

**SOURCES, REMARKS, OBSERVATIONS, ANECDOTES,
TRANSLATIONS, AND PERHAPS DIFFERENT
INTERPRETATIONS OF “NEW” MATERIAL FOR THE**

SUPPLEMENTAL

HOŁUBIEC COUPLE-TURN

**DANCE MATERIAL TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN
ADDENDUM OR SUPPLEMENT TO PREVIOUSLY
PUBLISHED WORK (1984) OF**

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**A CONTINUING WORK IN PROGRESS IN A CERTAIN
TOPICAL OR THEMATIC ORDER ALSO ARRANGED
CHRONLOGICALLY WHEN POSSIBLE — THERE ARE
OVERLAPPING CATEGORIES**

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THE POLISH WAY OF DOING THE HOŁUBIEC COUPLE TURN

From the end of the 18th century in Poland we have some citations about a couple who were well-known for their dancing.

Foreigners astonished at the Polish dances, particularly in the Polonez and Mazur danced in their flowing clothes [Polish Kontusz]. Known and admired for their Mazur were the best couple of Warszawa: Prince Józef Poniatowski and Julia Potocka.

*“Cudzoziemcy podziwiali polskie tance, zwłaszcza poloneza i mazura tańczone w powłóczyстых strojach polskich Znane są zachwyty nad mazurem wykonanym przez najlepszą parę Warszawską: księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego i Julie Potocka.”*¹

This citation is from a work which concerns itself with illustrating the many parties and balls which were part of Polish life during the Polish Enlightenment. In particular, the above citation describes a masquerade ball. This will explain the flowing “clothes” which was undoubtedly the 18th century Staropolska fashion. The Enlightenment in Poland is usually dated from 1784 to 1792. Taking the above citation at face value means that the Mazur was done in Warszawa before 1792. It is always a possibility. The above citation is not a primary source, but a mere construction.

For it seems that before 1792 the rural Mazurek is seen on the public stage and perhaps in the ballroom but not the polished elegant Mazur of the next century even though it is only several years away. Could a dance make a transition from the country to the stage, and to the elegant social ballroom, in so short a time? We need a primary source of evidence to decide one way or another.

During the year 1793 a German traveler, Frederyk Schulz, made a trip to Poland recording his impressions in a diary.² Here is what he wrote of Julia Potocka’s dancing:

When her small pretty feet, [which she] moving with a smoothness an evenness [so much so], that in the Mazur that she hardly touched the floor; when she went from the hand of one to that of another man, flyingly flirtingly, impulsively, knowingly- finally she returned to her partner,

“Gdy jej małeńka śliczna nóżka unosząca zaokrąglone elastyczne kształty toczonyj postaci, zwiwała się w mazurku i zdawała się ledwie dotykać ziemi, gdy z rak jednego w objęcia drugiego mezczyzny przelatując unoszona, porywana, wiedziona- na ostatek wróciła do swego tancerza,

¹ Irena Turnau, *Życie codzienne w Warszawie Okresu Oświecenia* (Warszawa: 1969, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy), p. 260.

² Frederyk Schulz in Magdalena Witwinska, *Kuligiem przez trzy stulecie* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1961), pp. 149-150.

he catching her strength
 turned her excitedly,
 her head, exhausted,
 dropped upon his shoulder or
 with a delightful grace or
 a shyness [bowed her head]
 onto his chest ,
 as if overflowing with feeling
 for her conqueror as he glances
 at his companion
 while the crowd,
 holding its breath,
 watches only her,
 mystified at the sight
 of her magic,
 which is incomparable.

*gdy ja gwałtonie porywał
 i okręcał namiętne,
 a jej głowa jak ze znużenia
 spadała mu na ramię lub
 pełna wdzięku rozkosznego
 a jednak skromnego
 na piersi się chyliła,
 lub jakby zwyciężona uczuciem
 wylewała je a spojrzeniu
 na swego towarzysza
 otaczające tłumy,
 wstrzymując oddech
 całe oczyma ja pożerając,
 milczące wzrokiem sobie tylko
 czarodziejkę ukazywały
 jako nieporównana.”³*

This is the only piece of eyewitness evidence that supports the view that the Mazur was done at this early date by Poland’s Upper Class. Because there is no mention of formally constructed figures, we can only assume that this is a description of couple solo dancing, which shows how closely it is related to the rural Mazurek-Obertas which itself, is a couple dance. There is one “figure” motif mentioned above: that of the woman changing partners.

However we **can** interpret the “. . .her head, exhausted, dropped upon his shoulder or with a delightful grace or a shyness [bowed her head] onto his chest, . . .” as occurring during the Hołubiec Couple Turn!

The greatest value of the above passage lies in the description of the women’s dancing. This is the way that the best Mazur dancer would dance, and what all women dancers should strive for—smoothness, evenness of motion, a gliding across the floor. The woman, though shy and delicate, yet is impulsive—she overflows with energy.

So this is how the noble Lady Julia Lubomirska Potocka danced with Prince Poniatowski. Here we present the couple.



So what was, and is this couple turn? Here is a mechanical description of it of its position.

³ *Ibid.*

This is the native Polish couple⁴ position which is most characteristic for the Mazur. It is used for doing a couple turn in place. The man has his left arm around the woman's waist. Woman's right hand rests upon man's left shoulder.



Free hands are joined in front. This couple position is used when the couple turns in place with great force. The turn is done going counter clockwise.

The man seizes his partner with force, literally taking her breath away. This is not a gentle turn. Because the movements here are forceful and done so that the dancers are close to one another—this implies that the partners did not maintain a formal attitude with each other.

The man would stop suddenly and throw his partner into his L arm and, seizing her by the waist, would turn her around in place. Karol Czerniawski's mid-19th century description is very good for conveying the energy and breathlessness of this movement.

As the cpl turns in place, the man would be turning with the heel-clicking step, ending with a stamping finish only to the run again with his partner.

Of all the writings only Mieczysław Hłasko (1846), Gawlikowski (1862), Onufry Rochacki (1874), Friedrich Zorn (1887), and Edward de Kurylo (1939), mention that the man does the heel-clicking step! It is all the more strange, since the dancemasters used the term "Hołubiec"! They neglected to mention this is probably due to the feeling that this was too rough for the Salon-Ballroom milieu.

Equally interesting is the fact that one encountered this turn in the Mazurka as a Stage European Character Dance.

The only good descriptions are from Onufry Rochacki (1874), and Edward de Kurylo's articles, which were published in an English Ballroom dance periodical in 1939. Pan de Kurylo was a Polish dance teacher and choreographer who came to teach the Ballroom and stage versions of the Mazurek abroad.

His remarks imply that there is both a ballroom and Stage turn. The Stage Version must have been derived from the Social Ballroom form, as done by strong dancers, which connects it by inference to the early Mazurek-Obertas form. We refer here to the throwing up of the free arm into a pose on the 4th m. In Jozef Waxman's book of 1937, he does say that the free arm could be up in a pose for the entire turn. His book deals with the social form of the Mazur. The Ballroom descriptions rely heavily upon Cellarius.

⁴ Is it? This is really quite a puzzle. There may be two "native" forms. See pp.220, 221, 228, 229, 232, 235 of, *The Elegant Polish Running-Sliding Dance*, Part II.

THE “TOUR SUR PLACE” VARIATION

Below we have the illustration from Cellarius’ 1846, 1847 dance manual. This is well known and was in the Russian edition of Cellarius’ manual. This depiction was repeated in other manuals as well—by other French authors of the time. This, however, is only the ending or finishing of the Cellarius’ written description of the turn. What it possibly shows, if we are not reading too much into this single illustration, is the neatness and precision of the footwork.



Now let us look at another illustration done from the same time and from Paris as well. It was done for a periodical magazine ⁵by one, Kontski, in 1844-45, and is entitled “Tour sur Place.”



This has a more relaxed or languid air about it. It is a charming illustration.

⁵ *L' Illustration, Journal Universale*, Vol. II, (Paris: 1844).

Here below is another illustration of the Tour Sur Place for the frontispiece of a description of a figure-sequence for a Mazurka by the French composer, M. Jullien, dated sometime around from 1844-1850s. It was dedicated to the dance teacher, E. Coulon.



The
figure-

sequences were taught also by the dance teachers Laborde, Corrali and Elie, who were dance teachers at the Royal Academy of Paris. Apparently they named it “The Mazurka of Spa” whereas M. Jullien referred to “The Original Mazurka ” and also as a Mazurka Quadrille. In any case they knew that there was a difference between the Polish and Russian version.

Laborde’s beautiful illustrations contained in his *Album a la mode* of 1844 are noteworthy as is his description of the Mazurka.

SOME MID-19TH CENTURY STAGE TURNS

How did it develop or how was it performed of the stage? From Klemm's 1855,⁶ and many times re-published thereafter, dance manual we immediately are struck by the strong leg-action.



One is supposed to swing around and beat one's heels together at the same time. This is difficult and helps to explain the existence of the more polite forms.

Look how the dancers below are pivoting on their inside foot—they are in, basically, a Waltz position.



⁶ Klemm's manual was for both social dancers and stage dancers.

THE WALTZ-LIKE HOŁUBIEC COUPLE TURN

Here is a side-by-side comparison of two drawings of the Waltz-like or waltzing variation of the Hołubiec Couple Turn.



Rochacki's 1874 Hołubiec Couple Turn



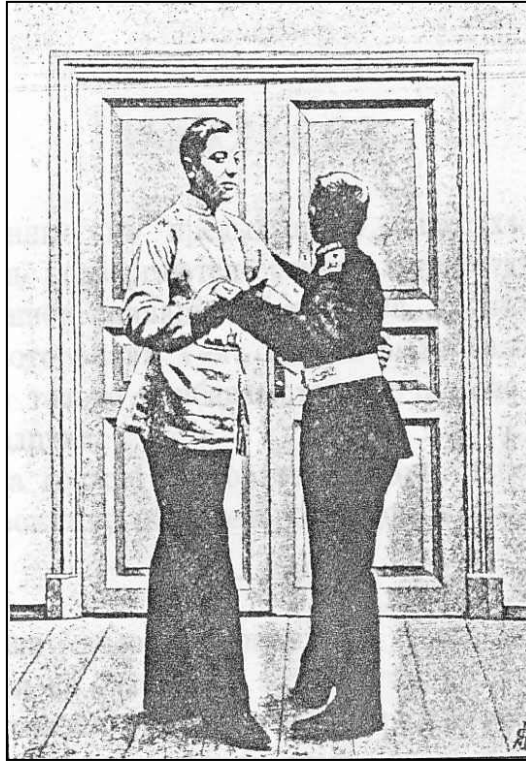
"Mazurka russe" 1897

We can see how similar they are, except that Rochacki actual drawing may be showing a transitional orientation in going from one side to the other. This is the general ballroom turn done by men who not going to strike their heels together as they turn. The "Mazurka russe" drawing is from the a French Dance history book under "Mazurka russe."⁷ It is obviously a depiction of the turn as done in Russia—at Saint Petersburg. And it is nice lively illustration. Note that the partners are not to close together as in Rochacki's drawing.

⁷ Henri de Soria, *Historia Pittoresque De La Danse*, (Paris: 1897).

From a Russian dance manual of A. Chistyakov we have a photograph of this couple position. The Chistyakov manual is a little more pedagogical sounder than other manuals as it is for a school and gives a progression of lessons according to the school classes and comments about teaching. And this brings us to the photographic evidence in this manual. Unfortunately it does not show steps: only couple positions using male students in the photographs.

Here is one of the photographs which shows how the Waltz couple position has influenced the Polish Hołubiec Couple Turn.⁸



Chistyakov 1890

We are told that in the open couple position the Lady holds her gown with her free hand.

⁸ A. D. Chistyakov, А. Д. Чистяковъ, Методическое Руководство Къх Овучению, A Methodical Handbook For The Learning Of Dances, (Saint Petersburg: 1890), p. 116.

Now we return to the only extant video-film, known to us, of Mazur-Mazurka dancing before 1914. It was filmed in 1912.⁹

Looking at the still photograph, below, from the Grand Duchess' Mazurka film, we can see that this is the very same turn. The provenance is clear. But this is not surprising since this is the easiest variation. (Actual an easier variation would be to simply take three steps per measure as you go around.



⁹ The film is from and used here with the permission of the Herman Axelbank Film Collection of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution And Peace of Stanford University, California.

Next we have photograph from the Italian manual, *Balli D'Oggi*, of G. Francesco published in 1914 ¹⁰ which illustrates the couple turn. It is stated explicitly that one takes the couple position as for the “Boston” which is an early 20th century variation of the Waltz. The author has this series of photographs, foot-drawings and instructions under the title of the dance, “La Mazurka Russa.”



Notice that this is a six-step turn which does include a heel-beat.

¹⁰ G. Francesco, *Balli D'Oggi*, (Florence: Hoepli, 1914), p.161.