

On Common Ground 3: John Playford and the English Dancing Master, 1651

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SIR ROGER – SCHARUTSCHA A BALLROOM DANCE OF THE FIN DE SIÈCLE AND A CURRENT AUSTRIAN FOLKDANCE

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SIR ROGER IN AUSTRIA

Sir Roger was a welcome guest during the late Straussera in Austria and survived as “Scharutscha”, a distortion of *Sir Roger*¹, within the actual dance repertory of a handful of folk dance groups in and around Vienna. As the history of this dance till now covers several centuries and three continents, and is laid down in countless sources, a detailed analysis of the complete material – even if at all possible – goes beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless a synopsis of the dominant versions of the main countries of this dance will help to shed light on the provenance of the most unusual Austrian version.

Three Viennese sources reporting the ballroom dance fashionable around 1900

- 1) Carl Haßreiter: *Sir Roger*. Vienna 1895 3rd edition, p. 3–16.
- 2) Heinrich Reisinger: *Sir Roger*. *Holländischer Matrosentanz* (Dutch sailors’ dance) in: *Wiener Tanzschule vol 2: Polonaise... Les Lanciers en Carré...* Vienna 1903, p. 16–25.
- 3) W.K. v. Jolizza: *Die Schule des Tanzes*. Vienna c1907, p. 113–118.

The practice throughout the 20th century reported by folk dance researchers

- 1) Franz Schunko: Ein *Sir Roger* aus der Buckligen Welt (N.-Ö.) in: *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes*. vol. IX; Vienna 1960. p. 93ff.
- 2) Karl Horak: *Sir Roger – Ein Beleg aus Oberösterreich* in: *Mannus, Deutsche Zeitschrift für Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, 1977 43 (2), Würzburg p. 84ff.

The descriptions of Haßreiter, Reisinger and Jolizza differ in crucial points from the versions reported in England and America of the same period or a little earlier.

- 1) The positioning of Ladies and Gentlemen within the set and the position of the set in relation to the musicians (see Figure 1).
- 2) The figures *lead down the middle and up again, à genoux, poussette* (without turning).
- 3) The division of the dance in 2 (3) repeated parts by “inner” progressions.
- 4) The finale after the last progression (see table 1).
- 5) The free choice of music.

A SHORT HISTORY AND VERSIONS FROM ENGLAND, USA & FRANCE

Roger of Coverly – longways for as many as will – is included in John Playford’s *Dancing Master* from the 9th edition (1695) until the 18th edition (c1728). The name and the tune of this dance have survived though with modifications. At the beginning of the 19th century Thomas Wilson basically uses Playford’s tune for two different dances called “*Sir Roger De Coverley: a country dance*”² and “*a finishing dance*”³. The latter contains the main figures, which make up the basic framework of a dance which spread widely in England and the USA and also in continental Europe under different names.

In table 1 significant variants of the dance figures are represented by “xa” and “xb”.

Thomas Wilson’s “finishing dance”, London, early 19th century

The finishing dance described by Thomas Wilson has three parts, each part performed by a different number and group of dancers:

- 1) The five diagonal figures (*advance, meet and retreat; turn right hands; left hands; both hands; allemande round each other*) are danced alternately by top Lady and bottom Gentleman and vice versa.
- 2) Top couple *pass each other and cross over every couple till they get to the bottom.*
- 3) The *promenade* up the centre and *cast off* of all couples following the leading couple.

***Sir Roger de Coverley*: English sources, second half of the 19th century**

Several English authors describe just two figures for *Sir Roger* omitting Wilson’s second figure. Therefore the leading couple – unlike in Wilson’s version – is in top position to begin the last section. In the short version of the *cast off* figure the first couple remains at the bottom forming an arch with their lifted arms, under which all the other couples pass.⁴ Thus the progression is made (table 1 xa). The undated “D. Anderson’s Universal Ball-Room and Solo-Dance Guide” printed in Dundee asks for a complete *cast off* figure, which ends *up the centre to places* and *first couple promenade to bottom* (table 1 xb). An even longer version is to be found in “The Ball-Room Guide”, printed by Frederick Warne and co. London 1866. The introduction takes 16 bars: “the lines advance and retreat: ... partners cross to opposite places: advance and retire as before, and re-cross to places” (p. 85). The following figure represents an intermediate stage between Wilson’s *passing each other and crossing over* without giving hands and *strip the willow*: touching the partner’s hand (alternately right and left) *crossing over always two couples at a time* (as Wilson suggests for a large number of dancers in a set).

***Virginia Reel*: American sources, second half of the 19th century**

During the second part of the 19th century the main difference between the English *Sir Roger de Coverley* and the American *Virginia Reel* is the added middle section of the dance: the figure nowadays known as *strip the willow*. The third part including a *cast off* figure and/or a *promenade* shows more variants in America than in the British sources.⁵

***Sir Roger de Cowerley* – *gigue anglaise* / *américaine*: Paris, late 19th century**

The dance descriptions of F[rança]ois Paul for the *Sir Roger de Coverley* – *gigue anglaise*⁶ and Eugène Giraudet’s *la gigue américaine*⁷ and other French authors differ from one another even between several – undated – publications of the same author. Nevertheless the French versions are the most interesting sources for researching the Austrian versions. First of all the same positioning of the dance set, unanimously described in all Austrian versions, is clearly illustrated by Paul. Secondly the authors Giraudet, Desrat [Traité 1883], and Lussan-Borel report an “inner repetition” with progression, an important feature of the Austrian versions. As a contrast the French authors (Desrat, Giraudet, Lussan-Borel and Bourgeois) switch the middle and the last part of the American sequence: after the diagonal figures, a *promenade extérieure* or *défilé* (*cast off*) and *l’arche* or *le pont* (arch) achieve the progress.

By all the French authors the last part of the dance is *la chaîne continue* (*strip the willow*) with one important difference: it is performed by one couple after the other. Last but not least a kind of finale described by three authors (Paul, Giraudet 1897 and Bourgeois) is

Table 1: dance-figures of the *Sir Roger* in Great Britain, USA, France, Austria; “Swedish dances” and Foula Reel

	lead down the middle & up again	diagonal figures	cast off	lead down the middle	strip the willow	“à genoux”	poussette “les zigs- zags”	lead down the middle	star	gallop etc
Sir Roger/London		:: x	xa :							
Sir Roger/Dundee		:: x	xb	x :						
Sir Roger/Glasgow		:: x	xb				xa :			
Virginia Reel 1		:: x	xa		x :					
Virginia Reel 2		:: x	xb	x	x :					
Gigue anglaise Paul		:: x		xa	x			cast/arch :		x
Gigue amer Giraudet		:: xa	xa :		:: x :					polka
Sir RogerHaßbreiter/A	:: x	x		x :	:: x	x :	:: x :		xa	x
Sir RogerJolizza/A	:: x	x	x	x :	:: x	x :	:: x :		xa	x
Sir RogerReisinger/A	:: x	x		x :	:: x	x	x	x :	xb	x
Scharutscha/A	:: x	x		xa (:)	:: x	x	x	x :		polka
Swedish/Giraudet/F	:: x	::				:: x :	:: x :	:: xa :	:: strip :	
Swedicht/Desrat/F	:: x				x	x	x	xa :	:: strip :	
Suédoise/Paul/F	:: xa				x	x	x	xa :		valse
Foula reel 1/Shetland			::	x	xa	x	x :			
Foula Reel 2	:: star x				x	x	gallop up the middle	poussette : to bottom		

Eugène Giraudet's dance *la Swedish* has the same number and the same sort of figures in a different order and with variations.⁸ The first figure appears as an inversion of *cast off*: starting between the lines and returning to the outside. Then the two important figures corresponding to *à genoux* and *les zigs-zags* follow. The fragmentary description of figure n° 4 assumes a close relation to figure n°1 with an arch formed by the waiting couples. The last figure is *strip the willow*. But the most remarkable detail of Giraudet's *Swedish* is the five progressions: each figure being repeated by all the couples before the next figure begins.

Desrat's *Swedicht-danse ecossaise* is closer to Paul's *Suédoise* than to Giraudet's *Swedish*.⁹ Like Paul and Giraudet the *Swedicht* begins with a *promenade*. The figures *tours de mains* (*strip the willow*), *arch* (= *à genoux*) and *les vagues* (= *les zigs-zags*) follow. *Le pont* describes the leading couple passing in both directions between the lines, whereas Paul uses this figure to progress. Desrat adds a sixth figure *chaîne*, closely related to figure 2 *tour de mains*, performed by all couples in sequence.

The synopsis of the English, American and French versions of *Sir Roger* as well as the French *Swedish*, *Suédoise* and *Swedicht* reveals the Austrian *Sir Roger* to be a combination of these two related dances: These "Swedish dances" contribute the opening figure (*promenade interieure*) and the figures at the end (*à genoux*, *poussette* and *lead down the middle*), which enclose the centrepiece of the *Virginia Reel*: the diagonal figures, *strip the willow* and either *lead down the middle* or *cast off*. The final round dance is the end of *gigue americaine/ anglaise* as much as the end of *la Suédoise*.

THE STAR – A NEW AUSTRIAN FIGURE WITHOUT PRECEDENT?

The *star*, the first part of the Austrian finale (Haßreiter, Jolizza, Reisinger and some folk reports), seems to be a Danubian extension or it may derive from a different model not as yet researched.

This *star* recalls Cotillon figures also called *Germans*, where objects were used in the dance. In the programmes of the "Ballspenden" (small gifts for Ladies containing the programme of the ball) frequently "Quadrille with Cotillonfigures" indicate the combination of set-dances with sections, where objects were used. Haßreiter prescribes a piece of tightly knotted cloth, while Reisinger asks the dancing-master to provide a circular iron bar or rod of two centimetres covered with smooth leather. Folkdance researchers report that the *star* could be formed by holding a hawser (Schunko p. 96) or the legs of a chair (Horak p. 84) allusions to a sailors' scene like Reisinger's subtitle.

The dancers of the *star* described by Haßreiter and Jolizza move counterclockwise for 8 bars, the Gentlemen inside, the Ladies outside. Reisinger's *star*: *Das Schiffsrud* (wheel of a ship) has three separate parts. These are: A Gentlemen's *right hand star* with the Ladies at the outside. After two or three turns of the *star* all the Ladies rush to the next forward

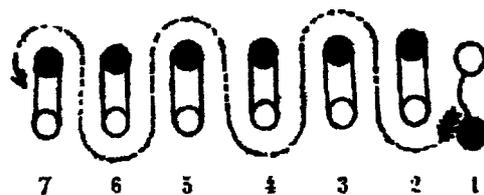


Figure 3. Paul: *la suédoise*: *les zigs-zags*

position. This change is repeated four times, until everyone is next to their own partner again. Men and women change places to form a Ladies' *right hand star*; the men in their turn repeating the figure as the Ladies previously did. When every man has returned to his own partner the dancing master orders *Sturmlauf* (attack) and all begin running in their star formation as fast as possible.

THE NORTH EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP OF *SIR ROGER*?

Not only the Austrian *Sir Roger*, but also the *Foula Reel* (from the Shetland Islands)¹⁰ comprises the figures of the *Virginia Reel* and the French "Swedish dances": after *lead down the middle* the figure *strip the willow* starts from the unusual end of the lines (exactly as a Spanish *Virginia* does¹¹). The two following figures correspond with *à genoux* and *poussette*. A second version of the *Foula Reel* starts with *right and left hand star*, continues with *gallop down and back (promenade interieure)*, and *strip the willow*. The order of the last two figures is switched (and consequently the direction of these figures reversed) i.e. *gallop up the middle to the top* and *poussette to the bottom*.

The *Haymakers or Sir Roger de Coverley* in "Allan's Reference – Guide to the Ball-Room" (Glasgow, n.d.) is not only geographically situated between the *Sir Roger* of London and the *Foula Reel*: the progressive figure is *poussette to bottom* (p. 72).

SOME FURTHER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN VIENNA AND PARIS

The author of the earliest *Sir Roger* in Austria Carl Haßreiter (1820–1870) reports first hand instruction by the famous Parisian dancing masters Laborde and Cellarius (see *Sir Roger* p. 19). Twenty-five years after Carl Haßreiter's death a third edition of his *Sir Roger* was published, probably by his son Joseph, a celebrated choreographer and dance teacher to the upper echelons of the Austrian nobility. The year 1895 brought him to France, where he introduced his most successful ballet: "Puppenfee" (The Fairy Doll).

Information derived from the *Ballspenden*¹² places *Sir Roger* in the Viennese ball season as early as 1890.¹³ Considering the than recently finished World-exhibition in Paris (31/10/1889), French taste was obviously fashionable in Vienna at that time.

VIENNESE DANCE MUSIC OF C.M.ZIEHRER ETC. FOR *SIR ROGER*

Parisian society accepted foreign dance figures, but refused the old English tune as well as the tune known in America as *McDonald's Reel* and replaced them by French gallops. Fortunately the programmes of the *Ballspenden* reveal the dance music played in Viennese ballrooms for *Sir Roger*.

In two cases, a close relationship between the musical composers and either Joseph Haßreiter or Paris is remarkable: Carl Michael Ziehrer's gallop "Grosstädtisch" op. 438 was played for the *Sir Roger* dance figures.¹⁴ This prominent composer was not only a successful conductor rivaling Eduard Strauss, but also the pianist of Josef Haßreiter's dancing school! The gallop "Diablotin" op. 137¹⁵ and the fast polka "Reißaus" op. 173 of Philipp Fahrback jr. could have been inspired by his appearance in Paris for the exhibition 1878.¹⁶ Alphons Czibulka, the best military band leader of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, contributed his piece "Im Fluge durch die Welt" another *Sir Roger*-music.¹⁶ "Warum so schnell" by C.Pebel has not yet been identified.¹⁷

Fahrbach: “Diablotin Galop”:	4+32+32	Trio: 32+32	Coda	4+32+41
Fahrbach: “Reiß aus Polka schnell”	4+32+24	Trio: 32+32	Dacapo	4+16+29
Ziehler: “Großstädtisch Galop”	2+32+32	Trio: 4+32+34	Finale	2+32+36

All these compositions had the flavour of the “modern” Viennese dance music. At this time there was so much local music available, that there was no necessity to import music or use any older melodies or folk tunes. Moreover, the structure of two repeated parts with a finale (or Coda) resembles Reisinger’s dance structure, but could also match the version of Haßreiter and Jolizza, regarding the figures *strip the willow*, *à genoux* and *les zigs-zags* as second part.

In the early 1920’s the “Seerutscher”, an Upper-Austrian pronunciation, was accompanied by a potpourri of wellknown songs in duple or triple time e.g. the hunters’ chorus of Carl Maria v. Weber’s “Freischütz” (see Horak p. 84).

KEHRAUS BY JOHANN HEINRICH KATTFUSS, LEIPZIG 1802¹⁸

Kattfuß’s *Kehraus* has important features in common with the dances listed above.

- 1) A *Kehraus* is the last dance of a ball like “the finishing dance”.
- 2) 6 out of 7 figures are similar or identical to the dances discussed above (see Figure 4): Figure n° 2 *große Acht* matches perfectly with Wilson’s *pass each other* and *cross over every couple*. Figure n° 3 *chaine en six* is *strip the willow*. Figures n° 4 and 5 are diagonal figures. The Gentleman and the Lady of the leading couple alternately turn every person of the opposite gender – starting from the most distant – to accomplish a farewell. Figure n° 6 *Bogen* or *Arkade* is *à genoux* without kneeling. Figure n° 7 *herunter gewalzt* is a turned version of *lead down the middle* while the other couples clap their hands.
- 3) “inner” progressions after the figures 1, 2, 3, and final progression after figure 7.

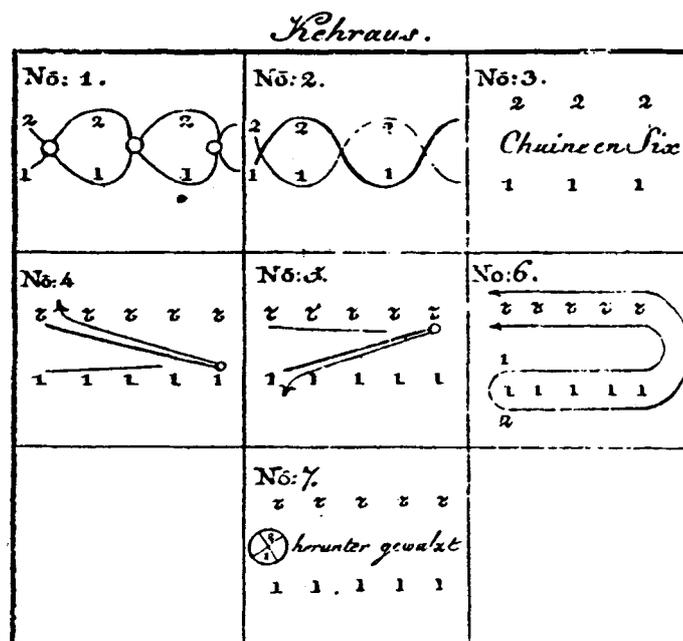


Figure 4. Kattfuß: *Kehraus*

SUMMARY

The dance *Sir Roger de Coverley* with its distinctive combination of figures shows connections between several countries, as yet insufficiently researched by either dance history scholars or folk dancers of different countries.¹⁹ The parallels concerning positioning of the set, “inner”-progressions, dance-figures, the finale with a round-dance and the dance music point to the French *Sir Roger* versions as well as the French “Swedish dances” as direct models for the Austrian *Sir Roger*.

The constancy of two different figure-combinations indicates two different sources of this dance: the first parting from Southern England across America and then to France, the second coming from Northern Europe to France, where these two forms seem to have met again. Reisinger’s subtitle reinforces a possible North-European origin.

NOTES

1. Some Austrian folkdancers claim the etymological origin of Sir Roger coming from “Saurutscher” (literal: sow-slipper).
2. Different figures in: Treasures of Terpsichore. London 1809 and 1816, p. 107. and Analysis of the London Ball-room. London 1825, p. 90.
3. An Analysis of Country dancing London 1811 p. 87ff. Complete System of English Country Dancing. London n.d. p.102ff. A companion to the ballroom. London n.d.
4. Soutton. The Manual of the ball room. London, 1861, p. 55. Coulon, E. Coulon’s Hand Book of Dancing. London c1873, p. 68. Radestock, R. The Royal Ball-Room Guide. London c1877, p. 87. Scott, E. How to Dance. London, 1894, p. 61f. Roberts, [H]. Roberts’ Manual of Fashionable Dancing. Melbourne, 1875, p. 129.
5. see Pugliese, P. J.: A Note on Mid-Nineteenth Century Variants of the Virginia Reel in: Civil War Lady Magazine (Pipestone, MN), #19, p. 16-18. n.d.
6. Paul, F.: Le Cotillon et les quadrilles actuels. Paris 1877, p. 33.
7. Giraudet, E.: Traité de la Danse. 7th edition Paris 187?. p. 83f.
8. La danse, la tenue, le maintien, Giraudet, E. p. 237f 55th edition Paris before 1897.
9. Desrat, G. Dictionnaire de la danse. Paris 1895. p. 346ff.
10. I thank Pat Shaw for this information!
11. Anonym. Bailes y Juegos par un aficionado. Madrid c1870, p. 38ff.
12. see: The Dance Card Museum <http://www.drawrm.com/dance.htm>.
13. Years and number of programmes for the Sir Roger in and around Vienna: 1890 (3), 1896 (2), 1897 (6), 1898 (5), 1899 (5), 1900 (4), 1901 (1), 1903 (1), 1907 (1).
14. “Chemikerkränzchen” 11/2/1898. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien. I. no 57 606.
15. See Hist. Museum d. St. Wien. I.no: 18.955. 5/3/1901
16. Kränzchen of 13/2/1899. Collection Dr. Schwab-Trau.
17. “Kränzchen ...” 7/1/1896. Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien. I. no 54088.
18. Kattfuß, J. H.: *Taschenbuch für Freunde... des Tanzes*. Leipzig 1802, p. 19ff.
19. Joan English was shown a “very old and genuine Greek folk-dance: Sirroj” in Greece.