

*The dance Serra as a means of expressing the folk culture and identity of the Pontians of the provinces of Kozani and Kavala, originating from the area of Matsoukas of Trebizond*

***Abstract***

This PhD dissertation proposal is part of the wider context of the Social Folklore of Dance. It is a study that will focus its research interest on the ethnological group of Pontians and more specifically on the Pontian dance of Serra as it is danced in the villages of the provinces of Kozani and Kavala from the Pontians who came from the Matsouka region of Trebizond. The dance approach will focus on recording, analyzing and interpreting the cultural, socio-political and educational dimensions of the Serra dance as they express and transfer the identity of the Pontians from one generation to the next.

The purpose of this particular proposal is to study in depth the Pontian dance of Serra within the space-time axis, both in its historical evolution and today's synchronism. More specifically, the aim of the research is to describe and record the forms of Serra dance in the villages of the provinces of Kozani and Kavala with their inhabitants having common place of origin the area of Matsoukas of Trebizond and then their comparison in order for the common elements and the transformations of these forms throughout time to emerge. The deeper objective is to study what this dance means to the people themselves and how it is expressed – and becomes integrated in their popular culture. Therefore, the present proposal aims to explore the ways in which, through the dance of Serra, the Pontians construct their individual and collective identity, how they handle it and how they pass it on to the next generations. An additional aim is to study this particular dance in terms of politics and possibly its therapeutic dimension, since apart from being a symbol it is also a place of memory for many Pontians, and for some even a traumatic one. Finally, the educational dimension of dance transfer from the perspective of informal and formal learning through the analysis and interpretation of participatory educational techniques will be studied.

To achieve these goals, methodology is an important factor. As regards the collection and processing of data, ethnographic research of dance will be implemented through field research. At the data collection stage an on-the-spot investigation will be carried out in the villages of Alonakia and Protohori Kozani, Kechrokampos and Hortokopi Kavala, and in case the conditions permit, an on-the-spot investigation will be carried out in the area of Matsoukas Pontos, the place of origin of the people who are studied. In this way, information about the initial development environment of the dance forms, will emerge as well as the activity of the subjects after their removal from their original cradle and the interaction of the site and the actors in the formation of the later forms, information important for the analysis of the data. During the on-site survey the material will be collected with participatory observation, interviews (structured and semi-structured) and questionnaires.

The archival material of the Pontian Studies Committee and the manuscripts of the Folklore Museum and Archives of the Department of Philology of the University of Athens will

also be used to collect further data, both bibliographic and archival. Still, information will be sought in diplomatic papers and doctoral theses related to the subject. In addition, publications in scientific journals and presentations at conferences based on the results of primary publications will be studied. Finally, information will be sought on web sites.

The recording of Serra dance data will be carried out with the Labanotation notation system. For the qualitative analysis and comparison of the ethnographic data of the dance, the structural-morphological and typological approach of dance and the comparative method will be used, while for the quantitative analysis statistic analysis program SPSS. The processing of quality data will become possible through the approaches of folklore, and its interdisciplinary cooperation with anthropology, psychology, history, oral history and choreology. More specifically, the use of thematic content analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis, biographical and narrative analysis will assist in the interpretation of the data of the research at an interpersonal, intercollective, ideological as well as family, political, socio-economic level. The socio-historical analysis in turn, through the homonymous method, will highlight the social components and historical conditions that have influenced the transformation of the Serra. For the writing of the thesis, Geertz's "dense description" will be used, according to which there will be a detailed report of the data and the reader will be able to experience emotionally and mentally what is described.

**Word keys:** identity, symbol, dance, transfer, memory, trauma, immaterial cultural heritage, place, dance practice of body.