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COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF ANCIENT GREEK DANCE

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> One of the barbarians from Pontos, a man of royal blood, came to Nero on some business or another, and among other entertainments he saw that dancer perform so vividly that although he could not follow what was being sung – he was but half Hellenised, as it happened – he understood everything. So when it came to be time for him to go back to his own country, Nero, in saying good-bye, urged him to ask for anything that he wanted, and promised to give it him. "If you give me the dancer," said he, "you will please me mightly!" When Nero asked, "What good would he be to you there?", he replied, "I have barbarian neighbours who do not speak the same language, and it is not easy to keep supplied with interpreters for them. If I am in want of one, therefor, this man will interpret everything for me in signs." So deeply had he been impressed by that disclosure of the distinctness and lucidity of the mimicry of the dance. [1]

The passage from Lucian gives a laudatory view of dance as a medium to transform knowledge, and as a replacement for language – when words fail, it is time to dance. Lucian's statement is, I believe, an exaggeration of the ability of dance to be cross-culturally understandable. Still, there is something in dance which enables it to be a powerful tool for communication. In this paper I concentrate on ancient Greek dance used as a communi-

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1 Lucian, On dance 64; translated by A. M. Harmon, Lucian, Loeb V. τῶν γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου βαρβάρων βασιλικός τις ἄνθρωπος κατά τι χρέος ἥκων ὡς τὸν Νέρωνα ἐθεᾶτο μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων τὸν ὀρχηστὴν ἐκεῖνον οὕτω σαφῶς ὀρχούμενον ὡς καίτοι μὴ ἐπακούοντα τῶν ᾀδομένων – ἡμιέλλην γάρ τις ὢν ἐτύγχανεν – συνεῖναι ἁπάντων. καὶ δὴ ἀπιὼν ἤδη ἐς οἰκείαν, τοῦ Νέρωνος δεξιουμένου καὶ ὅ τι βούλοιτο αἰτεῖν κελεύοντος καὶ δώσειν ὑπισχνουμένου, "τὸν ὀρχηστήν," ἔφη, "δοὺς τὰ μέγιστα εὐφρανεῖς." τοῦ δὲ Νέρωνος ἐρομένου, "τί ἄν σοι χρήσιμος γένοιτο ἐκεῖ;" "προσοίκους," ἔφη, "βαρβάρους ἔχω, οὐχ ὁμογλώττους, καὶ ἑρμηνῶν οὐ ῥᾴδιον εὐπορεῖν πρὸς αὐτούς. ἢν οὖν τινος δέωμαι, διανεύων οὗτος ἕκαστά μοι ἑρμηνεύσει." τοσοῦτον ἄρα καθίκετο αὐτοῦ ἡ μίμησις τῆς ὀρχήσεως ἐπίσημός τε καὶ σαφὴς φανεῖσα.

cative medium.[2] There are only a few writings of ancient authors who have discussed dance at length which survive. They discuss various aspects of dance, e.g. Plato explores dance used in education, Lucian and Libanius both write about pantomime, and Plutarch gives a brief discussion about the elements of dance. Some authors mention dance in passing. As the source material is what it is, some questions remain unaswered. For example, we do not have a detailed analysis of a dance and its movements, or a dance notation from antiquity. On the basis of this simple fact, I would argue that a reconstruction of ancient dance, or even a deep understanding of the "language of ancient dance", is impossible. There is, however, no reason to be too pessimistic about the possibilities of studying ancient dance. I wish to show in this paper that even a glimpse of ancient dancing seen from a modern theoretical viewpoint can stimulate our minds to see things a bit differently, to set ancient dance into the field of dance studies in general. Before entering the ancient world it would help to review some points of modern theories on dance and communication presented in the field of anthropology and dance studies.

Dance as nonverbal communication

> Movement, dance, music, and ritual can usefully be treated as modes of human communication on a continuum from the nonverbal to the verbal. – – – [They] can express ideas that belong to other spheres of human activity: social, political, economic, religious, and so on.[3]

In the 1950's anthropologists of dance began to view dance on its own rather than what dance can tell about something else.[4] The focus was on the

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2 There are studies on gestural communication in the ancient world but none on dance and communication. See e.g. G. Neumann, Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst, 1965; J. P. Holoka, "Nonverbal communication in the classics: research opportunities", in: F. Poyotas (ed.), Advances in nonverbal communication, 1992, 237–254. I would like to thank Mr Holoka for sending me the offprint of his article.

3 J. Blacking, "Movement, dance, music and the Venda girls' initiation cycle", in: P. Spencer (ed.), Society and the dance, 1985, 64. See also J. Blacking, "The study of man as music-maker", in: J. Blacking and J. W. Kealiinohomoku (eds.), The performing arts, 1979, 4.

4 A. P. Royce, The anthropology of dance, 1980, 31.

form of dance, and approaches were influenced by structural linguistics, cognitive science and communication studies. Dance was treated as a particular kind of "language". For example, Judith Lynne Hanna who constructed a theory of dance communication in the 1970's, states this quite explicitly: "– – – Dance is a conceptual natural language with intrinsic and extrinsic meanings, a system of physical movements, and interrelated rules guiding performance in different social situations."[5] It should be noted that in a strict sense dance is not language – it is not translatable into other modes without distortion of meaning.[6] Dance and language convey different kinds of information and in different manners. As Isadora Duncan has put it, "If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it."[7] What is usually stated in the comparison of dance with language is that dancing more resembles poetry than prose.[8]

Dance is often defined as human behaviour. In colloquial language we may describe certain behaviour of animals as dance, e.g. birds' dance, refering to their rhythmical, patterned movements by which something is communicated. Behind those movement patterns there are immediate emotion and drives, such as fear, hunger, and sexual arousal, involved. This behaviour is shared by all animals including human beings. In addition to this humans can consciously choose a particular rhythm and movement style in order to express and transmit abstract concepts, historical or mythological events, political ideas, etc.[9], and this kind of action is called dance. Curt Sachs makes a distinction between innate (animals) and acquired (humans) characteristics.[10] We can see that some human motions may share a

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5 J. L. Hanna, To dance is human: a theory of nonverbal communication, 1987, 5. Critique against Hanna's theory, e.g. N. R. Crumrine, CA 20 (1979) 325; J. W. Kealiinohomoku, CA 20 (1979) 327–328; S. A. Ness, "Observing the evidence fail", in: G. Morris (ed.), Moving words, 1996, 253–258.

6 Blacking, in: Spencer (ed.) 66 states that the discourse about dance is metaphysics.

7 In: T. Comstock (ed.), New Dimensions in dance research: Anthropology and dance, 226, ref. Royce 15.

8 E.g. A. L. Kaeppler, "Structured movement systems in Tonga", in: Spencer (ed.) 92.

9 Hanna 60–61.

10 C. Sachs, World history of dance, 8–19 (?), ref. Royce 4. Royce also states that this distinction becomes "knotty once more, however, when one considers the dancing of chimpanzees, where there is an uncomfortable fuzziness about the innate/acquired distinction."

universal meaning, such as approaching, fleeing, jumping with joy, or drooping with sorrow, but most of the motions are culturally specific.[11] In the same way dance is not universally identical behavior, although the raw capabilities, or tools are. Hence the "language of dance" is culturally bound, and even within one particular culture, dance may not communicate in the same way to everyone.

Dance can serve various purposes, just as music, literature, or any other so-called art form does. The communication-model of dance sees every function of dance as being communicative in essence, while other models may state that communication is just one class of purposes among others.[12] Seen from the viewpoint of communication dance can transmit cognitive information, such as norms, values, and concepts. By dancing one can teach and learn problem solving or basic skills which are needed for hunting, agriculture, or war, just to name a few. One scholar has even argued that in nonliterate societies dance functions in the same ways as a written language would: dance teaches and preserves knowledge.[13] Dance often serves as a mediator between humans and the supernatural. The affective function of dance is to provide an immediate and sensuous experience, and dance may provide a sense of security as a familiar experience for dancer or audience.[14] Dance has a great potential for self-expression, or as Royce says "– – – for communicating something about how people feel about themselves, and especially in a situation where different people come into contact".[15]

Dance is symbolic action where meaning is conveyed by using different means of expression.[16] Imitation is used when something is depicted as it is seen in the "real world". Using arbitrary symbols is a

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11 Hanna 61.

12 See J. E. Kaemmer, Music in human life, 1993, 153 ff. Kaemmer classifies music as play, as self-expression, as communication, etc. He writes about music, but the same classification can be applied to dance.

13 A. Snyder, "The dance symbol", in: Comstock 213–214, ref. Royce 154.

14 Hanna 25–28.

15 Royce 158.

16 The terminology used is naturally derived from communication studies and semiotics. See e.g. E. Leach, Culture and communication, 1976, 9 ff. I shall not discuss here the problematics related to the terminology, since it is not necessary for this paper.

common way of communicating in dance. De-coding gestures and abstract movements demands intuition and a good knowledge of the specific culture , or dance-culture, in order that the dance performance in question can be fully understood. Understanding a dance performance the way its creators (choreographer, dancers, etc.) meant it to be understood, is not the only way of understanding; one can simply enjoy a performance without being able to express (in words) what it "means". It is important to keep in mind that dance is in most of the cases not mere movement, but an entity comprised of movement, music (rhythm, melody, lyrics), costume, and the whole context of the performance.[17]

Ancient Greek dance and communication

In the Laws Plato writes that dance arose from the natural desire of the young of all creatures to move their body in order to express their emotions, especially joy. But, he continues, the sense of harmony and rhythm which actually makes dances out of instinctive movements is a special gift of the gods[18] – a difference between animal and human "dance" which is expressed in modern notions about the nature of dance in general.[19] Elsewhere Plato suggests in passing that dance evolved from the imitation of words by means of gestures: "διὸ μίμησις τῶν λεγομένων σχήμασι γενομένη τὴν ὀρχηστικὴν ἐξειργάσατο τέχνην ξύμπασαν".[20] Some modern scholars on human evolution have argued that language has evolved from gestural communication[21], just the opposite of what Plato claimed. I find the discussions about the origins of things somewhat irrelevant; in this case we

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17 Hanna, in her processual model of dance semiotics (p. 79, fig. 4), calls these adjunct channels, and she argues (p. 80) that "dance performance – – – *sometimes* includes adjunct channels" (italics mine).

18 Pl., Laws 2,653d–e; 2,672d; 2,673d. Cf. Ath. 14,628c where he cites Damon's ideas about dance: "– – – τὰς ᾠδὰς καὶ τὰς ὀρχήσεις ἀνάγκη γίνεσθαι κινουμένης πως τῆς ψυχῆς."

19 See above p. 177.

20 Pl., Laws 7,816a.

21 See Hanna 65.

could just accept the fact that both language and gesture are communicative vehicles, and often used together reinforcing each other.[22]

Dance for Plato was an unseparable part of human existence. And just because dancing is an inborn ability for any human being, it is practical to teach a child about the surrounding culture with the help of dancing, and what is most important, to teach the child what is good and virtuous – "these forms of training [i.e. music and dance] constituted, as it were, the *unwritten* laws. They were crucial because they allowed the child to become habituated to virtue (aretē) before reason had formed."[23] To teach the child to be all that, demands instruction in good, i.e. morally fitting dances. Eventually we are led to the conclusion, that one's dance would represent one's nature. It is important to note, though, that someone who is not so talented in the arts of the Muses but still "welcomes all the good things and dislikes bad ones" is deep down a better educated person than one who knows how to represent good things by dancing, and does so, but "neither delights in good things nor hates bad ones".[24]

Naturally it was important to make a distinction between dances proper for girls and proper for boys, as the natural temperament of each sex was characteristically different and the dance styles should be in accordance with the specific characteristics.[25] Lucian describes the Spartan dance called ὅρμος (chain dance):

> ὁ δὲ ὅρμος ὄρχησίς ἐστιν κοινὴ ἐφήβων τε καὶ παρθένων, παρ' ἕνα χορευόντων καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὅρμῳ ἐοικότων· καὶ ἡγεῖται μὲν ὁ ἔφηβος τὰ νεανικὰ ὀρχούμενος καὶ ὅσοις ὕστερον ἐν πολέμῳ χρήσεται, ἡ παρθένος δὲ ἕπεται κοσμίως τὸ θῆλυ χορεύειν διδάσκουσα, ὡς εἶναι τὸν ὅρμον ἐκ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀνδρείας πλεκόμενον.[26]

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22 A short discussion of the use of language and gesture simultaneously in antiquity, with some references to ancient authors in Holoka 242.

23 S. Lonsdale, Dance and ritual play in Greek religion, 1993, 24 with reference to Pl., Republic 3,401d–e.

24 Pl., Laws 2,654c–d. See K. Schöpsdau, Pl., Nomoi (Gesetze) Buch I–III, Übersetzung und Kommentar, 1994, 265–6.

25 Pl., Laws 7,802d–e. See discussion in Lonsdale 28–29.

26 Lucian, On dance 12. "That is a dance of boys and girls together who move in a row and truly resemble a string of beads. The boy preceeds, doing the steps and postures of

These thoughts have lived on in the Western philosophy of education throughout the centuries. "Dauncing may be an introduction into the first morall vertue, called Prudence," wrote Sir Thomas Elyot in 1531, and in 1693 John Locke stated: "The effects of dancing – – – gives to children – – – not mere outward gracefulness of motion, but manly thoughts and a becoming confidence."[27] Not only were the natural characters of each sex different but also the gender-related tasks and duties in society differed. One example of dance used as a medium of teaching these duties is that the boys were taught the skills of handling weapons and fighting to prepare them for manhood with the help of dance.[28] Πυρρίχη (*pyrrikhe*) is perhaps the best known and was the most wide-spread weapon dance in the Greek world, but not the only one. Xenophon, in Anabasis book six, describes several weapon dance performances which took place at the reception for the Paphlagonian ambassadors arranged by the Greeks. Some of the performances were clearly imitations of actual fighting situations, others had a nonmimetic character, like the choral dance where dancers were clad in ceremonial armour and moved to the rhythm used in war dances. The last performance is an example of how a war dance could be used in the context of ritual and as a mediator between gods and humans.[29] Plato says that in *pyrrikhe* the movements imitate the ways how blows should be fended off by turning and twisting the body and by jumping or crouching. Also, *pyrrikhe* teaches the dancer to attack by movements which imitate e.g. the shooting of bows.[30] It

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young manhood, and those which he will later use in war, while the maiden follows, showing how to do the women's dance with propriety: hence the string is beaded with modesty and with manliness." (Translated by A. M. Harmon, Lucian, Loeb V.) Some remarks to the translation: Firstly, Lucian does not write "women's dance" but more like "dancing the female" (τὸ θῆλυ χορεύειν). Thus, the description of the girl's dance means that it shows how to be a woman who respects the proper characterisrics of a female. And secondly, I would prefer translating σωφροσύνη as prudence, not as modesty.

27 Cited in P. Spencer, "Introduction", in: Spencer (ed.) 8.

28 Pl. (Laws 7,814a–c) considered that girls should also participate in weapon dances in order to be prepared to defend their city in case of war. And as Xenophon states (Anabasis 6,1,13) girls did perform them in practice. Hanna (p. 181) mentions briefly that in rites of passage the (warrior) dance is "usually an educational medium for adult male physical and moral behaviour."

29 Xen., Anabasis 6,1,1–13; Lonsdale 141–142. Hanna (p. 187) states that a weapon dance in a ritual context can act e.g. as a prayer of thanking or invoking.

30 Pl., Laws 7,815a. M.-H. Delavaud-Roux, Les danses armees en Grece antique, 1993, 74–100, discusses the various movements based on Plato's description, and gives

is no wonder, then, that Socrates is reported to have said: "οἳ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιστα θεοὺς τιμῶσιν, ἄριστοι ἐν πολέμῳ"[31], especially if those persons had learnt the weapon dances properly.

"– – – The movements of the dance are frequently full of meaning, and appeal to the emotions without any aid from words", states Quintilianus about the affective function of dance.[32] A vivid example of the power of dance to transmit emotions comes from Xenophon's Symposium, the final scene where two dancers performed the love-affair of Ariadne and Dionysus. The dancers, a boy and a girl, performed the emotional state so vividly that the audience, Athenian men, thought the dancers were truly in love with each other, and "they looked like as if they were not taught the movements but did what they had desired to do for a long time." After the performance the men hurried back home to their wives, and those who were not married swore they would do so.[33] In other words, the emotional state the dancers were presenting was transfered to the audience. The expressive power of dance made it possible that a certain kind of dancing was considered harmful for a person,[34] and that a dance style could reveal the dancer's inner norms and values.[35] One example of a person who revealed his very nature with unfortunate consequences (for him at least) comes from Herodotus' story about Cleisthenes of Sicyon. After Cleisthenes saw one of his daughter's suitors, Hippocleides of Athens, dancing in a vulgar manner,

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examples of these movements depicted on vases. Her aim is to give some kind of a reconstruction, which has been a typical trend in French studies of ancient dance, but she admits the obvious risks of this approach (40).

31 Ath. 14,628f. ("The ones who honour the Gods best in dancing, are the best in war.") Socrates' positive attitude towards dance is mentioned elsewhere: Xen., Symposium 2,16, tells how Socrates praised dancing over other "gymnastics" as dancing makes one's body symmetrical i.e. no part of the body is more muscular than an other.

32 Quintilianus 11,3,66.

33 Xen., Symposium 9.

34 Ath. 14,628c (citing Damon). Plato (Laws 7,815c, 816d–e) rejects dances which are "Bacchic in nature" and imitate an unorganized world. Later on he writes that one has to know what the "bad dances" look like in order to be able to avoid them. Thus, one is permitted to watch these dances provided one does not dance them oneself.

35 Pl., Νόμοι 7,815e. Plato writes here about the "good dances", but says quite explicitly that the state a person is in is direclty reflected in his dancing.

he shouted ἀπορχήσαό γε μὲν τὸν γάμον (you have danced away your marriage), believing that the man's soul was also vulgar.[36]

Earlier I discussed the devices, or the means of expressions, used in dance for transmitting information.[37] What devices were there used in ancient dancing and what elements were the ancient dancer/audience supposed to focus on? Plutarch discusses briefly the elements of dance.[38] He does not explicilty state what kind of dance he had in mind, or whether he wrote about dance in general. Reading the passage, however, leads one to think of pantomime,[39] which is not surprising as the "dance of the day"[40] was pantomime and one would have seen it performed quite often. I would argue, though, that Plutarch at least intended to discuss the whole art of dancing[41] – some elements he mentions may be emphasized more in some dance styles, others in other dance styles. Plutarch begins with stating that dance consists of movements (κινήσεις) and positions (σχέσεις) just as melody consists of its notes and intervals; the rests (μοναί) are the terminating points of the movements. Elements of dance are of three kinds: φορά (*phora*) is the actual movement, σχῆμα (*schema*) refers to the position where the movements end[42] and δεῖξις (*deixis*) is pointing, not mimetic but actually showing a particular object, e.g. a tree or the ground.[43] Plutarch

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36 Hdt., 6,129; Ath., 14,628d.

37 See above p. 178.

38 Plut., Table-talks 9,15,747c ff. The following discussion on Plutarchs' passage is to be found under this reference.

39 S.-T. Teodorsson, A commentary on Plutarch's Table talks (vol. 3), 1996, 377–380. He states that the theory of dance in Plutarch is clearly post-classical, and that Plutarch probably thought of pantomime dance when modelling his theoretical discussion on dance.

40 At the end of the passage, 9,15,748c–d, Plutarch rejects the dance of his times: "ἀλλ' οὐδὲν οὕτως τὸ νῦν ἀπολέλαυκε τῆς κακομοῦσιας ὡς ἡ ὄρχησις." He probably refers to pantomime.

41 E. g. Plutarch (9,15,748b) mentions *hyporchema* which was a combination of singing (i.e. poetry) and dance.

42 It can be called a pose. Plutarch (9,15,747c) describes schema as follows: – – – ὅταν 'Απόλλωνος ἢ Πάνος ἤ τινος Βάκχης σχῆμα διαγέντες ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος γραφικῶς τοῖς εἴδεσιν ἐπιμένωσι. ("– – – as when dancers compose their bodies in the attitude of Apollo or Pan or a Bacchant, and then retain that aspect like figures in a picture." Translated by E. L. Minar et al., Plutarch's Moralia, Loeb IX.)

43 This is a rough sketch of these terms, and there would be a lot more to discuss. That

continues by saying that poetry provides a parallel to dancing,[44] and compares the way poets use words to how these above-discussed elements are used in dancing. Plutarch makes quite clear what kind of devices there were used in dance in order to convey meaning. *Phora* expresses emotion or action, *schema* is mimetic action – "τὸ μὲν σχῆμα μιμητικόν ἐστι μορφῆς καὶ ἰδέας." These two elements can be used as metaphors, whereas *deixis* is a very pragmatic, straightforward way of "telling" something. When *deixis* is to be understood as pointing at some object, it could also act as a stylization, e.g. pointing at one's heart would be a sign for love.[45] I have already alluded to pantomime, I discuss it a bit more in detail. Pantomime serves as an example of how communication through dance took place in practice.

Pantomime and communication

In 22 BC, so the story goes, Pylades of Cilicia and Bathyllos of Alexandria invented a dance style called pantomime, a form of solo dance portraying a mythological or historical theme. Pantomime attained great popularity in the Roman Empire, and it seems to have dominated the dance world of Greece and Rome until the sixth century. It should be, however, kept in mind, that mimetic dancing was a feature of Greek culture from the earliest recorded times. In Xenophon's Symposium the final scene in which two dancers present the love-affair of Ariadne and Dionysos, is not only mimetic dancing but also mimetic dancing with a mythological theme.[46] As the ancient authors gave attention to pantomime it is perhaps the best known ancient Greek and Roman dance form.[47] Both Lucian and Libanius wrote in

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is, however, a task to be done in a paper dedicated entirely to the usage and meaning of these terms. See e.g. L. B. Lawler, "*Phora, schêma, deixis* in Greek dance", TAPhA 85 (1954) 148–158.

44 Modern notions about dance being comparable to poetry, above p. 176.

45 See Hanna 41. "Stylization encompasses somewhat arbitrary gestures or movements which are the result of convention – – –."

46 Xen., Symposium 9. About the origin of pantomime see E. J. Jory, "The literary evidence for the beginnings of imperial pantomime", BICS 28 (1981), 147 ff.

47 The best known works about pantomime are Lucian's On dance and Libanius' Against Aristeides (Or. 64). Modern studies see e.g. E. Wüst, "Pantomimus", RE XVIII

defence of pantomime describing its nature and good qualities. From these authors we can draw a general picture of the style of this dance. Pantomime was a highly stylized performance, usually portraying a story close to the themes of Greek tragedy, mythology, or legend. As Lucian states, a dancer must know and memorize everything: ἀπὸ γὰρ χάους εὐθὺς καὶ τῆς πρώτης τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ἀρξάμενον χρὴ αὐτὸν ἅπαντα εἰδέναι ἄχρι τῶν κατὰ τὴν Κλεοπάτραν τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν.[48] One dancer performed all the roles in episodes separated by musical interludes. The movements themselves consisted of twists, turns, leaps and back-flung poses[49], and the use of hand signs, χειρονομία, was very important. Music was played by a great variety of instruments. There was also a chorus of singers which sang before and between the episodes; their libretto, *fabula saltica*, was usually in Greek. The dancer was clad in sumptuous costumes of expensive materials, and wore characteristic masks with mouth closed to indicate that the dancer told the story without spoken words. An epigram describes the Muse Polymnia refering to pantomime: "Σιγῶ, φθεγγομένη παλάμης θελξίφρονα παλμόν, νεύματι φωνήεσσαν ἀπαγγέλλουσα σιωπήν".[50]

Concerning the nature of pantomime, Lucian says that "pantomime relates to rhetorics, depicting character and emotion," and it is "a science of imitation and portrayal, of revealing what is in the mind and making intelligible what is obscure."[51] Lucian quite explicitely places pantomime on the level with speech, or rhetorics. He says that the dancer must cultivate extreme clearness, so that whatever he presents will not require any interpreting. Lucian further states that the audience must be able "to understand the mute and hear the silent dancer." Lucian then gives a vivid example of the communicative power of pantomime dance. There was a

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2, 833–869; L. B. Lawler, "Portrait of a dancer", CJ 41/6 (1946), 241–247; M. E. Molloy, Libanius and the dancers, 1996.

48 Lucian, On dance 37. ("Beginning with Chaos and the primal origin of the world, he must know everything down to the story of Cleopatra the Egyptian." Translated by A. M. Harmon, Lucian, Loeb V.)

49 Lucian, On dance 71. Libanius also praises the vigorous movements of the dancers, Or. 64,117–118.

50 AP 9,505. "I, Polymnia, am silent, but speak through the entrancing motions of my hands, conveying by my gestures a speaking silence." (Translated by W. R. Paton, The Greek anthology, Loeb III).

51 Lucian, On dance 35–36.

story of Demetrios the Cynic, who like Kratinos in Lucian' essay, was denouncing the dance saying that the dancer was a mere adjunct to the *aulos*, *syrinx*[52] and stamping and that the dancer did not contribute anything to the performance, only making absolutely meaningless, idle movements; people were duped by the luxurious accessories, e.g. silk costumes and beautiful masks. Hearing these words, a famous dancer of that time, probably the one called Paris at the time of Nero, asked Demetrios to see him dance before passing judgment. The dancer promised to dance without the aulos and songs. He performed a passage of the Odyssey in such a manner that Demetrios was delighted and shouted: "ἀκούω, ἄνθρωπε, ἃ ποιεῖς· οὐχ ὁρῶ μόνον, ἀλλά μοι δοκεῖς ταῖς χερσὶν αὐταῖς λαλεῖν."[53] The use of the hands in dancing is emphasized in other areas of literature as well[54] and in modern studies it is often compared with the Indian hastas/mudras[55].What we have to remember, though, is that we do not know the exact system of using hands in ancient dancing – whether the signs were given a precise meaning so that a dancer could produce entire sentences by using hand signs, or whether the signs were purely "decorative". In Indian interpretative dance (nritya) the mudras have a real language value, word meanings, whereas in pure dance (nritta) the mudras have a decorative value.[56]

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52 *Aulos* (αὐλός) is often translated incorrectly as flute. It was a wind instrument, but it functioned more like an oboe or clarinet. *Syrinx* can be translated as a panpipe.

53 Lucian, On dance 62–63. ("I hear the story you are acting, man, I do not just see it; you seem to me to be talking with your very hands." Translated by A. M. Harmon, Lucian, Loeb V.)

54 See references in Molloy 69. Lucian (A professor of public speaking 17) suggests ironically that a pantomime dancer should be called χειρίσοφος.

55 E.g. L. B. Lawler, The dance in ancient Greece, 1964, 12; Lonsdale 30. It should be noted that in Indian classical dance a great emphasis is laid also on facial expressions, which are lacking in the ancient Greek pantomime as the dancers wore masks. But there are some similarities in the overall nature of the movements in ancient pantomime and certain Indian dances, e.g. "stamping of feet". It would be interesting to explore further the connections of Indian and Greek dances from the hellenistic period onwards.

56 See E. Barba and N. Savarese, A dictionary of theatre anthropology, 1991, 136; A. Iyer, "Hand gesture in Indian dance", Dance studies 18 (1994) 51–95. She states that "kathakali dance drama appears to be the only one which has developed the hasta/mudra to such an extent that they can be employed by the dancers/actors to translate speech into signs very accurately" (55). If the Indian system is compared with the Chinese sleeve gestures (hsiu), the difference is that with the mudras a dancer can tell a whole narrative

Demetrios the Cyniy was a Greek, he knew the culture, he knew the story and he probably recognized the system of gestures and the costumes and masks in which the dancer was clad. How then, could a foreigner understand the message of Greek pantomime? If we think of e.g. Indian dance employing mudras and facial expressions, it is quite impossible to follow the actual story without the knowledge of the language of that dance. But Lucian gives a different picture in the story with which I began this paper. This story leads us to think that the "language of pantomime dance" would have been easy to understand even for a non-Greek person. We have no way of knowing whether this was actually true – we have to keep in mind that Lucian uses every possible argument in defending dance. I discussed earlier in this paper about dance having a great potential for self-expression. And in this sense dance can be, and could have been in the ancient Greek world, a powerful tool of communication also over language-barriers.

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(nouns, verbs, modifiers) but the hsiu can only embroider the narrative. See Royce 195; Blacking, in: Spencer (ed.) 72.