

# De Michielen/Tongeren Sword Dance: 1961 notation

**Reconstructed from 1961 TV documentary *Een aanganeme  
kennismaking met....***

Film is edited, dance not shown chronologically. (The circling shown at the start is shown again later in its proper place). Overall they appear to have shown the climax of the dance and ending, without showing how it began.

There is no hilt-and-point ring. It is possible that this took place before the dancers circled with swords held aloft.

The dancers stand in two rows of 10, facing each other. Swords are held in both hands, almost level across their chests. They appear to advance for 3, raising L slightly and lowering R equally, touch swords in the middle, retreat for 3, then advance for 3 again and use the 4th 3 to make high baskets of 4.

Circle ccl for about 10 lots of 3 (timing is a bit various) then 12 break out into the ring, swords still held aloft.

12 dancers circle ccl with swords held aloft in R hand, while 8 dancers in the centre form a platform of swords: locked in some way? We never see. The dancers circling skip in time but not on the same foot.

They appear to circle for 4 lots of 3; then the platform is lowered and the King (not Fool) steps aboard (4 lots of 3). The platform is raised (4 lots of 3) and rotated ccl while the 12 continue to circle (8 lots of 3).

All stop. The dancers face inward. The platform is dipped 3 times - not in time with the previous rhythm - while the dancers dip their vertical swords at the same time. Given the break in the rhythm does this signify a pause in the music? Looks possible in the light of what comes next.

The platform is lowered, the King steps off, and all dancers walk (stride rather than amble) to re-form the two files of 10 each, with the King at the front, facing down the set. There does not to be any great business about breaking the platform - it doesn't look like drawing swords from a lock.

They form up with swords shouldered. They march forwards (now in time, L foot start), cast to the back, then raising their swords above their heads, held level in both hands. And cast again to finish.

I wonder whether this is how they came on at the start, as well?

*May, 2020*