

**An unedited source for Spanish baroque dance: the Nicolas Rodrigo Noveli
Manuscript (Madrid, 1708)**

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Abstract

This paper is based on the source entitled *Choreographia figurativa y demostrativa del Arte de Danzar*, en la forma española. Compuesto por Don Nicolas Rodrigo Noveli, dedicado al prior del Consulado de S.n Sebastián que fuere electo el año tercero del próximo siglo. En Madrid año de 1708.

Keywords: Noveli manuscript, Spanish dance, 18th century, dance instruction manuals.

The first part of the manuscript details the principal movements of the dance: positions of the body, feet and arms. Although at first sight it seems to be a mere translation of the treatise of Feuillet, it is actually an exposition of the principal Spanish dance steps written in that notation, and given that other sources of Spanish dance use only verbal descriptions, these are therefore of fundamental importance. The second part is a demonstration of the space in the habitual choreographical repertory, valuable information for the reconstruction of theatrical dances. The manuscript ends with the music and choreography for the entrance of the *Pabana*, followed by verbal descriptions of the other emblematic dances in the Spanish repertory.

Questions about the manuscript

We can start by studying this material thinking about five general questions:

- a) what?
- b) when?
- c) where?
- d) for what?
- e) why?

a) The “what”

The source is a medium-sized notebook, of 65 pages. Paging is constant except in the final index where there is a jump from page 44 to 63 and then it follows the normal order. In the notebook we can see two different calligraphies, one more legible than the other,

corresponding to two copyists. The source is in good condition and nowadays this material is available in the *Archivo de la Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* in Madrid.⁹⁰

It is a striking fact that a dance notebook is located in this place, since the Archive contains sources related to the visual arts, mostly paintings, drawings and engravings. There are no drawings of human figures in the notebook as in other dance sources. It seems that its location is casual or accidental.

b) The “when”

The date shown on the front cover is 1708. This is another interesting fact as at that time Spain was at war; therefore and despite the difficult times artistic practices were not interrupted.⁹¹

In 1700 the last king of the Hapsburg Dynasty died. Carlos the 2nd died without children because he was sterile and chronically ill. This circumstance leads to the War of Succession between the candidates of the Duke of Anjou (Louis the 14th's grandson) and the supporters of Archduke Carlos of Austria. The war begins in 1701 and ends in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht. The victory of the Duke of Anjou inaugurates the Borbon Dynasty with his first monarch Felipe the 5th. This dynasty still reigns today in Spain.⁹²

c) The “where”

In a previous page to the front cover can be read:

To my respected (!) friend Don José Esperanza y Sola. Signed by
Rodrigo Soriano. December 1887.

It seems a gift from Mr. Soriano to his friend. Rodrigo Soriano was born in San Sebastián, in 1868 and died in Santiago de Chile, in 1944. He was a politician, writer, diplomat and journalist. He was nineteen years old when he gave this notebook to his friend.

One possible hypothesis is that the notebook was found in a store or exhibition of old books by Mr. Soriano. How did the notebook end in its present place? Possibly through the link between Soriano and the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando*. His

⁹⁰ Filed under the number R-1220.

⁹¹ About this important question see the article by Lolo, Begoña (2009) “El teatro con música en la corte de Felipe V durante la Guerra de Sucesión, entre 1703-1707”. *Recerca musicològica*, Nº. 19: 159-184.

⁹² The Hispanist Henry Kamen has several studies on the Spanish monarchy. With regard to this period consult Kamen, Henry (2000) *Felipe V: el rey que reinó dos veces*. Barcelona: Temas de hoy.

father was *Director General de Bellas Artes* and *Subdirector del Museo de la Trinidad*, first National Museum of painting and sculpture before being transferred to the Prado Museum.

d) The “for what”

Perhaps this source is a notebook used in dance classes. These notebooks had small sizes and they had not many pages, so that they could be carried in a bag and be transported easily.

Maybe the source was not conceived as a whole unit with a specific plan from the beginning, the fact that different calligraphies appear is the clue. There are pages written by different copyists and those were joined later.

It seems unlikely that there was an intention to turn the notebook into a published work for later broadcast, but rather the notebook was intended for private use.

e) The “why”

The purpose of the source is to instruct the student or students who used it in the Spanish dance style, introducing a very important novelty: the use of the French notation system called *Beauchamp-Feuillet* notation or *Choreographie* (as it is shown on the front cover).⁹³ Other works that deal with the Spanish dance style (Esquivel⁹⁴ and Jaque⁹⁵ in the 17th century or Minguet⁹⁶ in the 18th century) use verbal descriptions to teach the steps and other body movements.

The arrival of Felipe the 5th to the Spanish crown caused a change in the Spanish society, towards a growing taste for French style. This notebook seems to be a vindication of native style, since the steps of Spanish dance are shown by using the French notation,

⁹³ Feuillet, Raoul Auger (1700) *Chorégraphie ou l'art de décrire la dance, par caractères, figures et signes démonstratifs, avec lesquels on apprend facilement de soy-mêmes toutes sortes de dances*. Paris: chez Michel Brunet. Ed. Facsímil New York, 1968.

⁹⁴ Esquivel Navarro, Juan de (1642) *Discursos sobre el arte del dançado, y sus excelencias y primer origen, reprobando las acciones deshonestas. Compuesto por Juan de Esquivel Navarro, vezino y natural de la ciudad de Sevilla, discípulo de Antonio de Almenda, maestro de dançar de la majestad de el rey nuestro señor d{on} Phelipe Quarto el Grande, que Dios guarde. Dedicados a don Alonso Ortiz de Zúñiga Ponce de León y Sandoval, hijo primogénito del marqués de Valdenzinas, y sucesor en su casa, estado, y mayorazgos. Con licencia, impresos en Sevilla, por Juan Gómez de Blas*. Ed. Facsímil Valencia, Librerías “Paris-Valencia”, 1992.

⁹⁵ Jaque, Juan Antonio (s. XVII) *Libro de danzar*. E-Mn Mss 18580/5 y E-Mn Barbieri Mss 14059/15.

⁹⁶ Minguet y Yrol, Pablo {Parte IV} (1764) *Breve tratado de los passos del danzar a la española, que oy se estilan 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: E-Mn R.14607 y E-Mn Barbieri R. 14649.

therefore being more effective than the usual verbal descriptions in other Spanish treatises.⁹⁷

Some words about the author

Is Nicolas Noveli truly the author of this work? Is he a compiler or is he one of the copyists? His family name could indicate an Italian origin. At this moment, I do not know a complete biographical study of him⁹⁸.

We know that he is the author of some published works on bullfighting and fencing⁹⁹.

There is a close relationship between dance and fencing since many teachers taught both disciplines¹⁰⁰.

Positions of the body, steps and arms movements in the source

In the first part of the manuscript we find the signs of Feuillet notation. These signs refer to the orientation of the body in a dance hall, the different positions of the feet, the basic movements, the main steps of the Spanish dance and the movements of the arms.

If we compare with the treatise by Feuillet we can see some interesting differences. In fixed positions of the feet we observe five academic positions and five false positions, as shown in Feuillet but there are also more: a 4th position with legs more opened and a 2th position with legs and feet very much stretched out. This less “natural” poses aimed at archetypical characters (for example, characters of the *Commedia dell' Arte*) but they were not likely to be used in court¹⁰¹.

⁹⁷The influence of French culture in Spain during the 18th century is studied from different perspectives. See Bottineau, Yves (1962) *L'art de cour dans l'Espagne de Philippe V (1700-1746)*. Bordeaux : « Bibliothèque de L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Hispaniques », fasc. XXIX. Carreras, Juan José (octobre 2000) “L'Espagne et les influences européennes: la musique française à la cour d'Espagne (1679-1714)”. *Échanges Musicaux franco-espagnols XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles. Actes des Rencontres de Villecroze*, réunis par François Lesure, Académie Musicale de Villecroze : 61-82. Morales, Nicolas (2007) *L'artiste de Cour dans l'Espagne du XVII siècle. Étude de la communauté des musiciens au service de Philippe V (1700-1746)*. Madrid : Casa de Velázquez, Collection « Bibliothèque de la Casa de Velázquez », vol. 36. Rico Osés, Clara (2012) “French Dance in Eighteenth-Century Spain”. *Dance Chronicle* 35 (2): 133-172.

⁹⁸Some information about his life appears in Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid, P^o 11570, ff. 361-374. ‘Archivo General de Palacio’ (AGP) EP c.2655, e.61.

⁹⁹ Noveli, Nicolas Rodrigo (1731) *Crisol especulativo, demostrativo practico mathematico de la destreza*, tomo primero dividido en dos partes o tomas. Madrid.

Noveli, Nicolas Rodrigo (1726) *Cartilla, en que se proponen las reglas para torear a caballo*. Madrid.

¹⁰⁰Anglo, Sydney (February 2008) « Notation of Movement in the Arts of War, Fencing and the Dance », in Barbara Segal ed., *Dancing Master of Hop Merchant ? The Role of the Dance Teacher through the Ages, Early Dance Circle*, Proceeding of a Conference held at St Bride Institute, London : 49-60.

¹⁰¹An important source on theatrical dance is Lambranzi, Gregorio (1716) *Neue und CurieuseTheatralischeTantz - Schul*. Nuremberg, J. Jacob Wolrab. The numerous engravings of the book show these characters exhibiting “strange” positions during their dances.

The tables in the manuscript that contain the steps are not as extensive as the tables in Feuillet's treatise. There are several points in common with the French source, however, other movements are not shown in Feuillet, for example: *Amolar con grillos*¹⁰². According to the official Spanish Dictionary¹⁰³ this expression refers to the movement and sound produced by a millstone. The friction of a millstone represents the movement of the step. As for the movements of the arms, the Spanish source follows the movements described by Feuillet with some peculiarities. For instance, *Devanando con círculos*. According to the official Dictionary the verb *devanar* means winding a length of thread, wire or anything like that into a ball or skein.

We can see here some similarities between the steps of the Spanish dance and those of the French academic dance.

Positions

- *Planta de cuadrado* (Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Deuxième position* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Planta natural* (Esquivel/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Quatrième position* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Walked steps with or without displacement

- *Passo* (Esquivel/Noveli) $\leftrightarrow$ *Demicoupé* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Doble* (Esquivel) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pas de bourré* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Carrerilla* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pas de Bourré vite* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Substenido* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pino* (Novelli) $\leftrightarrow$ *Relevé* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Quiebro* (Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Plié* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Slipped steps

- *Rastron* (Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pas grave ou temps de courante* (Feuillet/Rameau) $\leftrightarrow$ *Coupé* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Trinado* (Noveli) $\leftrightarrow$ *Borneo Trinado* (Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pas tortillé* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Stomping steps

- *Llamada* (Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Poser la pointe, poser le talon* (Feuillet)

¹⁰²This sentence appears in a description of a Spanish dance called Xácará. See, Xácará. Copia de Barbieri. BN Ms. 14059/12.

¹⁰³ Real Academia Española (2001). *Diccionario de la lengua española* (22^a ed.). Madrid: Espasa, 2001.

Steps with one foot in the air

- *Bacio* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Boleo* (Esquivel) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pied en l'air* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Campanela* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Rond de jambe* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Crossed steps

- *Cruzado* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Entrechat* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Encaxe* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Emboité* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Floreta* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Sissonne* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Cargado* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Chassé* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Jumps and hops

- *Cabriola* (Noveli) $\leftrightarrow$ *Cabriola atravesada* (Esquivel) $\leftrightarrow$ *Cabriola cruzada* (Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Entrechat* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Salto* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Jetté* (Feuillet/Rameau)

Turns

- *Buelta* (Esquivel/Noveli/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pirouette* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Girada* (Esquivel) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pirouette sur un pied* (Feuillet/Rameau)
- *Buelta al descuydo* (Esquivel/Minguet) $\leftrightarrow$ *Pirouette sur deux pieds* (Feuillet/Rameau)

An important remark by Minguet is showed in the introduction of his treatise about French dance style. He writes:

I have observed that in some French dances some steps or movements, such as Fandango, Seguidillas and so on, can be introduced and so it happens with the Spanish style. For this reason I have included both styles of dance in my book. Anyone who wants to learn all these steps can do it very easily. (Minguet, Yrol c.1737)¹⁰⁴

Study on space. The “Demostrazion Universal”

On page 28 of the manuscript appears a graph, the only one in the whole source. This drawing shows the geometrical division of the space with straight and circular lines, which are the paths to be followed by dancers. This design does not appear in any other

¹⁰⁴ Minguet y Yrol, Pablo (c. 1737) *Arte de danzar a la francesa... añadido todos los pasos o movimientos del danzar a la española*. Madrid.

Spanish source nor in Feuillet. Thus, it is extremely important because it offers choreographic information for court and theatrical dances. It also demonstrates the importance of the correct use of the space in this repertoire and the proper distribution of this space on stage. Let's see some of these lines on the graph:

ACCY/ YGGA	these lines are called <i>caras</i> or <i>frentes</i> (faces or fronts)
HDBEH	is called <i>cuchillos</i> (knives)
HDBE	is called <i>medios</i> (middles)
AYCG	is called <i>cuchillos</i>
ACYG	is called <i>esquinas</i> (corners)

These are some of the words that appear frequently on the margins of the *libretti* of the Spanish plays belonging to *Teatro Breve*¹⁰⁵. These are short pieces performed during the intervals between acts of longer theatre plays. In *Teatro Breve*, *danza* and *bayle* play a leading role.

There is a difference between these two concepts. When we talk about *bayle* rhythm is transmitted with the whole body, arms, legs, chest and even the head. The whole body is integrated in the music. On the contrary, *danza* is mainly based on the movements of the feet, and it is a social phenomenon where the proper posture to determine the social status of the dancer. Moreover, *danza* is regulated by rules explained in dance treatises or notebooks and by certain codes of behavior, known and accepted in court. *Bayle* is not attached to these rules and improvisation is very common.

Let us get back to the graph.

HB	indicated for <i>Paseos</i> and <i>Mudanzas</i> . (<i>Paseo</i> means walking and <i>Mudanza</i> means change. They are the different parts in which a Spanish choreography is divided).
HD / HY	indicated for jumps sideways.
HY / HK	indicated for jumps backwards, steps backwards, bows and curtsies.
HL	refers to <i>Llamadas</i> and <i>Carrerillas</i> .

¹⁰⁵ About choreographic indications in theatrical manuscripts consult Ruiz Mayordomo, María José y Valcárcel Rivera, Carmen (1993) "Palabras en movimiento: indicaciones coreográficas en tres manuscritos teatrales de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid". Madrid: Universidad Autónoma. *Revista Manuscr.ao(V)*: 67-101.

	(<i>Llamada</i> means a stomping step and <i>Carrerillas</i> indicates quick and small steps).
AGCY / YGCA	serves to pieces for two, four, six or eight dancers like in a dance called <i>Torneo</i> . This path is shaped into a Z and, curiously enough, this same shape is also used in the <i>Minuet</i> .
BDHE	serves to <i>Paseos de Villano</i> , <i>Españoleta</i> , <i>Mudanzas de Jácara</i> , <i>Mariona</i> , <i>Gayta</i> and other Bayles.
HXFZ	serves to <i>Paseos de Gallarda</i> and other pieces and <i>Mudanzas</i> that need less room or space.
TQRS	serves to all kinds of turns in the middle of stage.
HPO / HMN	serves to turns in the air: <i>Cabriolas</i> , <i>Campanelas de Villano</i> , etc.

An Entry of Pavan

Ahead of the manuscript we can see an *Entrada de Pavana* (*Entry of Pavan*). It is the only music example in the notebook, a simple bassline. Both in the Iberian Peninsula at Italy, most of the music intended for dance is made of a harmonic setting or structure over which the musicians improvised variations at the time of performance. These basslines various were stereotypes known everywhere¹⁰⁶.

In this example there are some numbers at the end of the bassline. They indicate accords and are there to help the bass player to add harmonies. Under the staff appears the *Entry of Pavan* written in Feuillet notation that is the first section of this dance, a sort of introduction that precedes the *Mudanzas*.

The place where the cross and the staff are written corresponds to the situation of the audience. The sign that resembles an upside down hat refers to a male dancer who dances towards the audience, then moves side wards, and finally backwards on stage.

Some dances “por lo Vajo” by Domingo González

In the last part of the manuscript (page 36), some Spanish dances are described verbally. It is under the following title: *Escuela por lo Vajo compuesta por Domingo González*. The term “*por lo Vajo*”, which means low, refers to dances without jumping or hopping¹⁰⁷. To

¹⁰⁶The basslines linked to dances in Spain are studied in the important work by Esses, Maurice (1992) *Dance and Instrumental ‘Diferencias’ in Spain during the 17th and early 18th Centuries*. New York: Pendragon Press Stuyvesant, 3 vols.

¹⁰⁷The dances described in Domingo González’s School are: Pavana, Gallarda, Española, Villano cavallero, Jacara, Mariona, Torneo, Gaita Gallega and Canario.

emphasize the fact that choreographies of *Mariona*, *Torneo*, and *Gaitta Gallega* only appear in Noveli's notebook.

Waiting for a future critical edition of the source¹⁰⁸, this article offers a preliminary study of it. The *Choregraphie figurativa* by Nicolás Noveli is a very interesting document for the study of the Spanish baroque dance, valuable for the information it contains, and for the implications it has in the context of cultural exchange between Spain and France in the 17th and 18th centuries.

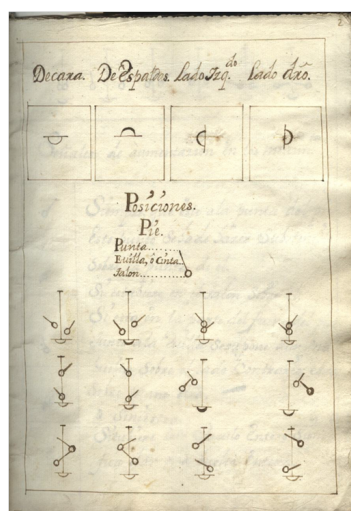
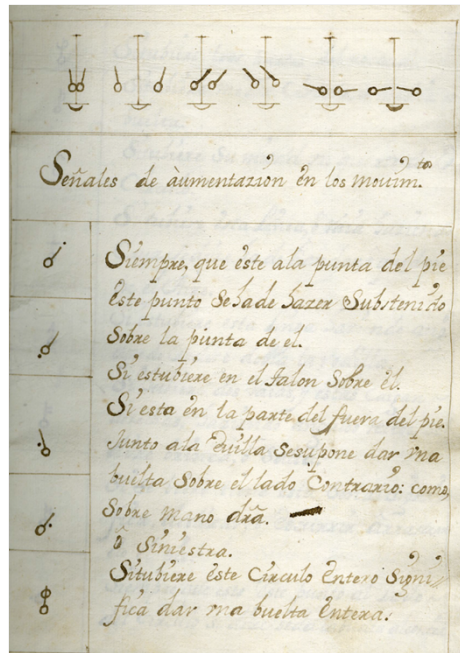


Figure I. The fixed positions.

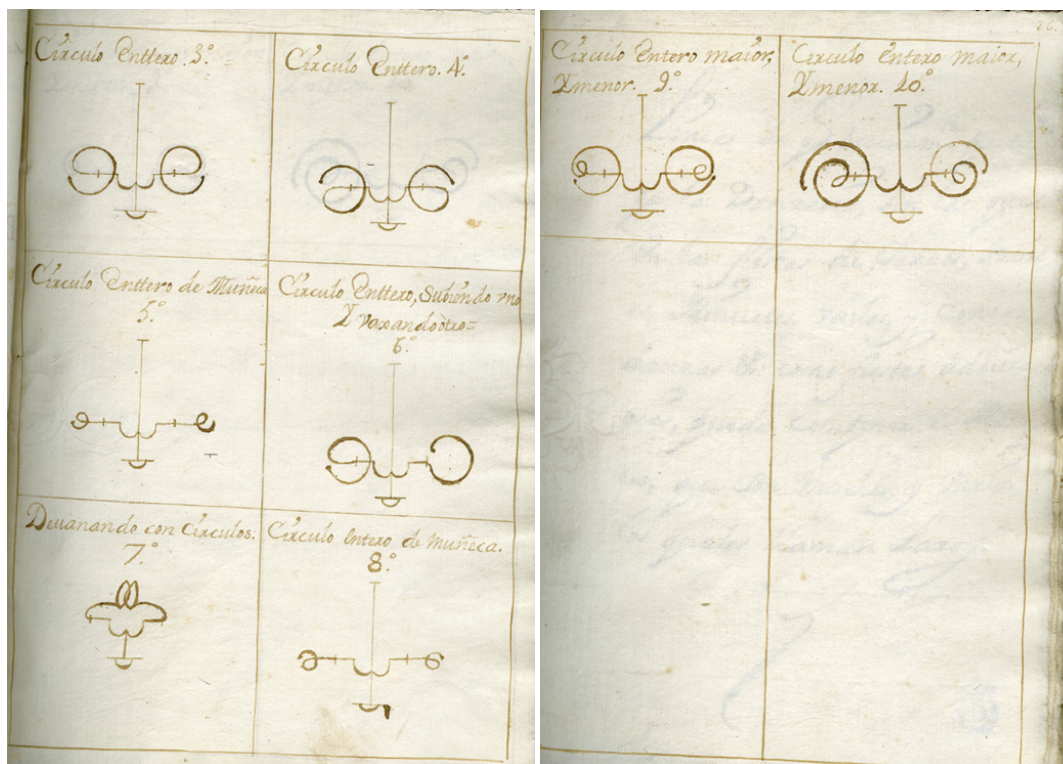
¹⁰⁸In preparation.



Figures II. The fixed positions.



Figures III and IV. Grillos (Shackles).



Figures V and VI. Arms movements.

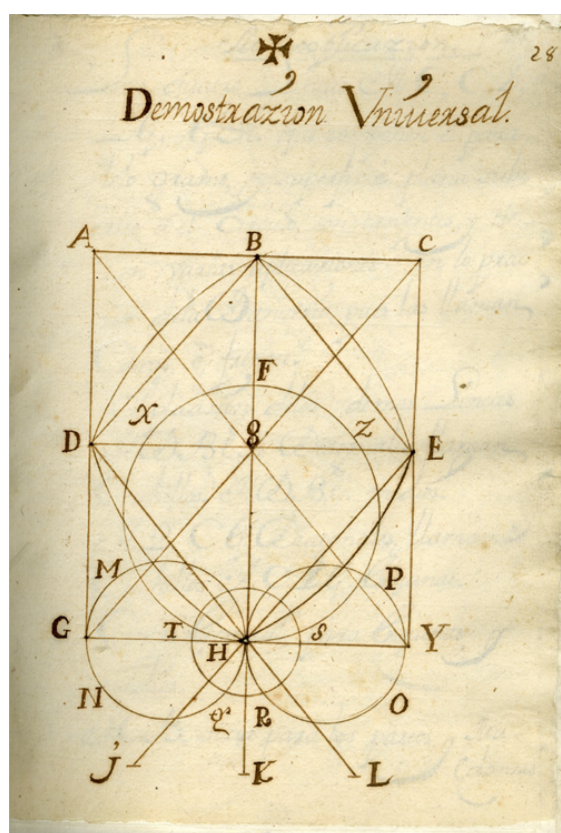
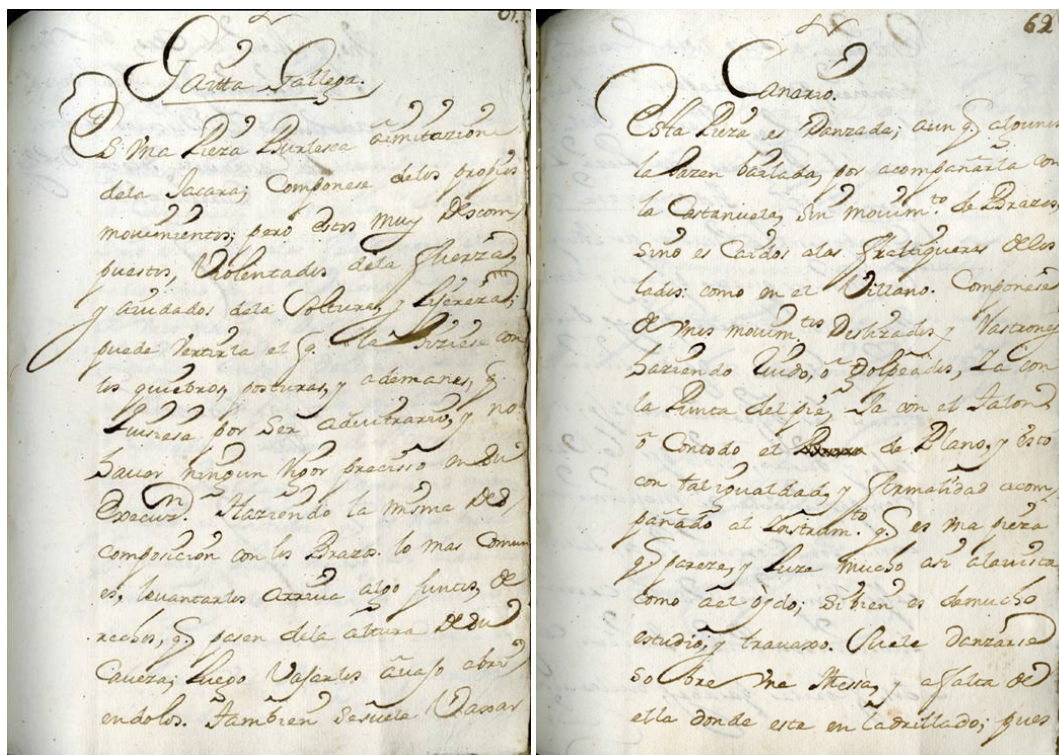


Figure VII. Demostrazion Universal.



Figure VIII. Entry of Pavan.



Figures IX and X. Gaita Gallega and Canario.

Table I. List of steps in Noveli compared to those in Esquivel and Minguet.

Noveli (1708)	Esquivel (1642)	Minguet (1737?)
Paso	Passos	Passo en buelta
Reverenzia	Cierta/Galana/ Reverencia cortada	Reverencia cortada
Bazio	Bazios	Bacio
Rompido	Rompido	Rompido
Pino	---	---
Trinado	---	Borneo trinado
Cargado	Cargado	Cargado
Floreo	Floreo	Floreo
Sacudido	Sacudido	Sacudido
Salto	Saltos al lado y en buelta	Salto y encage/ Salto y encage en vuelta/ Salto y campanela
Campanela	Campanela/ Campanela breve/ de compás mayor y por dentro	Campanela/ Campanela breve/ de compás mayor/ por adentro
Encaxe	Encaxe	Encage
Carrerilla	Carrerilla	Carrerilla
Floreta	Floreta	Floreta natural/ pasada/ Pasada en buelta/ en buelta
Retirada	Retiradas	---
Quiebro	---	Quiebro por delante/ Quiebro en vuelta
Paso cruzado	Cruzado	Cruzar por detrás/ Cruzados
Contratiempo	---	Contratiempo
Tope	---	Tropecillo/ Tropecillo en Buelta
Pernada	---	---
Quatropeado	Quatropeado/ Quatropeado atrás	Quatropeado/ Quatropeado atrás/ Quatropeado en buelta
Substenido	Substenido	Substenido de un pie/ de los dos pies
Buelta	Buelta al descuydo/ Giradas	Buelta al descuydo/ Buelt de pechos/ Buelt de tornillo
Cabriola	Cabriola entera/ Cabriola atravesada/ Media cabriola	Media Cabriola / Cabriola texida/ Cabriola cruzada/ Cabriola en buelta
Grillos	---	---
Rastrón	---	Rastron
---	Planta	Planta natural/ Planta de cuadrado
---	---	Llamada
---	---	Puntapie
---	Boleo	---
---	Doble	---

Table II. Comparison of different *Entries of Pavan*.

Noveli (1708)	Esquivel (1642)	Jaque (siglo XVII)	Minguet (1737?)
4 pasos graves	4 pasos accidentales	4 pasos	2 passos graves
2 vazios	2 vazios	3 Bazios	Bacio
Rompido	Rompido	Campanela	Rompido
Planta	---	---	---
Carrerilla y media	Carrerilla	Carrerilla y media	Carrerilla
Rompido	Rompido	Bazio	Bacio
Planta	---	Campanela	Planta
4 pasos graves atrás	7 pasos extraños (4 graves y 3 breves)	4 pasos atrás	4 passos atrás
2 pasos breves	---	2 pasos breves	2 passos breves
Planta	---	Planta	Planta
Cortesía	Reverencia	Cortesía	Cortesía y planta

Table III. *Danzas and Bayles* described by Noveli, Esquivel, Jaque and Minguet.

Noveli (Domingo González) (1708)	Esquivel (1642)	Jaque (s. XVII)	Minguet (1737?)
Pavana 4 Mudanzas	Entrada de Pavana	Pabana 8 Mudanzas	Pabana 6 Mudanzas
Gallarda 2 Mudanzas	---	Gallarda	Gallarda 8 Mudanzas
Españoleta 4 Mudanzas	---	---	Españoleta 8 Mudanzas
Villano Cavallero 8 Mudanzas	---	Billano 3 Mudanzas	Villano 3 Mudanzas
Jacara 4 Mudanzas	---	Jacara	---
Mariona	---	---	---
Torneo	---	---	---
Gaita Gallega	---	---	---
Canario	---	---	---
---	---	---	---
---	---	Folias 4 Mudanzas	---
---	---	Paradetas	---
---	---	---	Imposibles 4 Mudanzas
---	---	---	Hermosa 8 Mudanzas

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