

Studying Dance in the Present. The K'na Dance and Its Different Dance Forms in Nea Vyssa, Greece

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Abstract— In the community of Nea Vyssa in Greece there is the paradox that a single dance, with the name K'na dance, appears today in three different versions. The aim of this research is to record the different versions of the "K'na" dance that coexist today in the community of Nea Vyssa in Greece, to determine if they are really different versions of the same dance and to define the reason for their existence. The collection of ethnographic data was based on the ethnographic method. Laban's notation system was used to record the choreographic compositions of K'na 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 the versions that were found in the K'na dance in the community of Nea Vyssa, have to do with the place of the dance, as the three versions of K'na dance that exist today in the community of Nea Vyssa highlight issues of "first" and "second" existence of dance. In conclusion, the diversity of K'na dance today in Nea Vyssa is a consequence of the transfer of dance to the stage. The K'na dance in Nea Vyssa today is experienced in different ways by the residents of the community, depending on the place of its performance.

Keywords— Greek Traditional Dance, Ethnographic method, variety of dance forms

I. INTRODUCTION

It's commonplace that a dance can exist in different dance forms. This can occur as a result of either political influences (Filippidou, 2018), or local cultural identities (Filippidou, 2021; Filippidou, Koutsouba, & Tyrovola, 2013; Gerogianni, & Filippidou, 2021), or gender differences (Koutsouba, 2000). Therefore, the same dance may show differences from region to region, such as Syrtos "sta tria" (Tyrovola, 1994, 2001) or may be danced differently even within the same community (Filippidou, & Karfis, 2022).

The latter case is also observed in the community of Nea Vyssa in the region of Thrace in Greece. Carrying out on-site research in the area from 2004 to 2017, I found the presence of different dance forms of a specific dance and specifically of the "K'na" dance. The "K'na" dance is a ritual dance that accompanies the wedding event of "K'na", is one of the main dances of the dance repertoire of Thrace and is danced by all communities in the region. In previous studies I had researched the different dance forms that this dance shows in Greek Thrace (Filippidou, 2018; Filippidou, Koutsouba, & Tyrovola, 2013), but also within the same community (Filippidou, 2022), that of Nea Vyssa.

The presence of three different choreographic compositions has been recorded in Nea Vyssa (Filippidou, 2022). These choreographic compositions appeared in different time periods, one after the other. However, the field research found that in this community, today, three different versions of the "K'na" dance coexist. These different versions are danced in parallel in the community. The question at this point is whether this can happen.

Based on the above, the aim of this research is to record these different versions of the "K'na" dance that coexist today in the community of Nea Vyssa, to determine if they are really different versions of the same dance and to define the reason for their existence.

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 as it is conducted in the context of a "native anthropology" of dance (Boulamanti, 2014; Buckland, 1999; Charitonidis, 2018; Dimopoulos, 2011, 2017; Felföldi, 1999; Filippidou, 2011, 2018; Fountzoulas, 2016; Giurchescu, 1999; Koutsouba, 1991, 1997; Loutzaki, 1989; Niora, 2009, 2017; Sarakatsianou, 2011; Sklar, 1991; Tyrovola, 2008). 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 2004 to 2017 in the community of Nea Vyssa of Evros: 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 K'na 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 dance of "K'na" in Nea

Vyssa, 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. THE "K'NA" DANCE IN THE PRESENT

"K'na" is a wedding dancing ritual, which takes place, under various names (Rasm-e-henna, Takht e Khina, Shab-e henna, Mehndi, Punjabi, Kina gecesi, Gikna), in much of Asia and Africa, but also in Europe. In this dancing ritual the bride symbolically abandons her identity as a virgin daughter, focusing on her mother's home and enter a new phase in her life, like that of the woman, focusing on her husband's family.

"K'na" ritual got its name from the henna substance used in it (Filippidou, & Koutsouba, 2020), which is considered a symbol of purification and is performed also in Greece and particularly in the communities of region of Thrace, especially those originating from the part of Thrace that now belongs to Turkey, such as Nea Vyssa (Filippidou, 2010, 2018; Filippidou, Koutsouba, Lalioti, & Lantzios, 2018, 2019).

This wedding dancing ritual takes place the night before the wedding at the bride's house (Filippidou, 2010, 2018). More specifically, on that same night, the night before the wedding ceremony, a farewell party is held at the house of the bride as well as at the house of the groom. At the groom's house his family celebrates the last day of the groom-to-be but now unmarried lad. At the bride's house the night is more emotionally charged since it is the last night of the bride celebrating with her friends and family before moving to her husband's home.

When all the guests arrive and the party begins, the bride's mother in law accompanied by groom's relatives bring her "the Baxisia", in other words, her presents. Among those there is a small plate with some henna. After they dance "the Baxisia" dance and then give them to the bride, they take "the Baxisia" for the groom from the relatives of the bride, they return to the grooms' house and continue the party there. Later on, just before the end of the party, three newlywed girls (that have been married just once) whose both parents were still in life, prepare the "K'na", that is to say, the henna, in a brass or earthenware plate, by using their right hands (pic. 1).



Pic. 1 The preparation of henna

They add water, flour and wine to this and place three lit candles on the top. Next, they tie a red thread around the candles, while during the preparation of the henna the relatives sing three songs suitable for this special occasion. The songs played are about emigration due to the fact that the bride is soon to leave her family and home and live with her husband and his family.

After the "K'na" preparation, the bride's ring finger and the little finger are painted by a female member of her family. They are painted up to the second phalanx and then tied with two white handkerchiefs or cloths. When this ritual is completed dancing begins with the first one in the line holding in his/her right hand the sacred object of the ceremony which is the three lit candles (pic. 2) (Filippidou, 2010, 2018).



Pic. 2 The "K'na" dance

Although the dance of "K'na" in the community of Nea Vyssa is an integral part of the wedding customs of the community, however, the data collection showed that is danced, also, outside its context in dance performances on stage. In the community of Nea Vyssa there are two cultural associations, the Cultural Association "Stefanos Karatheodori" (fig. 2,3) and the Women's Association of Nea Vyssa (fig. 4), which have important cultural activity, presenting the dance repertoire of Nea Vyssa in dance performances. In these dance performances the "K'na" dance is always presented, because, as mentioned before, it is one of the most basic dances of the community.

These two cultural associations seem to present the dance of "K'na" in a different version, both to each other and in comparison with the ritual dance, which is danced by the inhabitants in the context of the wedding event (fig. 1). From this fact emerge the three different versions of dance in the community of Nea Vyssa which are the following.

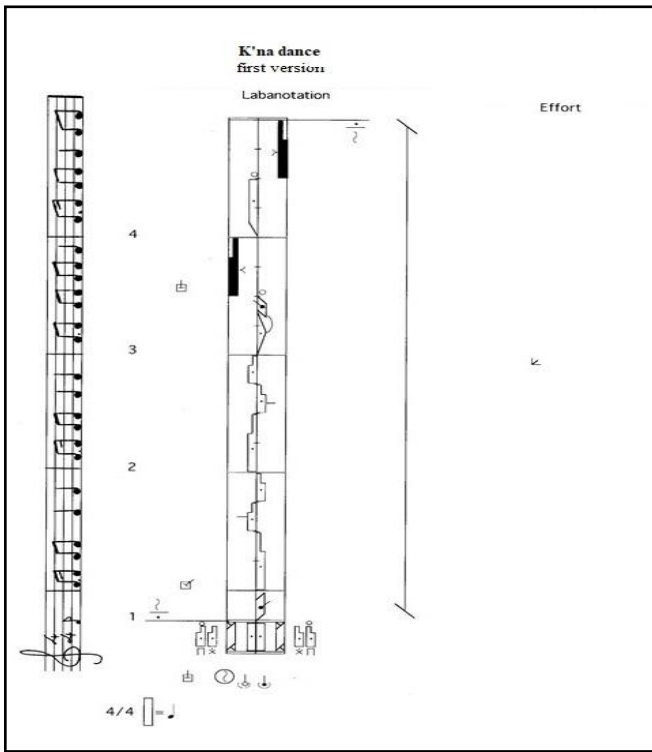


Fig. 1 The recording of the first version of the "K'na" dance

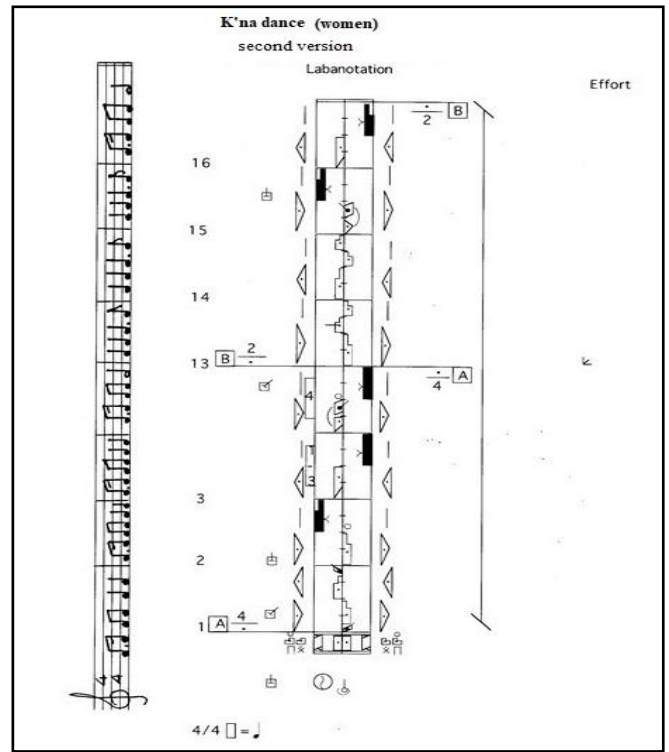


Fig. 3 The recording of the second version of the "K'na" dance (women)

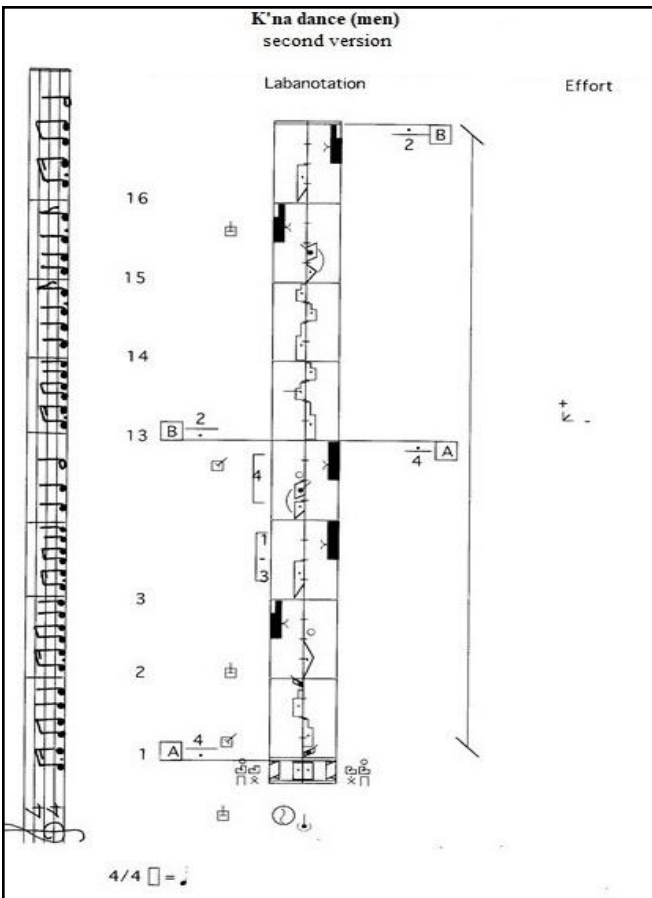


Fig. 2 The recording of the second version of the "K'na" dance (men)

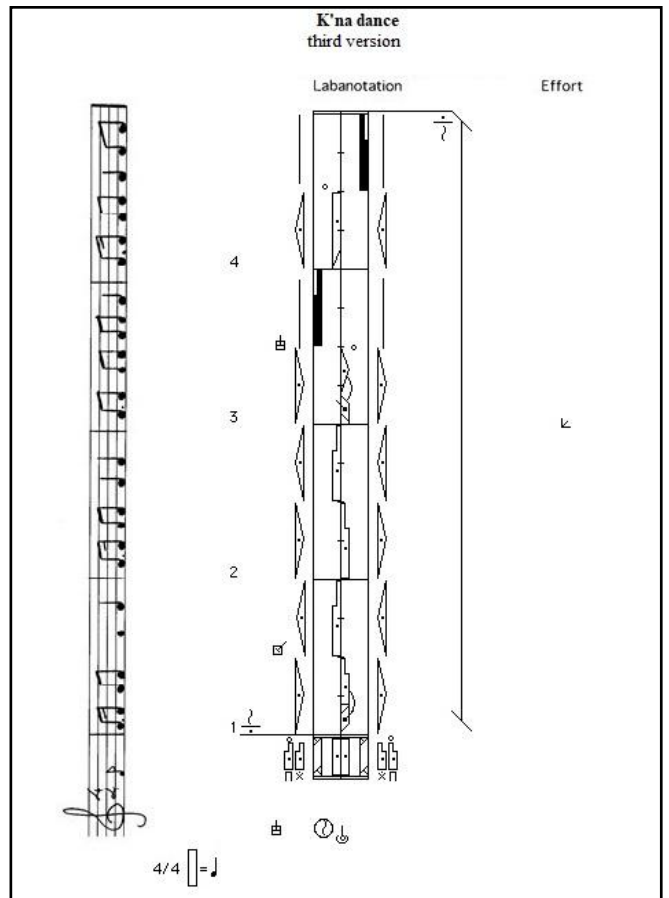


Fig. 4 The recording of the third version of the "K'na" dance

TABLE I

Comparative and concise table of the component elements of the different versions of the "K'na" dance

PARAMETERS	FIRST VERSION	SECOND VERSION	THIRD VERSION
Choreography	A basic dance phrase that is repeated.	Two basic dance phrase that is repeated.	A basic dance phrase that is repeated.
Kinetic unit	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.	Basic dance phrase constantly repeated.
Steps	Moderate with supports on the sole.	Moderate with supports on the sole.	Moderate with supports on the sole.
Handle	W	W (hand movement right-left)	W (hand movement right-left).
Use of space	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.	Circular shape, closed circle with direction to the right. Group dance characterized by the participation of many people.
Dancers' position and gender	Men, women shuffle.	Men in front, women following.	Only women.
Rhythmic pattern	4/4	4./4	4/4
Rhythmic organization	Moderate and stable.	Moderate and stable.	Moderate and stable.
Musical accompaniment	Organic music accompanied by a song	Organic music accompanied by a song	Organic music accompanied by a song
Method of interpretation	Moderate movements.	Moderate movements.	Moderate movements.
Dance form model	Unilateral dance form	Bilateral dance form	Unilateral dance form

TABLE II

Enriched kinetic type of the first version of K'na dance

$$A/O\Phi, F1, 4/4(2-2) \\ (7...), \dots 190, =, WD.1 = W1 [\delta^{1+} \alpha > \delta^{1+} + \delta^{2+}] - W2 [(a^{1+} \delta > \delta^{1+}) - \alpha^{2+}] + \\ MF/Pr. \\ \dots / I\mu / I\rho, \cup, W, A\Gamma, \dots \cdot W3 [\delta^{2+} + (\delta) \alpha^{2+}] \cdot W4 [\alpha^{2+} + (\alpha) \delta^{2+}] \\ Ox, Ak. \dots$$

TABLE III

Enriched kinetic type of the second version of K'na dance

$$AB/ev.\Phi, \\ F1 \& F2, 4/4(2-2) \\ (7...), \dots 190, = \\ MF/Pr. \\ \dots / I\mu / I\rho, \cup, W, A\Gamma, \\ Ox, Ak. \dots$$

$$WD.2 = W1 [\delta^{2+} - \alpha^{2+}] - W2 [\delta^{2+} + (\delta) \alpha^{2+}] - \\ \cdot W3 [\alpha^{2+} + (\alpha) \delta^{2+}] \\ \dots \times 6 \dots$$

$$WD.2 = W1 [(\delta^{1+} \alpha > \delta^{1+}) + \delta^{2+}] - W2 [(a^{1+} \delta > \delta^{1+}) - \alpha^{2+}] + \\ \cdot W3 [\delta^{2+} + (\delta) \alpha^{2+}] \cdot W4 [\alpha^{2+} + (\alpha) \delta^{2+}] \\ \dots \times 2 \dots$$

$$[\{WD1 \times 6\} \cdot \{WD2 \times 2\}] \times$$

TABLE IV

Enriched kinetic type of the third version of K'na dance

$$A/O\Phi, F1, 4/4(2-2) \\ (7...), \dots 190, =, WD.3 = W1 [\delta^{2+} - \alpha^{2+}] - W2 [\delta^{2+} - \alpha^{2+}] + \\ MF/Pr. \\ \dots / I\mu / I\rho, \cup, W, A\Gamma, \dots \cdot W3 [\delta^{2+} + (\delta) \alpha^{2+}] - W4 [\alpha^{2+} + (\alpha) \delta^{2+}] \\ Ox, Ak. \dots$$

From the recording and the analysis of the three versions of the "K'na" dance in Nea Vyssa it emerged that, the first version of K'na dance consists of a dance phrase consisting of four meters of 4/4, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In the first and second kinetic motif there are three not isochronous movements equal to 1/4, 1/4 and 2/4, while in the third and fourth kinematic motif 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.

The second version of K'na dance consists of two dance phrases that alternate with each other depending on the musical accompaniment. Specifically, the first dance phrase consists of three meters of 4/4, which correspond to three kinetic motifs. Each of the kinetic motifs corresponds to two isochronous movements, 2/4 each. All movements form a total of three groups of movements, which are repeated throughout the repetition of kinetic patterns. As for the second dance phrase, it consists of four movements of 4/4, which correspond to four kinetic motifs. In the first and second kinetic motif there are three not isochronous movements equal to 1/4, 1/4 and 2/4, while in the third and fourth kinematic motif 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.

The third version of K'na dance consists of a dance phrase consisting 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.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to record the different versions of the "K'na" dance that coexist in the community of Nea Vyssa, to determine if they are really different versions of the same dance and to define the reason for their existence. To achieve the aim, the data collection was held with the ethnographic method, as used in the science of dance, while for their analysis the structural-morphological and typological method of analysis was used, as it is applied in the Greek traditional dance.

In order to initially achieve the aim of the research, the structural composition of the different versions of the K'na dance in Nea Vyssa had to be determined. To make this happen: a) the various versions of dance were recorded, b) their component elements were classified, c) their dance form

was identified and d) their dance form was coded.

The analysis of the data shows that the three versions of the K'na dance show a common structural composition. However, there is a difference in the dance form between the three versions, due to the difference in the handle, the dance arrangement and the change of dance form.

The differences that were found in the dance of K'na in the community of Nea Vyssa, have to do with the place of the dance. Specifically, the first version of the dance is found in all dance events of the community, customary and secular. In this case, dance is a functional and integral part of all the inhabitants of the community. The second version of the dance is presented on stage by the cultural club of the community "Stefanos Karatheodoris". This club is reviving on stage an older form of dance, which was lost over time and came to the fore after research conducted in the area by the author of the article (Filippidou, 2010). Finally, the third version of K'na dance is presented on stage by the Women's Club of Nea Vyssa. This version is a choreography of the members of the club.

In the last two cases, the dance is part of individuals or groups who are interested in it and who transfer the dance from the original place of its performance into classrooms. In classrooms, the dance is called to operate in a new, different place and has the ultimate goal, mainly, its representation in dance performances and dance festivals.

In these dance festivals, an identical dance movement is sought, as well as a beautiful dance movement, which makes the cultural club stand out in dance. For this reason, the dance teachers 'intervene' to the form of dance. This also happened in the case of Nea Vyssa, where the dance teacher of the Cultural Club "Stefanos Karatheodoris" chose to revive a form of the K'na dance and not to present to the stage the K'na dance that is danced today in the community, which presents a simplification compared to the older form. The same happened in the Women's Club of Nea Vyssa, where the dance teacher did not present to the stage the current dance of K'na of Nea Vyssa, but chose to present a choreography of it, based on kinetic motifs that exist in the community.

From the above it becomes obvious that in its first case the dance is experienced and transmitted unconsciously, through its various music-dance circumstances, while in the last two cases the dance is consciously represented by specific people, who aim at its presentation, through the cultural clubs. Therefore, in the first case we are talking about experiencing dance, while in the second we are talking about revival and representation.

In conclusion, the three versions of K'na dance that exist today in the community of Nea Vyssa highlight issues of "first" and "second" existence of dance (Hoerburger (1965; Kealiinohomoku, 1972), which coexist in the community at the same time.

Finally, this research reveals the great diversity of K'na dance

today in Nea Vyssa, which is a consequence of the transfer of dance to the stage. Therefore, the K'na dance in Nea Vyssa today, is experienced in different ways by the inhabitants of the community, depending on the place of its performance.

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