

Pyrrhic and Women's Encounter

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Abstract

This publication sets as case of study the pyrrhic dance of antiquity, which was executed by women. It is intended to trace back the earliest written sources of antiquity and highlight the way in which it was imprinted on them. Dances, depending on the movements, the gestures and their character, are distinguished in religious, peaceful and martial ones. The Pyrrhic dance according to the written sources of antiquity was one of the armed dances. But, what was the origin of it? What was the Pyrrhic dance? Was it performed by women and why? How women influenced it? The historic route begins from mythology up to today. Postures and movements are included as if to attack an enemy with bow, arrows and spear. Yet, they dancers act as if they defended themselves avoiding blows, leaning sideways (εκνευσίς), receding (ύπειξις), jumping high (έκπήδησις έν ύψει), bowing (ταπεινώσις). So from the fourth century onwards, hetaeras are observed to perform the pyrrhic dance, having though replaced armaments, spear, and shield with thyrsus and torches. Professional dancers with helmets and shields performed individual pyrrhic dances, sometimes gracefully, sometimes as a parody and sometimes with lustful movements and gestures. This is mainly verified by the ceramic pots. Women, therefore, performing the pyrrhic dance lent a special scent to it.

Keywords: pyrrhic, women, martial dance