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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE “FIRST” AND THE “SECOND” EXISTENCE OF DANCE IN THE GREEK ISLAND OF CRETE. THE EXAMPLE OF THE SYRTOS DANCE

Eleni Filippidou¹ and Irini Gialiti²

¹School of Physical Education and Sport Science,
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

²Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences and Techniques,
University of Sorbonne Paris Nord – College IDEF

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ABSTRACT

The ethnographic context of this research is the Syrtos dance, as it is danced in Rethymnon, in the island of Crete in Greece. Observing at first glance the Syrtos dance, as it is danced in social events in the area of Rethymnon and in dance performances on stage, some differences can be seen in it. The aim of this paper is to compare the Syrtos dance in its “first” and “second existence”, in order to ascertain the differences that took place in it, if any, in order to confirm or reject the empirical observation, which wants the two existences of Syrtos dance, the traditional and the fakedance to be different. The collection of ethnographic data was based on the ethnographic method, as it is used in the study of dance. Laban's notation system was used to record the choreographic compositions of Syrtos dance, while for the analysis of their structure and form, as well as their codification, the structural-morphological and typological method of analysis was used, as it is applied in the Greek Traditional Dance. From the data analysis was found that in Rethymnon, Crete, the Syrtos dance in its "first" and in its "second existence" presents both similarities and differences, rejecting the empirical observation that wants the two existences of dance to be distinct. In fact, the similarities are more than the differences, as there is both a structural and a stylistic relevance between the "first" and the "second existence" of dance. This refutes the claim that traditional dance and the dance that is transferred to the classrooms and therefore on stage are two different things. The difference lies, in the case of Greece we are examining, in the way the dance is transmitted (with or without a dance teacher) and in the stylized movement used in the dance scene.

KEYWORDS: Greek Traditional Dance, Ethnographic method, “first” and “second” existence, Syrtos, Crete.

INTRODUCTION

With the term "traditional" dance" (or folk dance) “...we refer to the dance that was shaped and adopted by symbiotic social groups and is an integral part of this groups and is transmitted directly from one

generation to the next through traditional processes...” (Dimas, 2010, p. 19). This definition refers to traditional processes. These processes concern “...anonymity and orality, in the collective memory, in social control, in collective processing and spread ...” (Dimas, 2010, p. 18). From the above it is understood that traditional dance has to do with the concepts of metaphor and reception through orality. But what happens when these concepts disappear? What happens when traditional dance is broadcast with "modern" procedures? What happens when traditional dance is performed in a modern, that is, in a "non-traditional" environment?

When dance is not transmitted by "traditional" procedures, that is when dance is not transmitted orally, but is transmitted by "modern" procedures, that is through a dance teacher or is presented in the modern "non-traditional" environment, could it be said that we stop talking about traditional dance? According to Dimas (2010), when the traditional dance "... is represented and revived outside its original environment, with different functions and ways of learning it ..." (p. 36), must be called with different name (folkloric dance) (Dimas, 2010).

The phenomenon of transferring elements of the past to today's civil societies is contained in the concept of “folklorismus” (Dimas, 2010; Meraklis, 1972). The phenomenon of “folklorismus” or “fakelore” refers to the “falsified” version of folk tradition, which is considered “pure”, “original”, “authentic”, “genuine”. With other words, the phenomenon of “folklorismus” refers to dance in the context of a spectacle, that is, to dance, as it is performed on stage. This is the meaning of the Hoerburger's "second existence" of dance (Hoerburger, 1968). According to him, the traditional dance in the "second existence" no longer belongs to the whole society, but to specific persons, as a recreational activity, as a hobby, as an exercise, as a spectacle and so on (Hoerburger, 1968). In this case, is observed the systematic and "intentional" teaching of traditional dance by experts, where the dancer-student approaches the dance from part to whole. Therefore, the "second existence" of traditional dance refers to its conscious revival (Hoerburger, 1968).

On the other hand, the traditional dance in its “first existence” is an integral part of the life of a society and its members. In this case, the learning of dance becomes “natural”, “practical” and is a lifelong process (Hoerburger, 1968). Based on the above, it is understood that Hoerburger relates the concept of “first existence” to that of the original tradition and the concept of “second existence” to the “revival” of the original tradition.

The ethnographic context of this research is the Syrtos dance, as it is danced in Rethymnon, in the island of Crete in Greece. Crete is located in the middle of the Eastern Mediterranean and is the southern tip of the Aegean Sea (Kanakaraki, 2017). It is surrounded by two seas, north of the Cretan Sea and south of the Libyan Sea, surrounded by small islands. The island is the largest island in Greece, and the second largest island in the eastern Mediterranean (Kanakaraki, 2017) including four prefectures.

Syrtos is a dance that is danced all over Crete and is one of the most important dances of the repertoire in all areas of the island (Tsouchlarakis, 2000). This is the reason why it is often performed on stage by the dance groups of the cultural clubs of the area.

Observing at first glance the Syrtos dance today, as it is danced in social events in the area of Rethymnon and in dance performances on stage, some differences can be seen in it. On this basis, the aim of this paper is to compare the Syrtos dance in its “first” and “second existence”, in order to ascertain the differences that took place in it, if any, in order to confirm or reject the empirical observation, which wants the two existences of Syrtos dance, the traditional and the fakelore to be different. In order to achieve the aim of the research, it was deemed appropriate to study the Syrtos dance during the period 1950-2020, that is, over the course of two different generations. In particular, this time period, in research paper, is divided into two sub periods, the first of which lasts from 1950 to 1980 and the second from 1981 to 2020. This time separation was made on the basis of historical facts, which brought about social changes in the region (Greece's accession to the European Union).

2. METHODOLOGY

The collection of ethnographic data was based on the ethnographic method, as it is used in the science of dance (Buckland, 1999) and as it is conducted in the context of a "native anthropology" of dance (Buckland, 1999; Dimopoulos, 2017; Felföldi, 1999; Filippidou, 2018; Giurchescu, 1999; Koutsouba, 1997; Loutzaki, 1989; Niora, 2017; Sklar, 1991; Tyrovola, 2008). More specifically, the ethnographic method was based on the use of primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources refer to the data from the field ethnographic research carried out from 2020 to 2022 in the prefecture of Rethymnon in the Greek island of Crete: a) in the form of participatory observation (Gefou-Madianou, 1997; Lydaki, 2001), which is considered as the main method of field research (Buckland, 1999) and b) in the form of interviews with informants (Thompson, 2002). The informants of the research were residents of three different communities in Rethymnon, aged 18-90 years. They were picked based on sampling expediency. Secondary sources refer to the review and use of the existing literature (Thomas, & Nelson, 2003), which moved to identify both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources refer to the direct access to original texts of authors, while the secondary sources refer to the books of other scholars, who evaluate and examine the primary sources. Laban's notation system (Hutchinson, 2005; Koutsouba, 2005), was used to record the choreographic compositions of Syrtos dance, while for the analysis of their structure and form, as well as their codification, the structural-morphological and typological method of analysis was used, as it is applied in the Greek Traditional Dance (Karfis, 2018; Koutsouba, 1997, 2007; Tyrovola, 1994, 2001). Finally, for the comparison of the choreographic compositions of the Syrtos dance in Rethymnon, the comparative method was used (Holt, & Turner, 1972; Ogurtsof, 1983).

3. THE SYRTOS DANCE AND ITS EXISTENCES

Syrtos in Crete was and is the "King of Cretan Dances" (Kamilaki 2009). This is the reason that was chosen, from the multitude of Cretan dances, to be studied in this paper. The Syrtos dance got its name from the ancient Greek word "syro", which means drag. Therefore, it was named Syrtos after the way it is danced, that is, from dragging, from the contact of the feet on the ground. In Minoan times the Syrtos was danced only by women (barefoot) in religious ceremonies, on the altar where they went. By being barefoot they kept in touch and constant friction with the earth, since for Minoan Crete, the earth was the Goddess they worshiped. In this way they were showing the connection they had with her. This is another reason for the name of the dance (Krasanakis, 2016).



Pic. 1 The Syrtos dance in the "first existence"



Pic. 2 The Syrtos dance in the "second existence"

In the era of Ottoman rule and Venetian rule, the capital of Crete was Heraklion, which was called Candia. On the occasion of this name, the dance was named Kandiotis or Kritikos (Cretan). Its current name, Syrtos, prevailed over a variant of Kandiotis sirtos, after the liberation of Greece. In Syrtos dance, in the past years, the first two dancers were the only one's dancing, while the others "dragged" each other, walking and waiting their turn. When the leader "was being killed", it was the turn of the deputy leader and then the rest. The first two dancers had to have kinship or friendship with each other, so that the second could accompany the first in the best possible way. (Kamilaki 2009; Flouris, 2007). Today Syrtos is danced by all the dancers, who leave their turn and are placed at the beginning of the dance, in order to improvise and show their dancing skills.

Syrtos Dance Notation

Systos Rethymnon

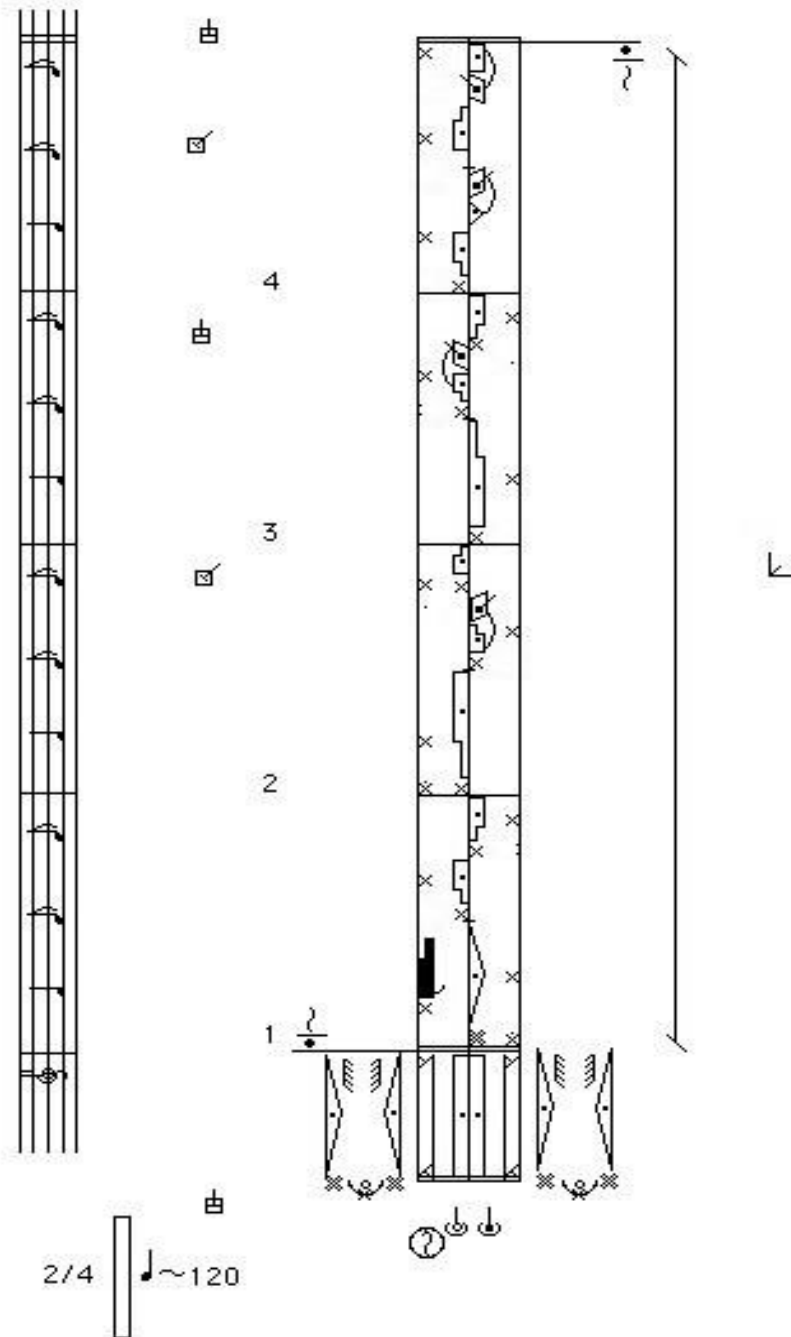


Fig. 1 Syrtos dance notation before 1950

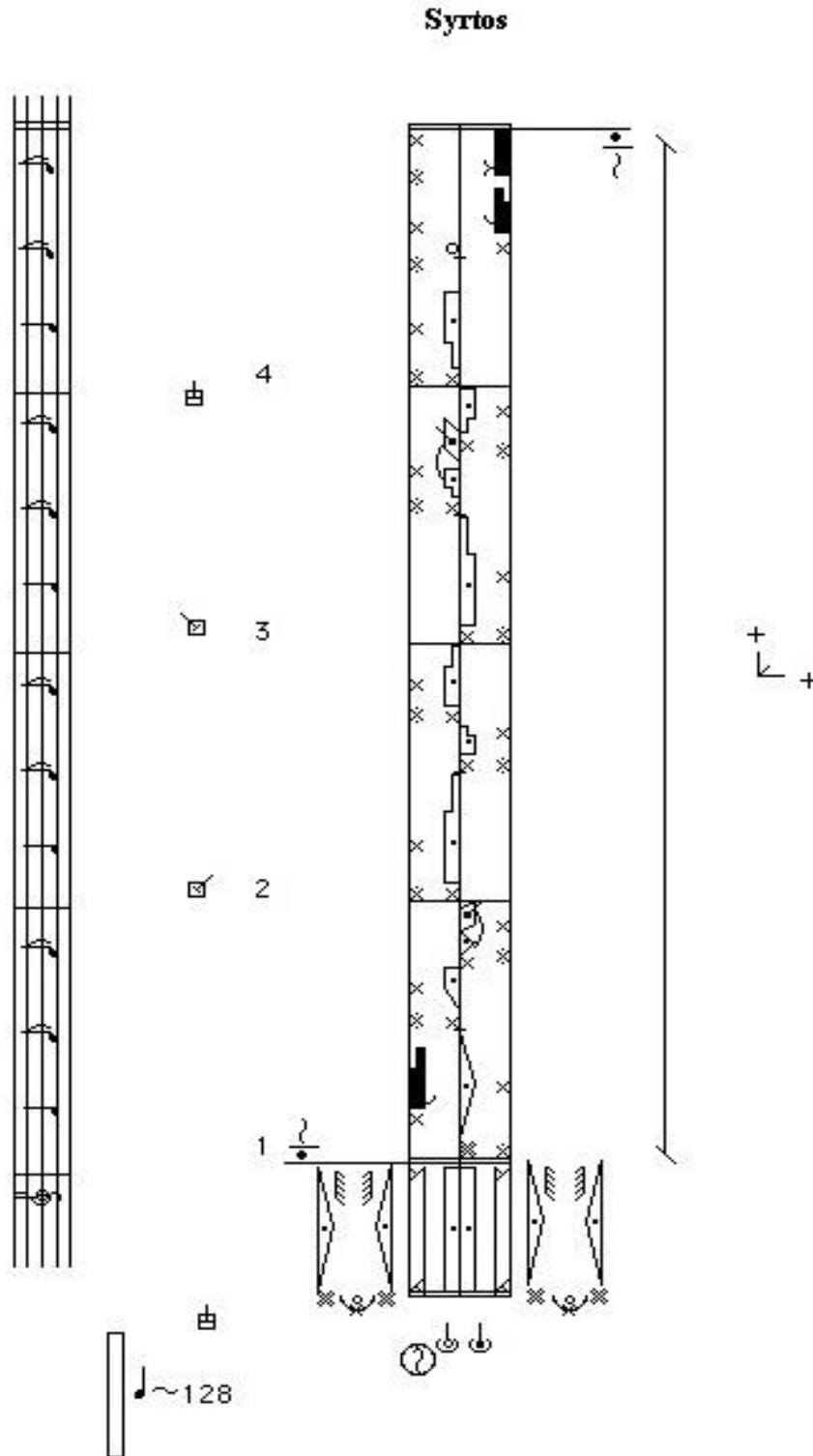


Fig. 2 Syrtos dance notation after 1950

Systos Rethymnon

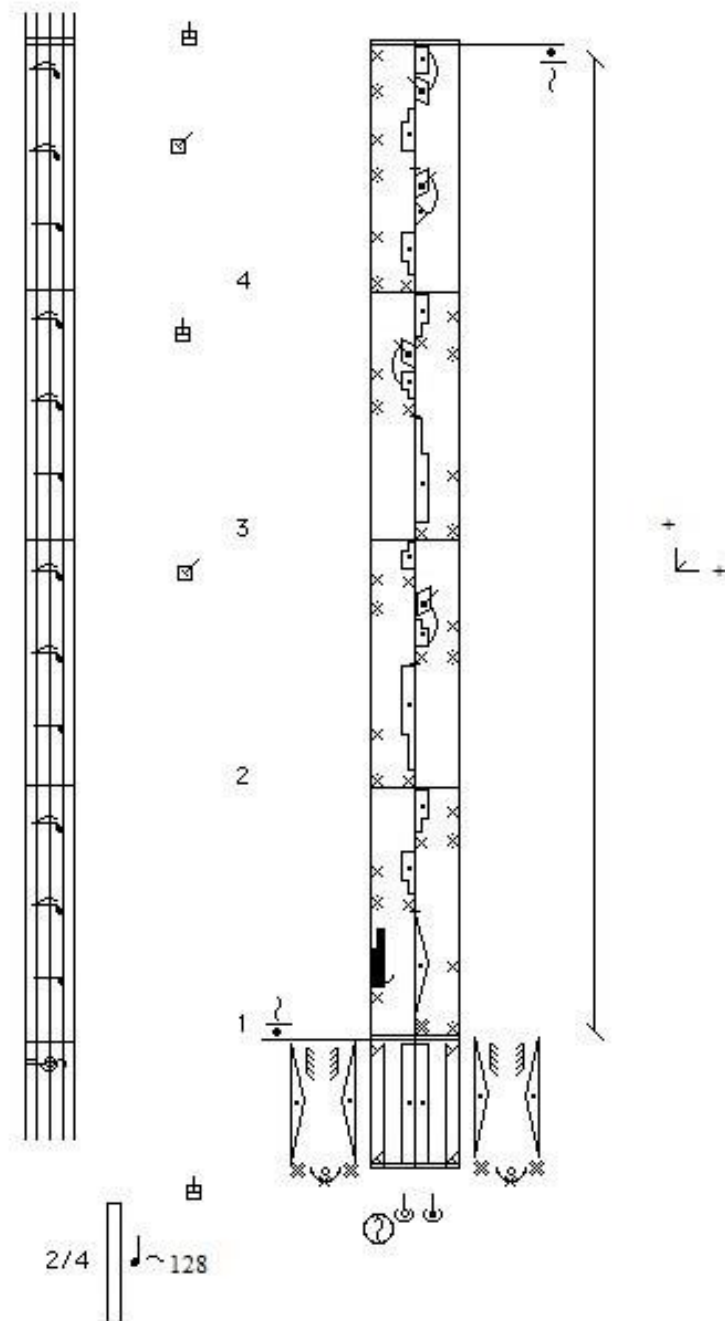


Fig. 3 Systos dance notation as danced on stage

TABLE I Comparative and concise table of the component elements of the choreographic compositions of the Syrtos dance

PARAMETERS	FIRST EXISTENCE (195-1980)	FIRST EXISTENCE (1981-2020)	SECOND EXISTENCE
Choreography	A basic dance phrase that is repeated.	A basic dance phrase that is repeated.	A basic dance phrase that is repeated.
Kinetic unit	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.
Steps	Moderate with supports on the sole.	Moderate with supports on the toes.	Moderate with supports on the toes.
Handle	W, M	W	W
Use of space	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.
Dancers' position and gender	Men, women shuffle.	Men, women shuffle.	Men, women shuffle.
Rhythmic pattern	2/4 or 4/4	2/4	2/4
Rhythmic organization	Slow and stable.	Moderate and stable.	Moderate and stable.
Musical accompaniment	Music (lyre, lute, rarely mandolin) accompanied by a song	Music (lyre, Lute, bagpipe, violin, drums) accompanied by a song	Music (lyre, Lute, bagpipe, violin, drums) accompanied by a song
Method of interpretation	Moderate movements.	Dynamic movements.	Dynamic movements.
Dance form model	Unilateral dance form	Unilateral dance form	Unilateral dance form

Coding of choreographic compositions

TABLE II Kinetic type of Syrtos dance before 1950

<i>Syrtos, Rethymnon</i> 4/4, A/OΦ, A η Γ, ∪	
F	$W1 \left[\frac{(\delta)}{\alpha} \alpha_{2,7,5}^{2/4} + (\alpha_o^{1/4} - \delta_o^{1/4}) \right]$
	$W2 \left[\frac{\alpha_o}{(\alpha_o)} \delta_7^{2/4} + (\delta^{1/4} - \alpha_o^{1/4}) \right]$
	$W3 \left[\frac{\delta}{(\delta)} \alpha_8^{2/4} + (\alpha^{1/4} - \delta^{1/4}) \right]$
	$W4 \left[(\alpha^{1/4} - \delta^{1/4}) + (\alpha^{1/4} - \delta^{1/4}) \right]$

TABLE III Kinetic type of Syrtos dance after 1950

<i>Syrtos</i> 2/4, A/OΦ, AΓ, ∪	
F	$W1 \left[\frac{(\delta)}{\alpha} \alpha_{2,7}^{1/4} + (\alpha_o^{1/8} - \delta^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W2 \left[\alpha_o^{1/4} + (\delta_o^{1/8} - \alpha_o^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W3 \left[\delta_o^{1/4} + (\alpha^{1/8} - \delta^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W4 \left[\alpha^{1/4} + \{ (\alpha) \delta_v^{1/8} - (\alpha) \delta_4^{1/8} \} \right]$

TABLE III Kinetic type of Syrtos dance as danced on stage

<i>Syrtos, Rethymnon</i> 2/4, A/OΦ, A η Γ, ∪	
F	$W1 \left[\frac{(\delta)}{\alpha} \alpha_{2,7,5}^{1/4} + (\alpha_o^{1/8} - \delta_o^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W2 \left[\frac{\alpha_o}{(\alpha_o)} \delta_7^{1/4} + (\delta^{1/8} - \alpha_o^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W3 \left[\frac{\delta}{(\delta)} \alpha_8^{1/4} + (\alpha^{1/8} - \delta^{1/8}) \right]$
	$W4 \left[(\alpha^{1/8} - \delta^{1/8}) + (\alpha^{1/8} - \delta^{1/8}) \right]$

From the recording and the analysis of the three choreographic compositions of the Syrtos dance in Rethymnon it emerged that, the first choreographic composition of Syrtos, which present from 1950 since 1980, consists of a dance phrase consisting of four meters of 2/4 (or 4/4), which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In all the kinetic motifs there are three not isochronous movements equal to 1/4, 1/8 and 1/8. All movements form a total of four groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of the kinetic motifs.

The second choreographic composition of the Syrtos dance in Rethymnon, which present from 1981 since 2020, consists of a dance phrase consisting of four meters of $2/4$, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In all the kinetic motifs there are three not isochronous movements equal to $1/4$, $1/8$ and $1/8$. All movements form a total of four groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of the kinetic motifs.

Finally, the third choreographic composition of the Syrtos dance in Rethymnon, which present at the stage from members of the Cultural club "Tzanidakis Folklore Group", consists of a dance phrase consisting of four meters of $2/4$, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In all the kinetic motifs there are three not isochronous movements equal to $1/4$, $1/8$ and $1/8$. All movements form a total of four groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of the kinetic motifs.

From the description, analysis and comparison of the data it emerged that Syrtos in Rethymnon, Crete in Greece, shows a common structural composition, as well as his three choreographic compositions are structured on the basis of type dance "sta dyo" (in two). More specifically, all three choreographic compositions are structured on the basis of the mixture of two types of dance "sta dyo" (in two). In particular, they result from the mixing of two time-transformed types of "sta dyo" (in two) ($W1 + W2$) and ($W3 + W4$), with different use of space.

However, despite their structural relevance, their structural-morphological and typological analysis revealed differences in the form of choreographic compositions. These differences are mainly found in the variable elements of their form.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this paper was to compare the Syrtos dance in its "first" and "second existence", in order to ascertain the differences that took place in it, if any, in order to confirm or reject the empirical observation, which wants the two existences of Syrtos dance, the traditional and the fakelore to be different. To achieve the aim, the data collection was held with the ethnographic method, as used in the science of dance, while for their analysis the structural-morphological and typological method of analysis was used, as it is applied in the Greek traditional dance.

In order to initially achieve the aim of the research, the structural composition of the Syrtos dance, as it is performed in the "first" and "second" existence had to be determined. To make this happen: a) the choreographic compositions of Syrtos dance were recorded, b) their component elements were classified, and c) their dance form was coded.

From the data analysis it was found that Syrtos dance in Crete in its "first" and "second" existence, during the period 1950-2020, is performed with three different choreographic compositions. The first of these took place from 1950 to 1980, while the second from 1980 until today. These two choreographic compositions refer to the "first" existence of the dance, as they are performed in all the

dance circumstances of the area. Why in the "first" existence is the appearance of two different choreographic compositions observed? This fact has to do with the evolution of dance over time (Filippidou, & Karfis, 2022; Filippidou, 2010). Finally, the third choreographic composition refers to how Syrtos dance is danced today on stage. In other words, this third choreographic composition recorded in Syrtos dance during the period 1950-2020, refers to its "second" existence.

The data analysis showed that these three choreographic compositions show a common structural composition, as all of them are structured on the basis of the mixture of two types of dances "sta dyo" (in two). In particular, they result from the mixing of two time-transformed types of "sta dyo" (in two) ($W1 + W2$) and ($W3 + W4$), with different use of space. However, there is a difference in the dance form between the three choreographic compositions. This differentiation has to do with the dance handle, in which initially, in addition to the W handle, the M handle was also used. It also has to do with the rhythmic organization of the dance, which over time became faster. There are even differences in the intensity of the dance movements, which over time became more dynamic, but also in the steps, in which the supports, after 1980, are made on the toes and not on the sole, as before. Finally, differences can be found in the musical accompaniment, as until 1980 the Syrtos dance was accompanied by a lyre and lute and rarely mandolin, while the bagpipe, violin and drum were later introduced. Of course, apart from the music, differences can also be found in the song that accompanies the Syrtos dance in Rethymnon, as from 1980 onwards the dance is accompanied by songs by famous musicians, in contrast to the older ones that are accompanied by songs by anonymous folk artists.

However, changes were also observed in the movement in the space of dance, which from 1980 onwards was differentiated. In conclusion, from data analysis, was found that Syrtos in Rethymnon, during the period 1950-2020 has differences in all dimensions of its trinity (Filippidou, 2011). Changes were found both in the rhythm and in the poetic text of dance, as well as its movements (handle, foot movements, improvisation of first dancer etc). These changes in dance over time are due in the "opening" of communities, which resulted in communication between them. This communication took place in the form of mixed marriages, inland relocation and seasonal work.

It is noteworthy that between the "first existence" of the Syrtos dance, as it was performed from 1980 onwards, and its "second existence", there are many similarities. In particular, similarities are found in all the variable elements of dance, except the movement in space. More specifically, Syrtos dance in its "second existence", that is during its transfer into classrooms and later on stage in the form of a dance performance, follows the choreographic composition of its "first existence", of the period 1950-1980. However, in all the component elements of the dance it bore similarities with its "first existence", of the period 1981-2020 and therefore differences with its "first existence", of the period 1950-1980. To sum up, in Rethymnon, Crete, the Syrtos dance in its "first" and in its "second existence" presents both similarities and differences, rejecting the empirical observation that wants the two existences of dance to be distinct. In fact, the similarities are more than the differences, as there is both a structural and a stylistic relevance between the "first" and the "second existence" of dance. The differences that

were found between the two existences of Syrtos dance have to do with the evolution of dance over time, which was influenced by cultural tourism, which increased during the 1980s and beyond. Therefore, in order for the dance teachers to entertain and please the audience, during a dance performance, they kept a dynamic style in them, while keeping the choreographic composition of the Syrtos dance "unchanged" (which in the social events of the area changed after the 1980s), in order to maintain their connection with the past.

At the base of the above, we are led to the question "what is traditional dance?" According to Dimas (2010), when the traditional dance "... is represented and revived outside its original environment, with different functions and ways of learning it ..." (p. 36) (such as learning it from dance teachers), must be called with different name (folkloric dance). But if dance is the same in its "first" and "second existence", as well as the dance under study, are we talking about another kind of dance again? Is the orality of the dance transmission that determines the kind of dance? In our modern urbanized societies, especially in large urban centers, the way traditional dance is transmitted has changed, as dance events (such as festivals) have been limited. Thus, children, nowadays, learn to dance with the help of dance teachers. So, there is no more traditional dance and children learn a pseudo-folklore dance? The meaning of traditional dance is not easy to define, as traditional dance is not static, but changes over time (Filippidou, 2010) and as all cultural products, so the dance subject to change, whether this change concerns its dance form or the modes of transmission of.

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Authors Profile



Eleni Filippidou is a postdoctoral researcher at the School of Physical Education and Sport Science of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens with a scholarship from the Hellenic State Scholarship Foundation and Lecturer in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences and Techniques of the French College Idef-Universite Paris13. She is a graduate of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and holds a Postgraduate and Doctoral Degree in Folklore-Anthropology of Dance at the same university.



Irini Gialiti comes from the island of Crete and is an undergraduate student at the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences and Techniques of the University of Sorbonne Paris Nord – College IDEF, specializing in Greek Traditional Dance.