

Orchesis

Movement in Etruscan Iconography: What is Dance?

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Abstract

The study of movement and dance in Ancient iconography means their visual definition. However, this usually presents difficulties, as the boundaries for the definition of dance in visual representations are not precisely set. Moreover, the terms used in Antiquity to define what we call today “dance” are not of great help. In consequence, this article proposes to establish criteria in order to define the visual representation of dance, based on Etruscan iconography.

Keywords: Movement, Dance, Etruria, Iconography.

Resumo

O estudo do movimento e da dança na iconografia antiga significa sua definição visual. No entanto, isso geralmente apresenta dificuldades, uma vez que os limites para a definição da dança nas representações visuais não são definidos com precisão. Além disso, os termos usados na Antiguidade para definir o que hoje chamamos de “dança” não ajudam muito. Em consequência, este artigo se propõe a estabelecer critérios para definir a representação visual da dança, a partir da iconografia etrusca.

Palavras-chave: Movimento, Dança, Etrúria, Iconografia.

The study of movement and dance in iconography means their visual definition. However, it collides with the terms used in Antiquity to define them. Indeed, the terms used by Greek authors,¹ which today are translated as “dance”, had a specific meaning.² The first commonly used term, *choreuô* (“to form a choir”),³ referred to the movements of choral dances, both mixed, or exclusively male or female. *Choreuô* evokes a ritual that is punctuated by several characters who stand together or simply follow each other, and that move from one point to another in a circle.⁴ *Orcheomai / orchoumai*, which is also translated as “to dance”, would more accurately mean “to move in rhythm”. It is also used in sports contexts. It thus emphasizes the rhythm, the know-how and the grace of the athletes. Used in a warlike context, it highlights the beauty of the fight and its good execution.⁵ While contemporary translations interpret this Greek term in different ways depending on its context of use, the use of *orcheomai / orchoumai* by ancient authors provides us with information on the amalgam between dance, sports and warlike practices. This amalgam is

1 See in particular Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, I, 37.

2 Cf. Garelli 2007: 93 and following.

3 Chantraine 1970: 830.

4 On choral dances, cf. Calame 1977 and Delavaud-Roux 1994.

5 Athenaeus, I, 25 = 14d (with the word *orchesis*, dance, used in the plural)

consequently found in iconography, at least between the 7th century BCE and the first half of the 5th century BCE, and is found also in Etruscan iconography. The antefixes discovered at Pyrgi (fig. 01), dated to the extreme end of the 6th century BCE, illustrate how the boundaries between fighting, sporting and dancing postures are blurred. Françoise-Hélène Massa-Pairault has interpreted the scene as an episode of the Goddess Uni's myth. The haloed figures would be: Memnon and his companions represented in full metamorphosis in front of his tomb; Aurora, in reference to the cycle of time; and a *pótnia híppon*.⁶ According to the author, the movement of the figures must be dance. However, the space between the legs and the ample layout of the arms on either side of the figures would rather invite to see a representation of race, and thus to interpret the scene as a solar course.

1. A look back at the first representations of dance movement in pre-Roman Italy: from cognitive experience to visual transcription.

When the absence of direct writings on Etruscan dance invites to revalue visual productions, the study of aliteral societies contributes to better understand the process of movement imaging.⁷ The analysis of the first visual representations from pre-Roman Italy, mainly in Valcamonica where there are nearly 300,000 figures dated from the Chalcolithic,⁸ has highlighted the codes and visual mechanisms used, and in consequence how prehistoric iconography was formalized. Three styles have been determined: the linear geometric style with elementary structures, the complex geometric style with juxtaposed elements, and the naturalistic style.⁹ The first style is characterized by simple figures whose coarse assemblage of incised lines permits to identify the subject of this basic representation. The design is elementary, the body parts are schematic and inorganic. The movement is suggested by the large space between the legs and the asymmetrical position of the arms that are placed on either side of the figures. The second style, called complex geometric with juxtaposed elements, still presents a schematic style. However, the human and animal figures are represented from a bi-angular perspective, namely the bust and the arms are represented frontally while the head and the legs are represented in profile. The representation of movement is reduced to the essential in order to make

6 Massa-Pairault 1992: 70.

7 Cf. Francfort *et al.* 2010.

8 The first traces of iconography seem to be dated around 4500 a.C. They developed considerably during the Chalcolithic, and lasted until the second century a.C. On those first traces, cf. De Marinis & Fossati 2012 and the bibliography indicated.

9 De Marinis & Fossati 2012: 15-21.

it understandable, and possibly narrative. In consequence, two distinctive elements for the representation of movement are to be noted: (1) the legs apart, and (2) the arms raised. These basic patterns do not change through time, despite the stylistic evolution. In these representations reduced to the essential, a fine vision of the body in movement is expressed. According to Günter Dux and Georg Kossack,¹⁰ which Christoph Huth quotes, the movements could be considered as emanations of a vital force. In this regard, the visual choices made for the representation of movements responded to the need to transcribe this force. The movement is perceived and reduced to its fundamental components, and expressed following the rules of “aspective”.¹¹

The study of the first visual representations of movements in pre-Roman Italy and the visual choices made by the artists of that time contribute to give a first definition of the visual representations of dance. And it will constitute an initial point of reference in this article. Three fundamental criteria are to be noted, namely: (1) the arms raised, (2) the legs apart, possibly raised and flexed, and (3) the choreographic action, which is expressed by the number and the redundancy of figures engaged in a same action (i.e. same figures repeated in a similar posture). The first representations present human figures arranged anarchically and in a carpet-like disposition, on a flat surface, this is on the walls of a tomb or on rocky boulders. Gradually, and over time, the figures tend to be organized in straight and horizontal lines, and to be bounded by the hands. In other cases, the figures are arranged in a circular way, around an object or not, which invites to identify the actions depicted as choreographed performances, collective and circular manifestations, namely dances.

2. Determination of the Etruscan iconography of dance:¹² from performative actions to representations' visuality.

From the 8th century BCE, the Etruscan iconography of dance continues to exploit the visual characteristics already in use in prehistoric iconography. The *olla* of Bisenzio, that is kept in Florence (inv. 85629), illustrates this point.¹³ Discovered in the Buccacce necropolis, the object presents a row of anthropomorphic figures, of which the lower part of the body is represented in silhouette. The arms are oblique, directed downwards and outwards. They all appear linked to each other, by holding hands. As previously argued, there are characteristic visual elements that invite to define the scene as a dance

10 Dux 1990, Kossack 1999 and Francfort *et al.* 2010: 205.

11 Brunner-Traut 1996.

12 For a historiography of Etruscan dance, cf. Gouy 2012 and Gouy 2017.

13 On the object, cf. Martelli 2000: 75 and the bibliography indicated.

performance: the repetition of human-shaped figures in a same attitude, the connection between the characters (in the present case, they hold each other's hands) and the presentation of the arms.

The study of a large chronological period, namely from the 8th century BCE to the end of the 5th century BCE, allows to shed light on the different strategies implemented in Etruscan visual representations of dance performances. Three distinctive visual elements can be differentiated: the construction of the body, the presence of musicians and the appearance of the actors.

2.a. Body building

There are four characteristics: (1) the presentation of the arms, (2) the turning movement of the body, (3) the repetition of the figures, and / or (4) their rotation. The body movements suggested in pictures refer to bodily actions that are different from ordinary motor actions, such as walking and running. The movement of the arms is characterized by four positions: (1) raised, (2) down, (3) in a median and symmetrical position, (4) in an asymmetrical position. The legs are usually depicted in a movement of (1) walking, (2) brisk walking, or (3) leaping.¹⁴

2.a.1. Characteristics of the arms.

2.a.1.a. The raised position of the arms: worshipers or dancers?

The raised position of the arms is the most common visual characteristic to express dance movements. The upper limbs are arranged symmetrically on either side of the figures. The arms are horizontal, the forearms oblique and upwards, and the hands are open. The palms are facing upwards as a sign of prayer. However, the dancers are to be distinguished from worshipers whose arms are also raised. On the right wall of the Tomb of the Jugglers in Tarquinia, the presence of a musician constitutes the visual element that contributes to identify the representation as a scene of dance. In this particular tomb, a static dance scene is composed of two female figures placed around a syrinx player. The raised position of the arms are also depicted on jumping dancers, as illustrated on the walls of the first chamber of the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing in Tarquinia. In this case, it indicates an extreme impulse in the body. In representations of *ekphora*, around the lying dead body, this gesture of raising

14 See a presentation of the problem and a study of the Tomb of the Triclinium in Tarquinia, in Gouy 2012: 100-101.

the arms is part of the characteristic movement of funerary lament. It consists of hitting one's chest, and it is to be understood with the gesture that consists of putting both hands on the chest. In representations of lament, those two specific gestures correspond to two crucial moments: the momentum, represented by the raised fists, and the moment of impact, represented by the fists placed on the chest.¹⁵

2.a.1.b. The asymmetrical position of the arms: dance or race?

The asymmetrical position of the arms is also one of the most common positions to express movement in iconography. However, while the raised arms would express spontaneous physical and emotional impulses in the body, during dance and lament for example, the asymmetrical position of the arms more generally refers to a rhythmic and controlled movement. This would explain why it is frequently used in racing scenes. In those sports representations, the forearms are usually pushed strongly outward and the hands are placed in line with them. When the hand placed backwards appears sometimes placed obliquely, it is shifted upwards in comparison to the forearm. The legs are wide apart, clearly represented in a lively and very rapid action. Runners often form a group and are therefore rarely isolated in the picture. The typology of these images of sportsmen gives a helpful repertoire and helps to define the visual representation of running postures. It also contributes to understand the action of figures in pictures, which are visually isolated and separated from other figures, as on the antefixes of Pyrgi (fig. 01).

The asymmetrical body posture is commonly used in dance performances, as illustrated on a funerary urn kept in Florence (fig. 02).¹⁶ In the urn's representation of dance, five female figures present the same body posture: the arms are asymmetrical. The arm placed backward is raised. The hand is open, facing inward. The palm is facing up. The arm placed frontward is flexed and folded over the bust. The hand is open, facing upwards and the palm is facing down. The legs, which are in profile, are spaced and present a lively, leaping movement. Unlike the racing scenes in which the figures are represented in a same movement and in a same direction, the dancers studied here, on this funerary urn, are distinguished by the varied directions they seem to take in the picture, creating thus opposition, isolations or encounters. The turn of the figures, as well as their visual opposition to each other, make clear that it is a choreographic sequence, and thus a representation of dance.

15 Cf. Gouy 2012: 96-99.

16 Jannot 1984: 19-21, fig. 93-94.



Fig. 01: Antefixes from Pyrgi. Dated from ca. 510 BCE. Kept in Santa Severa, Antiquarium of Pyrgi. After Massa-Pairault 1996: 117.



Fig. 02: Cinerary urn. Detail of one of the faces. *Pietra fetifa*. From Chiusi. 36 cm high. End of 6th cent. BCE. Kept in Florence, Museo archeologico (inv. 5501). After Jannot 1984, fig. 94.

2.a.1.c. Dance or race? Some border cases.

There are scenes in which the body representations meet the criteria defined for the race scenes, but which still raise uncertainties. An amphora kept in Chianciano Terme and discovered in the necropolis of Tolle gives such an example (fig. 03). On the object, several figures follow each other and move

towards the left in identical postures. The arms are flexed and positioned asymmetrically. The hand placed frontward is oblique and shifted compared to the forearm. The hand placed backward is positioned horizontally. The treatment of the hands differs from what has been observed previously. However, the symmetry of the figures, the speed expressed through the important space between the legs, as well as the oblique or horizontal position of the hair indicate the high body performance that might have come from running.

The exaggerated and redundant treatment of the hands and that of the figures lead to qualify this interpretation. Indeed, the figures are dressed in a long tunic, and a mantle that covers the shoulders and that falls in the back forming an arc. This mantle is maintained on the shoulders by two pieces pulled over the chest. This outer piece is very common among female figures. However, the racing scenes are usually made up of male figures. In consequence, is this a female racing scene? Or, as the end of the 6th century BCE (the object's supposed production date) showed strong similarities between sports and dancing postures, is this a particularly lively dance scene? Both hypotheses are plausible.

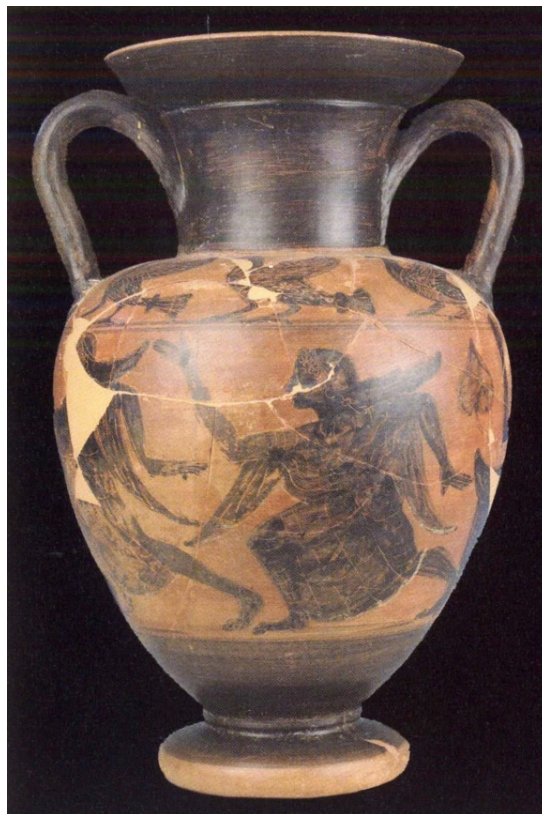


Fig. 03: Black-figure amphora. From the necropolis of Tolle in Chianciano Terme. Produced in Vulci. From the Micali Painter. Dated from the end of 6th cent. BCE. Kept in Chianciano Terme, Museo Civico Archeologico (without number). After Paolucci 2007:19-20, ill. 11.

2.a.2. Turning postures

In some scenes of running competition, the body of some runners turns. When it does, the head is positioned in an opposite direction to that of the legs. The aim of this visual device is to highlight the competitive nature of the scene. Indeed, the fact that athletes turn their head backward could be interpreted as a way to control the distance at which their opponents are. This specific aspect invites to resume the identification of some visual representations. On a series of oenochoe in *bucchero* distributed between the museums of Milan, Tarquinia, Chicago and Edinburgh (fig. 04), the depicted scenes on the main body of the objects are composed of naked male figures engaged in the same posture. And, they follow each other. The legs, flexed and in profile, are engaged in a walking action. The feet are on the tip. The arms are raised and arranged asymmetrically on either side of the figures. The repetition of those figures could lead to identify a running scene. However, the turn showed on all the bodies invites to consider it as a dance scene. In running scenes, not all athletes turn their head backward. Moreover, the muscular tension leads to represent the hands strictly in alignment with the forearms while in dance scenes the hands regularly shift. If a hand possibly presents a shift in sports scenes, it will be the one placed frontward, and it will put the accent on the runner's direction.



Fig. 04: Oenochoe in *bucchero pesante*. Produced in the area of Chiusi. Dated from 6th cent. BCE. Kept in Milan, Museo archeologico (inv. A 0.9.296). Personal photograph.

As Jean-René Jannot and Paul Fontaine have pointed out,¹⁷ the turn is a frequent iconographic characteristic in Etruscan dance iconography. While the torso is frontal, the head and legs are side view and facing different directions. This characteristic appears in various contexts and its function is diverse. On the right side of the entrance wall in the Monkey Tomb in Chiusi, it draws the attention from a point to another in the picture. Three figures present a turning posture: they turn their heads towards a seat on the floor, on which a piece of clothing is placed, at far left on the picture. This attention, and therefore the importance given to the turns and games of look between the figures, have led modern authors to see, in this seat and the garment, an evocation of the deceased or of the presence, real or symbolic, of magistrates.¹⁸

The second visual benefit of the turning postures in pictures is the creation of a link between the different human figures. On the cinerary urn kept in Florence (fig. 02), the direction of the heads, the looks and the symmetry of the legs create visual arrangements and give an overall unity to the scene. The turning postures also give an impression of cadence, rhythm and particularly lively turning movement. In the iconography of dance, this point is particularly present. The figures that look at each other, form couples among the dancers. Turning positions make sense in the pictures when given to several human figures and when they are accompanied by other bodily characteristics such as (1) curvature, (2) arms position and / or (3) gestures. On their own, turning positions don't necessarily imply dancing. But they will always increase the expression of movement in pictures.

2.a.3. Body curvature

On the right wall of the Cardarelli tomb in Tarquinia (fig. 05), the male figure placed at far left ostensibly turns back towards three male figures depicted on the same wall. His eyes are attracted to the male who is lifting a cup. The arms are asymmetrical. The curvature of the body is very important. It is amplified by the flexed position of the legs and the arms, that are also bent backwards.¹⁹

17 Jannot 1984, 258 and following, and Fontaine 2016:14.

18 Cf. Jannot 1998.

19 Marie-Hélène Delavaud-Roux notes the curvature of the body in Corinthian representations, and Germaine Prudhommeau describes it as "saddled". It is often joined with a movement backwards of the buttocks in order to increase the curvature of the body. Cf. Delavaud-Roux 1995: 56 and Prudhommeau 1965: 45 et pl. 15.



2.a.4. Position of the legs

The same figure from the Cardarelli tomb (fig. 05) is also remarkable for the appearance of its legs, which are strongly flexed. In iconography, the flexion of the legs can be more or less important, and it contributes greatly to suggest the type of movement of the dancer. The simple flexion of the legs, with the feet grounded on the floor, is used to express motion and an active state in figures. Walking is indeed expressed through legs slightly interspaced and tense. If there is also a flexion in the legs, it introduces a more accentuated movement through the body. When the legs are bent at a right angle, or when one of the two is lifted either frontward or backward, the movement expressed is brisker. More specifically, the position implies a leap. To this leap is often added indications of brisk movements through the arms, that are thus represented raised, or asymmetrical.

On the B 59 hydria kept in London (fig. 06), four armed male figures form two opposing groups. Raffaella Bonaudo has interpreted the scene as dance due to the impulse given to the legs through the four different figures.²⁰ The jumping legs, as well as the body postures that present no variation from a figure to another (with the exception of the arms placed backwards that vary slightly – raised or lowered), rather invite to interpret the scene as a fight. Indeed, the legs underline the high performance of the opposition between the two groups of fighters. The rotation created with the arms provokes some rhythm that can not be compared to that of dance, but rather to that of fight. The aim is rather to emphasize and express, through the visual rhythm, the

20 Bonaudo 2004: cat. 1.

grace and beauty of the fight. The legs of those armed figures echo the legs of the horses depicted on the backside of the object. Indeed, two horses are represented rearing up. The visual alignment between the warlike leap of the armed figures and the prancing horses, from a side to another, underlines the impulse, almost animal, of the four fighters. This further reinforces the hypothesis of a warlike scene.



Fig. 06: Black-figure hydria. Discovered and produced in Cerveteri. Dimensions: 42,8 cm high, max. 38,5 cm large. Dated from 540-530 BCE. Kept in London, British Museum (inv. B 59). After Bonaudo 2004, cat. 1.

While dance iconography is regularly characterized by dancers that show flexed legs, a funerary base kept in Perugia (inv. 529),²¹ shows human figures that have, on the contrary, their legs apart but straight. They seem to be engaged in walking. However, the turning position of several figures, as well as the gestures, invite to identify the representation as a dance scene.

2.a.5. Characteristic gestures

On this relief from Perugia, the position of the hands is both very heterogeneous and expressive. Thus, the figures seem to gesticulate.²² Their bodies show

21 Jannot 1984: 133-134, fig. 460-463.

22 Garelli 2007: 38-39. For a first study of Etruscan gestures in pictures: Jannot 2006.

consistency from a figure to another, and rigidity. This is due to their legs that are straight and little spaced, their feet that are grounded and flat on the floor, and their arms that are placed close to the body. However, the asymmetry of the arms, the turning postures in some figures, and above all the convoluted position of the hands as well as their apparent obsolete functionality, invite to interpret the representation as a dance scene. In consequence, gestures are here decisive elements to define the Etruscan representation of dance, also as pointed out by Paul Fontaine.²³

This specific criterion has invited to revisit the interpretation of many scenes involving body movement, and especially to specify the difference between scenes of dance and scenes of procession. In this regard, a more precise definition for processions in Etruscan iconography can be proposed, and it is based on four criteria that are the following: (1) representation of several human figures following each other and creating thus a group or a row, (2) those figures move towards the same direction, (3) they are engaged in similar gestures and postures, and (4) they carry various objects (sticks, objects related to the consumption of wine, plants).

2.b. The presence of musicians

The representation of musicians in pictures gives a rhythmic framework to the scenes depicted, and it is particularly meaningful in dance scenes.²⁴ When the musicians are represented in dance scenes, five types of instruments can appear: the *aulos*, the lyre, the cithara, the syrinx and the rattles.²⁵ The musicians are engaged in the dance scenes in three different ways: (1) at the heart of the dance, so they play their instrument among the dancers,²⁶ (2) they stop playing and dance with the dancers,²⁷ (3) two musicians, one playing the *aulos* and the other playing the lyre or the cithara, face each other and are placed on either side of a monumental element, such as a door,²⁸ or a container, such as a crater.²⁹

23 Fontaine 2016: 16: «La gestuelle expressive des mains ou chironomie constitue un élément essentiel de la danse antique et son importance dans la danse étrusque, admirablement illustrée à travers la peinture funéraire de Tarquinia et les reliefs de Chiusi, n'est plus à démontrer.»

24 As Jean-René Jannot recalls it: Jannot 1988.

25 On Etruscan musicians: Jannot 1974, Jannot 1979 and Jannot 1988.

26 As illustrated on the side walls of the Triclinium tomb in Tarquinia. Cf. Steingraber 1984: 355-356, fig. 166-171.

27 Cf. the back wall of the Bacchants' tomb on which a cithara player is engaged in a dance posture and is leaving his instrument to dance: Steingraber 1984: 290, pl. 23-26.

28 Cf. the back wall of the Cardarelli tomb in Tarquinia: Steingraber 1984: 302-303, pl. 54-58.

29 Cf. the back wall of the lioness tomb: Steingraber 1984: 322, pl. 97-104.

However, musicians do not always appear in representations of dance, as illustrated on one of the faces of the urn n° inv. 1237 kept in Berlin.³⁰ In this case, the convoluted gestures performed by the human figures constitute a crucial criterion for the identification of the dance scene. These gestures are coupled with a series of specific postures. Indeed, two figures are engaged in movements that respond to each other: while the bodies oppose each other symmetrically, the hands tend to converge and tune.

2.c. Clothing or nudity. The appearance of the dancers.

The appearance of human figures in Etruscan iconography contributes greatly to identify the action that is depicted, and in particular whether it is a scene of dance, war or fictitious duels.

For example, runners and other gymnasts are usually naked. Indeed, the absence of clothing and the reduced wearing of clothes, such as loincloths, refer to an athletic context. However, a series of dance scenes presents armed human figures, either alone or engaged in a physical confrontation, that are completely naked. Jean-Claude Poursat has pointed out that nudity can contribute to identify scenes of pyrrhic.³¹ In this particular case, it then refers to a context of competition and to the palestra. In this regard, wearing a breastplate would be, on the contrary, linked to a clear context of war.

This point contributes to clarify the definition of armed dance and performances in Etruscan iconography. More precisely, the decisive criteria would be the following: (1) the nudity of the dancers, (2) the performative nature of the act – through the construction of the body, the use of defensive postures and / or offensive – and (3) the possible presence of musicians.

Regarding women's clothing, it does not constitute a particular determining element insofar as it is found in very diverse contexts.³²

3. Conclusion on the definition of the Etruscan iconography of dance.

3.a. Criteria.

30 Cf. Jannot 1984: 35-36, fig. 143-145.

31 Poursat 1968.

32 However, we note a regular and specific alternation and rotation of figures in the image, according to their clothing. A crucial study is currently undertaken: *TEXDANCE project. Textiles in Etruscan Dance* (European Programme MSCA IF Horizon 2020. Grant agreement ID: 839799).

Three criteria can contribute to define the Etruscan iconography of dance. These are the following: (1) the construction of the body, (2) the presence of musicians, and (3) the appearance of the human figures.

The first criterion is particularly determined by the distinctive position of the arms. While the raised position of the arms is limited to physical and emotional impulses of the body, such as dancing or lament, the asymmetrical position of the arms refers to a rhythmic movement, and that can also be running. In consequence, dance representations and running representations have been delimited and distinguished. The body postures of running have been defined. More specifically in dance iconography, the human figures are characterized by turning postures, rotation, oppositions, isolation or encounters. The turning postures, in particular, constitute distinctive criteria. Their function is to create visual connections between the different figures, and a visual link from one to another dancer. An isolated figure in iconography, represented in a turning posture, does not necessarily involve dancing. The posture must be complemented with other visual characteristics and body criteria, such as the raised or asymmetrical position of the arms, the flexed and spaced position of the legs, the convoluted hand gestures, the curvature of the body. Finally, the repetition of the actors in the pictures constitutes an important element.

The presence of musicians in iconography gives a rhythmic framework to the scenes, and it takes on its full meaning in the representations of dance. However, the musicians are not constantly represented in dance scenes. Five types of instruments appear to be used by the musicians, and there are three modes of appearance in the pictures.

Finally, in armed scenes, the absence of clothing and the reduced wearing of clothes by male figures refer to a performative context. In this regard, the definition of armed dance scenes is possible with the combination of specific criteria, which are nudity, the performative aspect of the action and the presence of musicians.

3.b. Combination of criteria and interpretation grid.

Therefore, as the definition of Etruscan iconography of dance is determined by a conjunction of visual criteria, I propose an interpretation grid (see table). It appears that, in order to define a representation of dance as such, it is necessary to find in pictures at least two of the criteria I have defined, among which at least one must be considered a basic or recurrent criterion (such as the asymmetrical or raised position of the arms, for example).

The combinations are the following:

- The combination A is characterized by the raised or asymmetric arms with the convoluted gestures. Those two criteria may however, and in certain cases, not be decisive (border cases).

- The combination B is illustrated by the asymmetrical or raised position of the arms with the presence of musicians.
- The combination C combines the raised position of the arms with the expression of motion through the legs. In this regard, the legs are spaced and / or flexed. The presence of musicians in pictures is decisive.
- The combination D is characterized by the arms that are raised or positioned asymmetrically, and by the regular alternation and rotation of the human figures.
- The combination E includes the arms positioned asymmetrically and the frequent turning of the human figures in pictures. The figures can be nude, and the image can feature musicians.
- The combination F is composed with the turning posture and the convoluted gestures, sometimes also with the presence of musicians.
- The combination G is characterized by the arms that are raised symmetrically on either side of the figures and the legs that are flexed. To those criteria must be added those of nudity and of musicians that appear sometimes in pictures.
- The combination H involves convoluted hand gestures and active legs, that is to say, which present signs of movement such as flexions.

	Basic and Recurring Combinations	Auxiliary Criteria
A	Arms asymmetrical/raised + Gestures	Musicians (rarely nudity)
B	Arms asymmetrical/raised + Musicians	
C	Arms raised + active legs	Musicians
D	Arms asymmetrical/raised + Alternation of figures	
E	Arms asymmetrical + Recurrent turning posture	Nudity and/or Musicians
F	Turning posture + Gestures	Musicians
G	Arms raised + legs flexed	Nudity and/or Musicians
H	Gestures + active legs	

Table. Interpretation grid of Etruscan representations of dance

Not all the criteria identified can be considered alone as distinctive visual elements for the Etruscan iconography of dance. It is their combination in pictures that makes sense and that contributes to define dance movement in Etruscan iconography.

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