

WORLD CONFEDERATION OF ORNITHOLOGY (COM)

World Order of Judges

SONG STANDARD OF THE WATERSLAGER/MALINOIS CANARY

Preface to this American Edition

The present document was re-edited from the translation received by Richard Rolloff from European sources. It has been adapted to be more readable by English speakers in America. The adaptations do not change the basic meaning of the original document but are intended to make it more clear and accessible to readers. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first English version to be made widely available to English speakers and the first to be posted on the internet.

Sebastian Vallelunga, editor

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Norms of Judgment for Waterslagers/Malinois

The waterslager is descended from the SAXON canary which, in point of fact, was not a roller bird but truly a *slagvogel* (a beat bird).

(In this vocabulary, a beat bird is one that emphasizes discontinuous or beaten tours rather than rolled or continuous tours—editor).

This was a big yellow, strong bird that was highly appreciated in Belgium. It was the Belgians who tried to teach this bird the song of the nightingale. Early on, there was no official system of evaluating these birds, but each breeder separately endeavored to perfect what he liked best in their song. This is how different *stams* (*in this context, song strains—editor*) with very different interpretations of the repertoire were formed.

With the application of a system of selection (in the same way the Germans have practiced it with their harzers), at the beginning of the last century there occurred the creation of distinct *stams* of waterslagers with specific differences in their song tonalities. Also at this time, the first associations were founded and the beginning of the waterslager fancy occurred.

The breeders of harzers didn't appreciate the waterslagers with their sharp pitched sounds and always endeavored to exclude them from their song contests (*song contests outside of Belgium were inevitably roller contests at one point historically—editor*).

At that time, those who admired waterslagers had to go to Belgium in order to get their judge's certificate. In the beginning, they had to adopt one of the various systems of judgment then existing in Belgium. However, after some time and many difficult debates, success was reached in the implementation of a unified system of judgment. The bird was also named at this time and continues to use the name currently: waterslager/malinois.

It has been a very popular cage bird, especially because of its robust type and the impression of vitality that it gives. The song of the waterslager compared to that of the harzer is like the sound of the piano compared to that of the organ.

Both are magnificent instruments that, in the hands of artists, can touch their listeners. The organ and the harzer produce relatively slow, nostalgic, and soft accents;

the piano and the waterslager/malinois produce a more animated rhythm with detached musical chords (*i.e., when an organ is played the vibrato of the sound serves to connect the notes into one humming sound while the notes of the piano are more individually distinct—editor*).

Fortunately nowadays, the breeders of harzers no longer fear that their birds will copy the song of the waterslager/malinois. At present the two races meet side by side at exhibitions.

One harzer breeder commented in the following way: “None of my birds picked up the sound of the waterslager although they were amongst them.”

Questions and Responses

Where does the waterslager come from? From the SAXON, a *slagvogel*

How were the first *stams* created? By selection in Belgium

What were harzer breeders afraid of? That their birds would copy waterslagers

Is there still a difference in the systems of judgment? No, the COM unified the different systems

How does one express the difference between the song of the harzer and that of the waterslager? By the sound of the organ for the harzer and that of the piano for the waterslager

What must be eliminated in the song of the waterslager? All song tonalities that continue too long

Generalities

Without sufficient knowledge of the song, a breeder may be able to produce some good birds, but he will never be able to become a judge.

Knowledge of the song is useful and necessary, but it doesn't have any value without the faculty to appreciate the harmony of the sounds.

It is good to listen to many birds in order to refine theory into appreciation. Yet theoretical knowledge is also indispensable if one wants to judge a bird as to its real value. One will be able to verify the following assertion with experience: often while listening to a certain sound, the theory comes to mind and one arrives at the correct appreciation of it.

One must also learn to recognize the possible deviations.

In summary, it is indispensable to:

- recognize all sounds
- determine which bird produced them
- enumerate all positive sounds in order to determine their theoretical value
- recognize deviations immediately, possibly in order to note them on the score sheet

It appears that the song of the canary cannot be easily transposed into musical notation not only due to its semi-intervals but also because of its quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes. Phonetic induction consists of describing song tones in vowels and consonants, as it is done with the harzer. Different consonants can be used to this end and, with the choice of different vowels, the structure of specific chords can be expressed.

The tonal basis is always a vowel that, because of its movement, expresses a certain accent.

The value of a chord is based on divisibility by three.

This divisibility means that it is satisfactory, good, or very good.

This same divisibility also applies to the assignment of possible penalties: slight faults, serious faults, and very serious faults.

To reduce some obvious difficulties, we can represent the value of a song in general as falling into one of three degrees:

- a. loud, sharp, or hard
- b. middle or average
- c. low and deep

This means:

- a. a high or sharp song hasn't any value and is sometimes faulty
- b. fairly profound: the song is of good value

- c. low or deep (coming from the depth of the song organ) with energy but still soft: the song is of the best composition

In addition to the three degrees of tonality stated above, there are also the rhythm and the movement.

We must observe the way the song is executed, whether the tempo is slow, fairly fast, or partially or totally fast. In addition to this, the main tonal structure must be distinguished: complex, middle, or simple.

Main tonalities that are complex will harvest, so to speak, more points than simple ones.

In the song of the waterslager/malinois some parts are of uninterrupted tempo, interrupted tempo, and composed tempo (*rolled tempo, beaten tempo, and combined tempo—editor*).

We will approach this topic when we describe the tours.

When one is listening to a bird, it is important to recognize the recital's quality and to label it. The valuation takes place thereafter because it is necessary to first observe the way in which the bird presents the sound. It is necessary to verify the tonality and to note undesirable sounds.

At the time of the assessment of the tonality, it is necessary to compare the bird being judged to an ideal.

If the song is precisely performed, including possible variations named in theory, and exploits proper length and repetition, **only then** may the judge consider the assignment of the maximum points.

It is also necessary for the basis of the tour to be correct and for one to be able to discern the exact consonants as they have been determined phonetically.

One only meets a bird of this class very rarely because perfection does not exist in our waterslagers and it is indispensable to have a good ear and to interpret the theory correctly.

Attentive listening and critical judgment are necessary to avoid the consecration of an unworthy “**champion**”.

Questions and Responses

On what evidence is the system of judgment considered very tight and logical in structure? All the different musical tendencies find their place and the beauty of the song is encouraged when using the system

What is the basis of the system? Divisibility by three: satisfactory, good, and very good

What are the composed tours? Those that contain water sounds: beaten, bubbling, and rolling

What are uninterrupted tours? The *knorr* and the *belrol*

What are the interrupted tours? The *metallic sounds*, the *tjoks*, the *soutes*, and the *waterschokkel*

What is the *waterslag* or water beat? It is a tonality in which the sound of water dominates the tonal base

What principle must a judge observe in his evaluation? He must start with an image of an ideal bird singing a determined tour

The Water Beat

Several sounds in the song of the waterslager can present aqueous accents which don't have anything in common with the water beat.

The following definition may help.

The water beats consist of all those tonalities in which the aqueous features dominate the tonal base.

By *aqueous* in the song of the canary, we mean the sound produced within a tone which is reminiscent of moving water, like boiling, splashing, etc...

It is necessary to make an exception, however, for the *waterrol* because this tonality is not beaten; it is rolling.

Due to the domination of the rolled tempo and of the watery tone of the base, one stretches to give equal standing as a water "beat" to this tour, in that which concerns its musical value.

The water beats are divided into the following main kinds: interrupted, boiling, and rolled.

All these kinds have a point in common: the sound of water; the differences are to be found in the rhythm and the tempo of the beats. We must distinguish between them and recognize them immediately.

As a starting point, let us take the interrupted water beat: the beats are detached here. The strokes don't have any link between them; there is a space and a curved water sound is located in the tonal base.

In the bubbling beat, the beats have a faster cadence and follow each other more closely; there is less curve in the basic tone and the beats are less detached than in the interrupted version.

In the rolling water beat, the beats are presented even more closely together and the basic tonality is even less bent.

The judge must be determined not only to really know the water beats but to also be able to differentiate between the three immediately.

He must never lose sight of the fact that the water beat is a main tonality that can be produced in an interrupted or in a bubbling manner.

The bubbling water beat is easily identified: it is sung with deep, well-detached beats that rise up from the bottom of the throat.

Its value is attributable to the musical pleasure they give to the hearer. The tonal base of the water beats must be expressed as OUILLE, AULLE, OU, or OO. All other vowel forms lessen the quality of the water beats.

A bent water beat that intensifies in sound to a crescendo and then moves from strong to piano (soft) or to pianissimo (very soft), waving or rocking back and forth, has more value.

Questions and Responses

What is the water beat? It is a main tonality that can be sung in different ways

How can it be sung? Interrupted, bubbling, or rolled

What are the best tonal bases? OUILLE, AULLE, OU, OO

What quality increases the value of a song? When it begins in a soft way and passes in crescendo toward forte

What else increases the value? A waving or rocking aspect to the beats

What is the definition of water beat? The water beat is the tonality in which the aqueous feature dominates the sound of the tonal base

DEFINITIONS OF THE TOURS

Interrupted Water Beats (*Klokkende*—*editor*):

- satisfactory, 1 to 12 points
- good, 13 to 24 points

- very good, 25 to 36 points

The special character of the interrupted or tolled water beat is the rhythm which is different from that heard with the bubbling water beat.

The basic tones are: OUILLE, AULLE, OU, and OO. Sometimes A, E, I and U are used, but these are of lower value. The consonants DL, BL, WL, and GL are used. In this form the tonality is presented in its best aspect. Sharp or hard vowels attached to the good basic tonalities can also devalue this sound.

It is better with good basic tonality and a good form.

We must realize that there are both wavy interrupted water beats and hammered ones. The hammered sound is quicker but must not be of lower quality than the wavy.

The hammered beat will have vowels like KL or GL. The birds that present us with hammered beats have, in general, a lot of water beats in their songs. The tour loses value when the beats are only semi-interrupted. It also loses, in this case, its great suppleness and richness of sounds, and this must be considered a drawback.

Questions and Responses

How does one recognize the interrupted water beat? Deep beats and detached rhythm, with soft but vigorous beats giving a more valuable sound; it should come from the depth of the throat as a sort of gargle; it is pleasant to listen to

What are the consonants which are part of the interrupted water beat? KL, DL, WL, HL, GL

What water beats are less good? Those with the basic tones A, E, I, and U

When is the interrupted water beat at its best? When it is beautifully rounded, full, and deep; it should be distinct and complete

What is a bent water beat? A water beat that swells to a crescendo and then falls from strong to pianissimo; rocking and wavy

When should a higher score be assigned? When the beats of a normal water beat are sung in a wavy way and are rocking in a repetitive manner

When can one assume that the sounds are pure and clean? When they are sung with a closed beak

When are they nearly valueless, with some exceptions? When they are sung with an open beak

Bubbling Water Beat (*Bollende* — *editor*)

- satisfactory, 1 to 9 points
- good, 10 to 18 points
- very good, 19 to 27 points

The bubbling water beat is the second main tonality in the song of the waterslager; it is not merely a distortion of the interrupted water beat. There are many birds that are able to present beats of impeccable bubbling water.

It seems like a rolled water beat but possesses a rising tone. One may describe the tonal base of this tour as bubbling. Because each beat is shorter in duration, the rhythm of this tour is more accelerated than in the preceding.

The essential difference between this and the interrupted sound resides in the fact that the beats are less detached. Although the bubbling tour is classified among the uninterrupted tones, there are very short interruptions between the beats. The value of the tour depends on the aqueous sound being produced with the correct basal tone. The tour is sung with the vowels O, OU, and U and the consonants B, W, H, and D. It should be obvious that the vowel U is of lesser value than the vowels O or OU.

When the aqueous effect is not emphasized, one speaks of a dry water beat and the sound loses its value.

Questions and Responses

Is it difficult to distinguish between the tours? It's difficult to distinguish the bubbling water beat from the interrupted. With the interrupted water beat one hears: BLOU – BLOU, LOUILLE – LOUILLE, BOUILLE – BOUILLE, KLOUILLE – KLOUILLE; with the bubbling water beat the sounds are: WOU – WOU, BOU – BOU, HOU – HOU, DOU – DOU

What is the big difference between an interrupted water beat and the bubbling water beat? In the interrupted water beat one hears an L sound formed by the tongue. This is not the case with the bubbling water beat.

What are the consonants of the bubbling water beat? W, B, H, and sometimes D

What are the basal tones of the bubbling water beat? OU, O, U, and sometimes E and A; the last two vowels lower the value of the tour

How many beats must be included when interrupted or bubbling water beats are sung in order for them to be considered valuable? As long as they are watery, 3 to 7 beats are sufficient for them to be valuable

When can a bubbling water beat be called hard? When it has a deep, profound aqueous sound but a basal tone that is of a hard form and presented in a faster rhythm

How does the bubbling water sound, in form and rhythm, compare to the sound of interrupted water? A bubbling water sound can be very pure and clean of rhythm to the extent that it is so pleasant to the ear that it outclasses the interrupted water sound.

Must one penalize a waterslager for singing a sharp sound? Most waterslagers can produce sharp tones; it is not sanctionable

Rolling Water Beat (*Rollende—editor*)

satisfactory, 1 to 6 points

good, 7 to 12 points

very good, 13 to 18 points

As is the case with the interrupted and bubbling water tours, the rolling water tour is composed of a series of beats. The difference is due to an accelerated rhythm. The intervals between the tones are shorter than those between the tones of the bubbling water tour.

As for the rest, the structure of the rolling water tour looks a lot like that of the bubbling water tour; it uses the vowels O, OU, and U and the consonants W, G, D, L, R, and B.

Here, too, the aqueous effect has a big influence on the value.

Identification of this tour depends on the length of the basal tone and the speed of the succession of the sounds.

It can be presented in high or low musical pitch, except the highest pitch using the vowel I. The tour can also come in variations which decrease its value, for example: high, flat, dry, and splattered.

Hard consonants make the tour less pleasant to hear while the vowel A devalues it.

Questions and Responses

What is a rolling water tour like? It can be compared to the interrupted and bubbling sounds but is remarkable for the density (*uninterrupted rhythm—editor*) of the rolling sound; the tones melt away until the vowels are not heard anymore

What are the consonants of this water beat? The consonants are W, G, D, L, R, and B

What are the basal tones? OU, O, and U

Does this tour have a greater continuity? Yes

What are its phonetic sounds? LOULOULOULOLOU, LOLOLOLOLO,
WOUWOUWOUWOU, WOWOWOWO, LULULULULU, WUWUWUWUWU

How is the tour held for a longer time than the interrupted tour? The sound is less deep and requires less effort

What are the possible values for the tour? Satisfactory, 1 to 6 points; good, 7 to 12 points; very good, 13 to 18 points

The *waterrol* is classified with the rolling water beat.

The *waterrol* is a rolled sound in which, in addition to other consonants, R is used. While listening to a good *waterrol*, one may imagine being near a splashing stream where the water runs in swirls around obstacles like stones or other objects. One has the impression that the unpredictable waves are whispering vaguely with their splashing.

Here there is no question of water beats because the tour is made up of an uninterrupted rolling.

The base tones of the *waterrol* are the same as those of the bubbling water tour: OU, O, and in certain cases A.

The consonants are barely audible and consist of the letters R, W, L, G, D, and B. These consonants are used in combination with the vowels in a double or triple shape.

It is essential for the letter R to be mingled somewhere into the sound of the *waterrol*. The *waterrol* is scored like the rolled water beat.

Questions and Responses

Is there any question of water beats in the *waterrol*? No, it is all about rolls and not about water beats

What are the basal tones of the *waterrol*? The good tones are OU, O, and U; a sloshing *waterrol* sometimes uses an E

What consonants are used with these tones? W, G, D, L, R, and B; the R is the main characteristic and must always be present

What is the value of the *waterrol*? The same as that of the rolled water beat

Chor

- satisfactory, 1 to 6 points
- good, 7 to 12 points
- very good, 13 to 18 points

The *chor* is an interrupted tour; the vowel sound is short and the intervals between sounds are distinctly audible. It sounds more or less like “CHOR CHOR”. The vowel is O and the consonants are CH and R with a distinct tremolo.

Sometimes the lead consonants are SJ (*probably SH in English—editor*). There are deviations concerning the consonants and the use of the vowel A which are faulty. The *chor* has not been presented anymore in the last few years.

The nightingale sings this tour and for this reason it is to be preferred in the song of our waterslagers once again.

A lot of breeders no longer recognize this tour at present. They take it for a *knor* even when it is clearly sung as a *chor*.

Questions and Responses

What is a *chor*? A *chor* is a short *knor*, or to be more precise, a short link between two sounds

What are the basal tones? O or OU

What are the consonants? CH and R

What are the faults which lower its value? With A or E it becomes too flat or too sharp and unpleasant to listen to

Knor

- satisfactory, 1 to 6 points
- good, 7 to 12 points
- very good, 13 to 18 points

The *knor*, as we hear it in the song of the waterslager, is usually a rounded version. It is a tour which is a pure uninterrupted roll. Contrary to the *knor* of the harzer, it is not presented in lots of different variations. In general, there is a rounded *knor* and a *knor* with a gluck accent called the *gluck knor*.

The most valuable variety is the rounded *knor*. When the tours are, so to speak, winding, we call it a “screwed” *knor*.

The basal tones of a good *knor* are O and OU and the consonants are KN and R.

It must be sung with a closed beak, incorrect vowels cause less valuable deviations and the vowels A and E lower the quality of the *knor*.

There are detached *knors* in which the vowels are not bound. Others are aqueous or shivering when they are created by faulty vowels.

An ideal *knor* is one that is closed, deep, melodic, vigorous and not too short; however, it can also be held too long.

A good waterslager *knor* is short and “screwed”.

Questions and Responses

What is the difference between *knor* and *chor*? The *knor*, as opposed to the *chor*, is an uninterrupted sound and therefore a rolled tour

What type of *knor* is ideal? The rounded *knor*

What causes it to be deviant? The use of incorrect vowels or consonants

What are the characteristics of the ideal *knor*? Very closed, deep, warbling, vigorous, and not held too long

What is a *screwed knor*? When vocalized vowels are bound and sung without interruption

Metallic Tones and *Tjonken*

- satisfactory, 1 to 9 points
- good, 10 to 18 points
- very good, 19 to 27 points

These are characteristic tones for a waterslager. A waterslager that has all the tones on the score card except the metallic tones does not have 100% of the beauty of the song. The metallic tones are composed of sounds that separated by large intervals.

An appropriate metallic sound must be audible, without echo, or the tone is not a metallic tone.

One may often hear flutes struck without any resonance, but don't be deceived: they are not metallic tones.

The metallic tones can be sung at any pitch; they have a T that starts them and an NG that finishes them. The basal tones are O, OU, and U. If the metallic tone is sung with the vowel O, begins with TJ (*sounds like English CH—editor*), and ends with NK, we qualify it as a *tjonken*.

We rarely hear these consonants currently; they will come back only gradually but would mean a big improvement to the song.

Numerous deviations exist due to incorrect consonants.

Sharp I and flat A cause the tone to lose tone and value. The same is true for basal tones formed with EU or IEU.

The struck metallic tones have a lesser value and the high and sharp tones may be penalized.

Questions and Responses

What is special about the metallic tones? It is part of the song which is considered as having come from the nightingale

What is the resonance of these tones? That of metal hitting metal or a crystal glass

What are the consonants? T at the beginning and NK or NG at the end

What are the basal tones? O, OU, and U

How does this tour look phonetically? TOUNG TOUNG and sometimes TING TING

With what do the *tjonken* start? TJ

How does it end? NK or NG

How do the *tjonken* look phonetically? TJONK TJONK, TJONG TJONG, or TJOUNG

What are the criteria for evaluation? Fullness and purity of the basal tone and slow movement; when present fast, the *tjonken* have less value; if one hears A or E, the tour is without value

***Soutes* and Flutes**

- satisfactory, 1 to 9 points
- good, 10 to 18 points
- very good, 19 to 27 points

The flutes are an indispensable part of the song, but too many flutes can hurt it. 4 or 5 successive flutes produce the best effect.

The vowels must be stretched, producing a basal tone of appropriate length, and the intervals must be long enough.

Except for the *soutes*, which are even slower, the flutes have the slowest rhythm among the tours. They are formed by a vowel that is preceded by a consonant. The deepest vowels, O and OU, present the most pleasant melody. D or T at the beginning can add sharpness. Sharp or acute flutes damage the whole. The letter combinations TSI or SI can be penalized.

The *soutes* are classified with the flutes on the score card.

They are a form of flute and are, therefore, scored in the same way on the score card.

Although these haven't been heard in the last few years, they are thought to be a tour coming from the nightingale and, for this reason, are considered to be very attractive. *Soutes* are unforgettable. They compare to the deep OU flutes. They can be sung with another basal tone. The difference between these and the flutes is that here the basal tone is longer and is presented with a slightly ascending curve. The first consonant is S and the final one is T. The rhythm is slower than that of the flutes and the intervals between basal tones is longer.

Questions and Responses

Are flutes indispensable? Yes, but they should not be excessive

How is the structure characterized? As simple

What is the structure of flutes? A vowel preceded by a consonant

How must a good flute sound? With a tone of O or OU that is stretched and held

What consonants must be presented? It should begin with D or T; TSI and SI are of least value in flutes or *soutes*; *soutes* are to be presented as described above with a rhythm that is a little slower than that of the flutes

Woutes

Woutes are not presented any more and are practically extinct. They have been removed from the score card.

Tjokken and Rolled Tjokken

Tjokken

- satisfactory, 1 to 6 points
- good, 7 to 12 points
- very good, 13 to 18 points

Rolled *Tjokken*

- satisfactory, 1 to 6 points
- good, 7 to 12 points
- very good, 13 to 18 points

The *tjokken* belong to the category of interrupted simple tones. The structure is short and vigorous without aqueous effects in the basal tone.

The basal tone is O or OU with the consonants TJ (*sounds like English CH—editor*) at the beginning and K at the end. It is a nightingale tour that can influence the song of the waterslager a lot.

Occasionally we hear *tjokken* pronounced incorrectly; this happens when birds use SJ at the beginning and G at the end.

The *tjokken* which is expressed with an A is flat and the basal tones of IO, IOU, and U are faulty.

The rhythm must be slow with long intervals between the phrases. The form presented with a base of O and with distinct intervals is a good *tjok*.

Rolled *Tjokken*

Contrary to its name, the rolled *tjok* is not a rolled tour. The “*tjok*” sound is always interrupted, but the origin of the name is a result of the accelerated rhythm of the strokes here.

The possible deviations are the same as those for of the *tjok*. The vocalization is sometimes shorter, and a good presentation must sound like the clicking sound of a marble rapidly bouncing on a hard surface like ice.

An aqueous effect will slightly lower the value of a rolled *tjok*.

Sometimes waterslager song contains a tour that could be described as either a fast, good *tjok* or as a slow, good rolled *tjok*. In this case, points are only awarded for one or the other form and not for both.

For positive variations, one can add one (1) point to the score.

Questions and Responses

How is this sound presented on the score sheet? It is noted in a rubric

To what type of tone does the *tjok* belong? It is a simple and interrupted tone

The rolled *tjok*? In contrast to its name it is an interrupted tour; it is the faster rhythm that gave it its name

How is a good *tjok* presented? It begins with TJ and ends with K with a basal tone of O

When is it flat? When it is expressed with a basal tone of A and with the consonants SJ

What is the rhythm of a good *tjok*? Slow with very long intervals

With what can we compare it? To the noise made by a marble rolling on rough ice

How is it scored when two forms are audible? One scores one of the forms and one point can be added for the variation

Berceuse (Schokkel)

- satisfactory, 1 to 3 points
- good, 4 to 6 points
- very good, 7 to 9 points

The *schokkel* is an interrupted sound with its beats being very detached. The vocalizations follow each other in a rocking movement, and here resides the difference between this tour and all the other interrupted tours.

The basal tone is shorter than that of the flute and this tour can be presented in any basal tone. O, OU, and U are good sounds while A, EU, and E are less good or even nasal.

The consonants are H or sometimes a soft B or L.

The *schokkel* is considered very good when it starts with H in combination with the vowels O or OU and when it possesses the aforementioned detached, rocking rhythm.

There are some faulty forms such as: hard, long, nasal, forced, or stricken. The use of certain vowels or erroneous consonants is the cause of this.

One *schokkel* is the wet *schokkel* or *waterschokkel*; this form is sung in the countryside by the nightingale. The structure is similar but the basal tone includes a curve that recalls the sound of water. This form is very pleasant to hear. Some birds present ascending or descending variations of the basal tone.

The *schokkel* is a fairly rare tour.

Questions and Responses

What consonants are used? H or L; sometimes B or G

What are the basal tones? OU, O, U; sometimes A, IE, or EE

Can the *schokkel* be bent or rolled? No, R is not present

Are the vocalizations linked?