

ARE SERGIANI DANCES FEMALE BYZANTINE DANCES? COMMON FEATURES IN DIFFERENT PERIODS

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ABSTRACT

One of the main concerns in the study and the research of dance is whether today's dances are the continuation or the result of ancient or even recent dances and that there is perpetual performance of these dances. Our assumptions are based on secondary sources, and in various depictions and pictures that represent dance images. However, in order to draw safer and scientific conclusions maybe we should include other criteria as for example the common structure or the common components of dances depicted with each specific traditional dance. The aim of this study is to lay out these common components and the context as well, of the female Byzantine dances, and of the Sergiani dances in Thessaly (Karagounides ethnic group), in order to show if there is any connection between these two. The collection of data was based on the principles of the ethnographic research as it is applied in the case of dance and comes from primary (fieldwork research) and secondary (archival ethnographic and historical research) sources. In conclusion, it can be concluded that the way of dancing between these two cases is common, and maybe Sergiani dances constitute an evolution, a continuation of the female Byzantine dances.

KEYWORDS: history, visual anthropology, component elements of dance, Thessaly, Karagounides

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the concerns in this study and research of dance is whether today's dances are the continuation or the result of ancient or even recent dances and that there is perpetual performance of these dances. There are studies and books that attempt to prove this continuation and that these dances are nothing but an "advanced" or "variant" form of ancient dances. This claim is based on the dance form, as for example in the case of the Tsakonikos dance or Zonaradikos koulouriasstos where the shape of a labyrinth is formed by the dancers and is traced back to the time of Theseus and his way out of the labyrinth (Stratou, 1976). In addition, it is based on the dance handholds as they are depicted in pots and murals. Therefore, if an X hand hold is depicted, then it is assumed that the Zonaradikos dance or Trata dance from Megara or the Argo-Saronic gulf is performed. Lastly, from one common dance move, which may be depicted in a pot or a mural, and may be a part of a dance nowadays, it is assumed that this dance is traced back to that time period.

Is this criterion safe though? Can our assumptions be based on a depiction, a “picture” of that time and lead us to a certain conclusion that this is a particular traditional dance or dances? In order to draw safer and scientific conclusions maybe we should include other criteria as for example the common structure or the common components of dances depicted with each specific traditional dance, leading to a well-documented and comprehensive position on our behalf.

Someone, who thinks right, could ask how this can be achieved, since we are all aware of the fact that there was no dance notation system, so as to observe the “ancient” structure of dance. It remains to check the common components constituting these dances and the sources about the context that these dances were performed.

The aforementioned questions have been torturing me as well after coming into contact with one of the customs of my region (rural Thessaly), Sergiani, and the dances performed there.

I assumed that this custom originates from a very long time ago, before the Turkish rule, but I did not have the corresponding evidence to prove it. By studying about the female Byzantine dances though, I observed certain common features and I thought about researching further. The aim of this study is to lay out these common components and the context as well, of the female Byzantine dances, and of course of Sergiani, in order to show if there is any connection between these two.

The collection of data was based on the principles of the ethnographic research as it is applied in the case of dance and comes from primary and secondary sources (Boulamanti, 2014; Buckland, 1999; Charitonidis, 2018; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Felföldi, 1999; Filippidou, 2011, 2018; Foutzoulas, 2016; Giurchescu, 1999; Koutsouba, 1991, 1997, 1999; Loutzaki, 1989; Niora, 2009, 2017; Sarakatsianou, 2011; Sklar, 1991; Tyrovola, 2008;). The primary sources are about the data coming from fieldwork research in the form of interview (open-ended questions for a semi-structured interview and open interview) and of participatory observation with the use of concurrent recording and video recording of the residents of these communities where Sergiani is taking place. The secondary sources are about the review and the use of the existing bibliography which was based on the principles of archival ethnographic (Gefou-Madianou, 1999) and historical research (Adshead & Layson 1983; Thomas & Nelson 2002).

The analysis and the interpretation of data were achieved based on the description and the analysis of the component elements of the dance (Adshead, 1988; Giurchescu, 1992; Karfis, 2018; Koutsouba, 2019; Tyrovola, 2001, 2009, 2019). Furthermore, it was achieved based on the interpretative model of Adshead & Layson (1983), who claim that “the need to study dance within its appropriate circumstances and in relation to prevailing ideas and attitudes is vital if dance is to be understood in its own terms and that of the many contexts in which it exists” (pp. 8). Last but not least, the same (1983) claim that dance is “both part of and derived from its contexts” (pp. 9). These contexts in this particular study are the component elements of the dance, which provide us with information both

about the dancers and about the aforementioned context. The context according to Adshead & Layson (1983) can be aesthetic, anthropological, artistic, cultural, geographic, political, psychological, social etc. In the table below (Figure 1) the connection of dance types in time through their contexts appears clearly.

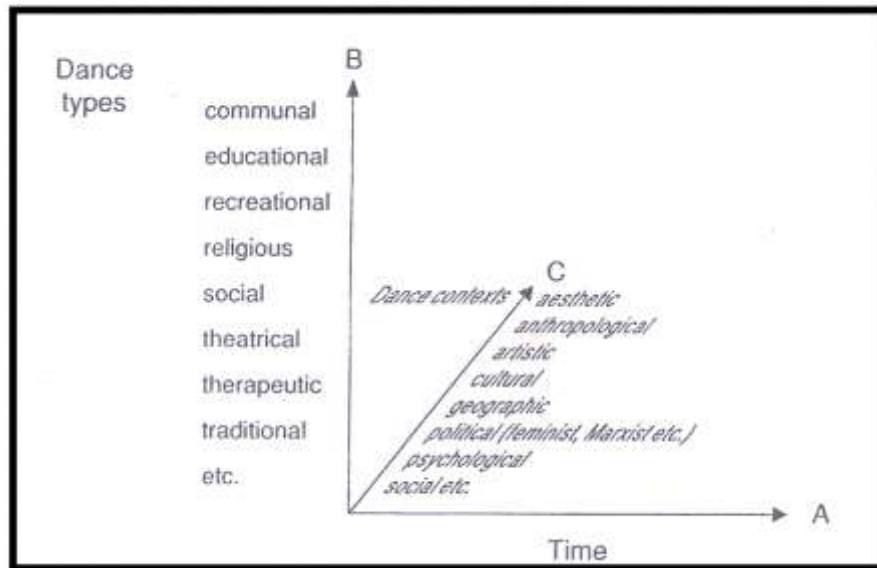


Figure 1: Dance types in time through their contexts.

Byzantium and female dances

Byzantium dates back to 330 A.D. and ends in 1453 A.D. It is divided into three great subperiods, the early Byzantine period (4th – 7th century A.D.), the middle Byzantine period (8th – 10th century A.D.), and the late Byzantine period (11th – 15th century A.D.). During all this time and clearly affected by the Christian perception, the empire tried to “fight” dance and stand against any dance event. According to Tyrovola (2003a), the Church Fathers “took advantage of any given chance to dissuade Christians from the customs continuing the ancient tradition and were, according to them, “outcast” and “diabolical” (pp. 248-249). The reasons, according to the same (2003b) were the following:

- i. the fact that, because of dance, the Church representatives recalled the national (folklore) ceremonies associated with popular belief, worship, and superstition, based on ancient and idolatrous archetypes
- ii. the conflict among different cults about the conversion of people, and the official Church against all
- iii. the freedom of morals and the “obscene”, “hedonist” and harlotrous elements in the appearance and movement of dancers, mainly of professional actors, as bequeathed by the late Roman era. (pp. 258-259)

It is obvious from the above mentioned that during the Byzantine period “the Church openly declared war against all arts reflecting the social disintegration of that time, leading them to deterioration and decay” (Tyrovola, 2003a:246).

Nevertheless, the Church did not condemn the “humble” dance (Blagojević, 2012).

Humble dances were the dances performed in order to honor a saint during religious festivals. Still, in spite of the prohibitions

Men, women and children were dancing, having fun and singing at every possible opportunity, despite the prohibitions imposed by the Church and the admonitions aiming at the ideal Christian life [...]. In the Byzantine community, dance – a body language – had many detractors mainly Church Fathers and eremites, and also many enthusiasts folk, scholars and clergymen, because it is considered a form of art and act of everyday life [...] and the dancer’s body in the Byzantine art, has always been his or her image. (Moutzali, 2004:20)

As far as women and dance in the Byzantium are concerned, as seen above, both based on the sources and the depictions and the iconographies in churches and monasteries (Dimopoulos, & Koutsouba, 2021) it is obvious that their presence is intense in various dance events in the Byzantium such as theatre, formal ceremonies, wedding ceremonies and several festivals (Voutsas, 2004). In some occasions, the female dancer was considered the “humble” woman, as she was dancing in order to honor the saints or the emperor, and in other occasions she was considered the “obscene” woman, when she was dancing in order to entertain or in front of people. No matter the classification, what seems to be the fact is that there was absolute presence and participation of women in the dance events of the Byzantine period.

Ethnographic elements: Sergiani

Sergiani is a custom that takes place in the region of rural Thessaly and more particularly in Karditsa and Trikala regions, inhabited by the population ethnic group of Karagounides¹ (Dimopoulos, 2011, Dimopoulos, 2017, Dimopoulos, Tyrovola, & Koutsouba 2017a, 2017b). It takes place during winter time. This time is divided into two subperiods. The first begins on Epiphany Day and ends on Carnival Day, and is called the Carnival Sergiani. The second lasts for the first three days of Easter, Easter Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, and is called the Easter Sergiani (Bazianas, 1997; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Dimopoulos, Tyrovola, & Koutsouba 2017a, 2017b; Kolonas, 2014; Magouliotis, 2010; Roussiakis, 2006; Tziamourtas, 2003, 2006).

The word ‘Sergiani’ etymologically means walk – from the Turkish word *seyran* which means stroll – and, respectively, *sergianizo* which means wander, walk around (Tegopoulos-Fytrakis, 1990:685; [Papyrus Larousse](#), 2014:33; Tziamourtas, 2003). Tziamourtas (2006), by both etymologically analyzing the word Sergiani and ethnographically the notion of Sergiani, mentions that: “Sergiani

¹ . Karagounides is the ethnic group, whereas Karagounes are the women, who belong to the specific ethnic group.

(the), noun: From the verb *sergianizo* and *sergiano*. Walk around” (p.412). Roussiakis (2006) points out that “almost all the residents were gathered at the square of the village and watched the female dance. This gathering was called *sergiani*. In general, the residents used to call every public social event that involved dance *sergiani* as well” (pp. 511).

Description and analysis of the component elements of the dance

The method of analysis of the dance form is mentioned in a unified research method,

which borrows elements from the methods of analysis 1) of G. Martin & M. Pesovár (regarding the inside analysis of dance form in relation to the musical accompaniment), 2) the choreological team of ICTM (regarding the terminology and the relation of the music and dance levels), 3) of Adshead (regarding the way of classification of the component elements and parts of dance for the identification of the dance form and 4) of G. Martin & M. Pesovár (regarding the use of the term “support index”) aiming at the systematic processing of the dance material. (Tyrovola, 2001:48)

As it has already been mentioned in the introduction, the classification and the analysis of the component elements (Adshead, 1988; Giurchescu, 1992; Karfis, 2018; Koutsouba, 2019; Tyrovola, 2001, 2009, 2019) and the parts of dance facilitate the recognition of the dance form (Tyrovola, 2001). What are the component elements which piece together in order to recognise the dance form and therefore compare and contrast two dances? These are the movement, the dancers, the visual environment, acoustic component elements, and lastly, their clusters. The juxtaposition and the comparison between the female Byzantine dances and the Sergiani dance will be based on the above key elements. Then, we will analyze each element/criterion of the component elements individually.

Movement

“The whole body or parts of it, including actions, gestures, postures i.e. steps, jumps, lifts, lifting turns, falls, on the spot movements etc.” (Tyrovola, 2001:49) appertain to this category. The category of movement is subdivided into other subcategories. The first subcategory includes the components of dance, meaning the dance form, the size of the dance form, the pattern, the direction, the place of performance and dance handhold. The second subcategory includes the dynamic components, the time, meaning the rhythm and the rhythmic organization (tempo, dynamic, meter). The third subcategory includes the group of components of movement, meaning the simultaneous occurrence of movement with elements of space and time (Tyrovola, 2001). This particular criterion will be analyzed below both in the case of female Byzantine dances, and in the case of Sergiani.

Movement in female Byzantine dances

Our knowledge about the Byzantine dances in general and the key element of movement comes from illustrations and other depictions of the time, which depicted dance representations. Through the analysis of the above mentioned sources we discover that the dance form was circular and also

individual dances were performed. Nevertheless, Blagojević (2012) mentions that “the most common dances in Byzantine were circle dances” (pp. 89). Moutzali (2004) agrees with this statement and points out that “the most popular dances in Byzantium were circle dances, which were related to primordial worship rituals” (pp. 21).

Regarding the dance form of female dances, Koukoules (1938) states that Basil the Great wrote “about the women dancing and young men gathering around their circle” (pp. 235). Furthermore, Touliatos-Miles (2004) specifically mentions that we can see women “forming a circle, like a circle dance” (pp. 32) and that “there are reports of circle dances performed in closed circles. These dances were performed in a counterclockwise direction” (pp. 34). Parcharidou-Anagnostou (2004) and Tsekoura (2004) have both referred to the circle dances. What is more, Tsekoura (2004) comments on how “this particular dance form is integrated in circle female dances which are found - along with some mixed ones - at the end of the Byzantine period” (pp. 6). Last but not least, the circle could be either open, or closed, since, as Voutsas (2004) reveals, “six women are dancing, forming a closed circle” (pp. 47) or as it is depicted “a closed circle of eight women in the countryside”. As indicated earlier, Touliatos-Miles (2004:34) also refers to “closed circles”. The circular shape seems to be present in the Byzantine period and even in purely female dances and “either in closed or open circles, the direction was counterclockwise” (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:34). Finally, Koukoules (1938) specifically refers to circle dances of the Byzantine era as he calls the dance *συρτόν* (syrtos dance), which “was danced only by men or only by women” (pp. 235) or together as well.

Regarding the places of performance of female dances, sources indicate that there is great diversity. They were dancing at the Emperor’s palace, the Hippodrome, the theatres, the wedding ceremonies, the festivals, and lastly, at several places in order to entertain the viewers (Voutsas, 2004; Touliatos-Miles, 2004). Nevertheless, there is particular reference to the dances performed around churches. Voutsas (2004) mentions that “folk sacred dances were performed by the Christians usually at the courtyard of the churches or even inside the temples” (pp. 48), that “during the commemoration of martyrs and saints, the Christians were dancing mainly around the temples” (pp. 47), and also that “information on dances at the courtyard of the churches exists on several texts including texts by foreign travelers” (pp. 47). Blagojević (2012) agrees on that stating that “dancing in church is mentioned in sources in 10th century” (pp. 90). She continues (2012) by mentioning that “church dancing later appears in the ethnographic notes in 19th century” (pp. 90) and that back then it was a general rule that “people all over Europe in the Middle Ages danced in churches and everywhere near them” (pp. 90). In addition, Touliatos-Miles (2004) mentions that in order to dance “women [...] were standing right outside the church” (pp. 32). Tsekoura (2004) states that “dirges were heard from the narthex of Byzantine temples [...] – accompanied by intense dance movements” (pp. 7). Therefore, “the example of circle dance [...] in the narthex of the church during the Byzantine years” (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:34) seems to be quite common.

Regarding the dance handhold, a lot of kinds of handholds can be observed during the Byzantine period. More particularly, Dimopoulos, & Koutsouba (2021:259) present in short the types of dance handholds observed (Table 1):

Table 1: Women’s handholds in dance events in Byzantium through depictions

Women’s handholds in dance events in Byzantium through depictions
Wrist handhold and distance among dancers’ bodies
Wrist handhold, but arm in arm, with no distance among them
Crosswise handhold (X handhold) using the hands
Crosswise handhold (X handhold) using the belts

Women dances are presented using these handholds. One handhold frequently depicted is the one where dancers are held by the hands arm in arm (Image 1).



Image 1: Women held by the hands arm in arm
(Source: Parcharidou-Anagnostou, 2004:56)

Regarding the time, the rhythm and the rhythmic organization (tempo, dynamic and meter), there are very little to none information. This is reasonable, since there were no official notation systems for the movement in relation to the rhythm. Nevertheless, we draw on the sources about the dynamic of female dances in the Byzantine period. For example, Voutsas (2004) mentions that women are dancing in a “calm and modest way, holding each other’s’ hands by the wrists and the shoulders. There is no longer the element of wildness even in vivid dances” (pp. 48). According to her, their dance “is now performed in slow, calm steps sharing nothing with its former wild nature” (pp. 47). There was a contradiction even in mixed dances where “the vivid rhythm, set by a davul player leading the dance, is shown by the bouncing step of both the musician and the male dancers, something that females do not follow since they are moving calmly” (Voutsas, 2004:48). Finally, Blagojević (2012) claims that “in church rituals there are movements that may look like a dance to an outside observer” (pp. 92).

Movement in Sergiani

We have plenty of information on the category of movement regarding Sergiani in the rural region of Thessaly. The dance form is circular, with the elder women dancing ahead of the circle and the younger women following (Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017). Regardless of the community, the identity of Sergiani required circle dances (even in a closed circle in certain cases, as for example the Roimana dance in Krania municipality), with the exclusive presence of women. From the following images (Image 2 and Image 3) the dance form can be perceived, in semi-circle and closed circle shape.



Image 2: Sergiani in the municipality of Megala Kalyvia in Trikala region probably in the 50’s or 60’s.

(Source: Christos Papapolikarpou’s archive)



Image 3: Sergiani in closed circle dance. The “Roimana” dance, as it is danced in the municipality of Krania in Karditsa region.

(Source: excerpt from the musical and dance performance “Folk Winter” 2009)

The place of performance of Sergiani according to the sources was mainly the square or the courtyard of the church, both for the Carnival Sergiani and the Easter Sergiani (Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Kolonas, 2014; Magouliotis, 2010). In particular, about the Easter Sergiani it is referred that “as the Karagounides were coming out of the church wearing their finest clothes [...] they started singing and setting the dance at the church courtyard and the whole village was humming” (Kolonas. 2014:45). From the informants’ report, a result of multi-year ethnographic fieldwork, the above mentioned statement is confirmed. More specifically, S.G. (2016) mentions that “every Sunday we danced; we were coming out of the church in the morning, dancing over there and at the square in the evening” and according to P.K. (2016) “on Epiphany day at the church in the morning and at the square in the afternoon only women”.

Similar was the case during Easter, when “the day included the Divine Service and afterwards the “Sergiani”, where women were singing and dancing the Easter songs” (Kolonas, 2014: 48). Magouliotis (2010), regarding the Easter Sergiani in Agnantero in Karditsa region, mentions that

¹. When we refer to age in Sergiani we do not mean biological age, but social age, meaning the age a woman got married. If a woman was younger than another woman, but married first, then, despite the fact that she was younger, due to her earlier marriage she would be placed ahead of the circle (Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017).

on the second day of Easter, after the priest's exit in the loggia of the church, and the exchange of wishes, middle aged women, newlywed women and single women started dancing almost in front of the entrance of the temple and kept singing and dancing until they reached "the Argastiri". This was happening circa 1910. In the next years they danced at the public Square, after gathering there. (pp. 161)

This statement confirms the informants' reports. S.G. (2016) says "*over there at the church in the morning and at the square in the afternoon*". And again on the second day. *Three days of dance*". Z.T. (2015) mentions that "*they used to go to the church in the morning, they finished, all the people there were dancing*", and E.G. (K) (2015) adds "*in front of the church*". T.R. (2010) from Rizovouni municipality says that they were dancing "*in front of the church, in front of the church on the right*". Regarding the dance handhold, we can observe a variety of handholds. In Sergiani mainly they hold each other by the hands, loosely down, although someone can observe dancers held by the hands arm in arm. As Bazianas cites (1997) there were dances in Sergiani using the handhold of "*holding each other by the hands arm in arm*" (pp. 288). In the following image (Image 4) we can see an example of this:



Image 4: *Using the handhold of holding each other by the hands arm in arm from Sergiani performance in the municipality of Magoula in Karditsa region, in 2015*

(Source: Konstantinos Dimopoulos's personal archive)

Regarding the time, the rhythm and the rhythmic organization (tempo, dynamic and meter), it can be claimed that there is something unique. Since there are no musical instruments, we could say that the musical accompaniment is vocal (song). This practically means that the rhythm is free and it is set by the singing, the voice stops and the breaths in between the song. Singing (antiphonal) means adding more fatigue to the female dancers. As a result, there was no dynamic in the movements and the

movements were simpler. The Sergiani dances usually present time equality and are mainly based on the repetition of the rotation of the lower limbs at a level of kinetic pattern or on the basic structural form of “three” at a level of dance phrase (Tyrovola, 2001; Karfis, 2018). There are no intense movements, jumps, lifting turns or falls. Therefore, there is no intense dynamic and the weight is average. Furthermore, as Bazianas (1997) mentions, Sergiani dances are “very strict, modest and earnest” (pp. 285) concerning their nature. He (1997) also mentions that dance in Sergiani is “mainly slow [...] walking” (pp. 288).

The characteristics (and the similarities) of the first category of the dance components, i.e. the category of movement are presented in short in the table below (Table 2):

Table 2: The characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of movement:

Movement	Female Byzantine dances	Sergiani
Place components (dance form, size of dance form, place of performance, dance handhold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly circle dances either in a closed or in an open circle. • The place of performance could be the palace, the Hippodrome, the theatres, the wedding ceremonies, the festivals, various places of entertainment and the churches. • The handholds vary. There could be the X, Wrist handhold and distance among dancers’ bodies, Wrist handhold, but arm in arm, with no distance among them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly circle dances either in a closed or in an open circle • The place of performance could be the square or the courtyard of the church. • The dominant handholds are the M, W and the arm in arm handhold.
Dynamic components (rhythm, rhythmic organization-tempo, dynamic, meter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm and modest dances. Without intense dynamic. • Slow dances; with calm steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple movements based on time equality. There is no intense dynamic and the weight is average. • Modest and earnest nature • Mainly slow, walking dances

Dancers

When we refer to this category we mean the number and the gender, the leading or the secondary roles, the simultaneous appearance of the aforementioned components, and also the dance arrangement of the genders (Tyrovola, 2001).

Dancers in Byzantine dances in general and in female Byzantine dances in particular

The gender participation in the dance events of the Byzantine period is varied. On the one hand mixed and entirely male dances are observed, but on the other hand entirely female dances are observed as well. The change and the participation of the genders in the dance events has been a result of the broader changes observed in the Byzantium, considering that since the Byzantine Empire lasted for many centuries, dance was subject to changes over the years. Furthermore, the number of dancers is varied. The male dances include the Pyrrhichios (war) dances (Antzaka-Vei, 2004; Touliatis-Miles, 2004; Tsekoura, 2004), the naval dances (Antzaka-Vei, 2004), the Makellarikos dances from the guild of Hasapides (Butchers) (Moutzali, 2004:22; Tsekoura, 2004:7) et.al. In mixed dances for example Voutsas (2004) mentions that “three men lead the open dance and three women wearing traditional costumes follow” (pp. 48). Parcharidou-Anagnostou (2004) presents another case: “three women and a man – are embraced by the shoulders and are moving in circle” (pp. 52) and Moutzali (2004) mentions that “six musicians are present [...] two acrobats and two dancers” (pp. 23) or that “there are two more dancers whose long sleeves flutter in the wind” (pp. 25).

Examples of purely female dances are indicated by Voutsas (2004), who mentions that “six women are dancing, forming a closed circle, held by their hands in an X handhold” (pp. 47) and we can even see “a closed circle dance of eight women in the countryside held by the wrists of their hands” (pp. 47). In this diversity we can observe that “only women usually dance, sometimes only men, and sometimes both genders together” (Antzaka-Vei, 2004: 75).

On the other hand, we could observe individual or face-to-face dances. For example, Parcharidou-Anagnostou (2004) comments on a depiction, in which “the dancer is usually a slim woman in a three-quarter position” (pp. 53) or, in another depiction “two women holding handkerchiefs are dancing the karsilamas dance, almost face-to-face” (pp. 53). It is also observed that women dominate individual or face-to-face dances. Furthermore, from the 11th century onwards the dance reality in the Byzantium is diversified. As Voutsas claims (2004), “as the centuries go by, a change in dance habits is noticed. Women no longer dance alone but in groups” (pp. 47), and also “from being mostly individual, with intense movement and maneuvers, dance changes and becomes collective” (pp. 48).

In short, it could be said that there is diversity as far as the number of dancers and the genders in Byzantium are concerned. Individual, face-to-face, mixed, purely male and purely female dances are observed. This seems to depend on the occasion (the type of celebration), and the place. If we examine it closely and isolate the dances performed in sacred places (churches and temples), we can observe that women dominate and have a leading role in all these dances. On the contrary, men have the leading

role in dances, concerning the male professions of the time (warriors/soldiers, sailors, butchers). During other celebrations and festivals the participation of the two genders seems equal as they dance together. Concerning the subject of the research though, that is to say the female dances of the Byzantine period, we observe that women used to dance individual, face-to-face and circle dances (mainly in churches and temples) making their presence felt in the dance events of the time.

The dancers at Sergiani

The custom, and by extension the dances of Sergiani, is clearly dominated by women (Bazianas, 1997; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Dimopoulos, Tyrovola, & Koutsouba 2017a, 2017b; Kolonas, 2014; Magouliotis, 2010; Roussiakis, 2006; Tziamourtas, 2003, 2006). This claim is being confirmed by secondary sources as well, and by data, meaning the informants' words, which were collected after long ethnographic field research. Women danced strictly and orderly organized and during specific songs, without being accompanied by musical instruments, only by the song, which was antiphonal, sung by the first dancers at first, and then the rest of the dancers repeated it. The elder women would go first, as stated above, and then the younger women would follow (Dimopoulos, 2017).

The Carnival Sergiani data will be cited first. As the written sources mention “during that time which started on Epiphany Day and ended on Carnival Sunday, women gathered and danced at their neighborhood along with their neighbors and sang songs without musical accompaniment” (Dimopoulos, 2011:150-151). In particular, Tziamourtas (2006) mentions:

at all these villages of the Karagounides women gathered in an open place held hand in hand (around 20 women danced slowly wiggling and sang using their mouth. Some men were taking a walk, and others stayed there and enjoyed the performance. Little children were playing carefree. This is where men used to choose the women they wanted to marry. Sergiani was taking place on Epiphany Day, during the Carnival, at Easter. (pp. 412)

Furthermore, Tziamourtas (2003) claims that during the Carnival “in the afternoon at Sergiani...women used to dance and sing” (pp. 259). Magouliotis (2010), since dealing with the Carnival Sergiani of the municipality of Agnantero in Karditsa region, states the following:

Lastly, early in the evening most of them used to go to the water fountain in the public square of the village, to have fun, to watch, to take pride in each other and listen to the women's songs, to which they would dance the long-established dances. The same songs were heard on Saturday nights as well in neighborhoods, during the full moon and fair weather. These events used to take place almost every Sunday, holiday and Saturday night until the Carnival. (pp. 106)

Lastly, Bazianas (1997) insists that “Karagounes” women – and women only – set the dance, accompanied by vocal song (never by musical instruments). [...] Men did not take part in Sergiani; they were only spectators” (pp. 285). The aforementioned confirm the informants' words from the

field research. The informants highlight the female participation in Sergiani. As P.K. (2016) mentions, “men didn’t dance during the Carnival [...] women danced to our songs”, and M.G. (2016) adds: “no men [...] during Easter and Carnival no men danced at the square” and V.C. (2016) mentions that “men didn’t use to go out and dance; only women did sing and dance”.

E.G. (A) (2019) mentions that “we were five, six, seven women and we were dancing here” and M.O. mentions that “all the elder women held on each other [...] all together” and “on the street, we all gathered and danced”, as S.V. (2019) says and F.P. (2018) mentions “we went out at night and danced”. S.P. (2020) mentions that “us girls went out and sang [...] danced and sang too [...] changed in their formal clothes and went at the square and danced”. R.F. (2021) states that “when the Service ended all the residents of the villages daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law, everyone danced” and that “when there was a celebration, us the girls of every neighborhood went out and sang all the songs” and regarding the antiphony she mentions that “there were a lot of women, half stood there, started it, the elder women who were the mothers-in-law, and on the other line, over there, because they were many, the first began and the rest again, repeated the same, until it was over, and then began another song”.

Data of Easter Sergiani follow. Kolonas (2014) mentions that Easter “that day included the Service and after that the “Sergiani”, where women were singing and dancing the Easter songs” (pp. 48). Tziamourtas (2003), referring to Easter Sergiani, points out that the Vespers of Love took place at the church:

after it had finished everyone went to watch the Easter dances at Sergiani, where the Karagounes danced happy songs. On Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday Easter Service took place again with the breaking of the eggs and dances at the dance halls. (pp. 271)

Magouliotis (2010), regarding the Easter Sergiani in Agnantero of Karditsa region, mentions that:

on the second day of Easter, after the priest’s exit in the loggia of the church, and the exchange of wishes, middle aged women, newlywed women and single women started dancing almost in front of the entrance of the temple and kept singing and dancing until they reached “the Argastiri”. This was happening circa 1910. In the next years they danced at the Square, after gathering there. (pp. 161)

Dimopoulos (2011), referring to Easter Sergiani of the municipalities of Krania, Rizovouni and Magoula in Karditsa region, points out that “during Easter women residents of the rural municipalities seemed to dominate public, social and collective practices” (pp. 157). In particular, he claims that

in rural municipalities during Easter people dance for three days, on Easter Sunday, on Easter Monday and on Easter Tuesday. On Sunday people only dance in the afternoon, whereas on the other two days people dance in the morning and in the afternoon. It is ascertained that during Easter dance performances women were leading both in ritual performances and in public dance practices, carrying out specific roles, whereas men follow. (pp. 156)

He also writes (2017) about the Easter Sergiani of the municipality of Megala Kalyvia, that “the performance of Easter Sergiani and the dances which accompany it is dominated by women. Women dance without the accompaniment of musical instruments; they only use their voice” (pp. 152).

In addition, Roussiakis (2006), regarding the Easter Sergiani of the municipality of Megala Kalyvia, mentions that:

Easter female dances took place during the three days of Easter, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. On Easter Sunday [...] people headed for the church at the square. Women were dancing and singing the Easter songs there without the accompaniment of musical instruments. (pp. 515)

The aforementioned are confirmed by the residents’ words. For example, E.M. (2010) mentions that “*when all the women sang for the dance to begin, only women danced there*” and A.K. (2010) from the municipality of Krania says, that “*at Easter we went out again, us women in the afternoon, the bell rang at two to three ‘o clock, we went out, danced after the Service, on the first day, wearing the good jewelries, all the Karagounes*”. Z.T. (2015) claims that women “*went to church in the morning, finished, the people who were there, danced there, and later in the afternoon they went out at the square, danced*”. M.O. (2018) mentions that “*you could see women on Sunday, my dear Kostas, all the engaged young women [...] holding each other ready to dance*”.

The leading role of the females, either in Carnival, or in Easter Sergiani is ascertained from the above mentioned (Image 5). As far as their number is concerned, it is ascertained from the interviews and the ethnographic data that Sergiani was public, meaning that all women (from a certain age) participated in Sergiani. During the dance procedure of Sergiani men were limited to the role of the spectator and therefore their role was passive and secondary.

In the following table (Table 3) the characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of dance are shortly presented in the second category, that of the dancers:



Image 5: *Sergiani in the municipality of Megalochori in Trikala region: Purely public female participation*

(Source: Varvara Tzeli’s archive)

Table 3: The characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of dancers:

Dancers	Female Byzantine dancers	Sergiani
Number and gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female participation in sacred places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purely public female participation.
Leading or secondary role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women have a leading role in sacred places. Equal or secondary role in other social events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women have a leading role. Men were limited in a passive, secondary role.
Dance arrangement of genders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity. Although one can observe only women in a dance arrangement in some cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only women

Visual environment

Regarding this category, we refer to the place of performance, whether it was performed in a closed or an open place, the costumes or the objects and the simultaneous occurrence of all the above mentioned (Tyrovola, 2001).

Visual environment in female Byzantine dances

As stated in the category of movement as well, the place of performance of the purely female Byzantine dances is apart from the palace, the Hippodrome, the theatres, the wedding ceremonies, the festivals, and various places of entertainment (Voutsas, 2004; Touliatos-Miles, 2004), the churches, dancing even on the inside of them. For instance, “folk sacred dances were performed by the Christians at the courtyard of the churches and even inside the temples” (Voutsas, 2004:48) and “during the commemoration of martyrs and saints, the Christians were dancing mainly around the temples” (Voutsas, 2004:47). Furthermore, “information on dances at the courtyard of the churches exists on several texts including texts by foreign travelers” (pp. 47). Blagojević (2012) agrees on that stating that “dancing in church is mentioned in sources in 10th century” (pp. 90). She continues (2012) by mentioning that “church dancing later appears in the ethnographic notes in 19th century” (p. 90) and that back then it was a general rule that “people all over Europe in the Middle Ages danced in churches and everywhere near them” (p. 90). In addition, Touliatos-Miles (2004) mentions that in order to dance “women [...] were standing right outside the church” (pp. 32). Tsekoura (2004) states that “dirges were heard from the narthex of Byzantine temples [...] – accompanied by intense dance movements” (pp. 7). Therefore, “the example of circle dance [...] in the narthex of the church during the Byzantine years” (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:34) seems to be quite common. Based on the above women of the Byzantine period dance in indoor and in outdoor places, in secular and sacred places.

There was great diversity in female costumes. Their common characteristic though which can be observed in the descriptions, and the depictions is that they had their head covered with a headscarf “all wearing white headscarves and long, traditional dresses” (Voutsas, 2004:47). Almost no part of their body was visible, and their costumes (Image 6) “reveal only their elbows” (Parcharidou-Anagnostou, 2004:55-56).



Image 6: Female dancers wearing long dresses and headscarves

(Source: Parcharidou-Anagnostou, 2004:56)

In particular,

there are many cases in which the female dancers are represented wearing a head cover – as in the works of art of painters or in certain sites of Mani, while their costumes, without exception, reveal only their elbows. (Parcharidou-Anagnostou, 2004:55-56)

According to Koukoules (1938),

Modest women were wearing long dresses, a cover over their head and they had to be careful because as they danced their hair should not fly, they should not drag their tunics, undress or expose their faces [...], whereas in earlier years female dancers used to wear light blue tunics which were held at chest height by a belt, which created many folds. (pp. 251)

and,

A distinctive feature of the male and female dancers is that they used to wear long sleeves below the elbow, which could be folded upwards, and sometimes could be a part of the veil which fluttered in a circle over their head. (Koukoules, 1938:251)

and lastly,

a modest woman during the Byzantine years had to cover her head, and a part of the face, and also the arms and the chest-how could it be possible for the strict ones to put up with this dance, during which the women dancing and feeling inflamed uncovered their heads, exposed their breast and made intense movements that modesty forbids? (Koukoules, 1938:220)

Furthermore, one could observe female Byzantine dancers “...*holding handkerchiefs...*” (Koukoules, 1938:234) when they were holding each other, apart from using the handholds presented earlier. It could be possible to hold objects too, such as “handkerchiefs” (Antzaka-Vei, 2004:76; Koukoules, 1938:239), “ringing crotali” (Antzaka-Vei, 2004:76; Koukoules, 1938:247; Moutzali, 2004; Touliatos-Miles, 2004:34), “cymbals” (Koukoules, 1932:255) and “drums” (Koukoules, 1938:255).

Visual environment in Sergiani

As stated earlier in the movement category, the place of performance of Sergiani was either the square of each municipality, or the church courtyard, both for the Carnival and the Easter Sergiani. This is also ascertained by the secondary sources and the informants’ words as well.

Therefore, the secondary sources concerning the Carnival Sergiani claim that “as the Karagounides were coming out of the church wearing their finest clothes [...] they started singing and setting the dance at the church courtyard and the whole village was humming” (Kolonas, 2014:45). From the informants’ report, as result of multi-year ethnographic fieldwork, the above mentioned statement is confirmed. More specifically, S.G. (2016) mentions that “*every Sunday we danced; we were coming out of the church in the morning, dancing over there and at the square in the afternoon*” and according to P.K. (2016) “*on Epiphany day at the church in the morning and at the square in the afternoon only women*”.

Similar was the case during Easter, when “the day included the Divine Service and afterwards the “Sergiani”, where women were singing and dancing the Easter songs” (Kolonas, 2014: 48). Magouliotis (2010), regarding the Easter Sergiani in Agnantero in Karditsa region, mentions that

on the second day of Easter, after the priest’s exit of the church, and the exchange of wishes, middle aged women, newlywed women and single women started dancing almost in front of the entrance of the temple and kept singing and dancing until they reached “the Argastiri”. This was happening circa 1910. In the next years they danced at the Square, after gathering there. (pp. 161)

This statement confirms the informants’ words. S.G. (2016) says “*over there at the church in the morning and at the square in the afternoon. And again, on the second day. Three days of dance*”. Z.T. (2015) mentions that “*they used to go to the church in the morning, they finished, all the people there were dancing*”, and E.G. (K) (2015) adds “*in front of the church*”. T.R. (2010) from Rizovouni municipality says that they were dancing “*in front of the church, in front of the church on the right*”.



Image 7: *Easter Sergiani in the courtyard of Saint Nicholas church in the municipality of Megala Kalyvia of Trikala region in 2019 (revival of Sergiani by the local cultural association)*

(Source: Konstantinos Dimopoulos's personal archive)

Women used to wear a headscarf in the traditional form and a traditional costume (Image 8) of Karagouna in the formal form. There was a distinctive dress code for each age. The women who participated in the custom mention being dressed in a beautiful and formal way. For instance, A.K. (2010) from the municipality of Krania says, that “wearing the good jewelries, all the Karagounes”. E.G. (A) (2019) mentions that “we went out on Sundays dressed in the clothes of a Karagouna² wearing *saiadia*³, handkerchiefs with threads, and *fountes*⁴ in the ending, a total Karagouna”.

Women could have a handkerchief in Sergiani, which was either hanging from the belt, or it was used to hold each other.

² . With this term we refer to the formal, festive costume of a Karagouna.

³ . Saiadia: A specific part of the formal dress of a Karagouna.

⁴ . Fountes: A specific part of the formal dress of a Karagouna.



Image 8: *Sergiani in the municipality of Magoula in 1936*

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=179030116307826&set=gm.1139421626206520>)

In the following table (Table 4) the characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of dance are shortly presented in the second category, that of the dancers:

Table 4: The characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of the visual environment:

Visual environment	Female Byzantine dances	Sergiani
Place of performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palace, Hippodrome, theatres, wedding ceremonies, festivals, various places of entertainment churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Square churches
Costumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional dresses Long dresses Headscarves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional dresses (Karagouna costume) Long dresses Headscarves
Objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handkerchiefs Crotali Cymbals Drums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handkerchiefs

Acoustic component elements

Regarding this category, we refer to the sound produced during the performance which can come from the singing or the musical instruments. Therefore sound, music, musical instruments and the simultaneous occurrence of all the above are parts of this category (Tyrovola, 2001).

Acoustic component elements in female Byzantine dances

In recreational dances of the Byzantium women used to dance accompanied by music and the clap of hands, as “the presence of dancers and musicians in the Byzantium was common” (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:31). Touliatos-Miles (2004) indicates that “it was well-known that the taverns of larger cities had recreational events with wind and percussion instruments and men and women danced to the music and clapped their hands rhythmically” (pp. 35) and Koukoules (1938) claims that “they swirl to the melody” (pp. 249). Blagojević (2012) suggest that “two groups of young girls holding hands and dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments” (pp. 89). Voutsas (2004) mentions that “they are all wearing white headscarves, traditional dresses and they are looking up. In the middle of the circle two musicians playing the davul and the multi-stringed psaltery, the zither according to the classification of musical instruments [...], are accompanying their dance. (pp. 47), and that “they are watching the open dance of young women who dance gracefully (in a smaller depiction), forming two groups, accompanied by various musical instruments including the two multi-pipe instruments placed in the Hippodrome” (pp. 45).

However, in “sacred” places, such as the churches, or in occasions when the celebration of Saints or the Lord took place, it seems that there is absence of musical instruments, and women seem to dance and sing at the same time. There were occasions in which there were musical instruments, such as “the multi-pipe instrument” – “the pipe organ”, as we know it today (Tsekoura, 2004:7) existing in “church-religious music” (Tsekoura, 2004:7).

It is observed from the sources that “women singing, let us sing to the Lord” (Voutsas, 2004:47).

Moreover,

women (during the singing of dirges) were held by their hands, as in ancient circle dances, and their bodies were moving giving the impression of dance [...] standing right outside the church and singing dirges or forming a circle, like a circle dance, and singing dirges, in the narthex of the temple. (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:32)

Tsekoura (2004), also refers to the singing of dirges by adding that “dirges were heard from the narthex of Byzantine temples [...] – accompanied by intense dance movements” (pp. 7).

It should be highlighted that there was antiphony in dirges. In particular

the dirges sung by women were usually in the form of standard couplets but they could also be formed depending on the occasion. It is a well-known fact that the dirges, the mourning songs, were performed in various ways: directly by a soloist or by a choir· in the form of a dialogue, where the soloist sings the dirge and the choir responds· in the form of antiphony where the mourning is performed by two groups or choirs. (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:32)

Over time “the dirges were integrated in Christian ritual” (Touliatos-Miles, 2004:32) and Touliatos-Miles (2004) concludes that “the dirges along with the dance movements in the narthex provide an example of Byzantine dance in sacred places” (pp. 32)

Acoustic component elements in Sergiani

Women in Sergiani danced without the accompaniment of musical instruments. Their dance was accompanied by antiphonal singing. This is ascertained by secondary sources, and by data collected from field research. Bazianas (1997) mentions that “Karagounes’ women – and women only – set the dance, accompanied by vocal song (never by musical instruments)” (pp. 285). Dimopoulos (2017) mentions that “the singing was antiphonal sung at first by the first half of dancers in the circle (who were more experienced), and then the other half of the dancers repeated it (pp. 146), and that “during Sergiani women used to dance without the accompaniment of musical instruments, only with the accompaniment of their own voices and the singing was antiphonal” (pp. 148).

The above mentioned is ascertained by the informants’ words. V.K. (2016) mentions that “*the first group was singing, the second group was singing [...] They were singing twice, at first the first, the elder women ahead and the younger behind*” and S.G. (2016) adds that “*our song was repeated by the second group of women*”. M.O. (2018) mentions that those who were singing first were “*the elder women, and after them the younger women were singing, in turn, starting from here first*”. A.G. (2019) indicates that they were singing (2019) “*divided into two groups*”.

Last but not least, it should be highlighted that antiphonal songs in Sergiani performances resembled the dirges. Apart from this specific style and performance of antiphonal songs, it is important to state that even the song titles and the lyrics referred to dirges. For instance, there are songs like “*Tria aderfakia kremasan*” (“*Three little brothers were hung*”) (community of Sofades), “*Sikoth’kan tria sinnefa*” (“*Three clouds risen*”) (community of Krania), “*Grammatikos varethike*” (“*An educated man was killed*”) (communities of Magoula and Lazarina), “*Mana gia de me xairesai*” (“*Mother why aren’t you happy for me*”) (community of Agnantero), “*Chimonas and Fthinoporo*” (“*Winter and fall*”) (community of Megala Kalyvia).

In the following table (Table 5) the characteristics (and the similarities) of the components of dance are shortly presented in the second category, that of the dancers:

Table 5: The characteristic (and the similarities) of components of acoustic component elements:

Acoustic elements	Female Byzantine dances	Sergiani
Sound, speech, music, musical instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the accompaniment of musical instruments (some were even called church instruments) • Song performed by women without the accompaniment of musical instruments • Antiphony when there was singing without the accompaniment of musical instruments • Antiphonal dirge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total absence of musical instruments. • Only singing performed by women without the accompaniment of musical instruments. • Antiphonal singing • Style, song titles and lyrics refer to dirges.

Easter period

Another common element – apart from all the above – would be to find out if the female Byzantine dances and the Sergiani dances are performed in the same time period. The Easter period seems to be common to both cases.

Easter period in female Byzantine dances

It was ascertained that the Byzantine people used to dance during all year. What happens during Easter, though? It is observed from the sources that many dance performances take place during this particular period of time and women seem to dominate these performances. For instance, Voutsas (2004) claims that

during Christmas and Easter celebrations and during the commemoration of martyrs and saints the Christians were dancing mainly around the temples [...] at Pringiponisia during the Second Resurrection girls were dancing inside the narthex accompanied by flutes and drums (pp. 47)

Furthermore, Koukoules (1938) mentions that women “dance during Easter” (pp. 248) and that “dances took place during Easter, based on female witnesses” (pp. 227).

Easter period in Sergiani

As stated earlier, the custom of Sergiani takes place at Easter as well (Bazianas, 1997; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Dimopoulos, et al. 2017a, 2017b; Kolonas, 2014; Magouliotis, 2010; Roussiakis, 2006; Tziamourtas, 2003, 2006). Magouliotis (2010), regarding the Easter Sergiani in Agnantero in Karditsa region, mentions that “on the second day of Easter, after the priest’s exit in the loggia of the church, and the exchange of wishes, middle aged women, newlywed women and single women started dancing

(pp. 161)”. Tziamourtas (2006) mentions that “Sergiani was taking place on Epiphany day, during the Carnival, at Easter” (pp. 412).

Conclusion

The categories of the components of both the female Byzantine dances and the dances of Sergiani custom were thoroughly analyzed above in order to ascertain whether and to what extent there are similarities and some kind of historical continuation between the two. Therefore, the categories of movement, dancers, visual environment and acoustic component elements were examined separately and a comparison followed in the tables, in order to ascertain whether and to what extent there are common elements between these two categories of dance.

In the category of movement, it was ascertained that both in female Byzantine dances, and in the dances of Sergiani custom circle dances in the form of either a semicircle or a closed circle are performed. Secondly, in both cases, the dances are performed in the courtyard of the church. Thirdly, one of the dance handholds observed in both cases is the arm-in-arm handhold. Fourthly, the dances in both cases are slow, modest, ritual, without intense dynamic.

In the category of dancers, it was ascertained that in sacred places (churches and sacred temples) where Sergiani was taking place, there is purely female participation in both examples. Moreover, the leading role of women emerges in these sacred places – in both cases –, since women were the ones who were mainly dancing. The word mainly mentioned before refers to the case of female Byzantine dances as it is ascertained that there is the possibility to observe a dance arrangement of only women dancing inside the diversity, whereas in Sergiani there was no diversity in the dance arrangement, only absolute female participation.

In the category of visual environment, it was ascertained that in the case of female Byzantine dances the places of performance vary. Nevertheless, one of the places of performance is the church. This is similar to the female dances of the Sergiani custom. One of the two places that Sergiani dances take place is the church courtyard. Regarding the category of costumes, it was ascertained in both cases that they wear long, “traditional” dresses and headscarves. Furthermore, it was ascertained that they could – it was not obligatory – hold a handkerchief (in both cases) or even tie it to their belts (Sergiani).

In the category of acoustic component elements, it was ascertained that in the case of female Byzantine dances there are musical instruments which accompany their dances. Nevertheless, there are dances, which are performed without the accompaniment of musical instruments. The aforementioned fact is the norm in the Sergiani custom, since there are no musical instruments throughout its performance. Moreover, during the ancient Byzantine years dance was accompanied by singing which was antiphonal in certain cases. In Sergiani custom the norm was the same, since dances were exclusively accompanied by the women’s song, which was antiphonal as well. What is more, during the Byzantine period in sacred places (churches) women used to sing dirges in an antiphonal way and dance.

Something similar to that is observed in Sergiani, since the titles, the lyrics and the way the songs which accompany the dance in Sergiani are performed resemble dirges.

Furthermore, in both cases the dances that are performed around the sacred places (churches and temples) take place at Easter time and women seem to have a leading role.

Taking into consideration the above citation and analysis of the categories of the components concerning the female Byzantine dances on the one hand, and the dances of the Sergiani custom in rural Thessaly (in the population ethnic group of Karagounides) on the other hand it was ascertained that there are a lot of common features between them. In all the categories there are a lot of common elements and characteristics. The above citation of both the ethnographic and the component elements of the dances researched are shortly presented in the following table (Table 6).

Table 6: Summary table of the common features between the female Byzantine dances and the dances of Sergiani custom based on the component elements of dance

Component elements of dance	Female Byzantine dances	Sergiani
Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly circle dances either in a closed or an open circle • Churches as place of performance • One of the prevailing handholds is the wrist handhold, but arm in arm, with no distance among them. • Slow, calm and modest dances, without intense dynamic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly circle dances either in a closed or an open circle • Churches as place of performance • One of the prevailing handholds is the wrist handhold, but arm in arm, with no distance among them. • Slow, calm and modest dances, without intense dynamic
Dancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female participation in sacred places • Leading role of women in sacred places • Only women observed in the dance arrangement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purely female participation • Leading role of women in sacred places • Only women in the dance arrangement
Visual environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches as places of performance • They wear long traditional dresses and headscarves • They may hold handkerchiefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches as places of performance • They wear long traditional dresses and headscarves • They may hold handkerchiefs

Acoustic component elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be a song performed by women without the accompaniment of musical instruments • One of the cases was the phenomenon of antiphony • Antiphonal dirges in churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing performed exclusively by women without the accompaniment of musical instruments • Antiphonal song • Titles, lyrics and way of performance of the songs refer to dirges
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Based on the above summary table, and if we consider the Easter period parameter, during which both female Byzantine dances, and Sergiani dances are performed, it is concluded that there are a lot of similarities and common features in all the categories of the components of dance. However, are Sergiani dances the same or the continuation of the female Byzantine dances? This question cannot be answered accurately, since, even though we are aware of the form of the Sergiani dances, unfortunately we do not exactly know the form of female – and in general – of the dances during the Byzantine period, since there was no notation or scientific documentation of dances.

What can be certainly concluded is the common way of dancing which is observed in both cases. It is ascertained that woman in the Byzantium used to dance in the same way as women in the custom of Sergiani danced. The component elements provide us with the framework, the way, and lead us to the conclusion that the way is at least common, if not the same, in both cases. As Touliatos-Miles (2004) correctly points out “Byzantine dances are important because they provide an ethnomusicological evolution of the transition from antiquity to contemporary Greek folk dances, where elements and traditions of these dances were bequeathed throughout the centuries” (pp. 36). It can be added, according to the above cited elements as well, that the Byzantine dances can provide us with an ethnochoreological evolution.

Are Sergiani dances female Byzantine dances? This question cannot be answered with certainty. What can be answered with absolute certainty is that the way of dancing between these two cases is common, and maybe Sergiani dances constitute an evolution, a continuation of the female Byzantine dances.

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