

Tradition and Fakelore: A Case Study in Greek Traditional Dance

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ABSTRACT

The ethnographic context of this paper is the community of Pentalofos in the region of Thrace in Greece. In the community of Pentalofos, the dance is being experienced and revived by the same people, who actively participate both in the public dance of the community festival and in revivals of customary circumstances on stage. Therefore, in this community, the coexistence of dance is observed in its primary environment and its transfer to the dance scene by the same people, who are both members of the community and members of the cultural club. In other words, the simultaneous “first” and “second existence” of dance is observed. This paper aims to compare the traditional and the folkloric dance in Pentalofos of Evros, to determine whether they are identical or different, through the example of the dance ‘Babisios’. The collection of ethnographic data was based on the ethnographic method. Laban's notation system was used to record the choreographic compositions of Babisios 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, although the traditional and fakelore form of Babisios dance is performed by the same people, who are both members of the community and members of the cultural association and often even happen to dance in the same place with both their qualities, show several differences. These differences reflect the dance expression of the same people in a specific context and at a given time. Thus, Babisios dance in its “first” existence includes a simple form, being an integral part of the life of the inhabitants of Pentalofos, while in its “second” existence the dance follows the rules of stage presentation, aiming to impress the audience, constituting a choreographic creation.

Keywords: Folkloric Dance, “First Existence” of Dance, “Second Existence” of Dance, Structural-Morphological Method, Traditional Dance, Typological Method.

Published Online: July 18, 2022

ISSN: 2736-5522

DOI: 10.24018/ejsocial.2022.2.4.291

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I. INTRODUCTION

The ethnographic context of this paper is the region of Thrace in Greece. Of particular interest in this region is the area of the Trigonon (Triangle), in its northwestern part, where a wide variety of rhythms and dance forms is observed, as the geographical location of the area makes it a crossroads between Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey (Filippidou *et al.*, 2008). The community of Pentalofos is also located in this area.

Pentalofos is inhabited by purely local residents, who claim that they originate from Constantinople (Istanbul). In 1960 it had about 1,850 residents and was a prosperous community. However, from then until 1970, a wave of migration began, which turned into a mass exodus, as a large part of the population of the Pentalofos community migrated to countries mainly in Europe, as well as to other continents. At the same time, since 1980 the remaining population has been accumulating in the large cities of the region of Thrace, with the result that today it finally has about 500 permanent residents (population census 2011, in 2022 the population has decreased even more, without yet there are statistics for this decrease), with an average age of 70 years.

With this significant reduction of the population, it is logical that in this community the dancing circumstances have been reduced and today their revival and rebirth prevails, which is carried out by the Pentalofos Women's Club. This club presents on stage the dances and customs of Pentalofos after the dance rehearsals take place in its hall.

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 popular tradition (Filippidou & Gialiti, 2022). In other words, the phenomenon of “folklorismus” refers to dance in the context of a spectacle, that is, to dance, as performed on stage. This is the meaning of the “second existence” of Hoerburger 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, there is a systematic and “deliberate” teaching of traditional dance by an expert, dance teacher. Therefore, the “second existence” of traditional dance refers to its conscious revival, in contrast to its “first existence”, which refers to its unconscious experience (Hoerburger, 1968). So, in the first case, we are talking about traditional dance, and in the second case about fakelore or folkloric dance.

In the community of Pentalofos, the dance is being experienced and revived by the same people, who actively participate both in the public dance of the community festival and in revivals of customary circumstances on stage. Therefore, in this community, the coexistence of dance is observed in its primary environment and its transfer to the dance scene by the same people, who are both members of the community and members of the cultural club. In other words, the simultaneous “first” and “second existence” of dance is observed (Filippidou *et al.*, 2008).

So, since the same people transfer the dance from the “folk dance hall” to the stage, is the traditional dance in Pentalofos identified with the folk dance? Since the same people dance in the “folk dance hall” and on stage, the dance, logically, should be transferred as it is on stage. But, to what extent can the “first existence” of dance be consistent with its “second existence”? In other words, to what extent is it possible to transfer the elements of the dance from the “folk dance hall”, that is, from each, dance occasion of the community, to the hall of the cultural club and consequently to the stage in the form of a dance performance? These questions shape the aim of this paper.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to compare the traditional and the folkloric dance in Pentalofos of Evros, in order to determine whether they are identical or different, through the example of the dance ‘Babisios’. From the dance repertoire of Pentalofos, it was chosen, in order to achieve the aim of the paper, to study the Babisios dance. This dance was chosen, as it is considered by the informants to be the most important dance (Filippidou, 2018) of their dance repertoire and which is danced both in the social events of the community (weddings, festivals), as well as in performances on stage. More specifically, the Babisios dance is a customary dance, which is danced at the wedding event of K’na (Filippidou, 2018) for its ratification (Filippidou, 2010). With this dance, all the guests and especially the women start to dance the “K’na” (a plate on which three candles are lit) (Filippidou *et al.*, 2013). According to the informants, the dance is always started by the oldest woman who was at that time in each house, hence the name “Babisios” (bamboo = old woman) (Filippidou *et al.*, 2013). In order for someone to come forward and ‘drag’ the dance, they have to deposit money in the “K’na” and kiss the hand of the first dancer who owned it until that moment. Until the 1960s, Babisios dance was an expanded form of the dance “sta tria” (in three). From the 1970s onwards, the dance form of Babisios changed and followed the dance form of the homogenized Pan-Thracian repertoire (Filippidou, 2011; 2018).

II. METHODOLOGY

The collection of ethnographic data was based on the ethnographic method, as it is used in the science of dance (Buckland, 1999) and is conducted in the context of a “native anthropology” of dance (Buckland, 1999; Felföldi, 1999; Giurchescu, 1999; Koutsouba, 1991, 1997; Loutzaki, 1989; Sklar, 1991). 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 2006 to 2008 and 2019-2020 in the community of Pentalofos in Evros prefecture in Greece: 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). 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 Babisios 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 Babisios in Pentalofos, the comparative method was used (Ogurtsof, 1983), which in terms of dance form was based on the two basic structural forms of Greek traditional dance at the level of dance phrase and specifically those of the dance “sta tria” and the dance “sta dyo” (Tyrovola & Koutsouba, 2006; Karfis, 2018).

III. DATA ANALYSIS

In order to make the comparison of the “first” (traditional dance) and the “second” existence (folkloric dance) of the Babisios dance in Pentalofos of Evros, the choreographic compositions of the dance under study must first be recorded, their dance form coded and their constituent elements compared.

The analysis and processing of the data were shown that although the same people transfer the dance from the “folk dance hall” to the hall of the Women's Club of Pentalofos and then to the dance floor, not all the elements of the dance can be transferred as they are. By classifying and comparing the data collected, regarding the dance Babisios in Pentalofos, as it is danced by the residents of the community, but also as performed by the members of the cultural club, the following were found.

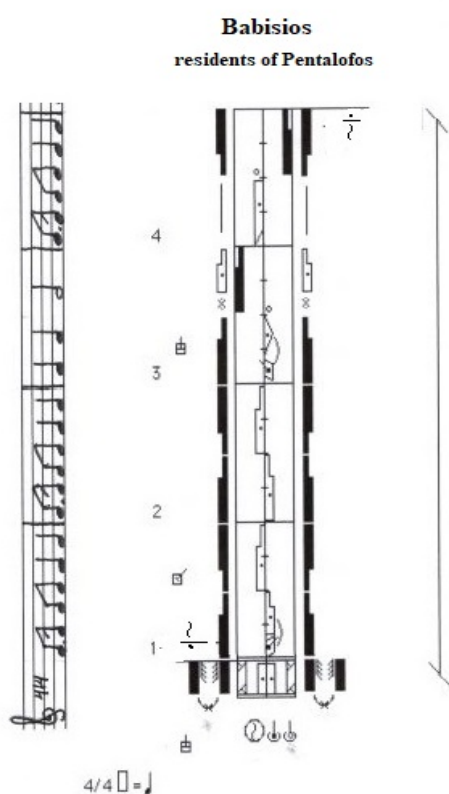


Fig. 1: Dance notation of Babisios dance, as it used to be danced by the inhabitants of Pentalofos.

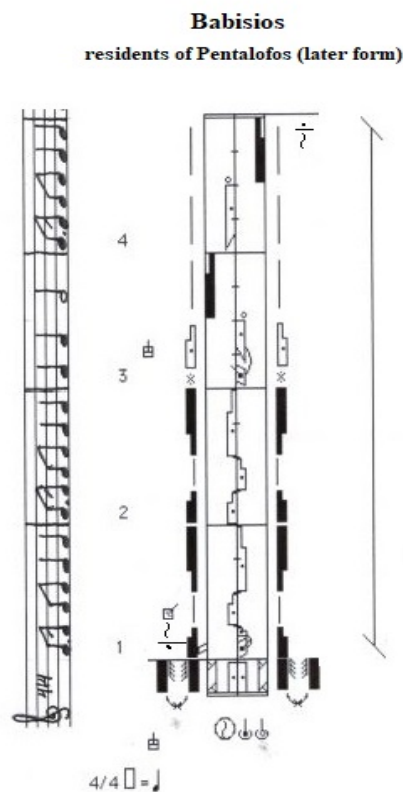


Fig. 2: Dance notation of the Babisios dance, as danced by the residents of Pentalofos today.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{A/O}\Phi, \text{F1}, 4/4(2+2) \\
 \sim 150, =, \text{MF/Pr}, \\
 \equiv / \text{I}\mu / \text{I}\rho, \text{O}, \text{M}, \text{A}\Gamma \\
 \text{Ox}, \text{A}\kappa. \curvearrowright
 \end{array}
 \left\{
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{MD.1} = \text{W1} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] + \text{M2} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] \\
 + \text{W3} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha^{2/4}] + \text{M4} [\alpha^{2/4} + (\alpha)\delta^{2/4}] \\
 \text{-----} \text{xn} \text{-----} \\
 \text{(unlimited repetition of the same dance phrase)}
 \end{array}
 \right.$$

Fig. 3: Enriched kinetic type of Babisios dance, as it used to be danced by the inhabitants of Pentalofos.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{AB/ev.}\Phi, \\
 \text{F1 \& F2}, 4/4(2+2) \\
 \sim 150, =, \text{MF/Pr}, \\
 \equiv / \text{I}\mu / \text{I}\rho, \text{O}, \text{M}, \text{A}\Gamma \\
 \text{Ox}, \text{A}\kappa. \curvearrowright
 \end{array}
 \left\{
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{MD.2} = \text{W1} [(\delta^{1/4} - \alpha > \delta^{1/4}) + \delta^{2/4}] + \text{M2} [(\alpha^{1/4} - \delta > \delta^{1/4}) + \alpha^{2/4}] \\
 + \text{W3} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha^{2/4}] + \text{W4} [\alpha^{2/4} + (\alpha)\delta^{2/4}] \\
 \text{-----} \text{xn} \text{-----} \\
 \text{(unlimited repetition of the same dance phrase)}
 \end{array}
 \right.$$

Fig. 4: Enriched kinetic type of Babisios dance, as danced today by the inhabitants of Pentalofos.

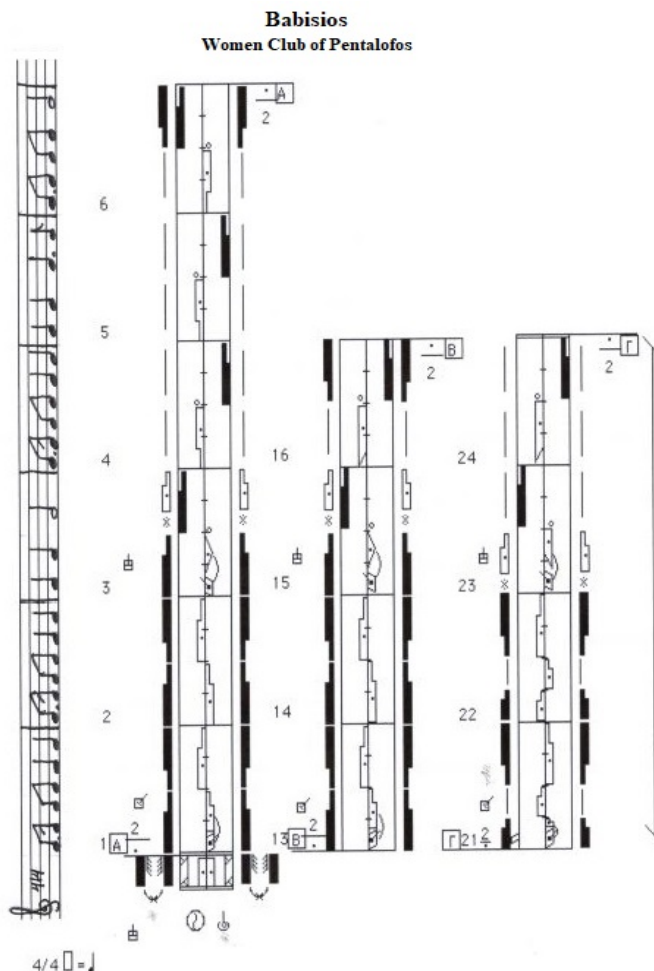


Fig. 5: Dance notation of Babisios dance, as being danced by the Pentalofos Women's Association.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{ABΓ/εv.Φ,} \\
 & \text{F1,F2 \& F3, 4/4(2+2)} \\
 & \sim 150, =, \text{MF/Pr,} \\
 & \equiv / \text{Iμ / Ip, } \cup, \text{M, } \Gamma \\
 & \text{Ox, Ak.} \quad \text{---}
 \end{aligned}
 \left\{
 \begin{aligned}
 & \text{MD.3}\alpha = \text{M1} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] + \text{M2} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] \\
 & + \text{W3} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha_4^{2/4}] + \text{W4} [\alpha_o^{2/4} + (\alpha_o)\delta_4^{2/4}] \\
 & + \text{W5} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha_4^{2/4}] + \text{W6} [\alpha_o^{2/4} + (\alpha_o)\delta_4^{2/4}] \\
 & \text{----- x2 -----} \\
 & \text{MD.3}\beta = \text{W1} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] + \text{M2} [\delta^{2/4} + \alpha^{2/4}] \\
 & + \text{W3} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha_4^{2/4}] + \text{M4} [\alpha_o^{2/4} + (\alpha_o)\delta_4^{2/4}] \\
 & \text{----- x2 -----} \\
 & \text{MD.3}\gamma = \text{M1}[(\delta^{1/4} - \alpha > \delta^{1/4}) + \delta^{2/4}] + \text{M2}[(\alpha^{1/4} - \delta > \delta^{1/4}) + \alpha^{2/4}] \\
 & + \text{W3} [\delta^{2/4} + (\delta)\alpha_4^{2/4}] + \text{W4} [\alpha_o^{2/4} + (\alpha_o)\delta_4^{2/4}] \\
 & \text{----- x2 -----} \\
 & [\{\text{MD3}\alpha x2\} + \{\text{MD3}\beta x2\}] + \{\text{MD3}\gamma x2\} \}.x
 \end{aligned}
 \right.$$

Fig. 6: Enriched kinetic type of Babisios dance, as danced by the Pentalofos Women's Club.

Many similarities were observed in the components of Babisios dance in its “first” and “second existence”. Similarities were observed in the musical measure, and the rhythmic organization, but also in terms of the handle, the use of space, and the intensity of the movements. But there were also many differences. More specifically, differences were found in the gender of the dancers, as Babisios on stage is danced only by women, in terms of musical accompaniment, since the dance on stage is accompanied only by song, but also in terms of choreography. This last parameter is the most important, as the Babisios dance on stage shows a different dance form and from a unilateral, it is transformed into a three-part alternating dance form, which incorporates the two different dance forms that appear in its “folk dance hall” of Pentalofos over time, and a third dance form, which not found in the community.

TABLE I: COMPARATIVE AND CONCISE TABLE OF THE COMPONENT ELEMENTS OF THE
DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BABISIOS DANCE

DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE DABSIOS DANCE			
Parameters	Community of Pentalofos		Women's Club of Pentalofos
Choreography	A basic dance phrase that is repeated	A basic dance phrase that is repeated	- Three basics dance phrasea which are repeated
Kinetic unit	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated	Basics dances phrases constantly repeated
Steps	Moderate with supports on the sole.	Moderate with supports on the sole.	Moderate with supports on the sole
Handle	M	M	M
Use of space	Circular shape, open circle with direction to the right.	Circular shape, open circle with direction to the right.	Circular shape, open circle with direction to the right.
	Group dance characterized by the participation of many people	Group dance characterized by the participation of many people	Group dance characterized by the participation of many people
Dancers' position and gender	Men, women shuffle.	Men, women shuffle.	Women
Rhythmic pattern	4/4	4/4	4/4
Rhythmic organization	Moderate and stable	Moderate and stable	Moderate and stable
Musical accompaniment	Music accompanied by a song	Music accompanied by a song	Song without music
Method of interpretation	Moderate movements	Moderate movements	Moderate movements
Dance form model	Unilateral dance form	Unilateral dance form	Bilateral dance form

Therefore, Babisios dance shows differences in the two performance environments, even though it is danced by the same people. And this is logical, as through the Women's Club of Pentalofos the dance act is cut off from the environment of its creation and is installed in the hall of the cultural club, as well as in closed or open fields, in squares of other communities, in schools and churches, in places recreation, in municipal and ancient theaters and elsewhere. In this case, the way of the performance of Babisios dance is determined by the requirements of the event, seeking some kind of aesthetic result, i.e. aiming at the production of a spectacle. This is probably the reason for the change in the dance form of Babisios on stage, to which two additional dance phrases were added, in order to make it more impressive.

Also, spontaneity is absent, since the dialectical relationship between musical organists and dancers is absent and is replaced by a similarly performed dance movement since the emphasis is on the dance itself cut off from any reference to its direct or indirect environment. Thus, the dance through the cultural club, being divided by its constituent elements, loses the character of creativity and improvisation and becomes a pre-planned process.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper dealt with issues of tradition and fakelore through the Babisios dance in the community of Pentalofos, Thrace in Greece. From the analysis of the data it was found that the dance in its "first" existence appears in two different forms, one later than the other. The first dance form was danced until the 1960s. In 1968, the dictatorship of the colonels prevailed in Greece. Like all oligarchic regimes, it also attempted to strengthen the national cohesion of Greece, based on the "same blood-same religion-same language-same morals" scheme (Filippidou, 2018). As Evros was a multicultural region (Filippidou, 2011), the dictatorship of the colonels created a homogenized dance repertoire, in order to eliminate the cultural peculiarities that existed in the region, so that all its ethnic groups are in line with it. The inhabitants of Pentalofos, like all the inhabitants of Evros, were forced to follow this "constructed" dance repertoire and so Babisios changed his dance form in the 1970s. After all, it is not uncommon for cultural goods, one of which is dance, to change over time, both in terms of structure and function, and to adapt to current social, economic, and political developments (Filippidou, 2018, 2022; Filippidou & Gialiti, 2022; Filippidou & Karfis, 2022; Koutsouba, 2009).

Of these traditional forms of Babisios dance, the first (MD.1) is a unilateral dance form, which is composed of four meters of 4/4, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. Each of the kinetic motifs corresponds to two isochronous movements, 2/4 each. All movements form a total of four groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of the kinetic motifs. The second traditional form of Babisios dance is also a unilateral dance form, consisting of four meters of 4/4, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In the first and second kinetic motifs, there are three asynchronous movements equal to 1/4, 1/4, and 2/4, while in the third and fourth kinematic motifs there are two isochronous movements, equal to 2/4. All movements form a total of four groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of the kinetic motifs.

On the other hand, in Pentalofos we find another form of this dance (MD.3), which is danced by the members of the Women's Club of Pentalofos that exist in the community. This dance is a three-part alternating dance form. The last two dance phrases of the dance are similar to the traditional forms of dance (MD.1 & MD.2). The first dance phrase is composed of six meters of 4/4, which correspond to six kinetic

motifs. Each of the kinetic motifs corresponds to two isochronous movements, 2/4 each. All movements form a total of six groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of kinetic motifs.

In conclusion, we find that although the traditional and fakelore form of Babisios dance is performed by the same people, who are both members of the community and members of the cultural association and often even happen to dance in the same place with both their qualities, show a number of differences. These differences reflect the dance expression of the same people in a specific context and at a given time. Thus, Babisios dance in its “first” existence includes a simple form, being an integral part of the life of the inhabitants of Pentalofos, while in its “second” existence the dance follows the rules of stage presentation, aiming to impress the audience, constituting a choreographic creation.

The choreographic creation, today, is criticized by most people who deal with Greek traditional dance. However, in the community of Pentalofos, today, social events have waned, due to the large and uninterrupted decline of the population. So, much could be attributed to the Women’s Club of Pentalofos, but it is impossible to ignore its remarkable contribution to the survival of the popular culture of Pentalofos in a not at all favorable time, in a time of saturation for the community. At this time, the Women’s Club of Pentalofos undertakes the duty to keep Pentalofos “alive”, its remaining inhabitants in the community, and the immigrants of Pentalofos in contact with the community and its traditional culture, through the creation of a “different tradition”, of a different experience.

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