

## EUROPEAN SEMINAR FOR KINEFOGRAPHY

Paper No.4.

The Notation of Elasticity for Steps and Step-Motifs

> by Gisela Reber, 1987. revised 1989.

- A 1.) The signs that have been developed to notate movements involving elasticity, very clearly denote the interlinking of tension and relaxation.
  - 2.) The three basic signs D D (Ex. 716 a,b,c in Knust's "Dictionary of Kinetography/Labanotation") express three different kinds of distribution of force within an elastic movement:

    - $\mathscr{P}$  Ex 716b) "a light and relaxed bounce"
    - ℱ Ex 716c) "a heavy swing"
  - 2a.) with the fourth sign D Ex 716d) the inversion of the elastic movement is described: "the beginning, i.e. the impulse which initiates the swing, goes upward and is light, and the second phase, which slows

- B 1.) This paper concentrates on elastic steps or step motifs only. Knust defines these occurrences in the following way:
  - a.) "When added to steps the elasticity sign means bouncing" Ex. 720c
  - b.) "In bouncing steps a downward starting accent and an upward rebound are regarded as the "normal" performance"



c.) "As an exception, if the bounce starts with an upward jerk, one can either add the pin-sign ----- "high", as in Ex 720e), or use the special sign for an upward elasticity as in Ex 720e<sup>\*</sup>"





Ex 720e'

- 2.) With these signs some basic possibilities are expressed. However, there are many other in existence.
- <u>C</u> 1.) Elasticity steps and step-motifs, dealt with in this paper, can be very different in their respective character. There may be:
  - a.) different degrees between deep and high in the elastic movement
  - b.) differences in the relation of tension and relaxation within the elastic movement
  - c.) participation or non-participation of particular joints
  - d.) peculiarities in the rhythmic progression
  - 2.) When looking through old and new kinetograms it becomes apparent that already in collaboration with Knust, and later with Christine Eckerle, these problems have been dealt with many times, and in a different manner. One attempted to deal with all aspects of this movement

phenomenon in a fair way.

- 3.) As the elasticity-steps and -motifs are of great importance in the dance folklore, one very often meets this problem when notating these dances.
- 4.) In the folk dances a specific elasticity generally remains unchanged during the whole dance, or even within a particular dance style. Therefore in many cases an explanatory note in the Preliminary Indications, or the employment of formulae is appropriate.
- 5.) We shall now view and analyse some of the relevant kinetograms. They were selected from extensive material, which was collected, studied and kinetographically written down, over many years, since 1957.
- <u>D</u> I. Three examples with a regular, slight deep-high elasticity are contained in the kinetograms at the end of this paper:
  - 1.) Csapásoló: on the whole foot
  - 2.) Haniotikos: on the balls of the feet
  - 3.) <u>Kukuvička</u>: here it is left open, as to whether one rises on the ball of the foot, or not.

In these three cases the elasticity sign is sufficient. It describes the movement adequately.

Because steps involving <u>new types</u> of elasticity were continually surfacing from the material, and because of the resulting problems, we (i.e. Knust, Christine Eckerle, and myself) tried to translate the particular movement qualities into kinetography, in various ways.

The following three examples demonstrate a similar problem solved in three different ways.

<u>D</u> II. Elesticities that require a precise statement concerning the difference between deep and high: (3

- 1.) <u>Hanter Dro</u>: the elasticity oscillates between a not too deep demiplié ( \* ) and that which is called a petit-plié ( × ). Here we have tried to express the elasticity by introducing narrow signs of different grades, in the leg gesture column. The elasticity sign on its own could not show this exact deep-high difference. In addition to that we used a formula, to facilitate reading and writing. The elasticity signs in the vertical bow at both sides of the pre-sign kinetogram, prescribe that these actions have to be performed with an elastic movement.
- 2.) <u>Šopsko Horo</u>: in this dance it is also the question of a regular deephigh-elasticity. However, during one step two elasticities occur; the first in a deeper level than the second one. The narrow signs of different grades in the leg-gesture-column make this clear. Here also the elasticity signs written inside vertical bows, and placed at both sides of bars 3 and 4, denote the elastic character of the steps.
- 3.) <u>Trakijsko Horo</u>: in this dance, performed all the way through in demi-plié, we find once more in each of bars and and two elasticities during one step, as was the case in the Šopsko Horo; the first in the lower level, the second in a somewhat higher one. In the kinetogram itself we find only two elasticity signs written. However, the Preliminary Indication on p.2. of the kinetogram explains how these steps have to be executed. In this Preliminary Indication there is the formula: the sign for the support plus two elasticity signs, and the fully written out kinetogram of the step. There is the sign for the support plus the narrow-signs of different grades in the leg-gesture-column, that describe exactly the progression of this movement.

D III. Examples which deal with rhythmic peculiarities:

1.) <u>Rumiana</u>: a fine elasticity follows the rhythm of the dance,  $(\frac{7}{8}) = 1-2-3$ 1-2 1-2. In the first elasticity the "fall" happens on the first note of the bar, the "rising" is distributed over the second and third eighths. The following elasticities are rhythmically regular. The level of the three elasticities is the same. Because of the rhythmic structure of the different steps, I was not able simply to use elasticity signs, written alongside. I tried to express the peculiarities of the movement with narrow signs, combined with the decrescendo signs  $\stackrel{\Lambda}{\times}$ , in the leg gesture columns. However, it is possible to stress the elastic character of all these steps, by writing  $\stackrel{\frown}{\gg}$  into a  $\begin{array}{c} \\ \end{array}$  bow, alongside the whole kinetogram.

- 2.) <u>Kamišica</u>: the elasticities also follow here the rhythm of the dance  $(\frac{2}{3})$ = 1-2-3 1-2 1-2. Here too the 'fall' happens on the first note of the bar, and the "rising" is distributed over the second and third eighths. The following two elasticities are rhythmically regular. But here the three elasticities occur at different leyels. They are written precisely with narrow signs of different grades, in the leg gesture columns. The problems encountered are the same as in <u>Rumiana</u>, and the solution ought to be the same: elasticity signs written into the ] bow alongside the kinetogram, or in an appropriate Pre-sign placed besides it.
- <u>D</u> IV. More examples which contain some further attempts to describe precisely the different elasticity motifs, in their rhythmic, as well as in their formal structure:
  - 1.) <u>Tasino kolo</u>: the three elasticities in this motif, (treperenje) are of a different length. In the first, long one, elasticity occurs between the demi-plié and the top of the ball of the feet. The "fall" is quick and short, the "rising" is slow. The following two short elasticities are executed with stretched knees. That means that these movements happen in the ankle joints. The kinetogram is very precise, and enlarged. In fact this dance has to be performed quickly, and the elasticities are very fine.

In this example, and in the following one (<u>Biserka</u>), the "treperenje" steps are similar. Knust tried different ways of describing these motifs. I think both versions can be read and performed correctly. In <u>Tasino Kolo</u> the first part contains an <u>innate</u> elasticity. The second has the  $\mathcal{D}$  in a bow written on both sides.

2.) <u>Biserka</u>: Knust was confident that these steps would be interpreted as elastic, without the necessity to indicate it additionally by *P* at the sides.

Both kinetograms (<u>Biserka</u> and <u>Tasino Kolo</u>) were written and released concurrently, and not long after I had collected these dances in 1957. I wish to leave these two kinetograms as they are, with the hope, that the reader will interpret them correctly.

- <u>D</u>V. <u>Čiro</u>: The elasticity motif appears in this dance in a very vigorous form. The dancer has to jump into the demi-plié at the beginning of the bar. After a second spring he lands on one leg with a stretched knee and on the flat ball of his foot. The weight is transferred on the other leg with the help of the elasticity. The knee of this leg is also stretched. This elasticity motif has a stronger form because the element of "rising" is turned into a spring.
- <u>D</u>VI. 1.) <u>Setnja</u>: the steps in bars 1 and 2 contain a double elasticity which is executed in turn with a bent, and then with a stretched knee. This double elasticity is represented by a narrow-sign and a wide-sign in the leggesture column. The sign  $\widehat{\mathcal{D}}$  was added at the side to confirm the elastic character of the movement (bars  $\widehat{\mathcal{D}}$ ,  $\widehat{\mathcal{D}}$ , and  $\widehat{\mathcal{W}}$ ). The elasticity in steps of bars  $\widehat{\mathcal{Q}}$  and  $\widehat{\mathcal{W}}$  is of "normal" type, danced with easy knees. In this instance the elasticity signs alone suffice.
  - 2.) <u>Beráti</u>: Here the first step is danced elastically in the form: deephigh-deep. This occurrence is written with the different hooks, which

indicate the change of support on the particular parts of the foot. The elasticity sign written in a bow along the kinetogram confirms the elastic character of this step. Also, a formula written under the kinetogram indicates that the level of the support on the balls of the feet has to be kept very low.

<u>D</u> VII. <u>Presekača</u>: The elasticity-motif in this dance is quite complicated. The original manner to describe kinetographically this "treperenje" (a) seems to me now, not especially successful. The next sample (b) shows how I would favour writing it today.



- <u>D</u> VIII. <u>Makrynítsa</u>: every bar of this dance contains four regular elasticities, however, the changes of the supports follow their particular way of rhythmic distribution. The next foot, so to say, takes over that part of the elasticity that the first foot has not yet finished. To make this clear I have written this occurrence with narrow and decrescendo signs in the leg gesture columns. The elasticity is already recorded in the Pre-signs.
- <u>D</u> IX. <u>Trite Páti</u>: sometimes elasticities and very small springs are so very close together, that one may be in doubt in defining the movement. In this kinetogram the step-motif is written with very small springs, that are very close to elasticities.
- E 1.) The elasticities, that start with the accentuation upwards, happens less frequently. However, I would like to present some examples of this too.
  - 2.) The two signs  $\mathcal{D}$ ,  $\mathcal{D}$ , that Knust proposes for this kind of elasticity, he himself never used, at least not in co-operation with me.

F I. Some examples for the high-deep elasticity follow:



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1.) <u>Moravac</u>: I learned this dance in 1959 and made notes. Some time later the kinetogram was written with Knust's collaboration (a). Today I am no longer convinced by it. Here is an attempt to describe a movement characteristic of a short, "dry" stretch of the knees (M), followed by a relaxed "sinking" into the petit-plié (X) (Ex.a). Today I would have written it in more detail (Ex.b).

2.) <u>Ueveges Tanc</u>: The movement in this "high-deep" elasticity motif is similar to that of "Moravac". However, it is somewhat stronger and danced less quickly. The kinetogram of the main step resembles the proposed new way of writing of "Moravac". Here a formula has been used.

In order to make the characteristic difference comprehensible between those Hungarian dances that are danced with the "deep-high" elasticity, and some others with the "high-deep" elasticity, I have applied

A for the "deep-high" elasticity and  $\bigwedge_{\mathcal{H}}$  for the "high-deep" elasticity

Two examples of the basic Csárdás step follow, in its two versions. The example with the "high-deep" elasticity is taken from "Ueveges Tanc (a), and the "deep-high"-example from a dance called "Leány Karikázó" (b).



<u>F</u>II. <u>Nedelja-Nedelja</u>: in the Serbian material there are elasticity motifs, that also start with the accentuation "high", but afterwards they do not immediately sink into the demi-plié, but the "sinking" movement extends over three changes of supports. This dance is such an example: After a very small spring one lands on the stretched, left leg, on the whole foot. The weight will be immediately transferred on the right leg, which is already giving in a little. From this leg the weight will be taken over by the left leg, that bends until reaching the demi-plié. The "fall" is distributed over three changes of support.

- F III. There is still another type of elasticities, which is present in the next three examples: The motif as a whole may be identified as a "high-deep" elasticity. However, the single, individual movements within the motif, are "normal", very small, "deep-high" elasticities.
  - 1.) <u>Čačak</u>: after a very small spring one lands on the stretched right leg on the whole foot. The weight is caught elastically. This is followed by a second elasticity on the left, also stretched leg, and once more on the whole foot. Only with the third change of support, the knees are bent and one sinks into the demi-plié. Here the elasticity is described by an elasticity sign within the path sign at the side.
  - 2.) <u>Dučec</u>: this dance is executed more vigorously than the previous one: after a strong spring one lands in a first position with stretched knees and on the whole feet. This is followed by a slight elasticity on stretched knees, and only on the third elasticity one sinks into the demiplié.

In this case the elasticity is expressed on the one hand by the spring, on the other hand by the different signs for the part of the feet, that take on the weight. (The different levels of support result).

3.) <u>Devla</u>: in this kinetogram once more another way to represent an elasticity motif, that extends over several changes of support, is attempted. The elasticity in the different changes of support originates not, like in "Dučec" in the "rising" on the ball of the foot, but is like a <u>very</u> <u>slight vibration that seizes the whole body</u>. The movements are very quick and very small, and only to be accomplished by never going entirely with the whole body weight on the respective, supporting leg; by making oneself very "light" and by passing the weight very quickly to the other leg.

F IV. Laridé: also in this dance we find an elasticity going "upwards". It extends over the whole bar and is described only by indicating the different levels of the supports.

## Conclusion

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- 1.) When comparing all the examples it appears, that a uniform kinetographic representation with the elasticity-signs D P D only, cannot do justice to the multiplicity of elasticity-steps or -motifs.
- 2.) A survey of the different ways of writing them shows the following possibilities:
  - a.) by indicating the level of support within the direction sign and the  $\mathscr{P}$  , (Trakijsko Horo).
  - b.) by indicating the changing levels at or besides the direction signs for the supports, that lead to an elasticity, but no p needed (Biserka).
  - c.) by the employment of narrow or wide signs, combined with a decrescendo sign in the leg gesture columns, without the  $\mathcal{D}$ , (Rumiana, Ueveges Tanc).

In this combination of signs an additional differentiation could be possible, namely: (10



for a regular fine "deep-high" - elasticity, like it is in "Leány Karikázó",

or



when the "fall" is quick and short, the "rising" starts instantly, and extends over the rest of the time. ("Tasino kolo" could have been written in this way).

d.) by the employment of narrow-signs of different grades with a destination in the leg-gesture-columns, without the D



(Šopsko Horo)

- e.) by the representation of the elasticity by very small springs instead of the elasticity-signs, (Trite Páti).
- 3.) The different attempts to reach a solution did not arise from arbitrariness but from the endeavour to show as unequivocally as possible the particular forms of steps, and their differences.
- 4.) Also the legibility on the one side, and the simplicity or fussiness, on the other side, have been points that had to be taken into consideration.
- 5.) Whatever the case, as all examples have shown it, the problems connected with this kind of movement, can be solved with the kinetographic means in existence.



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Die Musikanten bestimmen das Tempo wie auch die Reihenfolge und Dauer der drei Teile





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