

**When “Hellenes-Pontics” dance:
Seeking for the “Greek-Pontics” in Postmodern Greece**

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Abstract

The anthropological inquiry of (re)negotiation, (re)formation and (re)declaration of cultural identities is considered an extremely fascinating scientific field. In particular the study of refugees' and immigrants' identity formation practices provide exceptionally interesting information for the understanding of social changes and post-migration social relations. In addition identity making practices related to dance forms reveal that orchesis [ὄρχησις] can be seen as a remarkably flexible, significant domain that reflects and provokes dynamic transitional transformations/modifications. In Greece, research on dance identity issues has been related to social progress, long-term process of cultural adaptations, ethnic and national cultural flows. Dialectic, multicultural inventions of traditions, quests in-between “Greek-ness” and “Hellenic-ness”, forged through implications and impositions, stereotypic concepts for dance and music. Based on the national concept of continuity, cultural identity development was naturally reserved towards alterity. Thus, Greek origin refugees' displacements and Greek immigrants' migrations were related to the “discovery” of otherness. In this paper, based on the case study of the “Pontic”, “new-refugee's”, migration in Greece, that followed the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), we discuss national and ethnic attempts to re-create “uniformity” in order to secure identity maintenance. The article focuses on “Hellenes-Pontics” and examines their complex, multilevel, multiform and multi-faceted dance manifestations. The study of their dance, music and song practices demonstrate complex and multilateral interactive interactions, expressions and manifestations, which enact with the post-modern concepts of “Pontic-ness”, “Hellenic-ness” and “Pontic Hellenism”.

Key-words: dance, performance, identity, refugees, Greece, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), pontic hellenism, greek-ness, hellenic-ness, pontic-ness