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Dance in Proverbs: A First Approach

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Abstract

The folk proverb has been examined mainly as a poetic genre. However, in recent years researchers have begun to express interest in its sociological dimensions, on account of its longevity as well as its modern usage. The corpus of proverbs is a system of norms of moral behaviour and folk law, expressing in condensed discourse the prevailing concepts concerning people's life. In the Greek bibliography, D. Loukatos pointed out the important meaning of the proverbs referring to dance, emphasizing their contribution – on account of their broad scope – to the concept of dance formed by the agents of folk culture. This paper is part of a wider research programme aimed at tracing concepts about dance, through the implied counselling discourse of the proverbs. It presents a first classification of the diverse proverbs about dance. The material has been collected from the archives of the Folklore Centre of the Academy of Athens, the Folklore Study Library of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Serres Public Library. This material has been supplemented by ethnographic data from the authors' personal research, as well as from corresponding material in undergraduate dissertations supervised by the authors. The preliminary remarks and conclusions propose the classification of the proverbs into categories relating to dimensions of formal character, and into categorizations linked with the prevailing social structures (gender distinctions, work, etc.).

Key words: proverbs, dance