

THE NOTATION RECORDING OF THE DANCE, SYRTOS IN ERHIA. A PILOT STUDY.

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Abstract

The purpose of this pilot research was to demonstrate the notation recording of the local dance Syrtos. In this qualitative research the data was collected using two keys. First it was the semi-structured interviews from five citizens of Spata and second key was the literature review for the dance syrtos in the abovementioned suburb of the prefecture of Attica. Initially there will be a small topographic - historical overview of Erhia-Spata, followed by the meaning of dance/traditional dance and the notating recording of the dance Syrtos, in Erhia-Spata area. Even though the first attempt, for noting the dance, was held in 2000 to the members of Lyceum club of Greek Women, this pilot research wants to make an official record of the dance steps. The data was collected in winter 2003, by recording the dance team of the Lyceum of Greek of Spata.

Keywords: *Syrtos, Erhia, Greek dance, tradition.*

A short historical review

The town Erhia-Spata is located in the center of Attica. It is in the center of Attica Mesogian flatland, on a hill named "Father". The mountain is surrounded by a large plain decorated with olive trees; the blessed tree of God and at the same time is the symbol of Peace. Also the fields are skirted by vineyards, which are glorified from antiquity and they are indissolubly connected with the god Dionysus. In addition to the forgoing, nowadays, it is a suburb with a very good connection to the historical center of Athens, near to Attiki Odos and it is the closest city to Eleftherios Venizelos Airport.

According to Klisthenous (Palikisianos, 2003) among 4th-5th century BC were organized the municipalities of Attica. At that time all municipalities access their boundaries and among them it was the creation of the Municipality of Erhia. The new municipality, which belonged to the Aegean tribe and is located to the north of Attica Mesogian plain and its named was taken by the Eleusinian hero Erchio. Erhia was one of the most well-known municipalities in Attica and that was based to several reasons. Firstly, in this particular region, distinguished personalities of the ancient Athens, like Alcibiades, owned 300 acres of wheat. Furthermore the great historian Xenophon (431-355 BC) and lately the orator Isokratis (436-338 BC) were originated from Erhia.

Nevertheless, over the years, not only the city changed but the name as well. This is proved by official documents of the 19th century where it is remarked that they were existed two point of views for the new name of the city. The first considers the word "Spata" as an alias and equates it with the Albanian voice, which means ax, while the second as a geographical definition means a steep hillside. Erhia-Spata according to the Royal Decree of 31/8/1912 Government Official Paper A262 is recognized as an autonomous community with first chairman George Georgios. Fyrthermore, in 1952 it was recognized as a Municipality by an Official Royal Paper and at that time the citizens of Spata elected their first mayor, Mpeka Joan Christos.

The inhabitants of ancient Ehria-Spata have undergone several stages. Either peacefully or warfare. They always kept in their mind, their agricultural occupations, celebrations, festivals, and social gatherings (weddings, engagements, deaths). As it was noted to the researcher from the persons who took place in the research: “during our social-cultural gatherings, we kept our customs and traditions” (interviewer 1). Plus during their social interaction they used s and dances so as to express their feelings and their needs (interviewer 2). One of the most famous and lovable dance for them was and still is the syrtos (interviewer 1, 2, 3).

Syrtos Dance

One of the subjects of the study of physical education, both in the Greek and the European curriculum, is dance and, more specifically, traditional dance (Robinson, 1995). According to a 2002 European survey, its significance in the cultural life of most European societies (Europe of Cultural co-operation, 2002) was demonstrated.

Based on the above, dance can be described as a manifestation of the right of peoples, regardless of color, religion, gender, socio-economic power and other barriers that can inhibit the process of democratization. Also, dance represents the symbols and values of how social groups live. Suspension of participation in dance is like abolishing the ability of a person to experience and express his feelings. Men and women strongly feel the feeling of being deprived of the opportunity to enjoy the fullness of their lives when they are prevented from experiencing the different sensations of dance (interviewer 1, 2, 3; researcher’s personal archive).

But what is the conceptual meaning of the word dance? A variety of definitions of dance have been suggested by historians and researchers. More specifically, Plato (Lawler, 1962) considers that the dance came from the desire of all people to express their emotions and joy through the movement of the body. On the other hand there are researchers such as Judith Lynne Hanna (1979), which defines dance as “a human behavior that consists, on the part of the dancer, of the rhythmic movement, the cultural motifs, the sequences of non-verbal movement of the body, from the usual dance movements, the movement has an intrinsic and emotional value”. Also, Joan Kealiinohomoku (1976) argues that dance is “a transient art of expression, performed in a given form and style by the human body moving in space. Dance is performed through deliberate and controlled rhythmic movements. The resulting phenomenon is recognized as the dance by both the researcher and the other members of the group”. Similarly, Panagiotou and collaborators (1999) state that dance is a form of art, a means of expression and, over the years, keeps our national heritage alive in order to pass it on to the next generations.

But as research shows a Greek traditional dance, it would be sensible to see the meaning of traditional dance. Initially we will refer to the term traditional dance and then we will deepen the term Greek traditional dance. According to Barron and Harrington (1981), "traditional dance in its various forms is a means of transferring cultural heritage from generation to generation through recognition and acceptance of the different customs and customs, religions and peculiarities of every cultural communication". According to Sorell (1975) "the power of traditional dance is based on the feelings of the association of one with all the dancers. This shared experience is more than just the collective enjoyment of movement; it is a memory of Archaic ritual dances. The certainty of belonging to a certain group or community gives people their own existential sentiment. " The Greek traditional dance, based on the teacher's book (YEFT, 2013), has a long history that still expresses the Greek at all times of his life, influenced by generation to generation.

In general, the Syrtos dance, according to Struma (2007) is “a Greek traditional dance, of the most popular, ancient origins. Syrtos is found in various local variants, and his footsteps are

found in most Greek dances, so they can be considered as their basis". While for Liddell and Scott (eg.) "syrtos is a traditional Greek dance whose origins bring him to ancient Greece. The name of the dance comes from the ancient Greek word "syrtos" (dancing)". Dancing either with fast or slow rhythmic treatment. If we take a good look at the dance steps, they will show us the direct relationship they have with the Island Syrtos. How influenced are the locals from the island's whistle and why?

It is true that the Greeks dance in different cases and the same dance can be danced differently from one region to another and from village to village, even if they can be separated from just a few kilometers. Indeed, there is a dance whose motif with small variations here and there is danced throughout the whole of Greece (Hunt, 2004). As is Syrtos.

Sourtos or Margaris was the basic motif on which most of the local Arbanian songs were performed - which in our view highlights its antiquity in the local dance repertoire. At the same time, the dance combined with the corresponding ritual song accompanied the passport customs. In some cases, the poetic text of the song was the one that determined the kinetic evolution of dance (Hadjisotouris, x.x.e.).

Syrtos, in Spata, has not been officially recorded yet. However, one first attempt has been by Mrs. Deligianni Hara in November 2000 at the 6th meeting of presidents, dancers and dance teachers of the Greek Lyceum, where a group of local people of Spata, danced the aforementioned dance Syrtos and they were accompanied by recorded music (Lyceum of Greek Women, 2002). Also at local festivals when the orchestra began playing the traditional Syrto's song, at that moment you saw all the inhabitants of Spata, regardless of their age, young's, olds, women and girls, participated in the dance with great pleasure and satisfaction (interviewer 1, 2, 3). This sight was and still is in a great intense on June 29, where a great celebration was held to celebrate the Spatan patron saints of their city. The Apostles Peter and Paul (Liakou, x.x.e.).

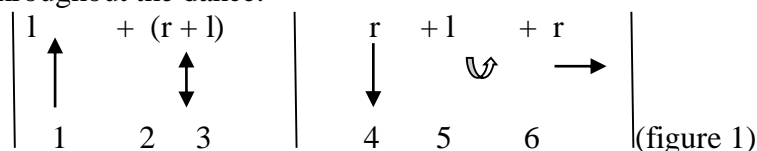
Methodology

The recording of the dance took place in Spata in collaboration of the Lyceum of Greek. As it is known, Lyceum of Greek women is a "non-profit association", founded in 1910 and recognized in 1911 under the Royal Decree. According to the official paper 281/1914 on Societies was recognized with the Secretary General number 1238/11.3.1915 of Athens Court of First Instance (registration number of the union register 219/21.3.1915) and aims to study, scientifically record, strengthen and maintain Greek customs and traditions within the framework of our national life. Relying on this and knowing that the researcher will collect all the data that she needed for her research, she spoke with Mrs. Artemis, a dancer at the Lyceum of Greek of Spata. The latterly helped the reason to be contacted with the head of the department of Lyceum of Greek. The meeting took place a few days before the Easter of 2003 and more specifically on Saturday, March 8, 2003 (08/03/03) at the Cultural Center of the Municipality of Spata. The dancing team and the dancers were aware of researchers' presence in lesson and they all agreed (oral acceptation from them) in recording the dance. The data is on the hold of the researcher's personal archive.

Dance Step analysis

The way in which the researcher will present the analysis of the dance steps is based on the analytical morphological method of Martin and Pesovar (1961), which through the support index guide us to record dances through the descriptive and semantic-structural analysis of the of the legs. As presented by William (1974) on "Possible Support for the Legs". Moreover the principle of connectivity or coherence, and the taxonomic method of the International Folk Music Council (1974), dancing is placed in "various forms" (Zografou, 2003: 155).

Based on researcher recording, Syrtos' dance has six (6) steps. The dance rhythm is 2/4. The dance begins with the left foot and then enters the center of the circle. The geometric dance form of the dance is the open circle - semicircle (Zografou, 1991; Tirovola, 1999). It is a mixed dance and the hand grip is W (with bent elbows). It follows syrtos' dance motif that is repeated throughout the dance.

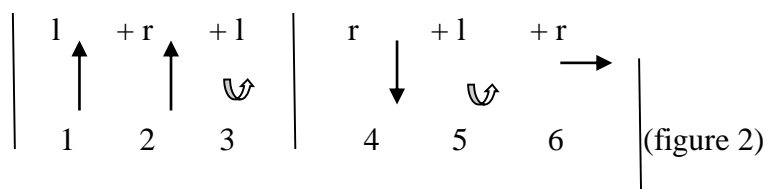


- 1: the left leg enters in the center of the circle
- 2: then right foot goes next to the left foot and rests there for a small tune and
- 3: at the same time the knees are bending
- 4: afterwards the right foot returns back to the circle
- 5: then the left leg passes behind the right foot and
- 6: the right foot moves right making a small dissociation.

Dancing moves

It should be noted that during the recording of the dance, the frontman (first dancer) (Tsiatmatos, 2011) performed some dancing moves. As it showed:

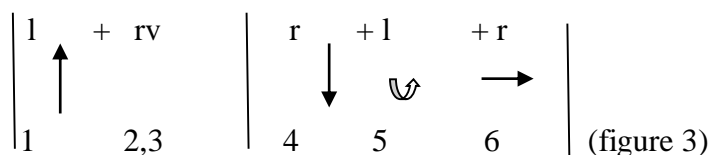
- a) Left foot in the center of the circle afterwards there is
- b) One variation for the 2nd and the 3rd step (right (r) and left (l)). The right foot makes a step in the center of the circle and then the left foot make a step behind the right foot so as to return on the circle (figure 2).



- c) then right foot returns in the circle
- d) left foot goes behind the right foot and
- e) finally right foot follows the circle.

A second dancing movement is:

- left foot in the center of the circle
- the heel of the right foot leans in front of the left foot and remains there
- then the right foot returns to the circle
- left foot goes behind the right foot
- and the right foot follows the circle (figure 3)



A third dancing movement is:

- a) left foot in the center of the circle

- b) then the right foot comes forward making a small circle and using his right hand he strokes four times his right leg
- c) then he moves his right foot back to the circle and leans in front of his left foot

A fourth dancing movement is:

- a) Left foot in the center of the circle afterwards
- b) the right foot make a step in the center of the circle and then the left foot make a step behind the right foot so as to return on the circle (figure 2)
- c) then in the fourth step (r) stays in his position (both feet close to each other) making lateral swings of his entire body first left (5th) and then right (6th).

One of the most famous songs dancing on the aforementioned dance motif is "Evioiotissa". Also according to the ladies who participate in the research there are some songs that accompanied them in their lives. For instance a) "The birds-The swallows" it was singing in the house of a bride at the end of a matchmaking, b) the song "One Friday" it was singing when the bride was leaving her parental home so as to start a new life with her husband (Cultural Association of Spata, x.x.e.). According to the interviewers and the literature review they sung a) "Beautiful Mesogiteissa", "These Sweet Eyes", "Rafa Kabana Ypapanti", "Doo Presse Kotsidet", "The Moodstyle", "Marigoula Madalena", "The Canary yellow" , "The Papaki", "Varvaara", "Elena" (Spata Cultural Association, etc.). Songs that accompanied not only the citizens of Spata when they were in the fields, they were preparing their children's marriage and in general their daily activities. It was a way to *dress up* their dance Syrtos (interviewers 4, 5).

Conclusions

In conclusion, dance is like a deeply personal meaning for those who dance independent of their age and gender. In this research the frontman, around thirty years old, while he was dancing the Syrtos it was obvious for the outdraws to understand that he was adjoin the past with the present and with the future. Moreover he was exteriorized his personals experiences, the rhythm of the dance, his love for Syrto dance, he was dancing like there was no one else near him and he was amalgamate with the dance steps and the musical piece he was listening. His association with the dance and the musical piece seemed intense. Watching the dancer the researcher (and the video) it was creating to her an awe and admiration, as when we watch the pontic male dancers dancing Pirichious dance, Kotsari, Tik Tromacton and Seranitsa. Who are dancers with a standing body, sometimes with their arms outstretched or bent, with dance moves, with small steps and their body, following the regulatory movements accompanied by the chemenez (lyraris) (Tirovala, Karepidis, Kardaris, 2007). Throughout Greek territory music, songs and dance were and still are part of the daily life of men and women. In each region, each song is tied to their roots and tradition. A bond that gives him, his identity. Like Syrtos for the Spatans' inhabitants!

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