

'Damnes' as described by Domenico, Cornazano and Guglielmo

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INTRODUCTION

The publication of 15th-century Italian dances presents more than ordinary problems to an editor. Descriptions of the dances are contained in nine main manuscripts, besides some fragments, less than half of which are published in an accurate and readily available form. The descriptions differ from one source to another, sometimes only in spelling and phrasology, but quite often also in content. A conscientious editor will cite all the variants that may be relevant to reconstruction of the dance, but the reconciliation of discrepancies is not just a textual problem. The evidence needs to be presented in such a way that differences in the actual performance of the dance in different cities or at different times can be allowed to emerge. While it is undoubtedly important to establish to the best of our ability the original version, as devised by the dance's creator, the other versions recorded in the manuscripts have their own validity and identity within the history of the dance. What is important here is that although all the texts are describing the same dance, they are certainly not describing the same performing version of it. The details are not freely interchangeable, and a modern reconstruction that tries to include the special features of every text is bound to end up as something of a muddle.

These points are demonstrated to the full in the *bassa danza* 'Damnes'. This is found in all nine main manuscripts, and in one of them twice over in different versions; so there is a total of ten texts to be marshalled, examined and compared. The dance is by Domenico and is one of those described in his treatise (though apparently incorporating errors presumably introduced by a copyist). Some elaborations appear in Cornazano. Then a substantially revised version, perhaps by Guglielmo, is found in all the remaining texts, some of which add further alterations. Against this background it is hardly pedantic to ask of any modern performance or performing edition which version it is seeking to represent; nor does it seem excessively purist to suggest that some care should be taken to keep at least the three main versions of the dance distinct.

THE TEXTS

The manuscript sources are as follows:

- (1) Paris MS of Domenico [Bibl. Nat. fonds ital. 972], fol 26r;
- (2) Vatican MS of Cornazano [Bibl. Apostol. Vaticana capponiano 203], fol 30r;
- (3) Paris MS of Guglielmo [Bibl. Nat. fonds ital. 973], fol 29v;
- (4) Paris MS of Ambrosio [Bibl. Nat. fonds ital. 476], fol 39r;
- (5) Modena MS of Guglielmo [Bibl. Estense alpha J 94], fol 23v;
- (6) Siena MS of Guglielmo [Bibl. Comunale L V 29],
(a) fol 57v,
(b) fol 59v;
- (7) Florence MS of Guglielmo [Bibl. Naz. Centrale magl. XIX 8], fol 21v;
- (8) Florence MS of Guglielmo [Bibl. Medicea Laur. Antinori 13], fol 22r;
- (9) New York MS of Guglielmo [Public Library (S) *MGZMB-Res. 72-254], fol 13v.

The relevant texts are transcribed below and translated into English. In the texts standard abbreviations are expanded, the added letters being shown in *italic*. In the translations the dance is divided into six sections labelled A-F; this is an editorial device to assist comparison between sources and to permit certain references in the commentary. The original texts are continuous, as printed.

Text 1 (Domenico):

[D]Amnes in trj cioe duj hominj et una dona in mezo. In prima fano doe continentie in Instanti cominciando col pe senestro. poj gli duj hominj se cambiano dj posta con dui passi sempi/ et una represa cominciando col pe senestro/ et facendo fine dal dritto/ andagando quello da man senestra de la dona dinançi ala dona/ et quello da man dritta de dietro ritroandossi equalj. poj retornano alle loro poste con duj passi sempi et una represa cominciando col pe dritto/ et façando fine dal senestro. poj *in* instante la dona *in* sieme con costoro fa una volta tonda onde *consiste* duj passi sempi et una represa començando col pe dritto/ et façando fine dal senestro *in* la sua posta medesima. poj *in* Instantj fano tuctj trj una

reuerentia sul pe senestro. poj la donna sola se parte façando duj passi sempi et quatro doppi començando dal senestro a guisa de .8. façando tuctj tre *in* instante due represe/ una sul senestro laltra sul dritto. poj se partono tuctj tre *in* instante, cioe façando la dona duj passi sempi et duj doppi començando col pe senestro/ et façando fine dal dritto et *in* instantj tuctj duj gli hominj fano *in* dietro tre represe començan[d]o col pe senestro *in* trauerso/ cioe luna sul gallone senestro/ laltra sul dritto/ et laltra sul senestro. Ancora *in* instantj se mouono tuctj tre/ cioe gliominj danno una volta tonda/ onde gli *consiste* duj passi et una represa començando col pe dritto et *in* questo instantj la dona da meza volta façando una represa sul pe senestro/ et una altra sul dritto. Ancora *in* instantj se mouono tuctj tre cioe che gliominj vanno *in*contra ala dona con duj passi sempi/ et duj doppi començando col pe senestro/ e façando fine dal dritto/ et *in* questo Instantj la dona da vna uolta tonda largha onde gli *consiste* duj passi sempi/ et duj doppi començando col pe senestro/ e façando fine dal dritto ritroandossi la dona *In* mezo de gli dictj duj hominj daghando una meza uolta gliominj sul lato senestro/ et non la dona/ façando tuctj trj doe represe una sul senestro/et laltra sul dritto ritroandossi lomo dj sopra di sotto/ et laltro dj sotto di sopra da la dona/ poj fano due continentie tuctj tre *in* instantj andando luno dietro allaltro/ et seperatj con quatro tempi dj saltarello començando col senestro/ et façando fine dal dritto con uno doppio sul pe senestro façando questo/ et retornando ale sue poste dj prima poj fano una meza uolta sul lato dritto nel uodo de la bassa dança façando duj passi sempi et vno dopio començando col pede dritto/ et façando fine dal dritto. poj se uoltano anco nel uodo sul lato senestro façando duj sempi et vno doppio començando dal senestro/ e finendo dal senestro/ poj danno tuctj tre *in* instantj vna volta tonda *In* cui *consiste* duj passi sempi et una represa començando col pe dritto/ et facendo fine dal senestro con vna reuerentia sul pe senestro tuctj tre / et fine.

Translation of Text 1

'Damnes' for three, viz. two men and one lady in between.

A First they make two *continentie* together (starting with the L foot). Then the two men change places with two *passi sempi* and one *represa* (starting with the L foot and ending with the R [L?]), the one on the L hand of the lady going in front of her, and the one on the R hand behind, ending up level. Then they return to their places with two *passi sempi* and one *represa* (starting with the R foot and ending with the L [R?]). Then, at the same time, together with them the lady makes a full turn consisting of two *passi sempi* and one *represa* (starting with the R foot and ending with the L [R?]) in her own place in the middle. Then at the same time they all three make a *reverentia* on the L foot.

B The the lady on her own moves off making two *passi sempi* and four *doppi* (starting with the L) in a figure of eight, all three at the same time [then] making two *represe* (one on the L, the other on the R).

C Then all three move off at the same time: the lady making two *passi sempi* and two *doppi* (starting with the L foot and ending with the R), while, at the same time, both men make three *represe* behind and crossways, viz. one on the L quarter, the next on the R, and the next on the L. Again all three move off at the same time: the men give a full turn consisting of two *passi* and one *represa* (starting with the R foot), while, at this same time, the lady gives a half turn making one *represa* on the L foot and another on the R.

D Again all three move at the same time: the men go towards the lady with two *passi sempi* and two *doppi* (starting with the L foot and ending with the R), while, at this same time, the lady gives a slow full turn consisting of two *passi sempi* and two *doppi* (starting with the L foot and ending with the R), so that the lady ends in the middle of the said two men, who give a half turn on the L side (but not the lady), all three [then] making two *represe* (one on the L, the other on the R). The upper man is now below, and the lower man above, the lady.

E Then they all three, at the same time, make two *continentie* and go one after the other, separated, with four *tempi* of *saltarello* (starting with the L foot and ending with the R), with one *doppio* on the L foot, doing this and returning to their original places.

F Then they make a half turn on the R side on the upbeat of the *bassa-danza*, [going on] to make two *passi sempi* and one *doppio* (starting on the R foot and ending with the R). Then they turn again on the upbeat, on the L side, [going on] to make two *passi sempi* and one *doppio* (starting with the L and ending with the L). Then all three, at the same time, give a full turn consisting of two *passi sempi* and one *represa* (starting with the R foot and ending with the L [R?]), with a *reverentia* on the L foot for all three; and so end.

Text 2 (Cornazano) – significant variations only:

A . . . gli homini si cambiano di posta con dui sempi a questo modo & fanno una ripresa sul uoltarsi de gli sempii/ poi tornano con quelli proprii al suo loco et cominciano col dritto/ & in tanto la donna da una uolta tonda/ e tutti in sieme fanno una ripresa sul dritto . . .

. . . the men change places with two *sempi* in this way and make a *ripresa* on turning with the *sempi*; then they return with these their own [steps] to their place (and they start with the R), and in that time the lady gives a full turn; and all together make a *ripresa* on the R . . .

B Poi la donna fa dui sempi et quatro doppij intorno a gliomini a questo modo començando col sinistro et torna al suo loco/ ma comella finisce dui tempi l' homo di sopra gli fa intorno dui doppi/ et uiene nel suo loco/ e cosi poi laltro homo di sotto/ e comella e tornata fanno in sieme duo riprese/ et una riuerentia sul sinistro

The the lady makes two *sempi* and four *doppi* around the men in this way (starting with the L) and returns to her place; but when she finishes two *tempi*, the upper man makes two *doppi* turning and comes to his place, and the other (lower) man likewise; and when she has returned, they make together two *riprese*, and a *riverentia* on the L.

E poi duo continentie/ poi in sieme si uoltano in lato/ et fanno quatro tempi di saltarello ala fila E poi tutti fanno una ripresa/ et tornano in detro dui sempi et uno doppio/ . . .

Then two *continentie*. Then all together turn to the side and do four *tempi* of *saltarello* in file. Then they all make a *ripresa*, and turn to the rear, doing two *sempi* and one *doppio* . . .

Text 3 (Guglielmo – Paris):

BASSADANZA CHIAMATA DAPHNES IN TRE DI MESSER DOMENICO:-

In prima la donna facia due continenze sul pe sinistro/ et glihomini scambiano il luogo *cum* doi sempij partendo col pie sinistro cioe quel huomo che dinanzi passi dinanzi dalla donna. et quello che e da pie passi di dietro dalla donna. et poi faciano una ripresa sul sinistro. et poi gli huomini tornino nel luogo suo per la uia che si partirono cominciando col pie dritto. et in quel tempo la donna dia una uolta tonda con doi sempij partendo col pie dritto. et poi faciano una ripresa sul pie dritto: et una riuerentia sul sinistro. et la donna sola senza gliomini uada tramezando glihuomini aguisa dun .S. con doi sempij & quatro doppij. poi si pigliano per la mano & faciano due riprese, Luna sul sinistro et laltra sul dritto. et poi faciano una riuerentia sul pie sinistro. et poi gli huomini uadano indietro con due riprese in portogalese larghe. et in quel tempo La donna uada innanti con doi sempij et doi doppij/ & glihuomini si uoltino tondi partendo col pie dritto. et poi faciano una ripresa sul pie dritto. ella donna dia meza uolta. et faccia due riprese Luna sul sinistro ellaltra sul destro. & poi uadano glihuomini incontro alla dona con doi sempij & doi doppij partendo col pie sinistro. ella donna dia una uolta tonda con quelli medesmi passi/ cioe con doi sempij & doi doppij alluogh suo pur col sinistro. et poi glihoumini diano meza uolta sul dritto. et mettano la donna in mezo. & poi tutti faciano due riprese/ luna sul sinistro ellaltra sul dritto. et quatro continenze sul pie sinistro. et poi uadano luno dietro allaltro con quatro tempi di saltarello partendo col pie sinistro. Et poi diano meza uolta sul dritto, & una ripresa sul sinistro. et anchora uadano luno drieto allaltro con doi sempij & un doppio partendo col dritto. et poi diano meza uolta sul dritto & una ripresa sul sinistro. et poi diano una uolta tonda con doi sempii partendo col pie dritto. et faciano vna ripresa sul dritto: et vna riuerentia sul sinistro.

Translation of Text 3

Bassadanza called 'Daphnes', for three, by Mr Domenico

A First the lady makes two *continente* on the L foot, and the men change places with two *sempii* (leading with the L foot), the front man passing in front of the lady and the man at the foot passing behind her. And then they make a *ripresa* on the L. And then the men return to place by the route they first took (starting with the R foot) and at the same time the lady gives a full turn with two *sempii* (leading with the R foot). And then they make a *ripresa* on the R foot, and a *riverenza* on the L.

B And the lady on her own (without the men) goes between them in an S-shape with two *sempii* and four *doppii*. Then they take hands and make two *riprese* (one on the L, the other on the R), and then they make a *riverenza* on the L foot.

C And then the men go towards the rear with two slow *riprese in portogalese*, and at the same time the lady goes forward with two *sempii* and two *doppii*; and the men turn round (leading with the R foot) and then make a *ripresa* on the R foot, and the lady gives a half turn and makes two *riprese* (one on the L, the other on the R).

D And the men go towards the lady with two *sempii* and two *doppii*, and the lady gives a full turn with these same steps (viz two *sempii* and two *doppii*) to her own place also with the L. And then the men give a half turn on the R and place the lady in the middle. And then all make two *riprese* (one on the L, the other on the R) . . .

E . . . and four *continente* on the L foot. And then they go one after the other with four *tempi* of *saltarello* (leading with the L foot); and then they give a half turn on the R, and a *ripresa* on the L.

F And again they go one after the other with two *sempii* and one *doppio* (leading with the R); and then they give a half turn on the R, and a *ripresa* on the L. And then they give a full turn with two *sempii* (leading with the R foot) and make a *ripresa* on the R, and a *riverenza* on the L.

Text 4 (Ambrosio – Paris): agrees with Text 3.

Text 5 (Guglielmo – Modena) – significant variations only:

A In prima fano in seme due *continentie* poi la dona lei sola fa due altre *continentie* et in loco de dicte due *continentie* li homeni fano doi *scempij* in uolta cambiando luoco cioe quello da mano dritta va da man mancha e quello che da man mancha va da man dritta cominciando cum lo pie sinistro cioe quello che da man mancha de la dona per dinanzi alla dona e quel che da man dritta va per dietro poi si pigliano per mano e fano doe *riprese* . . .

First they make together two *continentie*; then the lady on her own makes two other *continentie*, and in place of the said two *continentie* the men make two *scempii* in a turn to change places (the one on the R hand going on the L and the one on the L going on the R) starting with the L foot, so that the one on the L hand of the lady goes in front of her and the one on her R hand goes behind. Then they take hands and make two *riprese* . . .

C . . . & in quello tempo li homeni fano doe *riprese portogalesse indreto large cum la volta del gioioso et fornito che ha la dona li doi scempij e doi doppij fa doe riprese. La prima in volta*

. . . and during the same time the men make two slow *riprese portogalesse* backwards, with the *gioioso* turn, and once the lady has done the two *scempii* and two *doppii* she makes two *riprese*, the first in a turn.

D e poi tutti in sieme si partino andando in contra luno a laltro cum doi *scempij* & doi *doppij* Ma la dona subito che ha facto dui *scempij* & vno *doppio* die meza volta et entrij in mezo delli homenj et fornisca laltro passo dopio cum li homenj tutti in sieme si uoltano ale *riprese*// . . .

And then all together set off towards one another with two *scempii* and two *doppii*; but the lady, the moment she has done two *scempii* and one *doppio*, gives a half turn and comes between the men so as to complete the second *doppio* with them. All together turn with the *riprese* . . .

E-F . . . cum doe *continentie* in sul sinistro & poi vadino luno drieto alaltro cum doi *scempij* et vno *doppio* partendosi col drito Et poi diano meza volta in sul drito et vna *ripresa* in sul sinistro cum la volta del gioioso . . .

. . . two *continentie* on the L. And then they go one behind the other with two *scempii* and one *doppio* (leading with the R). And then they give a half turn on the R and a *ripresa* on the L with the *gioioso* turn . . .

Text 6a (Guglielmo – Siena): agrees with Text 5.

Text 6b (Guglielmo – Siena): agrees with Text 7.

Text 7 (Guglielmo – Florence BNC) – significant variations only:

B et la donna sola senza glihuomini uadia tramezando glihuomini ad ghuisa duno signore . . .

And the lady on her own (without the men) goes passing between the men in the manner of a gentleman . . .

F . . . et poi faccino una *riuerenza* insulpie mancho: finita/ et poi larifaccino unaltra uolta dachapo et poi uadino adporre la donna alluogho suo./

. . . And then they make a *riverenza* on the L foot: end of dance. And then they do it once more from the top, and then they go to put the lady in her place.

Text 8 (Guglielmo – Florence BML): agrees with Text 7.

Text 9 (Guglielmo – New York): agrees with Text 7.

COMMENTARY

There are ten separate descriptions of 'Damnes', all to some degree ambiguous; but if we assume wherever possible that they are describing the same sequence of steps, most ambiguities disappear. Some more substantial differences between the sources will then remain.

Some versions of the dance, as written, require 36 *tempi*, whereas others take 37, and that in Text 5 (which omits virtually all of section E) takes only 30. Domenico and Guglielmo (Text 3) agree on 36 *tempi*, but both appear to have omitted one *tempo* in error, so it is best to conclude that the dance is intended to have 37 *tempi*. An analysis of Domenico and of Guglielmo (Text 3) in these terms appears at the end of this commentary (below, p. 7).

Section A

The dance begins with the woman between the two men. None of the sources specifies what formation they should be in, but it is clear from what follows that they are in line abreast rather than single file. We shall nevertheless be encountering some evidence that suggests that the man on the left of the woman is also a little in front of her and that the man on her right is similarly behind. Now, while this arrangement in echelon is seemingly implied by the dance descriptions, it is nowhere positively stated and so, if true, it must be seen as a basic feature of *bassadanza* style, one that could be taken for granted without specific mention. In other words, it would be normal in *bassadanza* for the leading dancer to lead his or her companion(s) in the most literal sense, by going that little way in front of them. On this interpretation, an echelon formation would not be limited to this dance but would be found in all *basse danze* that were not limited to single file and in at least the *bassadanza* sections of *balli*.

If this formation is adopted here, it should be noted that all the dancers will be facing forwards, not obliquely to downstage right as proposed by Dixon [1986, 13]. They first of all do two *continentie*. (These *continentie* are omitted in Texts 3 and 4, but as they are found in all the other Guglielmo MSS, the omission is probably a scribal error.)

Then the men change places, the man on the left passing in front of the woman and the one on the right passing behind. In Domenico they have two *passi sempi* and one *represa* to cross (though the *represa* appears to be assigned to the wrong foot) and they finish level (*equali*). This last stipulation would be strange if the men had also started level, since in that case it would have been sufficient to refer to them changing places without further qualification. Use of the word *equali* is thus the first indication that they must have started in some sense *inequali*. All other texts agree that they have only two *sempii* (which makes the change of places a difficult manoeuvre to execute elegantly and cleanly), but do not insist on them finishing level. Peggy Dixon solves the problem of trying to cross over on only two *sempii* by having the dancers start on one diagonal and cross to a position on the other. Thus, after crossing, the man who had been on the left would still be a little in front of the woman, but on the right side; the other man would still be a little behind, but on the left. This reduces the distance to be travelled and is in one sense consistent with Domenico's original version, for there also the first man does not ever reach the second man's place 'at the bottom' (*a pie*).

During this manoeuvre the woman remains stationary in Domenico, but does two further *continenze* in Guglielmo. And in Guglielmo (and apparently Cornazano) all then make a *ripresa* to the left.

The men then return to their original places by whatever route and with whatever steps they used before. The woman meanwhile makes a full turn. Again there is a difference between Domenico and the rest: in Domenico this turn takes two *passi sempi* and one *represa* (matching the men's sequence); in the other sources it is done with two *sempii* only (again matching the men), the *ripresa* to the right then being made by all three together. Whichever way the turn is done, she starts (like the men) with the right foot, so presumably turning clockwise round her right shoulder, in a contrary direction to the men.

This section of the dance concludes with all making a reverence on the left foot.

Section B

It is now the woman's turn to go round the men. This she does in a figure of 8 (or less accurately an S), passing round the man on her left first, then the man on her right, with two *passi sempi* and four *doppi*. The shape of the figure 8 as drawn in the MS of Domenico [Wilson, 1988, 45] accurately portrays her track round two men of whom one is on the left and forward, the other on the right and behind. This is so far from being a merely conventional sign like a normal 8 or an S that it deserves to be taken at face value.

In Cornazano, the two men join in, each making a circle of two *doppi* as she passes. The man on the left makes his first *doppio* as she makes her second; the man on the right presumably does so as she makes her third. Nothing is said as to which way they turn, but considerations of space leave little doubt that they must follow behind the woman, the first man turning to the left, the second man to the right. Nor is it stated which foot they use. The man on the right must begin on the left foot; if it had made any difference which foot the man on the left began with, no doubt Cornazano would have mentioned it.

Cornazano's elaboration is effective, if somewhat busy, but not entirely appropriate in context, since it obscures the alternation of roles between men and woman in the first two sections of the dance. In section A the men travel on a circle around the woman; in section B she goes around the two of them. The balance between the two sections is destroyed if the men do not remain in place and so yield the initiative to her. Guglielmo reverted to Domenico's version, and his choice of words (*sola senza gliomini*) makes clear that he both knew Cornazano's variation and rejected it. It is of interest that some of the texts of Guglielmo describe the woman's sequence as being in the manner of a gentleman (*ad ghuisa duno signore*). The same phrase is used in similar circumstances elsewhere (e.g. in 'Pazienza'): whether this reflects the behaviour of gentlemen to persons of the opposite sex, or of a person of quality to inferiors generally, is open to question.

Finally, all three make two *repres* (left and right) and a reverence on the left foot. This reverence is omitted from the MS of Domenico but is present in all the other sources, including Cornazano. It seems definitely to be required, to match that at the end of section A, and was probably omitted in error.

Section C

The woman goes forward with two *passi sempi* and two *doppi*, while the men retreat with a sequence of diagonal *repres*. In Domenico (and Cornazano) there are three of these, but in Guglielmo only two slow ones, each taking one and a half *tempi*. These slow *ripres* are described as *in portogalese*; it is uncertain if this denotes anything other than 'on the diagonal' – it is possible that the step was elaborated in some way. For example, if it consisted of three main movements instead of the usual two, a prolongation from six to nine counts could be made without any difficulty.

The woman then makes a half turn to face the men, while at the same time the men make a full turn to end once again facing her. As usual, these turns are more measured in Domenico, rather brisker in Guglielmo. In Domenico the woman's turn is made on two *repres*, starting with the left foot and presumably moving round the left shoulder. In different texts of Guglielmo she is said either to turn before making the *ripresa* (i.e. on the upbeat at the beginning of the first one) or to turn as she makes the first *ripresa*. In practice, there is only a little difference between these, as in either case she will need to make a quick half turn round her right shoulder on the end of her second *doppio* as she goes into the *ripresa*. In Domenico the men's turn consists of two *passi sempi* and one *represa*, starting on the right foot and presumably turning

round the right shoulder. In Guglielmo the turn is completed in one *tempo* and is followed by the *ripresa*; it is not stated how the turn is made, except in as much as that may be implied by its description in Text 5 as a *gioioso* turn.

Section D

All now do two *passi sempi* and two *doppi*, the men going straight forward, but the woman circling so as to end still facing the rear but in between the two men. The woman will make her circle casting back round her left shoulder, both to achieve symmetry and to ensure that her second *doppio* is made coming towards the men; unless this is done, they are unlikely to end in a tidy line. (It should not be forgotten that the dancers will be in the same formation as that in which they started; if this was in echelon then, it will be so again now). The men make a quick turn on the end of their second *doppio* to face the rear, and all then make *represe* to left and right. Domenico specifies that this turn is made on the left side, i.e. turning *anti-clockwise* by swivelling on the right foot. Such a turn would be out of the question for a female dancer wearing a dress with a train but presents little problem for a man.

An attractive variation is introduced in Text 5. When the men advance towards her, the woman does not circle but goes to meet them. After two *sempii* and one *doppio* the three dancers are in line but facing in opposite directions. The woman makes a quick half turn round her left shoulder as she closes the *doppio* and then makes the second *doppio* advancing with the two men. All must then make another half turn to face the rear, this time round their right shoulder, before the two *riprese*.

Domenico's and Guglielmo's versions of the rest of the dance are so unlike as to call for separate description.

Domenico: section E

After two *continentie*, the dancers go off in single file, with the second man (who is now on the left of the line) leading, with four *tempi* of *saltarello* and one *doppio* on the left foot. In Cornazano the *doppio* is replaced by a *ripresa*. This sequence brings them back to their original places, i.e. where they started the dance, and it would thus be apt for them to close the *doppio* facing the front, or (in Cornazano) to use the *ripresa* to achieve this position. While a turn to the front is not specifically mentioned, either here or later in the dance, such a turn is needed at some point before the final *reverentia*, and this seems the most appropriate position. Whether the dancers do this, or whether they halt in their tracks facing the right side wall, must nevertheless depend on what follows.

Domenico: section F

There is then a there-and-back sequence: making a half turn to the right on the upbeat, they make two *passi sempi* and one *doppio* one way, then making a half turn to the left, two *passi sempi* and one *doppio* to return. The direction of this sequence determines the way that the dancers should be facing at the end of section E. The choice is between left-and-right and back-and-forward. Of these the latter makes by far the stronger and more appropriate conclusion to the dance, bringing all three dancers forward together for the first time. When they turn to the front at the end of section E, it looks as though they have returned to their starting position for a final figure such as a hay before making a last reverence. Instead, they turn away abruptly towards the rear; equally suddenly they then return, advancing in line abreast. The whole sequence, if performed in this way, has dramatic point as the culmination of the dance. The alternative, of proceeding in single file towards the left side wall and back, has little to commend it; it is asymmetrical and unrelated to the pattern of movement of the remainder of the dance.

The dance ends with all three making a full turn round their right shoulders on two *passi sempi* and one *represe*, followed by a *reverentia* on the left foot. (Domenico's copyist once again appears to have assigned the *represe* to the wrong foot).

Guglielmo: section E

After four *continente*, the dancers move off in single file with four *tempi* of *saltarello*. There is no guidance with regard to either track or destination, but if we accept that the travelling sequence in section F is also made in single file, as stated, then it is desirable that the second man ends the *saltarello* on the left of the dance and the first man on the right. They make a half turn on the end of the *saltarello* to reverse direction, and a *ripresa* on the left foot.

Guglielmo: section F

They go off again in single file, this time with the first man leading. With two *sempii* and one *doppio* he must bring them back into line abreast across the room; it is not stated whether this should be their starting position or some other. It seems that they must close the double facing the rear of the room, so they may have returned to the position from which they started the *saltarello*, facing in this very direction. Immediately, however, they turn to the front for the concluding sequence: a *ripresa* to the left, a brisk full turn on two *sempii* turning to the right, a *ripresa* to the right, and the final reverence on the left foot. If this interpretation is correct, and Guglielmo leaves much to the imagination, he has substituted a surprise near the end of the dance for Domenico's surprise at the beginning of this section. The technique is, however, the same: to make his dancers arrive in a certain position facing in a direction that is unrelated to what is about to follow.

The suggested allocation of steps to *tempi* for the two main versions of the dance is given below. Steps are designated by the initial letters of their Italian names, reserving capital *R* for *riverenza*, except that a step of *saltarello* is designated *sal*. When the abbreviation for *meza volta* is enclosed in round brackets, this denotes that the turn is made on the upbeat (*in vuodo*).

Domenico

A	cc	ss	r	ss	r	R		6
B	ss	d	d	d	d	r	r [R]	8
C	{	ss	d	d	r	r	}	5
		r	r	r	ss	r		
D	ss	d	d	(mv)r	r			5
E	cc	sal	sal	sal	sal	d		6
F	(mv)ss	d	(mv)ss	d	ss	r	R	7
								37

Guglielmo (Text 3)

A	[cc]	(ss)	r	ss	r	R		6
		(cc)						
B	ss	d	d	d	d	r	r R	8
C	{	ss	d	d	r	r	}	5
		r	r	r	ss	r		
D	ss	d	d	(mv)r	r			5
E	cc	cc	sal	sal	sal	sal		6
F	(mv)r	ss	d	(mv)r	ss	r	R	7
								37

When these are compared, we see that the author of Guglielmo's version has been at pains to keep the overall length of the dance unaltered. This is shown by the insertion of two

extra *continenze* at the beginning of section E, presumably to compensate for the fact that the revised version of the remainder of the dance is one *tempo* shorter than Domenico's.

It is hardly unexpected that in modifying the dance the new arranger should ensure that it could be performed to the same music, but it acquires some significance for us in as much as it runs counter to the general trend of what we know about *bassadanza* music. That indeed is little enough and mostly negative in character:

- (1) out of the four sources that contain music as well as descriptions of 15th-century Italian dances three include music for *balli* but not for *basse danze*;
- (2) the fourth source (Cornazano) includes three *bassadanza* tunes, described as the best and most popular available ('tenori da bassedanze et saltarelli / gli migliori / et piu usitati di glialtri'), but does not link them with specific dances;
- (3) unlike their French equivalents, the descriptions of *basse danze* do not even include any indication of length.

The apparent conclusions to be drawn are that *basse danze* do not have tunes of their own; that within reason any tune of *bassadanza* character can be made to fit any given dance; and even that the relative lengths of the dance and the music to be used were not of great importance.

These propositions should not be regarded as absolute and universal, however. There are some observations that point in a different direction. One was made above: the versions of 'Damnes' in Domenico and Guglielmo are of the same length, despite substantial rearrangement of the closing sections of the dance. Another is the existence of two *basse danze* by Guglielmo ('Alexandresca', 'Genevra') in which repetition and regularities of structure strongly imply (though they do not prove) that they had tunes composed of four equal strains in the pattern *aabb*. It is at least possible, therefore, that by the time of Guglielmo individual *basse danze* had acquired their own tunes, whether this was by custom or by design. We should at any rate be careful not to exclude the possibility of development in the character and conventions of *bassa danza* during the late fifteenth century, and in the present context we can hardly deny the role of Guglielmo as an innovator, ready to devise or adopt new versions of old dances.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper was originally undertaken as an exercise in the handling of multiple sources, but it quickly engendered respect for each of those sources as an individual and separate entity. This has been reflected in the foregoing commentary, where the versions of Domenico, Cornazano and Guglielmo have been carefully distinguished. It is here proposed that the many differences between them should not be regarded merely as a succession of optional variants, to be adopted or not at pleasure like fancy steps in ballroom dancing, but rather that any reconstruction should at the least take one of these versions as a basis. This is not to recommend or demand an inflexible or unimaginative approach; the very existence of many different versions in our sources is an invitation to experiment; but it is to ask for a greater degree of consistency than has been in evidence so far.

This is opposed to the 'mix-n-match' approach to be found in the Nonsuch reconstruction by Peggy Dixon [1986]. The Nonsuch arrangement of the dance has the great advantage of being accompanied by music composed by Dixon herself for the purpose. It may thus seem ungrateful to point out that this music does not always fit the steps. (The two *represe* at the end of section B, for instance, have to be squeezed into a single *tempo*, unless you are prepared to follow Domenico's text literally and omit the following *reverentia*.) There are few significant differences of interpretation between the Nonsuch reconstruction and that offered here. The most obvious lies in section F, where the 'there-and-back' movement of Dome-

nico is made in file towards left and right, rather than in line abreast to rear and to front as suggested above. There is nevertheless a sense of confusion that arises from the use made of the sources. In sections A-D Guglielmo's version is generally followed, except in section B, which uses Cornazano's variation (specifically rejected by Guglielmo), and in section C, where Domenico's three *represe* are preferred to Guglielmo's two slow ones. In sections E-F, on the other hand, it is Domenico who is generally followed, except that there are four *continenze*, as in Guglielmo, and that the final turn (like those in the earlier sections of the dance) is made briskly in Guglielmo's manner with two *sempii* only. Whether this compilation appears confused, or just a workmanlike compromise, is no doubt a matter of personal taste, but it does contain some curiosities. Thus, when Guglielmo (if it was he) reworked the last two sections of the dance, he reduced their length by one *tempo* and filled the gap by inserting two extra *continenze* at the beginning of section E. These elements go together in one package: what can be the point of prefacing Domenico's version with Guglielmo's extra *continenze*? – especially when this is not imposed by the strait-jacket of a given piece of music.

The appeal made here to respect the integrity of the individual sources, once obvious blunders have been corrected, is not limited to 'Damnes' alone. Its general purpose is to avoid the creation of hybrid dances, for which hybrid music must then be contrived by similar manipulations. The case of 'La giloxia' is particularly instructive. Domenico's version of the dance could be performed to Domenico's version of the music, if that were made available. Guglielmo's different version of the dance in the Paris MS could be performed to Guglielmo's different version of the music in the same MS, if that were made available. But what we actually have, now in three separate recordings, is a new arrangement of the music to which it is impossible to perform any version of the dance that can be found in the sources, but only the altered versions of our modern arrangers. Where the steps and the music found in the original manuscripts cannot be reconciled, it is clearly essential and justifiable to emend either the one or the other; but to alter both when there is no need to alter either betrays an inability to leave well alone and a seeming reluctance to allow Domenico and his successors to speak for themselves.

REFERENCES

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