

Marey's Flip Book

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[Marey, Étienne Jules]. n.d. [Flip book, depicting Angelo Mosso, Hugo Kronecker, and others]. 94 Photographs. (Università di Torino, Biblioteca Angelo Mosso)

Étienne Jules Marey was a scientist, as Marta Braun has put it in her biography, not an artist or entertainer. Marey recorded series of chronophotographies in order to analyze sequences of movements. His principal aim was not to provoke feelings of visual pleasure or to amuse any given audience by means of dancing images. On the contrary. When Marey's assistant Georges Demeny began his flirt with the cultural industry of the *fin de siècle*, he was immediately dismissed. In the papers of Marey's friend and colleague, Angelo Mosso, we have found a document showing the master in a moment of greater ease. Photographs taken by Marey are assembled to form a flipbook, i.e. one of the little machines that set images in motion during the 19th Century. In 1868, the flipbook, then called *kineograph*, received a patent in Great Britain. But nothing is known about its scientific use.

Here, we see a group of experimental physiologists, their spouses and a dog. In the center, Angelo Mosso, the famous fatigue researcher from Torino, is shaking hands. Marching past Mosso are Marey himself (the first in line) and the gifted, Leipzig- and Bern-based experimenter Hugo Kronecker (the third, with white hairs). The other ladies and gentlemen are hard to identify. It also remains unclear, where the images were taken. Engraved on the clip that holds the images together is *Station physiologique*, since 1882 the name of Marey's Paris institute for chronophotography. But since Mosso is acting as the host, the shots were probably taken in Torino.

What do we see, then? A "cinematic physiology" of shaking hands, or simply hand-shaking physiologists? The sequence is bound to some peculiar recursiveness. It shows experts for animal movement in movement and – thanks to our digital animation – the physiological emergence of motion pictures as pictures in motion. No one else than Marey indicates this loop. After having shaken hands with Mosso, he turns around behind him. His eyes seem to look in our direction – addressing the spectators. But in reality, Marey is watching his assistant besides the camera. The experimenter monitors his apparatus.