex*)

Number of paspieds

10 (*Resumen*)

2 (*Codex*)

*El libro de música de clavicémbalo del Sr. Dn. Francisco de Tejada* is an important source of keyboard music of the first half of the XVIII century. The date 1721 appears on the front-cover. The document is a 72-page manuscript, located in the National Library with the signature M / 815. The cover is profusely decorated and the following annotation appears: "This Ms. was found in Seville at the end of 1872."

We do not know the identity of Mr. Tejada. Is he the author of the pieces, the copyist or the amateur for whom these works were written?

In this source there are many dances and other works in the French style along with Spanish and Italian pieces. It is remarkable that some minuets exist with different time-signatures, like 6/8 or even 4/4. Other minuets have text and a bass line with harmonies.

Number of minuets

48

"Atypical" minuets

12

Number of paspieds

1

**Dance sources**

Bartolomé Ferriol y Boxeraus has three treatises on the art of dancing in the French style, printed in Malaga, Capoa and Naples<sup>5</sup>.

Treaty 1 deals with the different steps of the *minuete*:

There are five ways to practise the minuet step, *regular* (*à deux mouvements*), *à la Boemiana* (*à trois mouvements*), *à trois mouvements* with the knee relaxed and *à une mouvement*).

It can be done in countless ways with ornaments and variations, but the dance teacher is entrusted and advised to consider that they must pay attention to the dance and the music the whole time since it is more beautiful to do a simple step in time than it is make many ornamentations to the music. (Treaty 1, p. 78).

It can be done in countless ways with ornaments and variations; this should be entrusted to the dance teacher, who should stress the need to continually pay attention to the relationship of the dance to the music, since it is more beautiful to do a simple step in time with the music than it is to do make many ornaments out of time (Treaty 1, p. 78).

This observation is similar to the advice given by Rameau and Minguet, the other important Spanish authors of this period. Ferriol continues:

If these steps are well executed, the *minuete* has great brilliance, but the best thing is for the lady to dance the five steps and man doing the regular step first, then everybody else afterwards. The ladies must dance the *demi-jette* with imperceptibility. (Treaty 1, p. 82-83).

but it is best if the lady and man both do the regular steps together for the first five steps, then other steps are added. The spring in the *demi-jette* for the ladies must be almost imperceptible (Treaty 1, p. 82-83).

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Regarding the *contratiempo del passapie*, Ferriol says that this step is made in place of a *passo de minuete* and then he depicts the many ways of doing it, with *cabriolas*, *battements*, etc. (Treaty 1, p. 86-89).

Ferriol explains the *balance* below:

The very celebrated step *balance* is practised in different ways but it is always composed of two *demicupés* and it should be executed smoothly [...] But the most beautiful thing is to do the *balance* every time in a different way, *simple*, with *frisado* (*battement* forward and backward), with *frisado trino* (*battement* two times forward and backward) and so on [...] You can make several *tortillès*, and other different variations; (which left them) this is left to the taste of the master and the pupil (Treaty 1, p. 90-92).

Foreign travellers occasionally criticize the faulty execution of the French courtly dances in Spain. Alexandre de Laborde, for instance, complains about the lack of “majestic grace”, the jumbling of steps, and the introduction of movements that are alien to the dance.

However, these travellers are fascinated when they see the Spaniards dance their traditional dances like the fandango<sup>6</sup>.

In Treaty 2, Chapter IV, Ferriol (exposes) describes the different arm movements for the *minuete*. The high arm of the *minuete* can be made of infinite fashions in countless ways. All these ways (of arm movements) of moving the arms have three (times) parts, each occupying



(of these occupies ) one *minima* (half note). They are used by both ladies and men. Finally (Ferriol advises to practice many times step and arms movements together until you have mastered this question.) Ferriol’s advice is to repeatedly practise the steps and arm movements together, until you have mastered them (Treaty 2, p. 149-155).

In Treaty 3, Chapters I and II deal with the different ways of dancing the *minuete* and *passapie* (Treaty 3, p. 199-211).

One important question is why is it that Ferriol only mentions the French dances, although he names Spanish steps as well.

**Figure 3:** P. Minguet e Yrol. *Breve tratado de los passos del Danzar a la Española*. 2nd Edition. Madrid, 1764.

Minguet, however, adds to his treatise on French dance a brief treatise of the steps of dancing in the Spanish style (1764) that are used today in *fandangos* and *seguidillas* and says that these steps can be used in French dances and vice versa. (Minguet, *Breve tratado de los passos del danzar a la española*, p. 14). The cover illustration of his *Breve tratado* was in fact

recycled from *Arte de danzar a la francesa*, where it illustrated a couple performing a minuet (see Figure 3). The image would suggest that the level of the arms, nearly shoulder-height, was just as appropriate for the fandango and seguidillas as it was for the minuet.

The French dancing master Dezais shows a choreography titled *Le menuet d'Espagne* in his *XIII Recueil de danses pour l'année 1715*, issued in Paris. The music for this piece is a rondeau with the structure ABACA. The steps are limited to *pas de menuet à deux mouvements*, *pas de menuet à trois mouvements* and *contretemps du menuet*, with some ornaments. The figures are essentially those of the standard minuet: Z, right hands, left hands and both hands. Why is this choreography titled *Le menuet d'Espagne*? Could it have been a compliment to Isabel de Farnesio (second wife of Felipe V of Spain) who married on 24 December 1714?<sup>7</sup>

### **Minuet and other dances**

A remarkable fact in 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish dance is the presence of the *minuete* step in *contradanzas*, together with *seguidillas* and *fandango* steps.

The *contradanza* was introduced in Spain in the early eighteenth century, although the use of *lazos* (spacial figures) was already known during the seventeenth century. The *contradanza* acquired different characteristics and adopted an accompaniment of Spanish music (*seguidilla* or *fandango*) with introduction of the steps corresponding to the pattern of the piece used.

During the Carnival there were the so-called "mask dances" in which two orchestras alternated to serve as musical support for the dancers. The places in which this type of dance was celebrated were generally theatres, both opera-theatres (Valencia, Seville, Madrid, Barcelona) and coliseums, dedicated to dramatic works. The patio seats were removed so that the surface would serve as a dance floor. The orchestras occupied the stage, and the public alternated between the patio, the boxes, the corridors and other different rooms<sup>8</sup>.

In *Los presumidos y las presumidas* (*The smug boys and girls*), a *contradanza* collected in Minguet, the dancers return to their places in the *seguidillas* and dance the *fandango* with their partner. *Fandango* steps are called for in another *contradanza* of the same period, *La Fandanguera*. It begins with bows to one's partner and continues with travelling *pasos de fandango* as in *La Miscelanea* (*The Miscellaneous*). The triple-metre section in question is identified as a *minuet*.

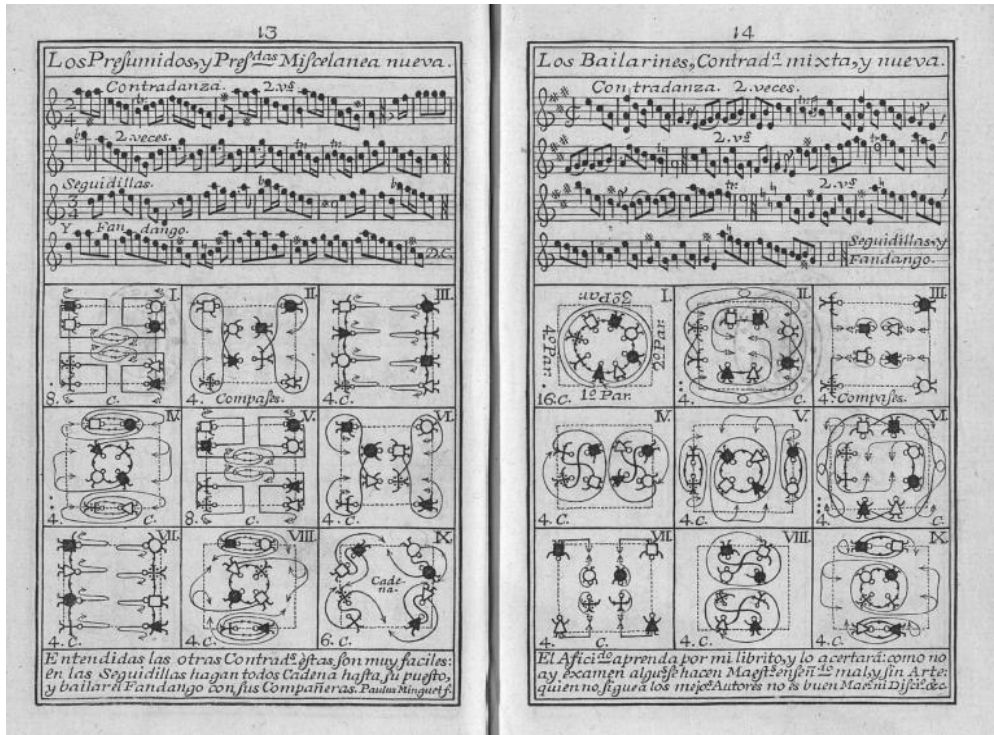


Figure 4: P. Minguet e Yrol. Breve explicación de diferentes danzas, y contradanzas, p. 13.

Some minuets became “hispanicized” as *minue afandangando*, which, as defined in Carlo Blasis’s dance treatise *Code of Terpsichore 1820*, is a “Minuet partly composed of the Fandango” (p. 35). Several examples of such minuets are found at the *Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid* (M. 2232. f. 13; M. 2232, pp. 10 and 13; and M. 1742, by Félix Máximo López)<sup>9</sup>.



Figure 5 F. Máximo López. Variaciones al minuet afandangado. BNE, M. 1742

The influence of the *fandango* would probably alter the tempo and character of the minuet, as can be seen in Julien Geoffroy's criticism of the *Les Noces de Gamache* Ballet (a section of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes), which premiered in Paris in 1801. The *fandango* that appears in this Ballet is described by him as "a sort of Spanish minuet, much quicker and more high-spirited than the ordinary minuet"<sup>10</sup>.

Another faster and more lively minuet is the so-called *minué congo*. Thanks to a manuscript dated in 1800, there is evidence that this kind of minuet was part of the teaching system at the *Real Seminario de Nobles de Madrid* (Royal College of Nobles in Madrid). The practice of dance was common in these educational institutions since its foundation by Felipe V in 1725. The minuet was one of the first dances that students learned, in its different variants: *minué figurado*, *minué de la Corte*, *minué del Congo*, *minué escocés* and *minué alemandado*. They also learned other dances like *el pasapié*, *las contradanzas inglesas*, *las francesas*, *las Contradanzas del Rigodón*, *la Gavota*, *la Alemanda* and *el Baile inglés*<sup>11</sup>.

Sieur Brives described a *menuet congo* in his *Nouvelle methode pour apprendre l'art de la danse sans maître*, Toulouse, 1779. (p. 20-25). There is also an example of a complete choreography of this kind of minuet in Saltator's *A Treatise on dancing*, 1802. (p. 73). The description of this lively minuet precedes Saltator's one of a more traditional *minuet grave*<sup>12</sup>.

Finally, congo minuets were mentioned in John Davis's *Travels of four years and a half in the United States of America during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1802* (London, 1803) and also by Moreau de Saint-Méry and several other sources around the same time.

## References

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Feuillet, R.-A: *Recueil de Dances composées par Mr. Feuillet, Maître de Dance*. Paris, 1706.

Minguet y Yrol, P: {Parte I} *Arte de danzar a la francesa, adornado con cuarenta y tantas láminas, que enseñan el modo de hacer todos los passos de las danzas de corte, con todas sus reglas, y de conducir los brazos en cada passo; y por chorographía demuestran cómo s deben escribir, y delinear otras: obra muy conveniente no solamente a la juventud, que quieren aprender el bien danzar, sino aun a las personas civiles, y honestas, a quien les enseña las*



*reglas para bien andar, saludar, y hacer las cortesías, que convienen en qualquier suerte de personas. Corregido en esta tercera impresión por su autor Pablo Minguet e Yrol. Madrid, 1758.*

Minguet y Yrol, P: *Breve explicación de diferentes danzas, y contradanzas, demostradas con media Chorographia.* Biblioteca Nacional de España, signature VE-340-47.

Minguet y Yrol, P: {Parte IV} *Breve tratado de los passos del danzar a la española, que oy se estilán en las seguidillas, fandango, y otros tañidos. También sirven en las danzas italianas, francesas, e inglesas, siguiendo el compás de la música, y las figuras de sus bayles Corregido en esta segunda impresión por su autor Pablo Minguet.* Madrid, 1764. E-Mn R.14607 y E Mn Barbieri R. 14649.

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Moreau de Saint-Méry, M. L. E: *De la Danse.* Imprimé par Bodoni. Parme, 1801.

Murcia, S. de: *Códice Saldívar n. 4, 1732.* Facsimile and transcription by Craig H. Russell. University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Murcia, S. de: *Resumen de acompañar la parte con la guitarra. Comprendiendo en él todo lo que conduce para este fin: en donde el aficionado hallará disueltas, por diferentes (sic) partes del ynstrumento, todo género de posturas, y ligaduras, en los siete signos natur(ale)s y accidental(e)s. Dedicado al yll(ustrisi)mo s(eño)r d(on) Jácome F(rancis)co Andriani caballero del Horden de Santiago, y embiado extr(aordina)rio de los cantones cathólicos. Por Santiago de Murcia m(aest)ro de guitarra de la reyna n(uestr)a s(eñor)a d(oña) M(ari)a Luisa Gabriela de Saboya q(ue) D(io)s aya.* (1714; ed. facsímil, Mónaco, 1980). E-Mn R. 5048.

Pécour, L. G: *Recueil de dances composées par M. Pécour, Pensionnaire des menus Plaisirs du Roy, et Compositeur des Ballets de l'Academie Royale de Musique de Paris, et mises sur le papier par M. Feuillet, Maître de Dance.* Paris, 1700.

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Saltator: *A Treatise on dancing.* The commercial gazette. Boston, 1802.  
*Varias contradanzas con sus músicas y explicación de todas figuras.* E-Mn M. 918.

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Figure 3: P. Minguet e Yrol. *Breve tratado de los passos del Danzar a la Española*. 2nd Edition. Madrid, 1764.

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Figure 5 F. Máximo López. *Variaciones al minuet afandangado*. BNE, M. 1742.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> The main documentary study of this group of French musicians in Spain has been carried out by M. BENOÎT in his article “Les musiciens français de Marie-Louise d’Orléans, reine d’Espagne”, *Revue Musicale*, 226, 1955, p. 48-60.

<sup>2</sup> Consult the monographic study on Desmarests, specifically the chapter referring to his stay in Spain. M. ANTOINE, *Henry Desmarests (1661-1741)*. *Biographie critique*. Paris: Picard, 1965.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Queen Maria-Luisa to her grandmother, dated December 8, 1705; cited by M. ANTOINE, *Henry Desmarests (1661-1741)*. *Biographie critique* (Paris, 1965), p. 104 note 1.

<sup>4</sup> On European musical features incorporated into the Spanish guitar repertoire in the Baroque period: C. H. RUSSELL, “Imported Influences in 17th and 18th Century Guitar Music in Spain”, *Actas del congreso internacional “España en la música de occidente”* vol. 1 (Madrid, 1987) p. 399-401.

<sup>5</sup> For this study the Capua edition of 1745 has been consulted.

<sup>6</sup> The digitized source is preserved in the Austrian National Library. A.de LABORDE, *Itinéraire descriptif de l’Espagne, et tableau élémentaire des différentes branches de l’Administration et de l’Industrie de ce Royaume*, vol. 1, editor Nicolle, 1809.

<sup>7</sup> On the front-cover of the the first edition of Rameau’s treatise, dated in 1725, it is written: “Maître à danser des Pages de sa Majesté Catholique la Reine d’Espagne”.

<sup>8</sup> In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century numerous booklets were published that described the *contradanzas*, as well as their music and details of the organization of these public balls. Some examples are shown in the section called “References” of this paper.

<sup>9</sup> See J. L. SEGURA MALDONADO, “El minué afandangado. Estudio comparativo de fuentes o la pieza clave de un gran rompecabezas”. *Cantos de Guerra y Paz: la música en las independencias iberoamericanas (1800-1840)* / coord. por Begoña Lolo y Adela Presas. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2016, p. 295-306.

<sup>10</sup> On the *fandango* and its connections with other contemporary dances, there is an excellent study by A. JONES, “Emergence and transformations of the fandango”, *Música oral del Sur*, Centro de Documentación Musical de Andalucía, nº 12, año 2015, p. 562-584.

<sup>11</sup> About dance teaching in noble colleges in Spain: D. CAMPOO SCHELOTTO, “Danza y educación nobiliaria en el siglo XVIII: el método de baile en el Real Seminario de Nobles de Madrid”, *Revista del Departamento de Historia del Arte y Música de la Universidad del País Vasco*, nº 5 (2015), p. 157-173.

<sup>12</sup> In the following link, R. POWERS proposes a reconstruction of Salvator’s congo minuet. [http://socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/congo\\_minuet.htm](http://socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/congo_minuet.htm)