

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL DANCE

EARLY RENAISSANCE DANCE

c. 1445 – *c.* 1535

A brief guide to the sources

David Wilson

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE
FOR HISTORICAL DANCE

Brief Guides to the Sources

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THE
EARLY DANCE CIRCLE
(founded in 1984)

promotes both the appreciation and
the understanding of historical dance
as practised in Western European
society from the early Renaissance to
the end of the twentieth century.

This includes perspectives on art,
music, dress and manners, in all their
particular social and historical context,
but it does not include classical ballet.

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EARLY RENAISSANCE DANCE

c. 1445 – *c.* 1535

A brief guide to the sources

While there is plenty of exciting dance music from 13th-century and 14th-century Europe, there are no sources giving technical details of actual dances before the mid-15th century. This booklet provides a brief guide to those sources that record step-sequences, floor-patterns and other technical information about dances current in western Europe between the approximate dates of 1445 and 1535.

It should not be supposed that these sources are the only ones relevant to an understanding of the dances of this period. The dances need to be understood in their social context, within the contemporary political situation, as well as related to local styles of dress and custom, not to mention the music. Descriptions of dancing in diplomatic reports and in literature are of great value for scene-setting, but can be disappointingly vague about the character of actual dances. For the most part, therefore, our detailed knowledge of individual dances is derived from the specialist sources listed here.

These can be divided into four main groups defined by their provenance:

- England
- France (with Burgundy, Cleves and Savoy)
- Italy
- Spain

Within each of these geographical regions the known surviving sources will be listed (as far as possible) in chronological order.

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ENGLAND

Two styles of dancing are known from England during this period: figured dances in a style broadly comparable with contemporary Italian examples, but in detail displaying a character all their own (1); and French Basse Dances, some of which are also unconventional (2, 3).

1. Buxton collection of dances (Gresley MS)

Location

Buxton, Derbyshire: Derbyshire Record Office, D77 box 38 (part of the Gresley of Drakelow papers).

Document

A pocket-book, 125 × 90 mm (the size of a passport), made partly of parchment and partly of paper, bearing the name of *Johannes Banys*.

Date

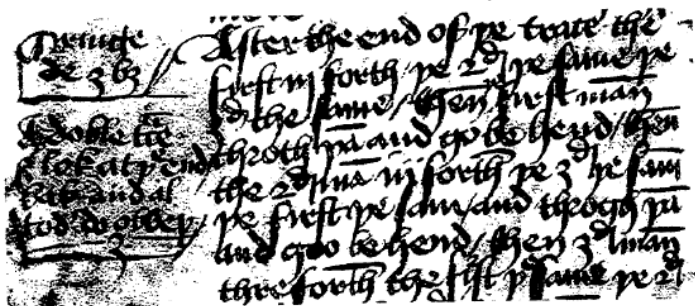
The character of the handwriting and that of the music are appropriate to a date between *c.* 1480 and *c.* 1520. The paper is watermarked with a mark mainly known from the 1470s and 1480s, which suggests a date no later than the last decades of the 15th century.

Contents

In addition to details of dances, the pocket-book contained two treatises in Latin, on chiromancy and physiognomy, and a number of prayers, also in Latin.

The information about dances is in English, but with a Derbyshire flavour. First comes a list of 92 dance names in approximate alphabetical order. Where comprehensible, these are mainly English, but a number are French, some with possible (but unproven) concordances with the known French repertoire. Two of the dances are for four dancers; the remainder are for two or three. Then follow descriptions of 25 of these dances, plus 'Temperans' (not previously mentioned). Finally, there are 13 single-line tunes, of which eight are for dances described in the previous section, three are for dances not

described in detail, and two are for dances whose names have not yet been deciphered.



Oringe (beginning of dance-description)

Steps

Brawle, doble, flowrdelice, hertt, lepe, meve, obeysaunce, rake, retrett, single, stop, tome, trett.

Dances normally start with a trace or double trace.

Publications

Text: Follows 1996 (some readings debatable).

Commentary: Nevile 1999; Wilson 1999.

2. Salisbury list of dances

Location

Salisbury, Wiltshire: Salisbury Cathedral Library, Johannes Balbus de Janua, *Catholicon* (Venice, 1497).

Document

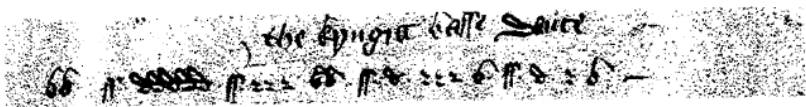
The dances are handwritten on both sides of the first flyleaf.

Date

The dances can only have been written down after the book was printed and bound. By comparison with other sources, a date between 1500 and 1520 seems appropriate, if uncertain.

Contents

Step-sequences are given for 20 Basse Dances (plus six duplicates). The names of the dances are mainly French, sometimes anglicised, often garbled, and sometimes unreadable. Only one is English.



the kyngis basse Dance

Steps are identified by the standard French abbreviations. No dance begins with a *révérence*: eleven have a double *branle* (*bb*), and thirteen have instead either *F* or *ff*. Nine dances are unusual in having all *mesures* (even up to eight in number) different.

Steps

b (brawle), *d* (double), *F/ff* (meaning unknown), *r* (reprise), *s* (single).

Publications

Text: Heartz 1958-63, 337-8; Crane 1968, *passim* under dance names; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Heartz 1958-63, 309-11, 339-40; Crane 1968, 24-5; Wilson 1986, 6-7; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

3. Coplande, 'The maner of dauncynge of bace daunces after the vse of fraunce & other places'

Location

Oxford: Bodleian Library, Douce B. 507 (only known copy).

Document

This text is printed on the final leaf of a small volume by Alexander Barclay, *The introductory to wryte & to pronounce Frenche* (London: Robert Coplande, 1521).

Date: 1521.

Contents

Coplande used the empty space at the end of Barclay's manual to print his own translation of the standard French treatise on the Basse Dance. The translation is faithful, though abridged. To this he added tabulations of seven Basse Dances as examples, using the standard abbreviations.

¶ *Le petit rouen* with *titl. mesures*.
B. b. ff. dddddd. ff. 335. b.
ff. d. ff. 133. b.
ff. dddddd. ff. 333. b. *Barcyle*
ff. ddd. ff. 333. b.

This is the only source for the French Basse Dance to set out the steps in their individual *mesures*.

Steps

Brawle, double, reprise (denoted by 3), reverence, single.

Publications

Text: Furnivall 1871, clx-clxii; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Hcartz 1958-63, 305-9; Wilson 1986, 8; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

FRANCE

with Burgundy, Cleves and Savoy

French sources are almost entirely devoted to the Basse Dance. Additional information comes from England (2, 3), Italy (6, 11, 12) and Spain (1, 2), as well as Arbeau in 1589. Different styles of Basse Dance appear to be current in the mid- and late 15th century, the early and mid-16th century. This may be a simple chronological development, or it may result from the successive dominance of a number of different regional traditions.

Both French and Italian sources feature a small number of French dances of other types.

1. 'The Nancy dances'

Location

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, manuscript copy of Guillaume Cousinot, *Gestes des noble François ...* (fonds français 5699).

Document

The dances are handwritten by the book's owner, Jean of Orléans, on the reverse of the first flyleaf.

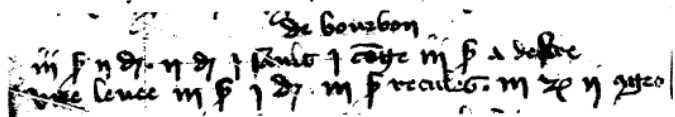
Date

Jean very probably copied down the dances in 1445 when he rejoined the royal court in Nancy, on his return to France after being held hostage in England for over 32 years.

Contents

Step-sequences are recorded for seven dances. Five of these are Basse Dances; the other two use similar steps, but are not arranged in conventional *mesures*. The Basse Dances have features that are not found later: steps made to the side or backwards, singles in groups of three, doubles and reprises in groups of two or four, and certain steps

that are not found elsewhere in French Basse Dance. These features presumably reflect the relatively early date, as well as the style of Basse Dance favoured by the French royal court.



Steps

Congé, leuée, pas double, pas menu, pas sangle, reprise, sault.

Publications

Text: Wilson 1995, 24; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Crane 1968, 21-3; Dixon 1988, 24; Wilson 1995, 24-7; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

2. *Sensuit lart et instruction de bien dancier* (Toulouse)

Location

London: Royal College of Physicians (only known copy).

Document

The first known printed book on dancing in Europe, printed in Paris by Michel Toulouze. The headings and the musical staves are in red.

Date

Toulouze's use of gothic type is believed to be limited to a few years around 1495.

Contents

This is the earliest known copy of the standard treatise on the Basse Dance. Six pages explain the dance's structure and how the steps are to be performed. A further 19 pages display tunes and suggested step-sequences for 48 dances, of which 45 are Basse Dances, two are probable examples of Basse Dance Mineur, and one is a dance for three dancers for which a floor-pattern is supplied by Italian source 12.

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation. The first staff is for 'Bayonne' and the second for 'La nauaroyse'. Both pieces are written in square neumes on a four-line staff. The notation includes rhythmic values and accidentals (sharps and flats) written in a medieval script. The text 'Bayonne a xxxiii. notes a.iiii. mesures' and 'La nauaroyse a xxxiii' is written in a similar script above the staves. Below the staves, there are two lines of rhythmic notation: 'd 222 b' and 'notes a.iiii. mesures' followed by 'a ddd a 222 b a d 2 d 2 b'.

Bayonne and La nauaroyse

One of the Basse Dances ('La ioyeux espoyr') comes from a different tradition to the rest, that of the Dauphiné and Provence.

Steps

Branle, desmarche (denoted by r), pas double, pas simple.

Publications

Text: Scholderer 1936; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Hertz 1958-63, 296-7, 331-4; Jackman 1964; Crane 1968, 7-12; Wilson 1986, 5-6, 10; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

3. 'Le Manuscrit dit des basses danses de la Bibliothèque de Bourgogne' (Brussels MS)

Location

Brussels: Bibliothèque Royal Albert 1^{er}, MS 9085.

Document

A book of 25 leaves is handwritten in gold and silver ink on black-

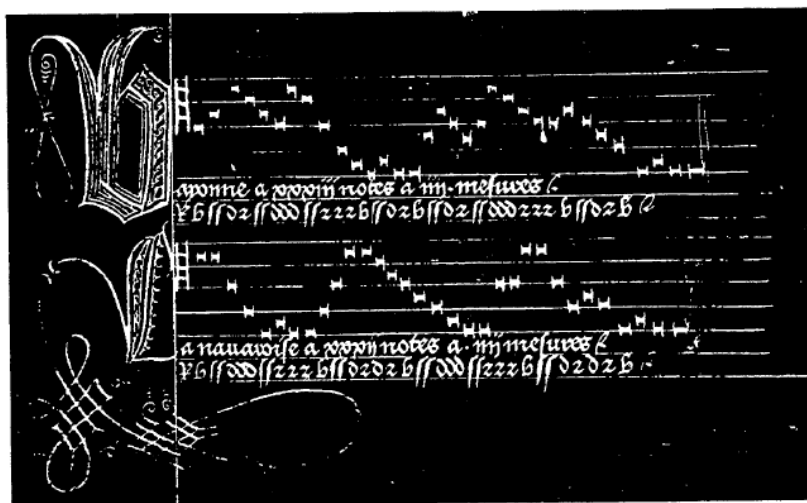
dyed parchment. It is in poor condition, several times rebound and the leaves no longer in their correct order; at least one leaf is missing. The actual volume is no longer available for study; its place has been taken for all practical purposes by the 1988 facsimile.

Date

The book comes from the library of Marguerite of Austria, when 'Princess of Spain' (1495-1501). If the use of black parchment refers to her widowed status, the time frame is reduced to 1497-1501.

Contents

This copy of the standard Basse Dance treatise mostly differs from that in (2) only in the spelling; exceptions are two discrepancies in the description of steps, and a fuller account of how to fit the steps to the music. There are then tunes and suggested step-sequences for 58 dances, of which 55 are Basse Dances, two are the same Basse Dance Mineurs as in (2), and one is the same dance for three as in (2); but fifteen of the dances are not in (2).



Bayonne and La nauaraise

There are many concordances with sources (5) and (6), which are from the regions of the Dauphiné and Provence, which border on the Duchy of Savoy, in which Turin lay.

Steps

Congé (denoted by 9), pas double, pas simple, reprise, révérence.

Publications

Text: Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Wilson 1986, 7-8; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

5. *Arena, Ad suos compagniones studentes ...*

Location

At least 41 editions were published between 1528 and 1758, and copies are widely available. The British Library, London, holds a copy of the first edition (1070.b.2).

Document

A comic poem on dancing, written in macaronic Latin.

Date

The first edition was printed in Lyon, probably in 1528. (All extant copies have abundant printer's errors.) An enlarged second edition appeared in 1529. The text was further enlarged in subsequent editions, but the new material contains little truly significant for dance.

Contents

After a good deal of preliminary matter, the main poem was originally in 638 lines, extended to 1670 lines in the second edition. The text explains the social importance of dancing; the difference between standard and non-standard Basse Dances; how to perform the individual steps of the Basse Dance; how to perform Branles; dance-floor etiquette; style in dancing; and how to organise a private dance. The object of the poem is to entertain more than to give genuine instruction, and technical descriptions of steps are couched in terms

that are seldom fully intelligible.

The poem is followed by the names of 31 Basse Dances that can be performed to 19 different step-sequences (extended to 58 dances and 29 step-sequences in the second edition), but there are no tunes.

*Le grant helas. Elle me tient.
Tant ay dennuy a. r. p.
R^o ff d ff r^o ff ddd ff r^o ff d ff r^o.*

*Le grant helas, Elle me tient and
Tant ay dennuy (1st edition)*

*Le grant helas. Elle me tient. Tant
ay dennuy. Verdemonc a. r. p.
R^o ff d ff r^o ff ddd ff r^o ff d ff r^o.*

The same three dances, plus
Verdemonc (2nd edition)

Steps

Congedium (denoted by 9), duplum, reprise, reuerentia, simplum.

Publications

Text: Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Heartz 1958-63, 334-6; Wilson 1986, 8; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

6. *S Ensuyent plusieurs Basse dances tant Communes que Incommunes (Moderne)*

Location

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, Coll. Rothschild, VI-3 bis-66, no. 19.
Another copy is reported from Besançon: Bibliothèque Municipale.

Document

An updated version of the standard treatise on the French Basse Dance (2, 3) was printed probably in Lyon, perhaps by Jacques Moderne, under whose name it is commonly cited.

Date

Unknown; its place in the development of French Basse Dance (late, but not final) suggests a conjectural date of c. 1535.

Contents

The treatise proper is closely based on (2), with updated technical information, but also with a number of glaring errors. The 199 step-sequences that follow define the Basse Dance repertoire of the second quarter of the 16th century: 35 are Communes, 137 are Incommunes, and the remaining 27 are either duplicate or triplicate versions (sometimes with variant step-sequences). No tunes are given.

“ La douloureuse
Sans elle ne puis,
R 6 ff d ff r d ff r 6 ff ddd ff r 6

La douloureuse with 2 mesures

La Navarre.
La douloureuse,
r 6 ff d ff r d ff r 6 ff ddd ff r 6
ff d ff r 6

La douloureuse with 3 mesures

Steps

Branle, congé, pas double, pas simple, reprise, révérence.

Publications

Text: Minkoff 1985 [facsimile]; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Hertz 1958-63, 299-305; Wilson 1986, 9; Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

—o0o—

ITALY

All but the last of the sources listed here document details of the Lombard style of dancing, current at least as far south as Naples during the second half of the 15th century and into the first decades of the 16th century. Of particular significance are the treatises of Domenico of Piacenza, Antonio Cornazano, and Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro (also known as Giohanne Ambrosio).

Guglielmo's treatise is known in four recensions and in multiple copies; each copy had its own selection of dance-descriptions. Only a few of these copies are closely datable, so their true chronological order remains uncertain. Version 1 of the treatise proper is reproduced in source (6) and version 2 in sources (8-9); version 3 is represented by source (4) and version 4 by source (7). (*See also p. 37.*)

The final source (14) shows us the transition to a 16th-century style of dancing that abandoned many of the conventions current in the 15th century. Most of the dances in this source were by Giovannino; early versions of three of these appear without attribution in the early 16th-century sources (11-12) that otherwise mainly contain dances of 15th-century character.

1. Treatise of Domenico of Piacenza (Pd)

Location

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds ital. 972.

Document

This manuscript was in the library of the Sforza Dukes of Milan at Pavia until the contents of that library were carried off by Louis XII of France in 1499. It remained in the French Bibliothèque Royale, first at Blois and then at Fontainebleau and Paris, until that was incorporated in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Early catalogue numbers were 2416 (Pavia?), 1678 (Blois), and 7747 (Paris).

The codex is incomplete: space has been left for 35 decorative initials and for the whole first word of the treatise, none of which was supplied. The lettering is of varied quality and is in six different hands. The two principal scribes consistently spelled certain words differently, one of them being influenced by Venetian dialect.

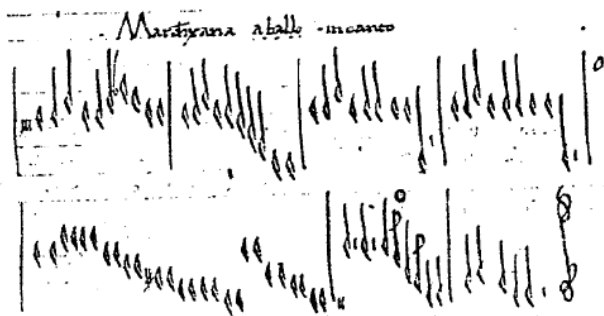
Date

Neither the compilation of this treatise, nor this copy of it, is exactly datable. The treatise was written after Domenico had been knighted (1452?) and conjecturally before Cornazano's treatise (1455).

Contents

As was usual, the treatise proper was followed by descriptions of actual dances, composed by Domenico.

Technical matter in the treatise concerned the qualities essential to a good dancer; the characteristics of the four *misure*, which Domenico may have been the first to co-ordinate into a coherent system; and the relationship between steps and music.



Marchexana aballo. eua in una hemo e una dona.
 Prima fano amano tempi oto ^{littarelo} demexura quademaria come
 negado con la pe sinistro xirmandate la dona. E lo homo ua in
 anti con frapaminti tri de piedi suxo elpe sinistro et uno tempo

Marchexana: tune and beginning of dance-description
 (NB. word cancelled by subscript dots, and missing initial)

There were descriptions of 18 *balli* (each with a single-line tune) and 4 *basse danze* (without tunes), plus an additional dance (apparently a *bassa danza*, but not certainly by Domenico).

Steps

Continentia, doppio/dupio, escambiamento, frapamento, mezauolta, mouimento, passito, posada, represa, reuerentia, saltetto, salto, scorsa, sempio, tempo di piua, tempo/motto di quadernaria, tempo di saltarello, uoltatonda.

Publications

Text: Wilson 1988.

2. Treatise of Antonio Cornazano (V)

Location

Vatican City: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, MS capponiano 203.

Document

This is a professionally written library copy on vellum, embellished in red, blue and gold.

Date

The treatise was originally written for, and dedicated to, the eight-year-old Ippolita Sforza on the occasion of her betrothal in 1455. The unique surviving copy was re-dedicated to her half-brother Sforza Secondo, without alteration of the basic text, in 1465 or just after, on the occasion of Ippolita's marriage in Naples.

El dançare consiste in quattro
principal misure. Piua. Sal
tarelllo. Quaternaria. e Bassan
dança. Piua non e altro che pas
si doppi ateggiati: e accelerati p
prestoca di misura che concita

Contents

While Cornazano covers much the same ground as Domenico, the discussion of style and the description of dances are integrated in a more literary composition. Included are 8 *balli* (with their tunes) and 3 *basse danze* (without tunes) all by Domenico and all featured in (1), plus three tunes said to be suitable for *basse danze* or *saltarelli*.

Steps

Cambiamento/scambio, continentia, contrapasso, doppio, frapamento, meçauolta, moto quadernario, mouimento, passetto, picçigamento, ripresa, ripresetta, ruerentia, salto, tempo di piua, tempo di saltarello, tempo di saltarello todescho, trascorsa, volta tonda.

Publications

Text: Mazzi 1915-16; Smith 1995.

Commentary: Inglehearn & Forsyth 1981.

3. Foligno collection of dances (Fol)

Location

Foligno: Seminario Vescovile, Biblioteca Seminarile I. Iacobilli, MS D.I.42 (formerly B.V.14), fol. 1-4.

Document

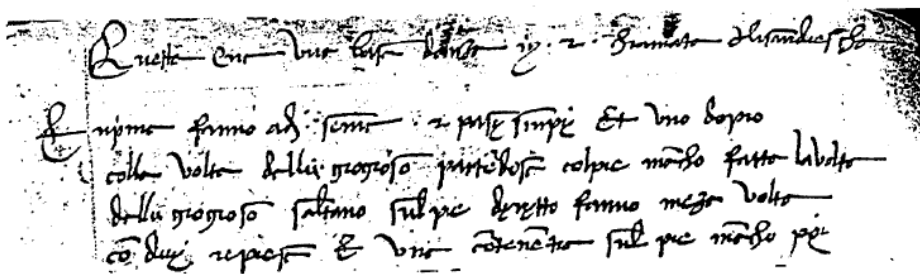
The first four leaves of a notebook carry dance-descriptions.

Date

Associated documents in a similar hand include accounts dated 1455, 1461 and 1462. These can give only an approximate date to the dances, which could have been written down either earlier or later.

Contents

The collection comprises descriptions of 7 *basse danze* (one repeated in a near-identical version). Two are unique to this source (composers unknown); two are by Domenico, and three by Guglielmo.



Start of the first version of *Alisandrescha*

Steps

Contenenzia, dopio, meza volta, passo, scasetto/scosso, represa, reuerentia, sinpio, tempo di saltarellu, volta dellu giogioso.

Publications

Text: Pulignani 1887.

4. Paris copy of Guglielmo's treatise (Pg)

Location

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds ital. 973.

Document

This handsome copy of Guglielmo's treatise was written on vellum by Paganus Raudensis (Pagano of Rho) and embellished with illuminated initials, Sforza *impreses* and the famous miniature of three dancers. It was presented to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Count of Pavia, who succeeded his father Francesco as Duke of Milan three years later.

It was, like (1) and (7), carried off from the ducal library in Pavia in 1499. Held at first at Blois, at some stage it entered the library of J. P. G. Chastre de Congé, whence it returned to the Bibliothèque Royale in 1728. Early catalogue numbers were 1725 (Blois), 101 (Congé) and 7747³ (Paris).

Date: October 1463.

Contents

This is a copy of what appears to be the *third* known version of Guglielmo's treatise (identified by being in two 'books', with the picture of three dancers before the appended dance-descriptions).

The first book expounds the six principles of dancing; presents six exercises of practical skill; lays down rules for accompanying music; and adds a note on female deportment. The second book takes the form of a debate between Guglielmo and his pupils, in which they challenge four of his assertions and he rebuts their criticism. There are then descriptions of 14 *basse danze* (5 by Domenico, 9 by Guglielmo), without tunes, and 17 *balli* (12 by Domenico, 5 by Guglielmo), with tunes for 13 of them. Three of Domenico's *basse danze* and two of his *balli* found here are not present in (1), and others appear in drastically revised versions.

This is a careful copy, but still has some errors.

BASSADANZA CHIAMATA PELLEGRINA
IN TRE FATTA PER GVILIELMO
IN prima doi sempij et doi doppij comi
ciando col pie sinistro et poi dia una
meza uolta in sul pie dritto . et facia
no due riprese . una sul sinistro ell altra

Steps

Continenza, doppio, meza uolta, mouimento, passetto, ripresa, ripresa in portogalese, riuerenza, salto, schosso, sempio, tempo di piva, tempo di saltarello, tempo di saltarello todesco, uolta del gioioso, uolta tonda.

Publications

Text: Sparti 1993 [edition].

Commentary: Sparti 1993.

5. Venice collection of dances (Ven)

Location

Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, MS Ital. II. 34 (=4906), fol. 105.

Document

A notebook of six leaves is bound into the same volume as an astrological text (*Il libro di Sidrach*). Dance-descriptions were written on both sides of the first page (fol. 105).

Date

A conjectural date of c. 1470 is inferred from associated documents, but this cannot be certain.

Contents

There are descriptions of three *balli* by Domenico and of two *basse danze* unique to this source, as well as two shorter phrases of dance ('La moderna', 'El saltarelo'). No music is given.

graciosa 2. a. finca. e. po.
2. pasi fempie. f. dopio covar
reuerencia. e. meza. o. lta. p.
doto. d. p. c. o. u. d. r. i. o. c. h. u. e. n. e.
el. d. e. v. o. m. i. n. a. c. i. o. f. a. n. e. p. r. e.
p. o. i. c. l. a. u. d. m. d. e. z. o. y. o. x. o.
2. n. u. o. c. i. e. p. o. i. 2. p. a. s. i.
f. u. p. e. f. d. o. p. p. o. u. a. r.

The beginning of *Graciosa*

Steps

Continencia, contrapaso, dopio, mezaolta, paso/boto de satarelo, prexa, reuerencia, salto, scoso, senpio, uolta, uolta del goyoxo.

Publications

Text: Pontremoli & La Rocca 1993.

Commentary: Smith 1990; Pontremoli & La Rocca 1993.

6. First Florence copy of Guglielmo's treatise (FN)

Location

Florence: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS magliabecchiano XIX.9.88 (formerly Stroziano 173).

Document

Although professionally written and clearly intended for someone's library, there is no dedication.

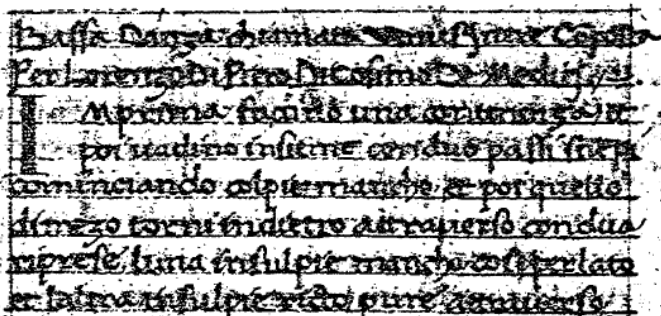
Date

If 'Lauro' and 'Venus' were composed for Lorenzo de' Medici's wedding, which is a plausible but unsure conjecture, this manuscript dates from 1469 at the earliest. It is in any case unlikely that Lorenzo composed these dances any earlier.

Contents

This is a copy of the *first* known version of Guglielmo's treatise. It has only the first book of the treatise, which is followed by unused space for a picture showing *two* (not three) dancers. The chapter headings differ from those in later versions. The appended dance-descriptions are the same as those in (4) with the addition of three *basse danze*, one by Giuseppe Ebreo and two by Lorenzo de' Medici. All are without tunes.

This is a less careful text than (4), yet it avoids some of (4)'s errors.



Beginning of *Venus*

Steps

Continenza, contrapasso, doppio, meza uolta, passecto, ripresa, ripresa in portoghallese, riuerenza, salto, schossecto, sciempio, tempo di piva, tempo di salterello, tempo di salterello tedesco, uolta del gioioso, uolta tonda.

Publications

Text: Zambrini 1873 [modernised, with some misreadings].

7. Paris copy of Ambrosio's treatise (Pa)

Location

Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds ital. 476.

Document

A professionally written copy from the Sforza library, which, like (1) and (4), was carried off by Louis XII. It carries early catalogue numbers, 1017 (Blois?) and 7746 (Paris).

Date

The *fourth* version of Guglielmo's treatise appeared under his new name of Giohanne Ambrosio, adopted on conversion to Christianity in *c.* 1464-5, so it can be no earlier than that. The present copy, in its turn, must be later than any of the events listed in the attached artistic autobiography – that is, definitely after 1471 and less certainly after 1474 – but evidently not long after, or else the autobiography should presumably have received a further supplement.

Contents

The treatise is essentially a word-for-word copy of (4), with minor corrections, with substitution of the name Giohanne Ambrosio for Guglielmo throughout, but also with substantial and important additions. These supplements comprise four additional paragraphs in Book II; one extra *bassa danza* and four extra *balli*, all unique to this source; and an artistic autobiography written in four instalments by three different hands.

CAPITOLO DE DANCARE CON MANTELLINA

Ancora siate aiutati aiutati che bisogna
Altra dilericione de dancare cō vna
Mantellina corta più che con vna turca.
Ne anche con vno vestito/ Et la cagion sic
Che la mantellina piglia vento ch' como
tu dai vn salto o vna uolta La mantellina
Se arimoue elle di bisogno ch'acerti

Steps

Continencia, doppio, meça volta, mouimento, passecto, rimpresa, rimpresa im portogalese, riuerencia, salto, schosso, sempio, tempo di piuma, tempo di saltarello, tempo di saltarello todesco, volta del gioioso, volta tonda.

Publications

Text: Smith 1995 [but does not recognise all the scribal corrections].
Commentary: Sparti 1993.

8. Modena copy of Guglielmo's treatise (M)

Location

Modena: Biblioteca Estense, MS ital. 82.a.J.94 (formerly α .J.94; VII.A.82; and K.V.22).

Document

A professionally written library copy.

Date

Not closely datable. This manuscript reproduces what is believed to be the *second* version of the treatise, but the editorial mistakes and insertions probably imply that there is at least one intervening copy.

Contents

The treatise now has both books, but still refers to a picture of *two* dancers (without leaving any space for it). There are stupid editorial mistakes at the end of Book I and the beginning of Book II. There is extra matter in Book II, partly derived from Domenico's treatise (1), but also including a section entitled 'Che cosa e ballare'. There are descriptions of five *basse danze* (two by Domenico, one by Guglielmo, and two anonymous) and ten *balli* (all by Domenico), without tunes. Lacunae are not uncommon.

Che cosa e ballare.
In pmo e da sapere continentie. Ripresi Passi scem-
pi Passi doppij Ripresi i volta Passi scempi i
volta. Galoppi vna volta di pua. Meza volta
Volta di bassadanza. Tempi di saltarello Tempi di
pua. Squassetto. Passi doppij suso vn pede Rie-
rentia passata. Misura Memoria. Partir di ter-
zeno Acre Maniera Et mouimento corporale por-

Steps

Continentia, contrapasso, doppio, galoppo, meza volta, mouimento, ripresa, ripresa portogalesse, riuerentia, saltetto, scempio, squassetto, tempo di pua, tempo di saltarello, tempo di saltarello todesco, volta del gioioso.

Publications

Text: Roncaglia 1885.

9. Siena copy of Guglielmo's treatise (S)

Location

Siena: Biblioteca Comunale, MS L.V.29.

Document

A handsome library copy professionally written on vellum, with initials and headings picked out in gold, red and blue. A coat of arms

on the first page presumably indicates the patron for whom this copy was made, but this has not been identified.

Date

The treatise appears to have been copied from the same exemplar as (8), or from (8) itself. It includes dances attributed to Giohane Ambrosio, so is later than *c.* 1464-5. Other dances described include the *bassa danza* 'Consolata' by Phylippo, who is likely to be Filippo Bussi of Biandrata (active in the 1470s). If so, this source will be no earlier than 1470 at the earliest.

Contents

The treatise has the same editorial blunders and extra material as (8). The number of dance-descriptions has been increased to 29 *basse danze* (one in two versions) and 33 *balli* (two in two versions), all without tunes. All but one of the dances found in (8) appear here in virtually identical versions; 13 of the *basse danze* and 10 of the *balli* (all but one anonymous) are found in no other source. There are frequent and substantial lacunae, as well as other errors.

Bassadanza chiamata con
solata in quattro composta
per Phylippo
I prima quatro conti
nente poi sparano co
due scempij et uno doppio co
lla uolta del gioioso et poi u
na continenta poi gliuo
mini pigliano le donne colle
mani diete et fanno infie

Steps

Continentia, contrapasso, doppio, doppio galapade, galoppo, meza uolta, mouimento, passetto, posata, ripresa, ripresa portogallese, riuerentia, saltetto, scempio, schossecto, scosso, squassetto, stracorsa, tempo di piva, tempo di salterello, tempo di salterello tedesco, trapassino, trapasso, tucta uolta, uolta del gioioso, uolta intera, uolta tonda.

Publications

Text: Mazzi 1914-15.

10. Viterbo collection of dances (Vit)

Location

Viterbo: Archivio di Stato, Notarile di Montefiascone, protocollo 11.

Document

Miscellaneous papers of the notary Lanzilotto Ricciarelli are bound together into ten volumes, one of which includes four dance-descriptions. Many of the papers are not in good condition.

Date

The dances are undated. Associated papers have dates ranging from 1468 to 1505. Ricciarelli himself practised from 1468 to 1527.

Contents

There are descriptions of three *balli* (one in two versions), all of which are ornamented versions of dances for which plain versions are given in other sources.

The faded ink and poor condition of the paper prevent satisfactory reproduction of a sample of the text.

Steps

Alzata de pede, contrapasso, doppio, meza volta dritta, meza volta reversa, passo, reverentia, represa doppia, ripresa, saltarello, salteto, salto, salto galante, scempice, squassetto, trapassetto, volta del gioioso, volta dentro, volta dritta, volta reversa.

Publications

Text: Sparti 1996.

Commentary: Sparti 1996.

11. Second Florence copy of Guglielmo's treatise (FL)

Location

Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Antinori 13.

Document

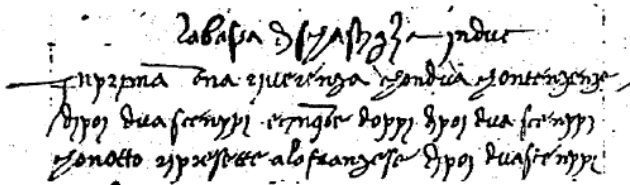
Apparently a working copy, written in a cursive but legible hand.

Date

The main part of the manuscript was completed in December 1510. Four further *balli* were added later.

Contents

The text both of the treatise and of the appended dance-descriptions is basically that of (6) or of a common source, but often garbled. To this have been added one *bassa danza* (with a concordance in Spain, source 2) and four *balli* (three of which are in 16th-century rather than 15th-century mode).



Beginning of *Labassa dischastiglia*

Steps

Chontinenza, chontrapasso, doppio, doppio de la tangielosa, meza uolтта, pasetto, paso, passo falso, ripresa, ripresa in portoghalese, ripresetta ala franzese, riuerenza, riuerezetta, saltto, scenpio, schosetto, tempo di piua, tempo di salterelo, tempo di salterelo tedesco, trapassino, uolta de troboni, uolta del goioso, uolta tonda.

Publications

Text: Pescerelli 1974.

12. New York copy of Guglielmo's treatise (NY)

Location

New York: Public Library for the Performing Arts, (S) *MGZMB-Res. 72-254.

Document

Another working copy, also in cursive, but difficult to read both because the hand is irregular and because the script is faint. It is described as being 'the copy of M[ae]str[o] Giorgio and the Jew, of dancing *basse danze* and *balletti*'; it is not clear if this refers to authorship of the text or to ownership of the manuscript.

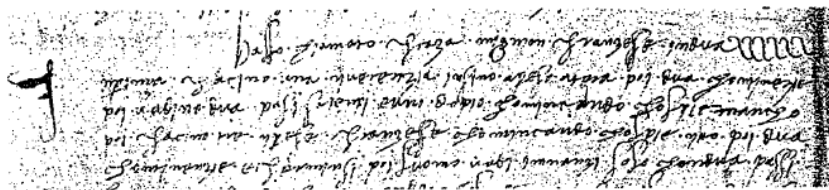
Date

The manuscript is not formally dated, but it shares features with (11) that indicate a broadly similar date; these include two or three *balletti* in the 16th-century manner and the use of 16th-century steps like *passettini*.

Contents

The text has clearly been compiled mainly from two earlier sources, one close to or identical with (6), the other similarly related to (7). It begins by following (6): Book I of the treatise is followed by 21 *basse danze* and 16 *balli*, mostly in versions very close to (6). Next come 13 *balletti* (of which two resemble versions of *balli* in (7), but most are unique to this source), a further *bassa danza* and two *balli*. The text continues with Book II of the treatise, with the same additions (now badly garbled) as in sources (7) and (8), another *bassa danza* and one more *ballo*. None of the dances have tunes. Altogether, four of the *basse danze*, six of the *balletti* and three of the *balli* are found in no other source.

It is noteworthy that, while the text of the treatise has been copied down without understanding, that of the dances normally improves on the versions from which they appear to have been copied.



The beginning of *Frazza mignon franzesse*

Steps

Chontinenttia, chontrapaso, doppio, dopio ghalopato, doppio portoghalese, meza uolta, pasetto, pasettino, passo della tangielosa, passo di natura, ripresa, ripresa franzesse, ripresa ghalopata, ripresa in portoghallese, riuerentia, riuerenzetta, schosetto, sciempio, sciempio fiorito, tempo di piua, tempo/paso di saltarelo, tempo di salterelo todescho, uolta tonda.

Publications

Text: Francalanci 1990.

13. Nuremberg collection of dances (N)

Location

Nuremberg: Germanisches Nazionalmuseum, HS 8842/GS 1589.

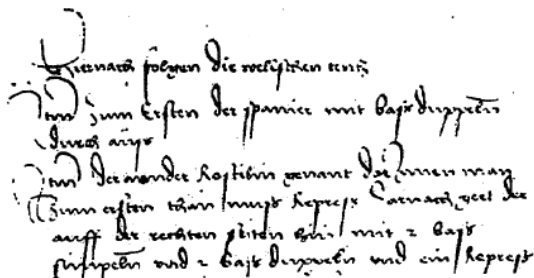
Document

A letter written in cursive from Johannes Cochläus in Bologna to the humanist Willibrand Pirckheimer in Nuremberg.

Date: 1517.

Contents

Cochläus sent, for the benefit of Pirckheimer's daughters, descriptions in German of eight Italian dances, which he described from the point of view of the spectator (thus 'left' means 'stage right').



Hiernach folgen die rechtigen einig
von zum Ersten der spanier mit bayr doppel
dunst anig
von dem andern Rostibin genannt der zinnen man
zum ersten tanz musz heprez Sacment geel die
auff die ersten stiden sein mit 2 bayr
pistipen und 2 bayr doppel und ein heprez

Der spanier and the beginning of Rostibin

The dances comprise 1 *bassa danza* (unique to this source) and 7 *balli* (6 known from Italian sources and 1 unique to this source).

Steps

Allzada, baß duppel, baß simpel, continenz, contraß, duppel, ploßpelg, referentz, repreß, simpel, volta.

Publications

Text: Wetzel 1990.

14. Manuscript of Il Papa

Location

New York: Public Library for the Performing Arts, (S) *MGZMB-Res. 72-255.

Document

A codex of 14 paper leaves bearing dances, written by Cosmus Ticcus (Cosmo Ticcio).

Date

This is ascribed to the 1550s in the New York catalogue. The fact that early versions of three of its dances are found in sources (11) and (12) suggests that this document, or at least the archetype from which it may have been copied, is likely to be a generation earlier.

Contents

An introduction by 'Il Papa', teacher of dancing, is followed by descriptions of 15 dances (11 by Giovannino and 2 each by Il Papa and Il Lanzino). These no longer feature the 4 *misure* used in the 15th century with their changes of rhythm and tempo. Instead, each dance consists of variations performed to the several playings of a single tune (a formula still current in the collections of Caroso and Negri in the late 16th century).

Balletto chiamato la vita composto
di Giouannino

In prima pigliarsi per mano et siccome facciamo le contrarie
dua scampi e se passetti; dopo la donna si uolta e goccina
decto cinque passetti e fermata e la donna fao una
reuerenza col pie manico aglio et gli si sulla ma ritto
et in qd si fonda con una reuerenza col pie ritto d'ito lo

Beginning of *La Vita* [di Colino]

Steps

Continenza, doppio, passettino, passetto, passo, passo falso, passo in
trauerso, ripresa, riuerenza, riuerenzetta, sempio, trapassino, uolta,
uolta di Lasso, uolta di Tromboni.

Publications

Text: a transcript and translation by Joseph Casazza and Elizabeth
Cain is available on line at

<http://www.nysl.org/research/lpa/dan/ilpapa.htm>.

Commentary: Wilson 2003, 62.

SPAIN

The two Spanish sources furnish details of a suite of dances (*baja/baixa-alta-loyoso*) that is also found in one of the Italian sources (11), where the three dance-types are called *bassa-alta-gioioso*.

1. Gratia Dei, *La criança y virtuosa dotrina ...*

Location

Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, sign. 878.

Document

Pedro de Gratia's poem survives in a single incomplete printed copy, without place or date of printing.

Date

On internal evidence, the poem cannot have been completed before 1488. It is dedicated to Isabel, eldest daughter of the 'Catholic Kings', Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile. It seems likely to have been written before her marriage in 1490 to John II 'the Perfect' of Portugal. The inferred date is thus 1488/90.

Content

The poem is concerned with princely etiquette. One stanza gives the sequence of steps of a dance performed after a banquet, identified as a *baja* by its similarity to French Basse Dance.

**Començando dança e
Tras la reuerencia dos continencias
p dos senzillos con cinco dobles
con dos senzillos entre los nobles**

Steps

Continencia, doble, represa, reverencia, senzillo.

Publications

Text: Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

2. Cervera collection of dances

Location

Cervera, Catalunya: Arxiu Històric Comarcal de Cervera, Manuscrits, "Notacions gràfiques de dances: la baixa de Castilla", s. XV, s.n.

Document

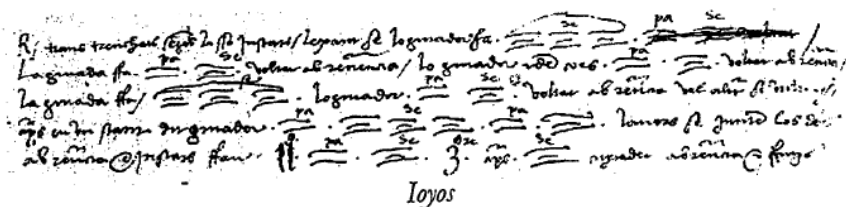
Two sheets of paper bearing details of dances, as well as other jottings, were found tucked into a notary's manual. Each sheet was written by a different person.

Date

The reverse of Fol. 1 carries the draft text of a legal injunction, still awaiting completion and dated 1496. If the dances were written on pieces of scrap paper that came to hand in a lawyer's office, they probably date from 1496 or not long after.

Contents

The dances are of two kinds: 6 *baixas* (plus one repetition) and four *ioyosos* (each of which includes an *alta* section). The steps are listed in a combination of continuous prose, abbreviations and symbolic notation.



Steps

Continencia, pas, represa, reverencia, seguit.

Publications

Text: Crane 1968 (*passim* under dance names); Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

Commentary: Wilson & Daniels forthcoming.

A note on manuscript sources

It is important to understand the difference between manuscript and printed copies of books. Printed books are familiar to us all: copies of a single printing have the same date, and all copies of a later printing or edition will have the same later date. In this context 'copy' means merely a particular example of one printing or edition of a given book.

Handwritten books are different. Every 'copy' is literally that: it is made by a copyist. He may be copying from the original text, but more often he will be reproducing another, earlier copy. Almost always the copyist will introduce some errors, but he may at the same time seek to remove what he believes to be errors already existing in the copy he is working from. (He may or may not be right in this belief!)

If the original text is re-issued in a revised version, some later copies will be made from that, but it is also quite probable that other copies will continue to be made that perpetuate the older version. This means that the relative dates of individual manuscripts provide an unreliable guide to the priority of the texts that they contain.

These remarks are pertinent to the seven known copies of Guglielmo's treatise, each of which is made up of two parts. First, there is a copy of the treatise proper, in any one of four known versions. Attached to that comes a collection of dance-descriptions; at first these dances conformed more or less to a standard list, but in later copies new dances were added or substituted. Thus, the treatise proper, and the associated dances, belong to separate traditions with different histories, and none of these manuscripts can be characterised by reference to either of those traditions alone.

This is how it happens that the *first* version of Guglielmo's treatise is known from a manuscript dated after 1469; the *second* version, from two manuscripts of the later 15th century; the *third* version, from one dated 1463; and the *fourth*, from one dated about 1475. The date of the copy does not define the date of the original text, except as a *terminus ante quem*.

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