



**Choreomundus: International Master in Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage**

**The Brazilian experience of belly dance in Egypt:**

**Representations and paradoxes**

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## **Abstract**

Currently, belly dance is practised worldwide, producing a global market of classes, workshops, festivals, competitions, and performances. In this sense, Egypt attracts amateur and professional dancers from all over the world that crave contact with the cultural birthplace of their practice, seeking knowledge “from the source”. However, in Egypt, even though professional belly dance shows are highly popular in commercial venues, parties and weddings, the belly dancer is an outcast in Egyptian society, mostly seen as a woman of low morals. Based on two months of fieldwork in Egypt and on the experience of a group of Brazilian belly dance practitioners during their cultural holidays in the country, this dissertation investigates the relations developed by Brazilian belly dance practitioners towards and within the Egyptian belly dance market. Contrasting the foreign idealisation of the “authentic Egyptian belly dance” as an “ancient, feminine and sacred practice” with local representations of the same dance as a “vulgar entertainment”, this research proposes an analysis of these contrasts through an intersectional approach. It discusses the intertwining of the categories of class, race, gender and sexuality in the production of different approaches to, representations and styles of belly dancing in Brazil and in Egypt.

**Keywords:** belly dance; Egypt; Brazil; orientalism; professional dance market.

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## Contents

Introduction.....	6
Chapter 1 - The way to Egypt .....	13
1.1 - About the field: Egypt, Summer of 2019.....	13
1.2 – A research trajectory: literature review and theoretical framework.....	16
1.3 – Methodology .....	23
Chapter 2: The working market of Belly Dance in Egypt.....	30
2.1 - The dancing venues in Egypt.....	30
2.2 – How Egypt relates to dance.....	33
2.3 – How non-Egyptian dancers navigate in the Egyptian belly-dance market.....	38
Chapter 3 - ‘Essa é a mistura do Brasil com o Egito’: A group of Brazilian dancers and their experiences in Egypt .....	43
3.1 – The <i>Mystical Egypt Tour</i> .....	43
3.2 – Part 1 of the <i>Mystical Egypt Tour: The Marhaban Festival</i> .....	44
3.2.1 – The contradiction within the <i>Marhaban Festival</i> : “Egyptians are not allowed” ....	48
3.3 - Part two of the <i>Mystical Egypt Tour: The Nile Cruise</i> .....	49
3.3.1 - The contradiction within the Nile cruise: “Where is the public for the Egyptian dancer?” .....	54
Chapter 4 - Contrasting ideas and contrasting dances: The differences in commercial styles performed in Brazil and in Egypt.....	58
4.1 - Analysing movement: adaptations of a Brazilian dancer to working in Egypt.....	58
4.2 - Discussing the dichotomy: ‘princess’ versus ‘vulgar’ .....	66
Conclusion.....	71
Bibliography.....	75
Appendix 1 – Glossary.....	84
Appendix 2 – Informants list (with pseudonyms) with short biography.....	88
Appendix 3 – Online Survey Model .....	92
Appendix 4.1 - Letter of information and consent, English version: .....	93
Appendix 4.2 - Letter of information and consent, Portuguese version.....	96
Appendix 4.3 - Letter of information and consent, Arabic Version.....	100
Appendix 5 –Interview quotations made in Portuguese in the original .....	103
Appendix 6.2 – Dance Analysis Table: Leticia performing in Cairo, Egypt .....	108

## List of Illustrations

<b>Fig. 1</b> A girl goes to the stage, dance with the dancer <i>Samia</i> and is filmed by her family in a middle-class Nile boat that offers a dinner with 45min show of belly dance and <i>tanoura</i> . Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). .....	31
<b>Fig. 2</b> – Scene of the play <i>Al Ayal Kibrit</i> , where Sultan (played by Sa'eed Saleh), reacts to Sahar's (played by Nadia Shoukry) new job offering ( <i>No Longer Kids</i> , 1979). .....	36
<b>Fig. 3</b> - Khayriya Mazin giving an explanation about her dance and her history to the Brazilian students. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). .....	52
<b>Fig. 4</b> - Andreia and Khayriya dancing. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). .....	53
<b>Fig. 5</b> - Detail of the dancer's costumes, when she passed in front of my camera, while inviting the audience to join her in a human train. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). .....	54
<b>Fig. 6</b> - Dancer inviting the audience to join her in a human train. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). .....	55
<b>Fig. 7</b> - On the left, <i>Letícia</i> dancing in a tea house in São Paulo, Brazil and, on the right, <i>Letícia</i> dancing in Cocktail Bar in New Cairo, Egypt. Screenshots from videos posted in her Instagram account in November 2017 and September 2019. ....	63
<b>Fig. 8</b> - Example of Dance Analysis table. ....	64
<b>Fig. 9</b> - Chart with proportions of sound-accompanying gestures in São Paulo's performance. ....	64
<b>Fig. 10</b> - Chart with proportions of sound-accompanying gestures in Cairo's performance. ....	65
<b>Fig. 11</b> - The Egyptian belly dance star Souhair Zaki wearing a white <i>shabaka</i> in performance for the movie “ <i>Alo Ana El Qitta</i> ” (1975). Available at: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GooW9HyUnC8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GooW9HyUnC8</a> (Accessed 25 June 2020). ....	85
<b>Fig. 12</b> - Egyptian <i>tabla</i> . ....	86
<b>Fig. 13</b> - Tanoura dancer in a Nile Boat in Upper Egypt. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019). ....	86

## Introduction

Huge, hot, colourful, noisy, busy, chaotic, dusty landscapes of yellow and brown; those were the first impressions upon my arrival in Cairo at the end of June 2019, after nine months in the cold green lands of Norway. The first ten days of my two-month stay in Egypt were spent in a small hostel, located in a domestic building in a *shaabi*<sup>1</sup> area of Giza. My hot and stuffy room had a little shared balcony from where one could see an unpaved square where cars were parked, donkeys roamed free, children played, and tapestries were put to dry. The small streets around were packed with stands selling bread and fruits, with tuk-tuks, and people moving around with an amount of clothes that felt, for me, unbearable for that hot weather. On the opposite side of the square stood a mosque that sent out the call for prayer loudly, five times a day, including at 3 in the morning, when I first heard it. It assured me, with all certainty, that I was no longer in Europe.

Ten days later, I moved from this small hostel that was the cheapest accommodation I found in the area, to a hotel that was on the other end of my budget. The new place was fifteen minutes away from my previous hostel, reachable via the always-jammed Haram Street. This famous avenue, full of commerce, restaurants and nightclubs, also known as the Pyramids street, leads to the most well-known post card of Egypt. An alternative path was via the Ring Road, passing through the brownish sea of dusty, unfinished, monochromatic buildings that make one scared when thinking of how millions of people could live in a relatively small area. To enter the tourist area, an army checkpoint, where soldiers ask for IDs and the intentions of visitors, determines if you can follow straight to the entrance of the Pyramids or to the gates of the luxurious hotel on the left.

On passing the hotel gates, the scenario completely changes, like an oasis in the middle of the city. Lush green gardens, tall palms trees, reflecting pools, water fountains, buildings with Orientalist architecture. The complex was the former royal lodge of the Khedive Isma'il Pasha<sup>2</sup>: an opulent rest house used by the Ottoman ruler and his guests when hunting in the desert or visiting the Pyramids. It passed through the hands of various

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<sup>1</sup> *Shaabi* means “popular” or “of the people” in Arabic. It is how locals designate popular neighbourhoods but also the music and dance genre that is associated with the urban working-class. This definition and of other terms in Arabic or related to belly dance vocabulary are available in the Glossary, in the Appendix 1 of this Dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> Khedive of Egypt and Sudan from 1863 to 1879. “Khedive” was a title created in 1867 for Isma'il and his successors (the government's heredity was instituted by him), equivalent to the title of Viceroy, but used to differentiate himself from other rulers who held this position in the Ottoman Empire.

British buyers who enlarged and transformed it into one of the best-known five-star hotels in the city. I was there for a big belly dance festival that takes place in the main *ballroom* of this hotel since 2004. To enter, one must climb the stairs right after the reception, pass through a security guard and X-ray, walk in through a corridor bedecked with large windows, luxurious Persian carpets, with sellers of dazzling belly dance costumes on both sides and enter the sumptuous room with huge candelabras and golden walls decorated in the “oriental”<sup>3</sup> style.

To attend the festival, participants come from all over the world and are accommodated in the hotel during the eight days of workshops, dance performances and competitions. The activities start with the ‘Opening Gala’, the big show with presentations of the main teachers of the festival and of famous dancers. It is the busiest evening of the festival, where participants must possess tickets, dress elegantly, and can enjoy a dinner buffet. From the second to the seventh day of festival, workshops are held in the mornings and in the afternoons with teachers of different nationalities, each class costing anywhere between U\$40 and U\$80. There are also dance presentations in the evenings, where the participants pay between U\$60 and U\$70 to dance and can choose to compete in different categories and either be evaluated or not by judges.

The contrast between the small dusty hostel – shared with brown and black immigrant families – and the luxurious hotel – shared with white tourists taking pictures in in the opulent ex-royal garden wearing their shiny belly dance costumes – was the first of the many contrasts that struck me in the two months of my stay in Egypt to conduct fieldwork for Choreomundus - International master in Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage. I went to the field with the aim of studying how Egyptian cultural heritage related to the dance that was presented to tourists. As I will explain later, my focus changed, one of the reasons being that I developed an interest in the many contrasts that dazzled me.

I went to Egypt to study a practice that is embedded in paradoxes and contradictions, so I cannot say that these contrasts were unexpected. As stated by Ward (2018a: 6), ‘Raqş sharqī (“eastern dance”), the Egyptian concert dance form commonly known as belly dance, is one of the most beguiling yet misunderstood dance forms in the

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<sup>3</sup> The words ‘Orient’ and ‘oriental’ are here used with the acknowledgement of the discussion of the concept of ‘orientalism’ coined by Edward Said (1978). This author recognises that the designations ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ or ‘East’ and ‘West’ are intrinsic to the historical process of colonialism, having cultural and material implications. It denotes the Western effort to represent ‘otherness’ with which it was faced in the enterprise of imperial domination. The concept will be better discussed in the next chapter.



world'. It is a highly popular and transnational practice, with a complex (and mostly unknown) history that involves the unequal power relations regarding race, class, age and gender, resulting from colonialism, orientalism, exotification, and has attracted attention from researchers in many areas<sup>4</sup>. As a belly dancer myself, one question that I'm frequently asked is: 'How come such a sensual dance can have originated in the Middle East, the land of oppressed veiled women?'<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, as an historian and, now, as an anthropologist, I have been trying to critically answer this and other questions in my research efforts. I have ended up dealing with the complexities and the challenges to define a dance practice that has specific cultural and historical roots but cannot be understood without taking into consideration the global network of dancers.

Practised in different countries with different languages, the first challenge is to name this dance. *Danse du ventre* (and its Latin language derivatives, such as *dança do ventre*, *danza del vientre* and *danza del ventre*), belly dance, oriental dance, *raqs sharqi*, *raqs baladi* are all terms used sometimes as synonyms and direct translations and sometimes not. In general, they refer to dance practices with origins in North Africa and in the Middle East 'characterised by a core repertoire of torso movements, including articulated hip and shoulder movements such as shimmies, circles and "figure eights" of the pelvis, and undulations of the abdomen' (Ward, 2018a: 6).

*Dança do ventre*, the version in Portuguese (and the one with which I had the first contact), originated from *danse du ventre*, the name given by the French to dance forms observed in countries such as Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon during the imperial conquests that began in the late eighteenth century. 'Belly Dance', the English term, was a translation from the French that became popular after its appearance in 1893 at the Universal Exhibition of Chicago to name the dances that were presented in the attraction called "Streets of Cairo" (Sellers-Young and Shay, 2005:1)<sup>6</sup>. According to Ward (2018a:6), 'the term "belly dance" is also used quite liberally to refer to a number of dance styles originating outside of the Middle East, most notably styles developed in the United States'. To distance themselves from this, communities of practitioners nowadays claim the use of the name "oriental dance" as a way of not erasing the place of origin of the

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<sup>4</sup> The available literature in the area will be further discussed in the literature review.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion about western objectification of Muslim women that dichotomise them between the passively lascivious "harem odalisque" and the identity-less veiled woman, and the issues of "veiling", see Abu-Lughod (2005, 2013), Mernissi (2001, 2011) and Sibai (2016).

<sup>6</sup> For a larger discussion about the origins of the term "belly dance" and its use in English language see, Hawthorn (2019).

practice. This term also resonates closely with the Arabic term *raqs sharqi* (that can be translated as “eastern dance”).

When talking about the Egyptian context, Ward (2020b) defines *raqs sharqi* as the staged concert form that has a formalised technique and is performed publicly in exchange for payment. The author explains that ‘many features of *raqs sharqī* are shared by dance forms throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Central Asia’ (Ward, 2018a: 6), and that native Arabic speakers, when talking in English refer to it mostly as ‘belly dance’, as it is the best known name. On the other hand, she defines *raqs baladi* (that can be translated as ‘indigenous dance’<sup>7</sup>) as the social form of the dance that is performed informally for fun, in domestic spheres or at festive occasions. In a similar vein, Noha Roushdy (2010: 72) advocates the use of the term *al-raqs al-baladi*, to refer to the ‘most frequently observed dance form that accompanies Arabic dance tunes today and is performed by women and men on many festive occasions’ in Egypt and claims that *al-raqs al-sharqi*, although equally employed, is more likely to be a translation of the French *Danse Orientale*.

These discussions about naming and the fact that a dance form is referred to in Arabic as “eastern dance”, clearly demonstrate the global reach and historical dynamics involved in its development. The need for demarcation of this practice as “eastern” in the “East” in itself highlights the transnational network of practice, imagination, and consumption in which it is inserted. Currently, belly dance produces an international market of classes, workshops, festivals, competitions, performances, along with the goods related to these: costumes, props, music, musical instruments. The elements of attraction range from its constructed exoticism, the interest for foreign cultures, attributed spirituality, community building potential to the furore caused by the super-star Shakira and her hip movements<sup>8</sup> or, in the Brazilian case, the success of the soap opera “O Clone”<sup>9</sup>.

However, the Middle East and North Africa, specifically Egypt, still bear the weight of legitimacy and authenticity as the cradle of this dance’s origin. It creates a cultural market of tourism and professionalisation, mainly in Cairo, attracting amateur

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<sup>7</sup> For more discussions about the meaning of the word *baladi* for Egyptians nowadays, see Roushdy (2010 and 2013)

<sup>8</sup> See Enriquez and Johnson (2020).

<sup>9</sup> “O Clone” is a Brazilian soap opera that was broadcasted for the first time from October 2001 to 14 June 2002. The story takes place between Rio de Janeiro and Morocco and presented lots of belly dance scenes, that popularised the practice in Brazil. For more about “O Clone” and “orientalism” see Karam (2010) and Shohat, & Stam (2014).

and professional dancers that crave contact with the cultural birthplace of their practice, seeking knowledge “from the source” [Gamal, 2019]. Nonetheless, while foreign travellers and tourists idealise Egyptian dance as an “ancient and sacred practice”, associating it with the “pharaonic past”<sup>10</sup> local feelings about it are mired in ambiguities and contradictions. Although highly popular, belly dance is commonly seen as a vulgar and inappropriate practice for women, and unacceptable for men. These ambiguities and complexities, which will be discussed throughout this dissertation, thus create an attraction and demand for non-Egyptian dancers in Middle Eastern venues.

Thus, the aim of this research is to discuss the implications of such views in the Egyptian belly dance market and how non-Egyptian dancers relate and navigate in this complex reality. My interests led me to investigate the contrasting relationship between the ambiguous local feelings about the dance, the foreign idealisation of the indigenous practice and how this impacts the commercialisation of goods and services related to the dance in different contexts. To delve further into this, I will be discussing the commodification of a dance and the issues of representation in its transnational and ‘glocalised’ (Robertson, 1995; McDonald, 2012) context. In other words, I am looking at ‘how people engage with local paradigms in order to integrate these incoming global tropes’ as ‘it is no longer possible to study local communities without examining how they are affected by cultural processes and products emerging and developing elsewhere in the world’ (McDonald, 2012).

To achieve this, in the first chapter, I will introduce my research trajectory, explaining how I came to this subject, my aims before going to the field, the development of the fieldwork and how my subject was transformed in this trajectory. Furthermore, I will develop a critical literature review to include both the academic knowledge produced about belly dance up to the present day, and the theoretical framework that guided the process of this research. There will also be a clarification of the methodological tools used for producing, processing and analysing the material that is the corpus of this dissertation.

The second chapter will deal with the professional market of belly dance in Egypt. I will discuss the process of development of the dance venues and present the different spaces where belly dance is performed in Egypt, nowadays. I will scrutinise the love/hate attitudes that Egyptian society nurtures about belly dance, and how it impacts on the stigmatisation of dancers. I will introduce the non-Egyptian dancers that work in Egypt

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<sup>10</sup> As it will be developed later, the perception of belly dance as an ancient practice is predominant among practitioners and even in academic bibliography. This issue will be better discussed in the third chapter.

to shed light on their perspectives about dancing in the country. Finally, I will examine how the issues previously mentioned affect what is commercially expected from dancers and how they relate with the exigencies of employees and the public.

The third chapter will focus on the experiences of a group of Brazilian dance-tourists in a tour organised by dance teachers with the aim to provide practitioners with the experience of Egyptian dance and culture. I will discuss their participation in an international belly dance festival that happens in Cairo and on a Nile cruise between Aswan and Luxor, demonstrating how dance was important in these two phases of their trip. I will disclose the ideas that the participants of the tour have about Egyptian culture and dance, and their motivations for travelling long distances to participate in it. In each of the contexts, I will expose some apparent contradictory situations to use them as examples of the complex relationship that Brazilian belly dancers sustain towards dance realities in Egypt.

Finally, the fourth and last chapter will present the differences of commercial dance styles in Brazil and in Egypt through analysing the dance and discussing the experiences of a Brazilian dancer that went to work in Egypt. I will investigate the transformations of her dance through detailed analysis of movement and her testimony to better understand what the different exigencies of the professional market of dance in different countries are. Furthermore, I will discuss the paradoxes between the discourse of what is valued and pursued in terms of dance style and what, actually, are the commercial demands that give prestige, power, and social and economic capital to dancers, managers, dance instructors and venues in the different contexts.

With this dissertation, I hope to contribute to the academic discussions about belly dance, bringing the perspectives from a Latin American country and the experiences of Brazilians in the transnational market of belly dance. As I will discuss in detail in the literature review, the poles of production of scientific in-depth knowledge about belly dance are the Global North including the United States, Canada and Europe. Here, I will propose an analysis of the interactions between two ‘subaltern’ cultures (Spivak, 1988), from a perspective from the South<sup>11</sup>, which does not mean that it does not encompass complicated power relations, misunderstandings and production of stereotypes (from both

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<sup>11</sup> ‘The epistemologies of the South concern the production and validation of knowledges anchored in the experiences of resistance of all those social groups that have systematically suffered injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. The vast and vastly diversified field of such experiences I designate as the anti-imperial South.’ (Sousa Santos, 2018:1)

sides). My point is that such relations should be specifically understood, having in mind the difficulties of access to the culture of the “other”. The Brazilian public interested in belly dance must navigate among the popular orientalist stereotypes in Brazilian mass culture, having much less access to specialised academic production about the subject (that are mostly in English language). Furthermore, international travel is a privilege available for few, due to geographical distances and the poor financial situation of a “third world country”<sup>12</sup>. It creates specific imaginaries and idealisations that will be here scrutinised to better understand how these interactions influence how belly dance is viewed and danced in Brazil and in Egypt.

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<sup>12</sup> During my fieldwork, some of the Brazilian travellers recounted to me that they were in debt due to the traveling, as it required taking a loan.

## **Chapter 1 - The way to Egypt**

The following chapter presents the context in which the current research was developed. Before discussing and analysing the results of my fieldwork, I believe it is important to make evident my agenda concerning this research: the experiences and readings that influenced my choices regarding the theme, place, informants and the production of data. Therefore, first, I will properly introduce my fieldwork: what were the paths that led me into it, what were the stages in which it was developed, what were my previous assumptions and how they changed in the course of my experience in the field. Secondly, I will present my trajectory as a researcher: how I developed my interests about the subject and how I engaged with it academically. I will introduce the literature available about the subject of belly dance and the theoretical and epistemological references that guided my gaze in the field and in the analysis of the data produced. Finally, the last section in this chapter will deal with the methodologies used to produce the material during fieldwork and to analyse it afterwards. I will expose which techniques of documentation were used, how I processed my data and how my informants were selected and approached.

### **1.1 - About the field: Egypt, Summer of 2019**

The trajectory of my fieldwork began even before *Choreomundus* started. From the moment I applied to the programme, I already had the aim of undertaking my fieldwork in Egypt to try to perceive the impact of the historical representations that I previously studied<sup>13</sup>, on the contemporary development of belly dance in the country. My idea started to materialise when, in May of 2018 I got to know two dance teachers that are also organisers of travelling excursions to Egypt. When participating in workshops about Egyptian folkloric dances with them, *Lúcia* and *Mariana*<sup>14</sup> shared their experiences in taking Brazilian dancers to experience tourism and dance in Egypt. They had an excursion planned to happen in July 2019, which package included a list of tourist

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<sup>13</sup> Assunção (2014, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> All the names of people that collaborated with me in the process of the fieldwork, for ethical reasons that will be better explained in the methodology section, were changed for pseudonyms, as the names of events and venues. They will appear in italic, if in the corpus of the text, or in between square brackets, in case of quotations, to mark the fact that I am refereeing to an anonymised person, event or venue. A list with all my informants' pseudonyms and a short biography is available in the Appendix 2.

attractions in different cities, the participation in a belly dance festival and a cruise along the Nile.

I decided to join due practical and academic reasons. The timing was perfect with Choreomundus requirements and the support of a tourist agency would give me some security, at least for a short period of time, to realise my fieldwork. They could also put me in contact with an Egyptian guide and translator that speaks Portuguese, which could help me in situations where the linguistic and cultural differences could build a barrier in the realisation of my research. The academic interest was due to the possibility of taking a class with a traditional dancer from Luxor and to engage in a Nile cruise following the same path executed by the English women that I used as a source in my previous academic research (Assunção, 2014 and 2018).

Therefore, my idea, when I left Trondheim<sup>15</sup>, was to investigate how the ideas of Egyptian national identity and their intangible cultural heritage operate in the context of commercialisation of cultural manifestations held by the tourist entertainment industry. I wanted to map the continuities and ruptures perceived in the representations about Egyptian dance sustained by foreigners and locals nowadays and compare these with the past representations that I studied previously, making a historical/anthropological comparison. In short, I went to the field with the aim of studying the dance that was presented to tourists in the main cities of Egypt as I believed it was a practical aim. I imagined that my field of action (being a non-Arabic Speaker) would be restricted to the tourist areas where people speak English. Likewise, I supposed that the commercial market of belly dance was mostly directed to tourism. Arriving in the field, I realised that my assumptions were wrong.

During my first days in Egypt, alone in the small and cheap hostel in Giza, with an exclusively male staff (which made the simple necessity of going out of my room in my pyjamas to go to the toilet into a frightening experience) I slowly realised that the staff, and most people I met, were kind and easy-going. Most Egyptians that were around my age could speak English and it was easy to make friends. These first ten days in Cairo assisted me in settling into the field, familiarising myself with the city, making friends, contacting informants, arranging my life to spend the whole two months there and, finally, in noting that the subject of dance would easily arise when interacting with people in different contexts. After that, the group of Brazilian travellers arrived, and I joined them

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<sup>15</sup> The first two semesters of Choreomundus programme were undertaken in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway.

in the two weeks of tourist excursions. The first eight days were spent in Cairo, in the hotel where the belly dance festival was happening. The second week was dedicated to the Nile cruise in the South of Egypt, finishing the trip in a beach resort in Hurghada, that I did not attend, as I stayed in Luxor a couple of days more and went back to Cairo alone<sup>16</sup>. In Cairo, I settled in a shared apartment with two Egyptian women around my age. Therefore, despite the period of twelve days that I stayed with the Brazilian tourists, I lived among Egyptians, had a social life among Egyptians and could grasp and be astonished by Egyptian culture, costumes and their perspectives about belly dance. Interestingly, I noticed that everyone had an opinion about it. It was then that I realised that my assumption that the belly dance market was directed mainly to tourists was also rather wrong. The biggest consumers of belly dance in Egypt are the Egyptians themselves.

In a very general way, Egyptians are very passionate about belly dance but their feelings about it are mixed and, most of the time, contradictory. Belly dancers are superstars in Egypt: they are in films, in soap operas and in television shows. Absolutely all Egyptians with whom I had contact knew the names of Samia Gamal, Naima Akef and Taheia Karioka (that were stars in old films) and of Fifi Abdo and Dina (more recent belly dance stars). Most of my informants said they enjoyed their dancing. Many of them, if wealthy enough, would pay a large amount of money to have a famous belly dancer in their wedding celebration. Almost none of them would allow their daughter to be a belly dancer.

The belly dancers in Egypt suffer from the same stigmatisation as prostitutes – for example, to call someone *ibn rakasa* (“son of a dancer”) is a terrible curse. Belly dance is a common practice among women<sup>17</sup> in specific social gatherings, such as the *hanna* (the celebration before a wedding) or the wedding itself, but it is seen as appropriate only when done among the family. So, to be professional dancers, Egyptians face many religious and social barriers, which opens the market for foreigner dancers. Russians, Ukrainians and Armenians have a big place in this market, but also Latin and North Americans. So, at the same time that Egypt sustains ambiguous evaluations about belly

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<sup>16</sup> Details about the tour, its participants, the activities it involved in the different stages will be given in details in the third chapter.

<sup>17</sup> In Egypt, belly dance is considered a practice exclusive to women. Men can be teachers but are forbidden to perform professionally. In the international community, however, the masculine participation in belly dance is increasing each day, and lots of Egyptian male belly dancers have their recognition in this international market of belly dance. For more about male belly dancers see Karayanni (2004).



dance, it remains as the global reference for belly dance practitioners: it bears the weight of legitimacy and authenticity – as the cradle of this dance – and many foreigners go to Egypt to work and to get professionalisation.

Realising all of that, the paths in my fieldwork changed from the tourist venues to the venues directed to the Egyptian public, but still thinking about the foreign presence in the Egyptian belly dance market. Although the frame of my work is no longer tourism as such, the tourist excursion remains important because it is a clear example of this presence. The organisers are dance teachers in Brazil, and dance teachers in the dance festival, positions conquered after a history of participating and winning the festival competitions. As an excursion designed by dancers for dancers, the travellers that come on the tour are interested in learning the “authentic” belly dance in its source and to have the social recognition of a dancer that actually knows the place and the culture from which their practice came. The festival also plays an important role in the belly dance community (locally and internationally) as a reference of authenticity, legitimacy, giving social, cultural capital and economic capital to dancers. Through the interviews made after the festival, I came to realise that the director is extremely important figure in the work market in Cairo. She has formed many famous belly dancers, and the claim of being her student is a matter of status and possibilities for work.

So, my present focus is on the presence of non-Egyptians in the Egyptian belly dance market in Egypt and the many contrasting approaches to dance that I witnessed in the different environments in which I circulated during my two months in the country. This presence is full of contradictions and intricate power relations, especially in the realm of dance. Therefore, I am interested in analysing the expectations and impressions of the group of Brazilian tourists/dancers in their participation in the tourist excursion and in the dance festival in order to contrast them with the reports of the dancers that have been working in the country. I will demonstrate how different ideas of authenticity, property, and adequate aesthetics contrast through their dances and through what they told me and how these impact on the commercialisation of belly dance. How I will engage theoretically with these issues, is the theme of the next section.

## **1.2 – A research trajectory: literature review and theoretical framework**

My interest in belly dance started when I was a teenager and began to attend dance classes. However, “dança do ventre” did not come by itself, but along with the curiosity

about music, culture and the diversity of dances in the Middle East and North Africa. Those interests were further developed when I started my degree in History at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS, Brazil). The academic experience gave me an overview of the historical processes that could have been related to the development of the dance I practised. Finally, the reading of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) had a strong impact on my perceptions on the subject.

Said characterises “orientalism” as a discourse ‘by which European culture was able to manage - and even produce - the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period’ (Said, 1978: 11). Therefore, the standard idea of the “East”, in the Western imaginary, is considered a European invention, manufactured from stereotypes, based on imperialist policies in the context of the nineteenth century colonialist expansion and on the racialist theories of the same period. From this reading, I started to acknowledge that much of the discourses and imaginaries impregnated in my belly dance classes had exactly to do with the constitution of the image of the East by the West commented by Said. From these insights, my curiosity led me to search for descriptions of dance in sources produced in the context of European Imperialism in the Middle East in the nineteenth century. The effort was productive, and the research drew me to a vast literature produced in this scenario that resulted in the final thesis for my undergraduate degree and my Master Dissertation in Cultural History<sup>18</sup>.

The research also introduced me to the literature produced about belly dance in academia and by independent and amateur researchers. In Brazil – the country from which I first approached the subject – I noticed that academic research about the theme exists in several areas. In physical education and dance, the focus of the research varies from analysis of its impacts on the body and mind of practitioners, transmission, education, choreographic proposals and symbolic aspects of human movement (Baldez, 2017; Kusunoki, 2010; Braga, 2018; Mesquita, 2014; Baptista, 2018). In the area of sociology, arts, linguistics and psychology, Brazilian researchers approach the subject via gender issues, identity formations, aesthetics, hybridisations, the way dancers relate to

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<sup>18</sup> In my undergraduate research, I used as primary source Lane (1890). In my Master thesis I focused on accounts produced by women, using as source Beaufort (1862), Chennels (1893), Gordon (1902), Herbert (1869), Poole (1845) and Romer (1846). For more about literature produced in colonial times and orientalism, check Assunção (2014 and 2018), Lewis (2014) and Melman (1995).

techniques, music, their bodies, considering social constructions inherent to dance (Xavier, 2016; Geletkanicz, 2017; Oliveira, 2011; Reis, 2007).

In some of the works mentioned above, I noted a tendency to dedicate an introductory section or chapter to the “history of belly dance”. The predominant reference on this issue is the book *Dança do Ventre: Ciência e Arte* (Belly Dance: Science and Art) by the physiotherapist and journalist Patrícia Bencardini. Such a book brings extremely problematic assumptions, with no clear historiographical or scientific evidence, that “Dança do Ventre” was danced in several ancient civilisations of the Middle East, in a ritual context to worship feminine goddesses related to fertility. Several academic works end up reproducing uncritically its orientalist perception of belly dance as an ancient practice, stagnated in time<sup>19</sup>. Such imaginary is predominant amongst Brazilian belly dance practitioners, having a strong presence in the discourses and performances I witnessed in my fieldwork and will be further discussed.

Another publication that supports this perception is *Serpent of the Nile: Women and Dance in the Arab World*, published in 1989 by Wendy Buonaventura. The book makes a clear effort to render it accessible to a non-academic public, being a pioneer in the field of oriental dance studies, using Said’s concept of “Orientalism” and its impact on representations of this practice. However, several critiques can be directed to it, regarding the many problematic and unsubstantiated views about the practice and its history. As pointed out by Ward (2020a), the publication presents several factual errors and is heavily coloured with the author’s opinions regarding legitimate performance contexts. Buonaventura’s sources and bibliography are few and steeped in Eurocentric and Orientalist visions of world cultures, embracing ‘the debunked idea of a matriarchal prehistory’ (Ward, 2020a). It is the basis for the romantic and sexist ideas that belly dance is an inherently feminine practice, also corroborating an essentialised vision both of dance and of what it is to be a “woman”.

I believe that Karayanni (2004) offers an interesting counterpoint to the essentialist vision of the dance as an exclusively female practice. His main subject is the intertwined relation between race, sex, and national identity in Middle Eastern dances, analysed through colonial narratives. The innovative aspects of his work are the considerations about the role of male dancers in the heteronormative or Eurocentric discourses about these dances. Also thinking about the impact of representations on the

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<sup>19</sup> Examples of that are: Abrão and Pedrão (2005), Kusunoki (2010), Baldez (2017) and Braga (2018).

materiality of bodies, Keft-Kennedy (2005) uses conceptual tools from literary, cultural and dance studies to analyse colonial discourses and the effect on commodification, consumer culture and sexuality regarding oriental dance.

Here, it is important to highlight that the majority of more academically engaged works in history and anthropology about belly dance are in the English language, which make its access difficult for the Brazilian public. However, there are works in Portuguese language that seek to ground a discussion of the history of belly dance in historical primary sources (Assunção, 2014 and 2018; Paschoal, 2019). Likewise, Salgueiro (2012), in the area of anthropology, is an expressive work in Portuguese, addressing the historical process of formalisation of belly dance in the context of European colonialism in nineteenth century Egypt and how these cultural flows shaped the practices and imagination of the Brazilian practitioners with whom she had contact in her fieldwork.

Besides the works evaluated above, there remains the specialised bibliography about the theme of belly dance that I consider important to mention here. A crucial publication for the development of my research was *A Trade Like Any Other: Female Singers and Dancers in Egypt* (1995) by the anthropologist Karin van Nieuwkerk. The book can already be considered a canonical text in the area, bringing extremely valuable ethnographic data about the development of belly dance in Egypt at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Based on fieldwork done in Cairo, Luxor and towns and villages of the Nile Delta in the 1980s, Nieuwkerk analysed the paradoxes between prestige and marginality that female performers faced in these communities. It is one of the most important sources for understanding the ambiguities of Egyptian society in relation to dance, which will be an important aspect for analysis in this dissertation. Having been published more than two decades ago, many changes can be perceived in the realities she described. However, the issues she raised regarding the intertwinement between religiosity, construction of gender roles, notions of morality, class, honour and shame will be essential for the development of my analysis.

*Belly Dance: Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy* (2005), edited by Anthony Shay (anthropologist and choreographer) and Barbara Sellers-Young (anthropologist) is also an important and pioneer publication. The book consists in a series of articles with themes that cover cinema, jurisprudence, literature, and tackles categories such as identity, gender, nationalism, among others. It constitutes a consistent corpus of scholarly texts and, I believe, an introduction to academic production in the subject of belly dance and orientalism although more in-depth works were already published.

Another compilation of articles is *Belly Dance Around the World: New Communities, Performance and Identity* (2013), edited by Caitlin E. McDonald and Barbara Sellers-Young. The twelve articles, written by dancers and scholars from different countries and areas of studies discuss a vast range of issues concerning the transnationalisation of solo improvised forms of dance from the Middle East and North Africa. It is a more recent publication that brings new insights to the analysis of the development of the dance in its different communities of practices and the role of internet in the spread of images and ideas that impacts the way dance is danced and consumed.

Regarding the history of Belly Dance, there is the extensive research made by Fraser (2015), Bunton (2017) and Ward (2018). Although analysing different time periods and focusing on different themes, those authors demonstrate the role of the European presence in Egypt in the development of belly dance but highlighting the Egyptian agency in this process. For instance, Fraser discusses the formation of corporation and guilds of dancers, in the early nineteenth century, in order to protect themselves from government regulations over their work. Bunton analyses the *ghawazee*<sup>20</sup> dancer's defiant posture to female gender roles in the mid-nineteenth century, such as financial independency and use of the public space to work. She suggests that their dance had a political and critical aspect, using pantomime to make social comments. Ward, focusing on the developments of music and dance halls in the early twentieth century, argues that 'The assertion that Egyptian entertainment hall owners were targeting their programs specifically to Europeans, Americans, and the Egyptian elite is simply false' (Ward, 2018a: 182). Using Homi Babha's notion of hybridity, she claims an understanding of belly dance as an hybrid form that 'can be viewed as the product of Egyptian agency, rather than a distortion of pure indigenous dance imposed by Westerners' (Ward, 2018a: 182).

Regarding more recent ethnographic works on belly dance, there is the PhD thesis of Christine M. Şahin (2018) *Core Connections: A Contemporary Cairo Raqs Sharqi Ethnography*, that focusses on the period after the political uprisings that happened in the Middle East in 2011 known as 'Arab Spring,' particularly Egypt's January 25th, 2011 revolution. She uses dance ethnography 'to explore ways *raqs sharqi* contexts and bodies

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<sup>20</sup> The *ghawazee*, in the 19th century, were professional dancers who performed on the streets of Egyptian cities or would be hired to dance at festivals and private parties. The ethnic and historical origin of this group and the very meaning of the word are still under discussion among researchers but the term was consolidated to refer to "public dancers".

relate to tumultuous contemporary Middle Eastern politics', centralising the 'Cairene dancing body as a means of knowledge production and dissemination while fleshing out nuanced portraits of the lives, stories, and political insights of Middle Eastern dance and non-dance bodies' (Sahin, 2018:ix). Sahin uses choreographic analysis to 'expand upon intersectionally focused dance scholarship by investigating lived realities of dancers in Cairo at a corporeal level in how dynamics of gender, sexuality, nationalism, and class are employed, mis/read, policed, and played with' (Sahin, 2018:56). Being attentive to the different venues in Cairo and its relational differences of class (in dancers' background, environment and audience) the author tackles the matters of marginalisation and prestige that result from those differences, an awareness that will be essential to my analysis.

Specifically, about the foreign presence in the belly dance scene in Egypt, Arvizu (2004) gives a good overview on the subject. Although being published fifteen years before the realisation of my fieldwork, the article *The Politics of Bellydancing in Cairo* provides an interesting contextualisation of the dynamics of the dance market in Cairo. The realities the author described and analysed about the government regulation and control over the dance industry and how it indicates tensions between performers of different nationalities, the State and society were present in my experience in the field and will also be explored in my study.

With regard to the imaginary constructed by non-Egyptian belly dancer practitioners, Maira (2008), Haynes-Clark (2010), Bock & Boarland (2011) and Gurel (2015) deal with the North-American context. Boukobza (2009) and Hooi (2015) write about foreigner imaginaries in association with dance tourism and festivals. As Sahin says 'The bulk of belly dance scholarship remains western-centric, addressing the form's value and meanings to western practitioners in western contexts, and treats only tangentially the topic of how the dance circulates within the Middle East.' (Sahin, 2018:2). I am then, aware that my research tackles many themes and subjects that were already discussed in the bibliography presented above and could fall into what is criticised by Sahin, that is, the focus on western perceptions instead of putting as central Middle Eastern bodies.

However, I believe that it is also important to position myself as a researcher from the South. I bring in my theoretical background in Latin American epistemologies, such as decoloniality (Quijano, 2000; Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2011) intertwined with the perspectives of female scholars from the Islamic world (Abu-Lughod, 2005 and 2013; Mernissi, 2001; Sibai, 2016). In this way, from a decolonial

perspective, one seeks to avoid the “disasters” of both economic and cultural reductionism by realising that categories such as gender, class, race, sexuality, nationality are always intertwined in the power relations of the capitalist society. As posed by Anne McClintock (1995: 5): ‘Gender here, then, is not simply a question of sexuality but also a question of subdued labour and imperial plunder; race is not simply a question of skin colour but also a question of labour power, cross-hatched by gender’.

In this way, I will use Said’s concept of “orientalism” with an intersectional perspective (Crenshaw, 1989), having in mind some of the criticism that was posed to his theory in the last decades. I take into account, for example the Marxist critic of Aijaz Ahmad (1992) about the lack of awareness of post-colonial theorists of their own belonging to an elite, mostly male, from the colonised areas and their choices for sources of analysis that are equally excluding. Also, the feminist alternatives as posed by Lewis (2004), who suggest rethinking orientalism based on sources produced by female writers (and, in my case, dancers). I will operate my analysis considering the agency and politics of negotiation of ‘subalterns’ (Spivak, 1988) to ‘neither inflate nor ignore the role of western politics and dynamics within non-western scholarship’ (Sahin 2018:56).

I will also develop my study having in mind the importance of representations, as conceptualised by Denise Jodelet (1984), who sees them as modalities of practical thought, determined by the social, material and ideological environment of groups and individuals and oriented towards communication, understanding and changing reality. Situated intersectionally between the psychological and the social, social representations fulfil the function of making the unfamiliar, familiar, classifying phenomena and individuals, configuring a way to interpret everyday reality. They have a symbolic and significant character, not just reproducing an absent object, but being elaborated by creative social subjects. They are collective, changeable and contradictorily constructed by the different groups that make up a society (Jodelet, 1984: 473).

However, my research contributes to the field of dance studies, therefore, it proposes to think the importance of embodiment of socio-cultural-political dynamics as suggested by Farnell (2000) and Ingold (2001). Both authors are interested in the embodied aspects of culture while thinking about the “signifying body” (Farnell) and the relevance of considering knowledge as “skills” (Ingold). They pose a challenge to the binarism that led to a constituted hierarchy in the social sciences, putting the “mind” as the main object interest: the source of rationality, knowledge, and creativity and the body as simply biological repository of the human brain. This way of perceiving the

possibilities of intellectual processes within the body leads to a new understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning devices specially when directed to dance studies. To realise the centrality of the body in the political and cultural dynamics of societies opens possibilities to analyse dance disregarding the Cartesian hierarchies, paying attention to tacit knowledge, skills, mnemonics of the body and intellectual processes that engage dance not as bodily representation of intellectual processes that exclusively relate to the mind, but as creative, artistic, socially meaningful use of the body as a producer and transmitter of knowledge.

Bringing this section to an end, I hope to have demonstrated that the subject of belly dance and Middle Eastern Dances is a rich, and growing field of research. As more and more practitioners of belly dance around the world seek to professionalise and deepen their knowledge about the practice, the demand for research and social, political, historical and anthropological comprehension grows, both in academia and among the general public. However, as posed by Sahin, ‘The dancer/researcher must always be keenly aware of all bodies, particularly her own as it’s employing, playing, and being read in gendered, classed, raced, and sexual lenses’ (2018:52). My white, female body was the source of many annoyances during my journey, however, it also granted me many privileges denied to the Egyptians in their own country, which made me perceive the numerous disparities that are typical of any country of the Global South<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, my research seeks to contribute to the construction of scientifically based knowledge about belly dance, and the communities for which it is significant, from a specific critical and reflective point of view, having in mind my own positionality as a white, middle-class, Latin-American, female dancer in the field. The procedures to reach the results will be explained in the next section.

### **1.3 – Methodology**

The following section aims to clarify the process of production of data and metadata during my fieldwork and to justify the choices regarding the types of material produced, including how this material was processed and analysed. As an overview,

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<sup>21</sup> ‘The “Global South” is not a geographic part of the planet, but the places on the planet that endured the experience of coloniality - that suffered, and still suffer, the consequences of the colonial wound (e.g., humiliation, racism, genderism, in brief, the indignity of being considered lesser humans) and ‘is not simply the land below the equator. It is an ideological concept highlighting the economic, political, and epistemic dependency unequal relations in the global world order, from a subaltern perspective.’ (Mignolo, 2011:185).



during my two months of fieldwork, I produced a daily journal that ended up with 122 typed pages, approximately 80 GB of video recordings and photographs, ten video and/or audio recorded interviews, and five answers to online surveys sent via e-mail<sup>22</sup>. All this material was organised in my computer, registered in a database and uploaded on the One Drive cloud, according to the agreement between Microsoft and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), following the rules of the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD – Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata), in which this project was registered, evaluated and authorised.

The collaborators with the project were given the information sheet<sup>23</sup> and gave their consent written or orally. As already mentioned, all the names of dancers, interviewees, informants and venues in this work have been suppressed or changed to ensure anonymity following ethical guidelines in anthropology. This was a difficult choice. Anthropological research, although historically constituted along with the colonial enterprise with the aim of describing and classifying humans according to Eurocentric categories, in the present day should be undertaken against this tendency. During both my process in the field and in the writing, I tried to create a space of meaningful listening and respectful dialogue to understand more than classify, in an attitude of respect and comprehension of the other. With that in mind, as a researcher, I understand that names are an important aspect of individuality and recognition not only of the self but of the social, professional and creative human being. My anonymisation, therefore, does not come with the aim of suppressing this individuality, but to protect it, having in mind that the narratives resulting from my work can affect lives, reputations and memories either positively or negatively. With that in mind, I chose not to expose anyone, trying to show my respect for and gratitude of everyone that collaborated in this work.

The only exception in this process was the name of Khayriya Mazin. She is a traditional dancer from Luxor, in Upper Egypt with whom, as part of the activities of the Nile cruise with the other Brazilian tourists, I had the opportunity to take a dance class and, on the next day, to individually interview (with the help of a translator). She is the only of the Banat Mazin sisters, known as the “last *ghawazee* from Egypt”, that is still actively dancing and teaching. As I will discuss in the paper, the foreigners that come to

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<sup>22</sup> The model of the online survey with the questions made is available in the Appendix 3.

<sup>23</sup> The letter of information and consent given to the informants is available in the Appendix 4, in its English, Portuguese and Arabic versions.

research about her life and learn her dance style are an important source of income for her. She was really emphatic that she wanted her dance and her work to be disclosed and the dance tradition of her family to be passed to next generation, which made me think that to anonymise her would go against her declared wishes. Added to that, I often quote throughout the paper, the names of legendary dancers of the past or well-known dancers of the present with whom I did not have direct contact during my fieldwork. As I believe that Khayriya Mazin figures among the historical figures on oriental dance, I decided that it was important to be open about her name.

Finally, to better contextualise the reader in relation to the voices in the text, I made a list with the pseudonyms of my informants and a short biography, that is available in the Appendix 2. In this list, I explain who they are, how I met them, how I conducted the interview with them or in which situations the personal communications happened. With this strategy, I hope to make clear my informants background and the conditions in which the information was produced, which could influence their perspectives about the subjects we discussed and on my interpretation of them. It is also important to mention that this list comprises only the names that were directly quoted in this work, however there were many others, with whom I interacted in my fieldwork that informally contributed to the reflections and conclusions that are here presented.

As explained previously, I developed my fieldwork in two different stages. The first, when I attended the tourist excursion and the belly dance festival, constituted a more intense and condensed moment. The first eight days of the trip happened in Cairo and around half of the forty participants of the tour were actively engaged in the festival, doing the workshops in the afternoons and/or dancing in the evening shows. The other half was experiencing the festival as spectators, as I was. As a researcher, it was important to document how this group was experiencing their traveling and their engagement in the festival. My strategy for that was to take notes, as much as I could, of what I was observing, to take pictures of the places we went together as tourists, of the hotel where we were staying and of the facilities of the festival, and, finally, to film the dance performances that were taking place on the festival's stage.

The filming of the 'realizations' of the dances, as conceptualised by Bakka and Karoblis (2010: 172) as 'the actual dancing of a dance' was a special concern because, as these authors point out 'Film/video recording for documentation purposes needs to become a systematic and theoretically grounded tool' (Bakka and Karoblis, 2010:187). Therefore, the recordings were made with the best quality enabled by my equipment,

according to the options available to move and occupy the space, always thinking about the future possibilities regarding analysis of movement, of the environment and of interaction between dancer and the audience. I chose to record only the dancers with whom I was having direct contact and could understand better not only the realisation, but also the concept behind their performances because, according to Deidre Sklar:

Dance ethnography depends upon the postulate that cultural knowledge is embodied in movement, especially the highly stylized and codified movement we call dance. This statement implies that the knowledge involved in dancing is not just somatic, but mental and emotional as well, encompassing cultural history, beliefs, values, and feelings (Sklar, 1991:6).

Following this idea, in my project it was important to combine the documentation of dance in video with the opinions, ideas, values and feelings regarding dance expressed through speech. However, bearing in mind that the two weeks of excursion were a short period in which the participants did not have much free time nor the willingness to answer deep questions and participate in long interviews, I had to find a different strategy to get their personal statements about their experience dancing in Egypt. Therefore, in this case, I decided to send their videos by e-mail and ask them to provide brief answers to some questions in return. These answers were sent back to me written by e-mail or by WhatsApp audios that were later transcribed.

The second stage of my fieldwork took place over a longer period of time, so it was more suitable to schedule longer interviews. I used the semi-structured model of interview, setting some topics and answers in advance but leaving it open to explore themes that emerged from the dialogues. As Petri Hoppu (2018:8) states, in this kind of interview the focus and topics are decided by the researcher but it also gives the interviewee the time and scope to talk about her/his opinions on a particular subject with the main goal of understanding the informant's point of view rather than making generalisations. However, a couple of the interviews were the result of unexpected encounters and were largely improvised, working as free conversations. One singular interview was conducted via WhatsApp, with a Brazilian dancer that works in Egypt, and whose contact details I obtained only when I had already left the country. The interview was carried out over three days and resulted in a conversation of almost two hours,

recorded in a single audio file. When possible, I chose to record the interviews on video, having in mind the importance of gestures, facial expression and the visualisation of the environment to better understand the speech about dance. However, in most of the cases, this was not possible because of the noisy public environments where the interviews happened and the lack of good equipment to record images (on almost all the occasions, I used my personal smartphone).

Regarding the way I quoted the interviews, having in mind that the names were changed by pseudonyms, I put the in-text citations in between double quotation marks and the references in between square brackets, to differentiate them from the bibliography and other references used. All the interviews used in in this work are referenced in the reference list with the pseudonyms and the relation between the real and the fake name are in a personal list that I elaborated along my database. In many cases, I used citations from personal communications, which means, informal conversations that I had with friends and acquaintances during and after my fieldwork that were registered in my fieldwork journal or social media conversations. As these names were also changed by pseudonyms, I maintained the double quotation marks and the square brackets to reference them within the text, indicating that the information was taken from ‘personal communication’ but, in these situations, I did not put the reference in the reference list in the end of the paper.

Regarding the analysis of video-recorded performances, I opted for the Transcription Method proposed by Egil Bakka (2018), who explains that the process of dance movement transcription occurs when the researcher converts

one person’s specific movement sequence into some kind of writing or notation. It requires that the movement sequence is filmed so that the transcriber can study the recording and take down the movement elements in the order they occur. The transcriber can define the level of detail or the aspects of movement recorded in the transcription, but should keep to the level and the aspects as consistently as possible through the transcription. (...) The level of detail or aspects chosen, depends on the focus of the study and the questions asked. (...) A main argument for recommending this kind of movement transcription is that it allows us to establish a firm empirical basis for studying movement patterns (Bakka, 2018:2).

Hence, in an Excel table, the following elements were distinguished. First, the time code, to track each of the movements being analysed according to the minutes and seconds of the video. Second, the music, identifying the beats, phrases and bars of the song. Then, as in belly dance, different parts of the body are used simultaneously, I separated the dancers' body in "Torso movements" (chest, pelvis and hips), "Arms and hands movements or position", "Legs and feet movement or position" and "Music Related Gesture". In each of these sections, the aim is to narrate what is being performed by the dancer in terms of position of the limbs, weight distribution, movement and direction of the hips, and identify the relationship between the movements and sound-related gestures as defined by Godoy (2010).

In this author's theory, sound-accompanying gestures are 'all kinds of body movement that may be made to music but which are strictly speaking not necessary to produce sound, such as dancing, marching, gesticulating, nodding the head and so on' (Godoy, 2010: 110). These music related gestures are classified in three main categories:

1 – Iterative: 'meaning rapid repetition of small movements such as to fuse these into a single structure' (Godoy, 2010:111), like rapid shaking and rapid bouncing.

2 – Impulsive: meaning a discontinuous spike of effort followed by relaxation and/or rebound, such as in hitting, kicking, etc. Could also be called 'ballistic' (Godoy, 2010:111).

3 – Sustained: Meaning continuous effort, just like in sustained crescendos, bowing or blowing (Godoy, 2010:111).

Such categorisations can be easily associated with the characteristic movements of belly dance. The Iterative gestures can be identified with shimmies (of hip and shoulders), fast and continuous hip beats, fast twists and circle movements of hands and hips, and so on. The Impulsive gestures can be associated with accents made with hips, chest, head, limbs, the single beats and single contractions that are normally used to finish a musical phrase or highlight and accent a beat of the song being danced. The Sustained gestures are relatable with slow sinuous movements, such as pelvis, hips and arms undulations, circles and figure "eight" shapes performed with different parts of the body. This method, in my opinion, is the one that makes more understandable a dance that has as its main characteristic the simultaneous movement of different parts of the body that in a system of notation as Labanotation would get lost in the infinite amount of symbols necessary to distinguish a single step. My transcription, in this sense, is much more descriptive due the fact that my aim is to identify the effort being performed, the

characteristic of the steps in a qualitative way. My intent was to identify similarities and differences in the performances and check if there is a relationship between the movements being performed and the context in which they were presented. The details about the videos chosen to be analysed are described in the fourth chapter.

Bringing this chapter to an end, I hope to have clarified the development of my fieldwork, the theoretical background that guided my research and what were the methods used to produce, process and analyse data. Therefore, in the next chapter, I invite the reader to take a step into the belly dance world of Egypt, to get to know the complex way in which this practice is regarded in Egyptian society and how non-Egyptian dancers navigate in this reality.

## **Chapter 2: The working market of Belly Dance in Egypt**

In the following chapter, I will discuss the professional belly dance market in Egypt and the paradoxes and ambiguities inherent to it. I will contextualise historically how it was constituted to help in the understanding of these paradoxes and to introduce the differences between entertainment settings and their public. I will analyse what is the role of dance in Egyptian society: what are the different, and most of the time contradictory, ideas that the Egyptian public holds about the dance. I will discuss how dance suffered and suffers from State regulations and how foreign dancers are affected by these. Finally, I will examine how non-Egyptian dancers navigate through such work conditions and the ways in which they adapt to the Egyptian market and deal with the stigmatisation they suffer in Egyptian society.

### **2.1 - The dancing venues in Egypt**

Entertainment venues with dance performances started to appear in Cairo in the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Following a process of urbanisation and socio-cultural transformations related to the British colonial presence in the country, *cafes*, *salats*, theatres and nightclubs contained and transformed the dance that was traditionally practised on the streets by *ghawazee* and *khawals* and in the houses of upper/middle-class families by the *awaleem* (Assunção, 2018: 166)<sup>24</sup>. In this environment, *raqs sharqi* emerged as a hybrid product ‘of Egyptians actively defining and asserting their cultural and national identity while under the domination of a foreign occupying power’ (Ward, 2018:16) merging, in a dynamic and contingent way, European and North American orientalist aesthetics with local corporealities and musicalities. During the twentieth century, entertainment venues as nightclubs, boats, hotels, restaurants and performing arts settings such as concert halls, theatres and television were developed in parallel with the continuation of the more popular wedding and celebration circuit (Nieuwkerk, 1995: 50).

By the first decade of the 21st century, the prosperous moment in terms of tourism fomented the popularity of belly dance shows within the Nile boats, five-star hotels, restaurants and *cabarets* of all levels. However, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, Egypt witnessed massive protests as a part of the movement that got to be known as ‘The Arab

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<sup>24</sup> Definitions of these groups of dancers are available on the Glossary, Appendix 1.

Spring' that affected considerably the belly dance market in the country (Sahin, 2018: 88). The flow of tourism, one of the main incomes of Egyptian economy, dropped radically. Weddings, celebrations, and dance venues closed their doors for months and, after opening, with the drastic reduction of public, also reduced the frequency of performances, the size of the live bands<sup>25</sup> and the salaries of the artists.

In this context, the dance market is recovering from the uprising. The high-class entertainment circuit composed by luxury hotels (and resorts, in the case of the coast), restaurants, nightclubs and Nile cruises still exist but shrunk considerably after 2011. As the prices of these upper-class venues are inaccessible for most of Egyptian population, their public is composed mostly by Egyptian elites and tourists (with a high parcel of tourists coming from other Arab countries, especially from the Gulf). However, there are more accessible venues, such as middle-class boats, that have a bigger Egyptian audience, frequented even by entire families, as in the case I witnessed exemplified in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1** A girl goes to the stage, dance with the dancer *Samia* and is filmed by her family in a middle-class Nile boat that offers a dinner with 45min show of belly dance and *tanoura*<sup>1</sup>. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

The Cairene upper and middle class venues, the resorts and nightclubs in the North Coast (Mediterranean), Sharm el Sheikh (Sinai) and Hurghada (Red Sea) are the ones that

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<sup>25</sup>Before the revolution, most dance venues had live bands composed by percussions, accordion, violin, *qanun*, *oud*, etc. With the economic struggles, bands shrunk, with an electronic keyboard substituting many instruments and, in many cases as in discos and *cabarets*, by electronic music played by a DJ. (Sahin, 2018: 88)



offer the majority of job opportunities occupied by the non-Egyptian dancers that I had contact during my fieldwork. There is still a low-class circuit of *cabarets*, many of them located in Al Haram avenue (also known as the Pyramids street) in Cairo, that occupy a low place in the esteem of dancers and the upper-middle class Egyptian public that constituted the majority of my informants. Such venues are generally referred as “crummy” places, not appropriate and even dangerous for a woman to go to alone, as they are frequented by “Saudi men that have guns and use drugs” and where the dancers “just show around for the tips” [Said, personal communication, 2019].

The same class division of entertainment venues can also be applied to the wedding circuit. Wedding celebrations are still an important source of work for dancers and were mentioned by all my informants as their favourite setting. They claim that the family environment, the happiness of the guests and the fact that the dancer is the highlight of the evening make the perfect conditions for the performances: “the people [are] really waiting for you” [Samia, 2019]. To have the well-known and well-paid stars as Dina, Amie Sultan (both Egyptian), Oxana (Russian) or Sofinar (Armenian) dancing in your wedding is a sign of status for the family offering the party as the dancers bring with them their fame, prestige and also indicate the wealth and generosity of the hosts. The dancers with whom I had contact, occupy mostly the niche of middle-class wedding celebrations. The *shaabi* (or popular) wedding circuit is occupied by Egyptian dancers from less-privileged background, with their struggles and hardships, a remarkable contrast to the glamourised general idea about belly dance presented in the documentary *At night, they dance* (Lavigne and Thibault, 2010)<sup>26</sup>.

It is then possible to attest that the belly dance market in Egypt is marked by the profound stratification of Egyptian society. It is important to highlight that social class and gender norms and roles are significant in understanding the differences in the development of this dance form, the niches occupied by different dancers and their public,

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<sup>26</sup> The movie directed by Isabelle Lavigne and Stéphane Thibault is one among the quite few that portrait the belly dance scene in Egypt, most of them, interestingly, being French productions interested in the “sensual belly dance that is performed in the conservative Middle East” (the titles are available in the reference list). The short videos and documentaries, although reproducing the western stereotype of the submissive binary related to oriental woman: the oppressed veiled one and the sensual dancer (Mernissi, 2001; Abu-Lughod, 2015), they illustrate well the contradictions I have been tackling here. As an example, *Ghazeia, Danseuses d'Égypte* (1993), directed by Safaa Fathy, according to the *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers* is a ‘A film portrait of two very different belly dancers: the famous Lucy of Cairo, and Sabah from a village along the Nile delta. They come from different social *milieus* but they share the stigma of having to assert themselves against the contradictory roles that society forces upon them. Belly dancers are a screen on which to project human fantasies and yet they are socially marginalized.’ (Hillaier, 2005: 79)

as well as the social impact of discourses and visions about dance in their lives. Furthermore, political, economic, and religious contexts affected the importance, status, popularity and regulation over belly dance and its dancers, that had ups and downs over history. In the next section, I will discuss in more detail the status that belly dance has in Egyptian society to understand how it affects belly dancer's work and opportunities.

## 2.2 – How Egypt relates to dance

Dance, in the Islamic world, is a subject surrounded by contradictions, ambiguities, regulations in a dynamic way and contingent way. As argued by Shay (2005), when discussing Dance and Jurisprudence in the Islamic Middle East, indigenous forms of dance performed by professionals are 'widely perceived as a negative and often disreputable symbol of behaviour that contains within it, the view of large segments of the population, the potential for social disruption (*fitnah*)' (Shay, 2005: 86). Because of that, dance has been a subject of religious interpretation and State regulation. Already in the early 19th century, there is evidence that female public dancers were heavily taxed by Egyptian government, alongside other workers that provided services in the public space (Toledano, 1998: 279). In 1834, female dancers were banned from Cairo and Alexandria, forcing them to move to villages in Upper Egypt, deepening their marginal position in Egyptian society. If the ban prevailed in the second half of 19th century is still in discussion by researchers (Ward, 2018: 54-55), but during the 20th century, it is certain that authorities regulated, and controlled dance activities in an arbitrary and inconsistent way, censoring dancer's costumes, prohibiting behaviours and practices (Nieuwkerk, 1995: 63-64). At the same time, dance is an important mean of social expression, acceptable – or even essential – in celebrations such as weddings and other social gatherings as legitimate and necessary manifestation of joy.

Such ambiguities were already subject of discussions<sup>27</sup>, but Karin van Nieuwkerk (1995) and her ethnographic book about female singers and dancers in Egypt in the end of the 1980's is a reference work to understand these dynamics. Working mainly with the decadent scene of the Muhammed Ali street and the perceptions of Egyptian society regarding professional dancers, the author demonstrates how entertainment is treated, along other "dishonourable professions" as a source of moral disruption and deviation of

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Adra (2005) and Roushdy (2013).

religious and civic acceptable behaviour. The cultural marginality of female entertainers ‘pertains to the fact that they do not have the habits and qualities considered to be feminine, such as sitting home, producing children, and avoiding contact with male strangers.’ (Nieuwkerk, 1995:6). From the dancers’ side, it generates a constant need of reaffirmation of qualities that society see as honourable being one of the highlights the statement, among the dancers coming from unprivileged backgrounds, that dance is ‘a trade like any other’ (that is the title of her thesis) and they do that for the sake of theirs and their children’s livelihood (Nieuwkerk, 1995:159).

When talking about the nineteenth century context, Bunton (2017) points to a series of characteristics that were highlighted in European documentation and literature about Egyptian dancers, that used to disqualify their morals through their association and invasion of the male domain as the perception of the dancers as financially independent and unsubmissive, with a tendency to smoke and consume alcohol (Bunton, 2017: 37). In the travel reports I analysed in previous research (Assunção 2014 and 2018), I noticed that it was common for Europeans to disdainfully comment on the high remuneration that the dancers usually received for their work and on the ostentation of coins and jewellery in their costumes. Such disdain, according to Bunton (2017: 40), was a way to criticise the demonstration of financial independence, something considered inappropriate for a woman, who should be economically dependent on a man. Furthermore, European literature often describes with a critical tone the assertiveness of the dancers' looks and attitudes, that would contradict the modesty that was expected from a lady.

Interestingly I could perceive a similar phenomenon in my fieldwork conversations about dance. The matter of payment was an issue often brought as an example of the low morality of the dancers and their audience. An Egyptian friend showed me a picture of the payment sheet of an agency that organises wedding parties, listing the names of dancers and their commissions, saying that such a list went viral on the internet [Abdalla, personal communication, July 2019]. I found a copy of this list posted on a Facebook page that shares work opportunities in Egypt. The list was posted as a joke, saying, in an ironic way ‘These are the dancers' salaries. I hope we understand that we don't have a place here (Egypt)’<sup>28</sup> (EgyptCorner.com, 2019). The general comments on the post were about the astonishment with the high payments of the dancers (varying between around 400 and 1000 Euros, supposedly for a two hour show). Most comments

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<sup>28</sup> On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June of 2020, the post had 354 reactions, 312 comments and 361 shares. The translations were made by classmate, Fadi Giha and my friend Abdelrahman Ali.

were made by male Egyptians, making jokes about the high prices and affirming, with antipathy, that probably the dancers were actually payed much more than that. Several comments suggested that the high commissions were related to sexual work that would come as an extra after the performance. Some commentators mock the fact that, even though they have degrees and qualifications, they would never be as highly payed as a dancer, that is seen as a unqualified worker, who is not educated and whose only attribute is to have a beautiful face and body. One even commented: ‘Amie Sultan is an engineer! Such a smart shift of career!’ (EgyptCorner.com, 2019).

Amie Sultan is one of the well-known Egyptian belly dancers that appeared on the above-mentioned list. In my fieldwork conversations, her name arose several times as a more respected dancer due to the fact that she has a degree in engineering, the statements being: “she is different because she is educated” [Said, personal communication, July 2019] and “she does not work for the tipping but because she loves to dance” [Saad, personal communication, June 2020]. Her greater respectability among the Egyptian public comes also from a self-campaign of valuation of belly dance as part of Egyptian cultural heritage. As an example, she is the star of a short video posted by VICE Canada with the title ‘How to Treat a Belly Dancer by a Belly Dancer’ (VICE Canada, 2019). In the three-minute video she makes statements such as ‘We are not sex workers. Oriental dance is important because it is history, heritage and culture. I dance because I love to dance. (...) Consider oriental dance the same way you would ballet’<sup>29</sup>. However, even with this campaign, she still suffers from stigmatisation as is exemplified with these two comments posted in the commentary session of the video:

I do agree it’s art and you’d like people to respect you. But showing your almost naked body and doing provocative moves are only making things difficult for you lady. Why don’t you cover up with the hijab and do the same moves and perform the same art.’, and ‘Although she’s quite good & beautiful, I wouldn’t be so quick to be entertained by her. Perhaps she’s looked at sexually because lack of clothing? I’d definately (sic) avoid her if I was in a relationship. Don’t want him thinking of her all night. (Facebook users on VICE Canada post, 2019).

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<sup>29</sup> I think that it is interesting to point out here that the whole aesthetic of the video produced by VICE Canada, instead of reinforcing the words of the dancer, contradicts her statements, reproducing the association of belly dance with strip tease, as they used in their edition neon font subtitles, a strip tease music in the background, and close ups in her breasts and hips while she was dancing.

The provocation of male desire and potential disruption of families that the female dancing body could cause, making a man look at the dancers, desire them and waste his money on them instead of spending it on their families, are also among the sources of stigmatisation of dancers in Egypt. Nieuwkerk (1995: 43-44) explains that around the 1920s and 1930s in *salats*, the entertainment houses with *raqs sharqi* and music performances, the main task of the female entertainers was to sit and drink with the customers and make them spend their money on bottled beverages, a system called *fath* (from the verb in Arabic, “to open”). Such practice is depicted in a scene of the famous Egyptian play *Al Ayal Kibrit* (“No Longer Kids” in the English translation offered by Netflix) that was released in 1979. The recording of this play, according to an Egyptian friend, is one of the classic movies that families gather to watch every Eid<sup>30</sup> [Abdalla, personal communication, June 2020]. In the scene in question, the only woman among the four siblings tells her brother, Sultan, that she was offered a job as a dancer in a *cabaret*. The brother’s immediate reaction is to consider it a tragedy for the honour of the family.



**Fig. 2** – Scene of the play *Al Ayal Kibrit*, where Sultan (played by Sa'eed Saleh), reacts to Sahar’s (played by Nadia Shoukry) new job offering (No Longer Kids, 1979).

However, Sahar convinces Sultan by saying that she will make a lot of money as a dancer and as a “opener”, sitting with the costumers and making them drink. She argues: “Just think with me, Sultan. How many years did you spend in school? And how many

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<sup>30</sup> Religious holiday.

years are left until you graduate? And after you graduate and find a job, what will be your salary? (...) See how a loser you are? In less than a month, I will have lots of gifts and lots of money”. And the dialogue follows with laughs from the audience. I introduce it here as an example of the reputation of the professional dancer reproduced in Egyptian mass culture, that makes fun of the supposed lack of education and morals of dancers, on the one hand, and their high payments, on the other.

Having in mind the strong stigmatisation that dancers suffer in Egyptian society, the Egyptians themselves face many obstacles and social restrictions to become professional dancers. There are no formal belly dance schools in Egypt, and “If a mother would put her daughter in a belly dance school, people would say that she is crazy!” [Sahar, 2019]. As demonstrated before, even the famous Egyptian dancers, although being beloved and well payed superstars, often have to deal with public shaming. For example, when talking about the issue, with an Egyptian from the staff of one of my accommodations in Cairo, he told me: “It is complicated to be a belly dancer here because Egyptians are hypocritical. They will never marry a belly dancer, but in their marriage, they will always hire one to dance in the party”. He then gives me the example of the superstar Dina, that is constantly questioned by the media about the impact of her profession on the life of her son, which is said, was sent to study abroad to not suffer from her mother’s stigma [Mostafa, personal communication, 2019].

Added to the cultural perceptions on gender and sexuality related to the activity of dance that prevent Egyptians to become professional dancers, there is also a tendency on the contemporary belly dance market to value white dancers. As stated by a French dancer with Moroccan origins:

And you have to be white. If you are white, you work more. So, me, I try to go to not go to the sun, to the beach, to be more white because when you are (...) like, *bronzée* it mean you are not clean. (...) So *chic* people are white. So I try to... to be white. That’s difficult because I’m Moroccan and this is my skin, and I cannot... So I know some places prefer this one because she is white. Like, Ukraine they are very white and blonde. And some places don’t care [Samia, 2019].

It is then noticeable that there are many factors that both attract and create a demand for foreign dancers to work in Egypt. However, although non-Egyptian dancers

are reaching the fame of their Egyptian counterparts, there is still a nationalist sentiment among Egyptians and also in the international belly dance community that puts the Egyptian dancers as the holders of the true art and essence of belly dance. An Egyptian 18 years-old girl told me: “Dina, she is the last one that represents the old way of dancing. The new ones, I don’t know, mixed up with foreign things and don’t represent our culture anymore” [Zeina, personal communication, 2019] and an Uber driver stated: “Russian dancers are beautiful but lack the Egyptian side. They are famous more because they are sexy but they don’t dance like an Egyptian” [Uber driver, personal communication 2019]. Moreover, such a perception also affects the dancer’s works, as it is possible to notice through the words of *Christine*, the Australian dancer:

When I first came here, we were copying the Egyptians. And it was almost a test how Egyptian we could be. And if someone thought we were Egyptian, that was the highest compliment we could get. We tried. I even dyed my hair black. I tried to, you know, know the language, try to be as Egyptian as possible. That was my aim. (...) Now the Egyptians are copying the Russians and I find it mind bubbling [Christine, 2019].

It is then noticeable that the professional belly dancers in Egypt, nowadays, have to navigate among ambiguities that must be understood regarding class backgrounds of both audience and the dancer, matters of race, gender roles, age, ideas of sexuality and property that are in constant conflict. I thus argue that an intersectional understanding of the interactions of the categories of gender, race and class are essential to tackle the dynamics and conflicts of the presence of non-Egyptian dancers in the belly dance market in Egypt. In the next section, I will discuss the experiences of three non-Egyptian belly dancers and how they relate to the stigmatisation in Egyptian society and to the demands of the commercial market for dance in the country.

### **2.3 – How non-Egyptian dancers navigate in the Egyptian belly-dance market**

In this section, I will share the perspectives of three different dancers that I interviewed during and after my fieldwork in Egypt. They are *Christine*, an Australian dancer with Russian origins that has been living in Egypt for more than 20 years and worked in Nile boats, on cruises, in hotels, festivals and *cabarets*; *Samia*, a French dancer with Moroccan origins that has been living in Egypt since 2013 working on Nile boats, in cabarets, discotheques and festivals; and *Letícia*, a Brazilian dancer with a year’s

experience working in resorts, *cabarets*, bars and discotheques in Sharm el Sheik, Cairo and the North Coast.

A common point of reference for the three women is an apparent contradiction between the idealised glamour of their work and the reality that does not encompass this, in so far as it is laced with actual abuse. Sonya reported that her first job in Egypt was in a well-known upper-class Nile boat in Cairo, where she had a month's contract, with daily shows in the evenings, from 7:30pm to 12:30am and no day off. She comments that on the twentieth day of work, she complained to the dancer that arranged the job for her of tiredness and pain in her feet, to which the boss answered "You have no blood, it's ok. Continue.", and "Day off why? You are 22. You are tired of what?", which *Samia* completes with the following: "So we don't have day off in Cairo because if you take day off, people will take your place" [Samia, 2019]. Similarly, *Christine* affirms: "I remember sometimes just crying, like... I'm like: this is too much, I can't do it every day. I need a day off, I need a week off. But you couldn't. (...) Someone else will take your job. You just can't not go to someone's wedding." [Christine, 2019]. In both cases, the ones that were pushing them to not take a day of rest and reinforcing the demands of the managers were two well-known and well-influential Egyptian dancers and dance teachers that acted as intermediaries in order for the two dancers to enter the job market.

Besides the pressures of the working hours there is also a control of the dancers' bodies and, in all the cases, the figure of the male manager plays an important role. Because of the intricate documentation and licences necessary to work in Egypt, foreigners – but also Egyptians – normally depend on a manager to arrange the documents for them, to contact the dance venues and arrange work. Therefore, the managers make their living from how profitable a dancer is. And the profitability of a dancer depends a great deal on their looks, as explained by *Leticia*:

As I told you, the body comes in the first place. (...) Unfortunately, you can be wonderful on the stage, to study a lot, have an amazing technique, be a great dancer, but, this doesn't sell. What sells is a beautiful body at first. Then comes the technique. This is, unfortunately, very sad. But it is the reality here. Because here is money. *Flus*. Here



everything revolves around money. All. Absolutely everything.  
[Leticia, 2019]<sup>31</sup>

The control of the dancer's bodies passes through many instances: make up, hair, weight, size of the breasts, costumes, colour of the skin and of the hair, as already mentioned. As another example, *Samia* commented that on a day that she was supposed to have been off work, her manager called her saying that he had arranged work for her. She answered that she could not go because she had taken off her hair extensions to hydrate them. The manager insisted that it was no problem, but, when she arrived in the venue, the "big boss" said she could not work without the hair. Dancers also report the pressure to lose or gain weight and to do plastic surgery with managers imposing restrictive diets, as reaffirmed by *Samia*: "Here body is everything. (...) I think I lost 15 kilos to work here. Because here, body is more important than your technique" [Samia, 2019].

The centrality of a normative and ideal body comes along with the control over the dancer's costumes. *Leticia* reported that, when coming from Brazil, she had to change all her costumes to adapt to the local taste "which are a little more revealing". She added:

I made a big investment [buying new costumes] because here, if you don't have a big breast, if you don't show a leg, no one will watch you. Your costume, the more revealing, the more attention of the public you will have, being them man or a woman. (...) There was a manager of mine who said to me at the beginning: "The more naked you are, the more chances to become a star". And this is very messed up, very derogatory for us. But it's the reality. The reality here is: you have to have a big breast, you have to show your thighs, you have to, yeah..., dare, you know. The more of your body you have on display in your performance, the more chances you will have to be seen and recognised [Leticia, 2019]<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> All the translations from interviews that were made in Portuguese, were made by me. Therefore, the original versions are available in the Appendix 5. This is Appendix 5, Interview quotation 1.

<sup>32</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 2.

However, as already mentioned, the dancers are under State regulation, which include norms for the costumes<sup>33</sup>. *Samia* reports that, according to the legislation, the dance costumes cannot be too revealing and dancers are obliged to wear a *shabaka*, that is a kind of transparent elastic cloth to cover the belly, and shorts that reach to the middle of the thighs. She explains that, “of course nobody respects this rule because it is horrible” [Samia, 2019]. However, the dancers are constantly trying to avoid the police who occasionally inspect the venues. Indeed, there were cases of dancers being sentenced to fines and even arrested for ‘inciting debauchery’, two well-known examples being that of Sofinar (Armenian) and of Johara (Russian) (Nabbout, 2019). This kind of occurrence helps to consolidate the discourse that, in Egypt, dance is becoming more vulgar, mainly through the foreigner dancers’ fault. Such statement was constantly repeated to me by Egyptian citizens and by dancers from different nationalities.

Therefore, arriving in Egypt, foreign dancers also suffer from stigmatisation. All of them told me that they cannot be open about their professions, having to hide it even from neighbours. As *Christine* [2019] recounted: “I had to move from my apartment several times. Once they found that I was a dancer, I was not welcome in the building anymore.”. Similarly, *Leticia* [2019] stated: “I already worked in hotels that, in the moment the staff found out that I was a belly dancer, they started to treat me like garbage”<sup>34</sup>. Likewise, *Samia* [2019] affirms that what she hates more about Egypt is having to hide her profession and not demonstrate pride about it. It is then noticeable that the stigma that affects the Egyptian dancers are extended to the foreigners that come to work in the country. Although they do not suffer the same family reproaches that Egyptian women willing to become dancers face and, sometimes, end up benefiting from privileges guaranteed by their passport and skin colour, they also occupy an ambiguous position in Egyptian society, being beloved on the stage and marginalised in their daily lives.

In conclusion to the chapter, it is clear that the dancers face complexities and paradoxes embedded today in the Egyptian belly dance market. These include the fact that dance is adored while dancers are demeaned; that there is a demand for fair and blonde dancers who are never considered ‘as good as the Egyptians’; that the growing vulgarity of the dance and the exigencies to have an ideal dancing body are heavily criticised but are also a compulsory requirement on the part of the employers. In the

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<sup>33</sup> For more details about the rules on belly dancing in Egypt, consult the account of Luna (2018), a belly dancer from USA narrating her issues with the ‘belly dance police’, and Arvizu (2004).

<sup>34</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 3.

following chapter, the relationship of the international dance community with this market will be discussed, using as study case my analysis of the experiences of a group of Brazilian tourist/dancers who went to Egypt in the Summer of 2019 with the aim to experience dance and culture in Egypt.

### Chapter 3 - ‘Essa é a mistura do Brasil com o Egito’<sup>35</sup>: A group of Brazilian dancers and their experiences in Egypt

This chapter shifts to a specific niche of the larger belly dance market in Egypt and focusses on dance festivals and the dance tourism industry, targeting the experiences of a group of Brazilian dancers in Egypt. I followed them for thirteen days, during their cultural holidays, and participated in the *Mystical Egypt Tour*, a tourist package organised by two oriental dances teachers from Rio de Janeiro. Through this tour, I will analyse the tourist’s representations of Egyptian culture and Egyptian dance resulting from their engagement in the *Marhaban Festival* and their experience of the country as tourists. First, I will explain what the tour is, who organises it and who participates in it. Then, I will focus on the two different stages of the tour: the *Marhaban Festival* in Cairo and the Nile Cruise in Upper Egypt. Within each of those events, I will expose contradictory situations that revealed contradictory attitudes related to the development of belly dance in Egypt and in Brazil. My aim is to analyse these contradictions and what they can illustrate about the relation that Brazilians developed with the Egyptian belly dance market and how a specific dance style was developed from that relation (which will be the theme of the fourth chapter).

#### 3.1 – The Mystical Egypt Tour

As already mentioned, the *Mystical Egypt Tour* was devised by two oriental dances teachers from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: *Lúcia* and *Mariana*. They explained to me that their initiative to establish the *Mystical Egypt Tour* came with the aim to provide dancers with an experience of the culture they study and to foment their own research on Egyptian folkloric dances [Lúcia and Mariana, 2019]. Encompassing both the tourist

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Essa é a mistura do Brasil com o Egito; tem que ter charme pra dançar bonito’, which can be translated to ‘This is the mixture of Brazil with Egypt; you have to have charm to dance nicely’ is the first line of a song by *É o Tchan!*, a Brazilian musical group of *pagode* and *axé* from Bahia that became very popular in the second half of the 1990s. With several songs of erotic content and double meaning, the group became popular with the dance performances of the trio Carla Perez, Débora Brasil and Jacaré. The song “Ralando o Tchan (A dança do ventre)” was released first as a single in 1997, and then in the album “É o Tchan do Brasil”, that sold more than two million copies. The song and the videoclip are a compiled of orientalist erotic stereotypes regarding belly dance and the “orient” with intended comic aspects. This song was often sang (as a joke) by some of the Brazilian tourists in the two weeks trip to Egypt as, nowadays, it can be considered a “classic” from popular culture of the 1990s in Brazil, although its absurdly explicit sexual content. The video clip, as it will be discussed later, represents the eroticisation of belly dance in Brazilian mass culture, which can be considered as one of the reasons for some of the counter-discourses that will be disclosed in this chapter. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTQecKQBUs> (Accessed 28 June 2020).

aspect and the dance engagement, *Lúcia* and *Mariana* offer an opportunity to Brazilian dancers to experience Egyptian culture with all the commodities of an organised tour: luxury hotels, cruise and resorts, transportation to the tourist attractions and a tour guide that speaks Portuguese. At the same time, *Lúcia* and *Mariana* use the opportunity and the incomes from the organisation of the tour to deepen their knowledge on Egyptian folklore and culture through workshops and classes with Egyptian teachers, and to promote their work and expand their network with dancers on the influential *Marhaban Festival*.

The tour, as already mentioned, is divided in two stages. The first eight days happen in Cairo, where the whole group is provided accommodation in the hotel where the *Marhaban Festival* happens. Although most of the participants are involved with oriental dance in some way – from professional dancers to amateur students – just half of them were directly immersed in the festival, participating in the workshops, dance shows and dance competitions<sup>36</sup>. The other half, such as myself, were attending the festival as spectators of the dance evenings and had the opportunity to undertake optional tours during the day, such as a visit to Alexandria and to museums, or sight-seeing.

The second half of the tour included four days on a Nile cruise, from Aswan to Luxor and two days in a beach resort in Hurghada on the Red Sea. After Cairo, half of the participants returned to Brazil for different reasons: some came just to participate in the dance festival (mostly those that had already come on other occasions), others had limited time or budget to travel. Therefore, on the second half of the tour, only around twenty participants remained to explore the Nile and desert landscapes, pharaonic temples and, afterwards, rest on the beach resort (that I did not attend, as I remained in Luxor when they left for Hurghada). Having all that in mind, I will discuss in the next sections in further detail the experiences of this group of Brazilian dance tourists on the two parts of the tour and the contradictions that emerged from their relation with the Egyptian belly dance market.

### **3.2 – Part 1 of the Mystical Egypt Tour: The Marhaban Festival**

The *Marhaban Festival* is one of the most well-known Belly Dance festivals in the world, created and organised by a well-known Egyptian belly dance teacher.

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<sup>36</sup> I could not get the exact numbers with the organisers but, in non-precise quantities, there were around 40 participants on the first phase of the tour (Cairo). On the second phase (Aswan, Luxor and Hurghada), just around half of them remained. The only ones that were not oriental dance practitioners were friends, partners, or relatives of dancers.

According to one of the administrative organisers of the festival, its first edition took place in 1999 and was moved to the locality where it happens today – in Giza, close to the Pyramids – in 2004 when they used to receive around 1500 participants and it was spread in 3 different hotels [Gamal, 2019]. However, as already discussed, the 2011 Revolution affected the whole tourism industry in Egypt, including the festival that shrunk considerably and became concentrated into a single hotel. With the competition of other dance festivals that started to be organised on the same dates as the *Marhaban Festival* and the general drop in tourism, nowadays, the festival is attended by around 300 participants [Gamal, 2019].

However, its prestige and relevance for the international dance community remain quite strong, attracting dancers from different countries to attend the workshops and perform in the dance shows and competitions<sup>37</sup>. The participation in the festival provides social, cultural and economic capital to dancers, that return to their home countries with the claim to have studied with the best teachers in Egypt and danced on one of the best-known belly dance stages in the world. Furthermore, the festival plays an important role not only in the international community but also in the working market disputes in Cairo as the creator of the festival is an influential personality, having trained many famous belly dancers and having the power to open job opportunities through her relationship with managers and venue owners [Samia, 2019; Christine 2019]. The participation in the festival, membership of this network of dancers and a relationship with the organiser (both personally, professionally and as a student) are a source of authenticity, legitimacy and status, opening work possibilities both in Cairo and abroad.

Regarding the group of Brazilians with whom I had contact, the reasons for their participation reflect the way belly dance was constituted as a market in Brazil. Having professional dance schools all over the country, a large circuit of festivals, workshops and competitions, the Brazilian belly dance market has created a large community with its own specificities.<sup>38</sup> The main difference with the Egyptian market is that, in Brazil, most of the amateur practitioners have formal training in schools and do it as a hobby, as a workout or for therapeutic purposes. Salgueiro (2012), in her ethnographic work with

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<sup>37</sup> Regarding the nationalities that attend the festival, according to one of the organisers, before the Arab Spring, Japan, Russia, and USA were the biggest attendees. After 2011, the USA participation almost stopped. Spain, China, Russia and Japan continued, but less than before. Nowadays, the scene is dominated mostly by Ukrainians, with participants also from Europe, Latin America, China and Japan [Gamal, 2019].

<sup>38</sup> These affirmations are based on my own experience, being inserted in the Brazilian belly dance market as a dancer, teacher, participant and consumer of workshops, courses and belly dance events since 2005 and also through the doctoral thesis of the anthropologists and dancer Roberta Salgueiro (2012).

Brazilian dancers in the late 2000s, lists the factors that lead her informants to practise belly dance: health, well-being, the love for Arabic culture, self-esteem, body-acceptance, body positivity, the beauty and sensuality of the dance, the joy of dancing, its exoticism, the mystical, magical and esoteric aspect, 'recover of femininity', freedom and creativity related to dance moves, the beautiful costumes, and so on (Salgueiro, 2012:186). As the dancing venues that offer work in Brazil are not sufficiently numerous to make a living, professional Brazilian dancers work mostly as dance teachers in Brazil or as 'international dancers' being hired to work in hotels, restaurants, resorts and desert safaris in the Arabic world, mainly the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrein, Lebanon, Egypt and Tunisia.

Bearing in mind that the participants of the *Mystical Egypt Tour* and the *Marhaban Festival* festival included both amateur and professionals, the motivations to engage in both events echoed with those highlighted by Salgueiro (2012). In my questionnaire<sup>39</sup> answered by five of the dancers that performed on the stage of the festival [Alicia; Bruna; Judite; Malu; Teresa], they indicated, as reasons for their love of belly dance, the appreciation of the music, the increased self-esteem, the therapeutic aspect to recover from emotional and physical injuries and the love for the culture. As two examples, a middle-aged amateur dancer wrote to me:

Belly dance happened to me at the time I got divorced, and the ancestral female soul called me. An unexpected appeal. Belly dance heals female wounds. If we are permeable to the thousand and one lights and voices that the ancestry of the womb intones, we are able to transform pain into art [Malu, 2019].<sup>40</sup>

And a young professional dancer, owner of a dance studio stated:

That's why I can say that I continue to dance, because it has always helped me to accept and love myself more, and with that I can help other people in that same need. And it is gratifying to see that my students start to feel better about themselves after they create this contact with this ancient and magical dance [Alicia, 2019].<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The model of the Online Survey, with the questions sent to the dancers is available in the Appendix 3.

<sup>40</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 4.

<sup>41</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 5.

These statements start to delineate the first contrasts with the exigences of the Egyptian belly dance market for an ideal, young, fit, white, and strong body that were already mentioned. For now, it is just important to note that in Brazil, although the social pressures for an ideal marketable body also exist (Salgueiro, 2012:169), there is a therapeutic appeal that is not manifest in Egypt.

Regarding specifically their participation in the festival their reasons for dancing on stage as well as their impressions afterwards varied according to the dancer's background as amateurs or professionals. For the amateur dancers, their performance experience had more to do with self-gratification and personal accomplishment. A middle-aged amateur dancer recounted that to perform in Egypt was important as a process of overcoming physical injuries from an attempt against her life, highlighting the magical aspect of it: 'I felt like ... it's magic. A magic. It is as if I had met my ancestors, with long-life friends. The moment was magical. It was wonderful.' [Judite, 2019]<sup>42</sup>. For professionals, on the other hand, the experience and approval of the Egyptian teachers and dancers were pointed out as one of the most important aspects:

It is a lot of responsibility to dance something that can be considered as belonging to them in their land (Egyptians). Like ... Who am I to prove that I can do as good as they do? But the positive feedback I got was amazing! Even more from the owner of the festival! My heart was very happy! And made me create a reason to come more often!!! [Alicia, 2019].<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, for the Brazilian dancers that are already professionals or pursue a professional career, the learning and approval from Egyptians are essential. Commonly to all of them, the cultural experience in Egypt is a way to improve their dance, as highlighted in this statement: 'It is interesting to see how people live there, the climate, the environment. You understand better. Dance is also always a cultural expression, right? With the contact with Egypt and with the teachers in Egypt, you understand better.'<sup>44</sup> [Teresa, 2019]. Therefore, the Egyptian experience is something used as a claim of legitimacy, to prove that, as a dancer, you experienced that culture, you learned from the

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<sup>42</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 6

<sup>43</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 7.

<sup>44</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 8.



source and gained approval from the bearers of the practice. However, the appreciation of the approval of Egyptians and the desire for interaction with Egyptian culture does not exist without contradictions, as it will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.2.1 – The contradiction within the Marhaban Festival: “Egyptians are not allowed”**

In this section, I would like to use an ethnographic account to introduce the biggest contradiction that I experienced during my participation on the dance festival. As described before, the *Marhaban Festival* takes place in a luxurious hotel close to the Pyramids in Giza. As a researcher, I was present on all the competition nights when dancers would perform, from around 8pm until all the dancers who paid to perform had done so. On the shortest evening, the performances finished at midnight, but the longest evening went until around 5am. On one occasion, I invited two friends to come and watch the performances with me.

The two friends were *Mohamed*, an Egyptian engineer student that I met when living in Norway and became a good friend of mine (he was in Cairo with his family for summer) and *Frida*, a German pedagogy student that we also met in Trondheim and was staying a couple of weeks at *Mohamed's* house. We headed up to the hotel together, in *Mohamed's* car, having no problems to pass through security, as I claimed that I was attending the festival. We arrived in the hall here the performances were supposed to have already started but, as on the other evenings, “Egyptian time”<sup>45</sup> was being followed strictly and the show was more than one hour late. *Mohamed* got worried with possibility of paying too much for the hotel parking, since it seemed we would still wait for a while, so he decided to take the car out and park it on the street. He went alone and took some time to come back. The show had already started when I saw him coming in our direction with an expression of annoyance on his face. He explained that the security did not allow him to enter the building again and that he had problems to finally get into the main hall. He had argued with hotel guards and with festival staff saying that he was with two foreign female friends, one of whom was attending the festival. He had to give them his identity card and his entrance was only allowed after he showed his Norwegian residence permit.

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<sup>45</sup> This very essentialist joke is commonly repeated even by Egyptians to make fun of their loose relationship time schedules.

When this episode happened, I saw in practice a statement of one of the organisers of the festival with whom I had talked that same day. I was interested in the numbers and nationalities of the participants of the *Marhaban Festival* and then asked him about the attendance by Egyptians, arguing that I had not seen any that were not part of the team of teachers or the staff. His answer, thus, surprised me. I was told that it was their choice to not accept anyone from Arab countries because of the social impact and bad repercussions it could cause. The organiser claimed that the media could accuse the festival of teaching “sexualised dances” to Egyptian girls. As a result, they do not accept any kind of local media inside of the festival. Their advertisements are done exclusively on the internet for a foreign public. In his words: “I don’t need the news saying that I am encouraging girls to be dancers” [Gamal, 2019]. Indeed, negative public opinion could cause problems with the authorities.

The situation with *Mohamed* materialised these statements from the festival’s organiser and made evident the many contradictions inherent to the practice of belly dance in Egypt that were already discussed. The rhetoric used to sell the Festival stresses its role in the international dance community: since belly dance has become a worldwide practice, being transformed in every country it passes through, this festival seeks to establish Egypt as the international centre for belly dancing. As said by the organiser: the festival gives prestige to dancers because they come to learn at the source [Gamal, 2019]. While a range of foreign teachers are invited to teach in the festival, there is a common discourse that places belly dance as a typical national product and symbolic of its people and the Egyptians as the only authentic dancers of this modality. As already discussed, the Brazilian dancers value the opinion and the learning with Egyptians. Paradoxically, Egyptians are not allowed to participate or even to watch the performances, mainly done by foreigners (and most of the festival participants are not even aware of that prohibition).

Having then perceived that the contradictions of Egyptian views on belly dance – the love for the dance and the marginalisation of the dancer – thus affect also the structure of dance festivals in the country, I shift now to the discussion of the second stage of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*.

### **3.3 - Part two of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*: The Nile Cruise**

The second stage of the *Mystical Egypt Tour* was dedicated, mostly, to tourism along the Nile route between Aswan and Luxor. To analyse the impressions and meanings

that this stage of the trip had for the group of Brazilians and how it was related to dance, I will narrate some scenes, directing the focus of my observation on one of the women in the group. Her name is *Andreia*, and she is a dance teacher in Rio de Janeiro, with experience in gypsy and oriental dances. In her words: “I don't work with belly dance, but with Ancient Egypt. I studied the Ancient Egypt in order to get to the dance” [Andreia, 2019], which made this second length of the trip very meaningful to her.

We all arrived in Aswan early morning, after an overnight flight from Cairo. The group joined the cruise and, afterwards, went directly to visit the Philae Temple, in an island in the middle of Nile<sup>46</sup>. In most of the visits to archaeological sites, since Cairo, *Andreia* always demonstrated much emotion, sharing with the rest of the group her knowledge about mythology, the symbolism of the wall carvings and dance gestures related to them. When we were in Philae, the tour guide explained its history, mentioning that the temple had been built by Greeks in homage to the goddess Isis to please the religious people of Egypt around 400 AC. *Andreia*, as in other situations, became so emotional that she started to cry and exclaim “that’s wonderful”.

On the late afternoon of this same day, there was an optional tour to a Nubian Village that almost all the participants decided to take. We went there in a *faluca* (a small boat, typical of Nile navigations) and, on the way back, me and other three women took the ride on the roof of the boat. *Andreia* was one of them and she started to dance as soon the boat sailed. It was an interesting moment that me and the other two just admired and filmed her dance in the beautiful light of the sunset. When we arrived at the port, the Egyptian guide saw the scene and thought Claudia was praying, therefore he waited her to finish before calling her to come down. She then answered him that she was not praying, but dancing, which, for her, was a kind of ritual. Having witnessed this scene, I asked her if she could explain her dance and its meanings to me, for which she agreed to give me an interview, that happened in the next day.

In this interview she explained that her work with dance is related to Ancient Egyptian goddesses and to the fertility rituals that used to help women to give birth. Therefore, along with personal reasons, she stated that the trip to Egypt was important for her to get in contact with this ancient world by going to the places she had studied and seen in books. It was already the second time she came with the tour organised by *Lúcia*

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<sup>46</sup> Most visits to temples and sightseeing were made very early in the morning or in late afternoon as the Upper Egyptian summer was making nearly unbearable to walk under the sun even in this early and late times.

and *Mariana* but, in the previous year, her budget allowed her to go only to Cairo. But on both occasions, she danced on the stage of the *Marhaban Festival* and the narration of her experience sums up many subjects that have been discussed here. She recounted that, in a first moment she did not want to dance, arguing that she could not “step on the stage and dance with the essence of Ancient Egypt because it is Arab, everything is changed” [Andreia, 2019]. But then, the organisers and participants of the tour convinced her to dance and even payed for the fee necessary to dance at the festival. She agreed saying: “But then, I will dance my dance. If they want, they can take me off the stage, but I'm going to dance my dance”. She described her experience as follows:

And it was fantastic because I didn't dance for the people who were there, I'm sorry. I danced for all the women who went through the history of dance [starts to cry]. For all the primitive women, I'm not even talking about dynasty, all the women who moved their bodies in gratitude for life, in search of a perfect child, in search of a perfect childbirth and they moved their bodies in the desire for it to improve their lives, as we do. (...) And it was wonderful. Because nobody stopped me, I was respected by the musicians - this year when I arrived, everyone recognised me (...) What has changed? When I left the stage, when I saw people crying, some Egyptian teachers came to talk to me, and I was more impacted than those who were watching. Because, in the end, this is what we want. We want to go back to the womb. So, a metaphor, right? (...) And when I returned to Brazil, it was like this ..., my classes increased, my students started looking for me, people started to respect me better. For the presentation? I do not know. For the courage? I don't know either. But I know that I have changed [Andreia, 2019]<sup>47</sup>.

Her account illustrates one of the common meanings of the dance for many Brazilian practitioners: its mythical/therapeutic side. She also points to the importance of having the approval of Egyptian teachers and the recognition it generates inside the Brazilian community, all topics that were already discussed. *Andreia* engaged with a great

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<sup>47</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 9.

deal of passion in the workshops of the festival, during the tourist visits to archaeological sites, and the class we had with Khayriya Mazin.

As already mentioned, this traditional dancer that lives in Luxor, in the South of Egypt, is the last of the Banaat Mazin sisters that is still active dancing in celebrations but, mainly, teaching her techniques to foreign dance researchers. As stated by Ward (2018b:3): ‘Since the 1960’s, dancers with more than a passing interest in Egyptian dance tradition and history have made the pilgrimage to visit the famed Mazin family of Ghawazi in Luxor.’. So Mazin’s recognition in the international dance community is, mainly, among dancers with more academic or in-depth independent research about the history of belly dance or Egyptian traditional or folkloric dances. As *Lúcia* and *Mariana* have a big interest in the folk dances, they pay visits and take dance classes with Khayriya every time they come to Luxor and, if she is available, offer this opportunity to the participants of their tour.

Participation in the class cost 60 US dollars or 960 Egyptian pounds, which included transportation by bus and translation. We were sixteen people in the intimate space of her house: the two organisers, eight students, the translator, Khayriya and four musicians.



**Fig. 3** - Khayriya Mazin giving an explanation about her dance and her history to the Brazilian students. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

She began her class by telling the history of her family and how she started to dance while, at the same time, phoning her sister to bring CDs and DVDs to sell to us. As everyone was already anxious to start the dancing class, we moved to her room, where the musicians were seated on her bed, waiting for us. As they started to play, we started to dance, following Khayriya's moves. She gave no instructions, just danced, and pointed to her feet, showing that she wanted us to pay attention, mainly to her steps and the rhythm. As we were in a tight circle, she danced in the middle of us, choosing someone to come and dance with her in the centre, always paying attention to the camera I placed in a corner on a tripod. When she invited *Andreia* to enter the circle and dance with her, they danced for longer than anyone else and the music was over when *Andreia* hugged Khayriya, with tears in her eyes.



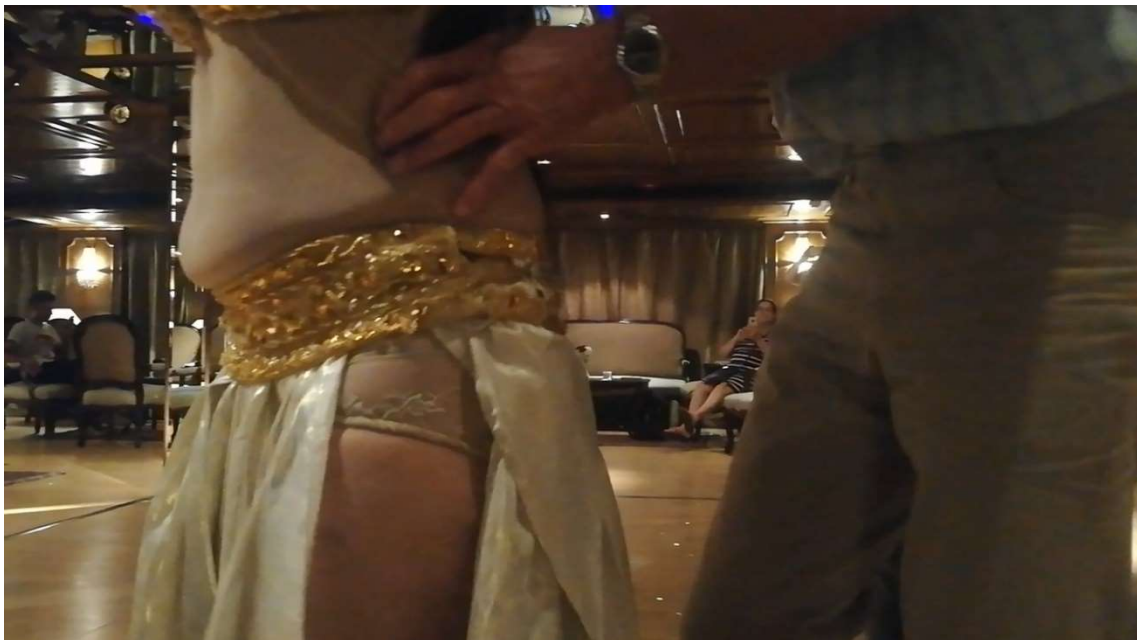
**Fig. 4** - *Andreia* and Khayriya dancing. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

The whole class took about half an hour, after what she brought us back to her living room to have sodas and sell the CDs and DVDs that her sister finally brought. We bought her merchandise, said goodbye, and came back to the cruise with happy faces and cheering emotional comments about the class and this great opportunity. With these episodes, I hope to have demonstrated how dance was also an important feature of this phase of the tour. Focusing on *Andreia's* reactions, emotions, impressions and words about her dance and her experience, my aim was to expose the contrasting meanings and relations that Brazilians establish with belly dance when compared the meanings and

relations attributed by the Egyptian public. However, once again on the boat, another contradictory situation happened, as recounted in the following episode.

### 3.3.1 - The contradiction within the Nile cruise: “Where is the public for the Egyptian dancer?”

On the first evening of the Nile cruise, there was a belly dance show at 9 pm, as is common during most of the Nile cruises in the region. Interestingly, when the show started, I was the only member of the tour there. This fact, though, was not surprising as one or the tour organisers had warned the group, when still in Cairo, that the belly dance shows in Upper Egypt were not good. The argument was that the dancers were poorly paid which compromised the quality of the performances, adding that they had tried, without success, to change the boat performance for a Nubian folklore. When I first saw the dancer, I could see that many of the words of the organisers were not lies. It was noticeable that she was not a wealthy dancer as her costume was really simple: a set of bra and belt with visible cheap material, a white skirt and a nude *shabaka* covering her stomach, as it is possible to see in the following image:



**Fig. 5** - Detail of the dancer's costumes, when she passed in front of my camera, while inviting the audience to join her in a human train. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

It was, indeed, impossible to compare her outfit with the sparkly, expensive, and well elaborated costumes sold and used in the festival in Cairo. The dancer was very short,

even with the thick platform high heels she was wearing, and not at all a beauty model. Her show started precisely at 9pm, which I was not expecting, since schedules are rarely followed with exactness in Egypt. But seeing the hurry with which she left the boat when she finished dancing, I believe I understood her punctuality, as she probably had other shows to accomplish right after. She danced to four songs, that were played by three musicians: one *tabla*, one *daff* and an electric piano. After dancing the first song in the middle of the bar, she went to each table to invite the audience to make a human train and then a circle around her, where she danced, eventually inviting someone from the audience to come dance with her, the same way Khayriya did in her class. After that, she danced two more songs, thanked the audience with a gesture and left quickly, finalising her performance that had less than fifteen minutes.



**Fig. 6** - Dancer inviting the audience to join her in a human train. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

In terms of dance, she was not as bad as I was expecting from the organiser's word and had many features that are used to characterise a good belly dance performance. First, her musical reading was very precise, beginning and finalising the music phrases and marking the beats of the music with her feet or her hips. She had good posture and used a varied repertoire of movements, mainly hip beats, *shimmies* and spins. Her *shimmy* was



perfect: loose and precise in Fifi Abdo's style<sup>48</sup>. Her spins were well balanced and well-defined, even though she was wearing very high heels that could easily make her lose her balance. She did not use extravagant and big movements such as arabesques, floor work or *cambrés*; indeed, her dance had the simplicity that is much praised in the belly dancer practitioners' discourse. It is commonly said that the dance is becoming too extravagant and fused with ballet, which makes dancers lose the focus on the hip movements. The boat dancer's dance was, basically, the dance that is argued as authentically Egyptian, with small, elegant and precise movements.

There were many strong and justifiable reasons that led the participants of the tour to not watch the dance show including lack of sleep after the overnight flight and a long day filled with tourism under the hot sun and the fact that we would have to wake up at 3 in the morning the next day to go to Abu Simbel. However, it was also interesting to note the lack of interest in an "authentic" Egyptian dancer as, until that moment, it was repeatedly emphasised how important it was to learn with Egyptians, and dance as they do. The unnamed dancer of Upper Egypt on the Nile cruise did not have the status of the well-known dance teachers from Cairo, nor the beauty and elaborated costumes of the professional dancers of Cairene venues. Nonetheless, precisely because of that, it could be said that she was the most authentic dancer with whom we had contact during the whole trip, as she had probably learned her technique through experience, from watching videos or dancing in family settings. Therefore, although her dance had all the traits valued by the Brazilian dancers, in their discourse, she was not actually considered worthy of much attention. With that in mind, I propose that the dance style developed in Brazil is a reading of what Brazilians understand as "authentically Egyptian", which passes through many cultural and corporal filters that are, actually, authentically Brazilian.

Karam (2010) brings an interesting overview about the subject. When discussing the popularisation of belly dance in Brazil, the author analyses the role of the Syrian-Lebanese diaspora in this phenomenon:

While men and women of Arab origins have usually framed the dance as an essential link to their ethnic heritage, non-Arab female enthusiasts have generally treated it as a universal dance for women. (...) These

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<sup>48</sup> Fifi Abdo is an icon of Egyptian belly dance, and the flexibility of her hip movements are well-known in the belly dance community. Her famous shimmy can be seen at the 10min and 30sec of this video: <https://www.facebook.com/barbara.zank/videos/3087578131252953/?t=634> (Barbara Zank, 2020).

moves across gender and ethnic lines, I argue, not only reveal Syrian-Lebanese men's complicity in the marginalization of Arab women through the belly dance, but in so doing, also show the reproduction of the sexual and racial hierarchies in Brazilian nationalist ideology (Karam, 2010:86).

With that in mind, I argue that such complicated relation echoes in the transnational belly dance market, where it is noticeable the predominance of white-middle class women and the marginalisation of non-white dancers. The discourse that places belly dance as a feminine and therapeutic dance, although having an interesting potential or female empowerment in the white-middle class context, excludes marginalised groups, as it is argued by Karam (2010). Furthermore, the influence and control of the masculine figure in this process is often neglected, but it highly determines the intricate politics related to this dance style. In the next chapter, I will discuss in greater depth the differences between the belly dance styles that are commercial in Brazil and in Egypt and the importance to evaluate the impositions of the male gaze, mainly through the power exercised by managers and sexist public opinion on the dance.

## **Chapter 4 - Contrasting ideas and contrasting dances: The differences in commercial styles performed in Brazil and in Egypt**

Thus far, the contrasting ideas and meanings that belly dance holds for Brazilian practitioners have been discussed in relation to the ideas and meanings that Egyptian society gives to belly dance. Regarding the professional market, such ideas, although related, are very distinct: what is commercial in Egypt contrasts with what is commercial in Brazil. In this chapter, I will discuss these differences in terms of the dancing. I will focus on analysing the movement that differentiates the dance styles as they are practised in Brazil and in Egypt. I will, however, also pay attention to the broader context, as movement depends on the music, the audience, the setting and the demands of managers and the public.

### **4.1 - Analysing movement: adaptations of a Brazilian dancer to working in Egypt**

The following section will be dedicated to analysing the transformations, in terms of movements, that operated when a Brazilian dancer went to work in Egypt and the adaptations that she had to do in terms of dance style, which encompasses not only the movement, but also the choice of songs, costumes and attitudes as a professional. I will take as study case the example of *Letícia*, a dancer from São Paulo who has been working on a contractual basis in different localities in Egypt since December 2018.

I came to know *Letícia* after I had already left Egypt, in September 2019, through her Instagram account<sup>49</sup>. After contacting her through that platform, she agreed to share her history with me on a WhatsApp interview, that took place over three days and resulted in a conversation of almost two hours. Some excerpts of her interview have already been mentioned in the second chapter, concerning the control of a dancer's body to match determined beauty standards and the changes she had to make to her costumes, to more revealing ones, in order to work in Egypt. However, beyond that, she shared with me interesting observations regarding the adaptations she had to embrace in terms of dance and movements to satisfy the demands of the Egyptian market.

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<sup>49</sup> Her account was suggested to me when I was talking to a friend (a Brazilian belly dancer) that works in Dubai. We were discussing about her views on the differences between working in Egypt and in the United Arab Emirates, as she had experience in both places, so she told me to follow *Letícia* in her social medias, as she shared a lot from her experience as a belly dancer in Egypt on this platform.

Before going to Egypt, *Leticia* gave classes and performed in a famous and influential belly dance venue in São Paulo, Brazil.<sup>50</sup> To work there, dancers have to pass through a selection process and gain a ‘quality certification’, which even dancers from other Brazilian States obtain after studying and paying to be evaluated by this institution, as this certification gives status and prestige to dancers. A characteristic of the Brazilian market, but especially in São Paulo, is the importance of these ‘quality certifications’ and the centrality of festivals and dance competitions, in which *Leticia* started to participate, winning prizes and being recognised. The opportunity to work in Egypt was made possible by a friend of hers, also a dancer, who was selected by Egyptian managers to work there. Through her friend’s influence, *Leticia* also gained one of these manager’s approval and was selected to work there, her first contract being with an entertainment company in Sharm el Sheikh, in the Sinai part of the Red Sea.

Discussing her perspectives on the differences between professional demands and notions of what is commercial in terms of dance in Brazil and in Egypt, *Leticia* commented that belly dance in Brazil is seen more as a form of artistic expression, associated with the study of the culture. Dancers, both in terms of performance and costumes, tend to follow what she calls the “princess style”: all “flowers, rainbows and birds” [Leticia, 2019]. In her view, this is a fantasy that comes from the influence that *ballet* has on the way that belly dance is performed in Brazil. She comments that, before arriving in Egypt, “I also had this romanticised view, this thing of, you know, showing the essence, the poetry” [Leticia, 2019]<sup>51</sup>. Indeed, already in her first days of working in Sharm El Sheikh, she felt the differences in styles and the demands to adapt her dance in terms of music, stage presence, costumes and dance movements. A change, in her words, ‘from water to wine’:

In my first days my manager watched me and he just said: “*Leticia*, you will stay here in Sharm [el Sheikh] until you learn it right. You will need to train a lot what we need here. Because that style of yours doesn't work here.” He was very direct with me. He said “Look, these songs don't work”. And they were songs that I previously thought they would

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<sup>50</sup> Besides that, *Leticia* used to work full time as an accountant. As already mentioned, there is not enough demand for belly dance performances in Brazil to make possible a livelihood just from that. The dancers that make it their only profession either own dance studios or give many classes a week in other studios. Most dancers, however, even the professional ones, have other careers as their main source of incomes.

<sup>51</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 10.

like. They were Umm Kulthum, Abdel Halim, Warda<sup>52</sup>. I used this type of music in my first shows [in Egypt]. But then they [the managers] cut me, saying “No! You have to put on happy songs. People want entertainment, they don't want to cry, they don't want [laughs] to ... cut their wrists.” [Leticia, 2019]<sup>53</sup>

Here it is important to note that the demand in terms of music has a big influence on the kind of movements that the dancer will perform. The performers quoted by *Leticia* and their songs belong to a category known as *Tarab*. “*Tarab*” is a general term in Arabic that describes a kind of aesthetic ecstasy in relation to some artistic object related to the act of listening, which may be a song or a poem. It can be related to a style of music and musical performance in which these states are evoked and awakened. Therefore, ethnomusicologists describe *tarab* as an emotional state provoked in the audience as a result of the dynamic interaction between the artist, the music, the lyrics, the audience, and the dancer (Dib, Marcia: 2013). The music of Umm Kulthum, Abdel Halim Hafez and Warda is the best known as being related to the state of *tarab* and such artists remain popular until the present day. It is possible to see their pictures hanging on the walls of coffee shops and restaurants all over Cairo and to hear their songs being played in many commercial establishments in Egyptian cities and villages. Their songs are also part of the repertoire of belly dance shows in many venues, especially five-star hotels and boats, when the dancer can perform along with a live band. They demand strong interpretation from the dancer, normally requiring big dramatic movements. However, in the case of parties, nightclubs, discos, *cabarets* and restaurants, where the dancer performs to recorded music, there is a bigger demand for *shaabi/maraghanat* songs.

*Shaabi*, meaning “popular” or “from the people” in Arabic, can designate the working-class neighbourhoods, their people or the music style that derives from this social class (Goodyear, 2010). *Maraghanat* (meaning “festival”), also known as *electro-shaabi*, is the new tendency in terms of music and dance in Egypt. It is played very loud from the tuk-tuks that took over the traffic in Cairo and from the *falucas* that take groups of tourists for boat-rides on the Nile or young residents to party in the middle of the river, far away from neighbours or relatives who might be annoyed by the loud music or pass

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<sup>52</sup> Umm Kulthum (1898 – 1975), Abdel Halim Hafez (1929 – 1977) and Warda Al-Jazairia (1939 – 2012) were acclaimed singers and interpreters of Egyptian songs. Warda, although born in Algeria, made her fame in Egypt.

<sup>53</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 11.

judgement on their behaviour. Some of my middle-class Egyptian informants manifested some disdain towards this style of music saying, for example, that “for me, it’s just auto-tune. It doesn’t have proper musical scale and it’s too much noise. And it also gives a wrong assumption that Egypt has no valid history or music” [Abdalla, personal communication, 2020] and that the *shaabi* lyrics and dancing are rude [Mohamed, personal communication, 2020].

The demand for *shaabi* music in many venues in Egypt, however, is a reality, as it has much to do with the demand for interaction with the public in the settings in which *Leticia* was working, for example, as she explains:

Here, dance is very simplified, you know, (...) the interaction is sometimes more important than the technique itself. Because, as I told you, there is a dancer who works here, who doesn't know how to dance, but she knows how to interact, she knows how to interpret the songs, she sings, she can captivate her audience, so this dancer will continue to work regardless of having technique or not. Because sometimes, the most important thing is to bring the audience to you. (...) Because, that is often the case, people just want, you know, to participate in something, you know. They want to be included in your show. They don't want to be there watching a person performing. Performance doesn't work here. You even arrive, yeah ..., performing, but if you want to continue, you have to demystify all of that. You have to..., change completely. [Leticia, 2019]<sup>54</sup>

She then explains that “to do performance” with arabesques, *cambrés* and big and elaborated moves on the stage was what she was used to doing in Brazil: movements that would go along with the costumes, as they would have a nice effect on the long skirts in which she used to dance. On the other hand, she states that in ‘Egypt, the context is different’. As already mentioned, she had to change her costumes, saying that the ones she brought with her, which followed the “princess style”, with long and elaborated skirts, well covering the legs, and did not have push-up padded bras<sup>55</sup>. These costumes were not approved by her manager and she had many complaints about them: “Now I only use the ones they use here, which are the ones that guarantee my salary, right? [laughs]” [Leticia.

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<sup>54</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 12.

<sup>55</sup> For examples, check Figure 7 below.

2019].<sup>56</sup> One of the reasons for the change of costumes was also the demand for specific movements, as *Leticia* explained to me:

I lived part of the nine months that I am here with a friend [another Brazilian dancer] that has been working here for two years. And she also had to go through this process of adaptation, because here dance is completely different from Brazil. She took classes with some [female] Egyptians, in which the Egyptians told her how the dance was like, how it was supposed to be, the scenic development, the importance of using the torso more than the lower part of the body, because what Egyptians really like is boobs shaking. That was what the Egyptians told her. And when I arrived, she helped me, to shape my dance. She helps me until nowadays, when I sometimes forget or stop training what they are really looking for in the market, you know. [Leticia, 2019].<sup>57</sup>

She told me that the request for more torso movements and, shimmies in her dance was a direct order from her manager, and that the changes in her repertoire of movements on the stage were one of the most challenging aspects of working in Egypt. To understand better these changes, I then searched for examples of her dance in the two different settings. I found two videos, taken from her Instagram account, that were selected to be fully investigated through dance analysis technique in order to identify the differences more clearly. The first one was posted in November of 2017 and is related to a performance in the venue in which she used to work in São Paulo, Brazil. The second video was posted in September 2019 and was filmed in a cocktail bar in New Cairo, Egypt<sup>58</sup>.

My first impression from the two videos was an evident contrast in matters of dance style and audience. In the tea house in São Paulo, owned by an influential belly dancer, the public is mostly other belly dancers and their families. In the video recording, it is possible to see seven women and two men in the audience and they are all seated, looking at her without moving. The music, to which she is dancing, is a *mejance*, a slow instrumental piece, and her costume covers all her legs with a large “siren” skirt.

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<sup>56</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 13.

<sup>57</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 14.

<sup>58</sup> The videos are not referenced here to preserve the anonymity of the dancer.



**Fig. 7** - On the left, *Leticia* dancing in a tea house in São Paulo, Brazil and, on the right, *Leticia* dancing in Cocktail Bar in New Cairo, Egypt. Screenshots from videos posted in her Instagram account in November 2017 and September 2019.

The second video is from a performance in a Cairene bar. The public is mostly masculine and it is possible to see that the three men and the woman that appear on the video are standing close to the stage, dancing, drinking, smoking and singing along with the music. The song is *Ely Byshtky Menna*, by the artist El Sawareekh, released in 2018 from the style known as *maraghanat* or *electro-shaabi*. She is wearing a tight mini-skirt and a padded push-up bra.

From this first impression, I decided to take a detailed look, breaking her dance into a descriptive dance analysis table, applying Godoy's (2010) sound-accompanying gestures classification. As explained in the first chapter in the methodology section, this system was chosen due to the meaningful classification of belly dancing movements into Iterative (repetition of small and rapid movements), Impulsive (discontinuous spike of effort followed by relaxation) and Sustained (continuous effort). I separated the music by its phrases, bars and beats to describe and classify the movements performed by the torso and by the limbs in each of the beats, identifying, in the last column, the movement that could be classified as Sustained (identified in turquoise), Iterative (identified in yellow)

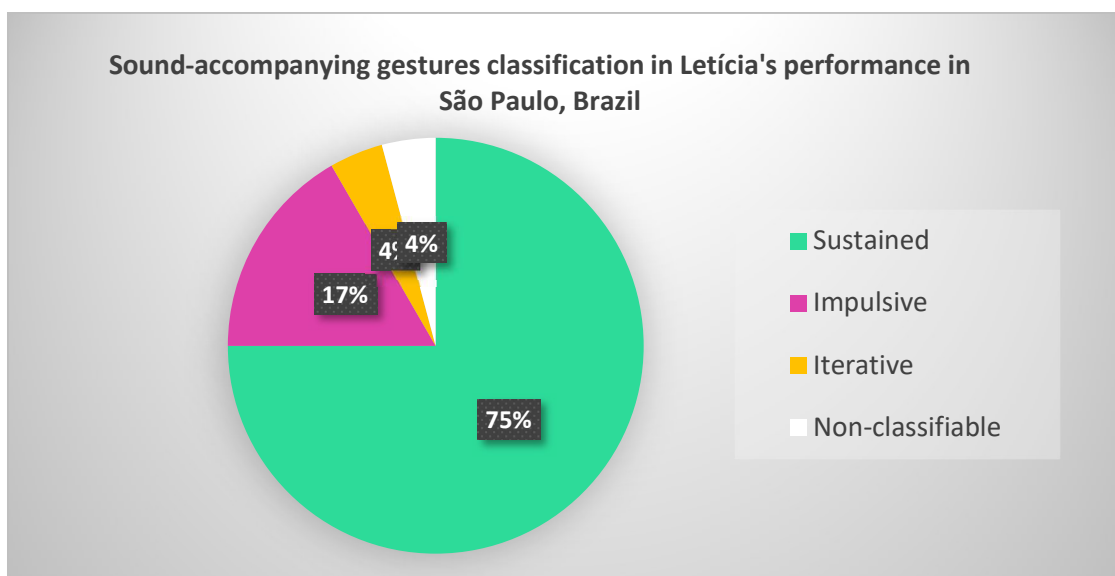


and Impulsive (identified in pink) . An example of this procedure can be seen in the image below and the two full tables are available in the Appendix 6 to the dissertation.

Time code	Beats	Phrase	Bars	Hips and chest movements	Arms/hands movements or position	Feet/body movements or position	Music Related Gesture
00:00:02	1, 2	1	1	Hip undulation (camel going down/inside).	Open as an arch to the front at the height of the shoulders.	Stepping right feet back. Body faces back side.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right.
00:00:03	3, 4		2	Vertical/down hip eight (right and left)	Open as an arch to the front at the height of the shoulders. Right arm slightly higher.	Weight on the right feet. Spin left feet to the back (180º turn). And step (weight on left feet). Body faces front side.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/left.
00:00:04	5, 6		3	Hip undulation (camel going down/inside).	Arms com from the sides (open position) to the front: hands cross in front of the body.	Step back with the right feet and full change of weight. Body faces right side.	Hip undulation -Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right
00:00:05	7, 8		4	Neutral	Right arm straight to the front, height of the shoulder. Left arm up, straight.	Bring weight back to the left, extend right to the right side and step, dislocating the body to the right. Body faces the front. Body faces right side.	Slow step - Sustained - big dislocation to the right side

**Fig. 8 - Example of Dance Analysis table.**

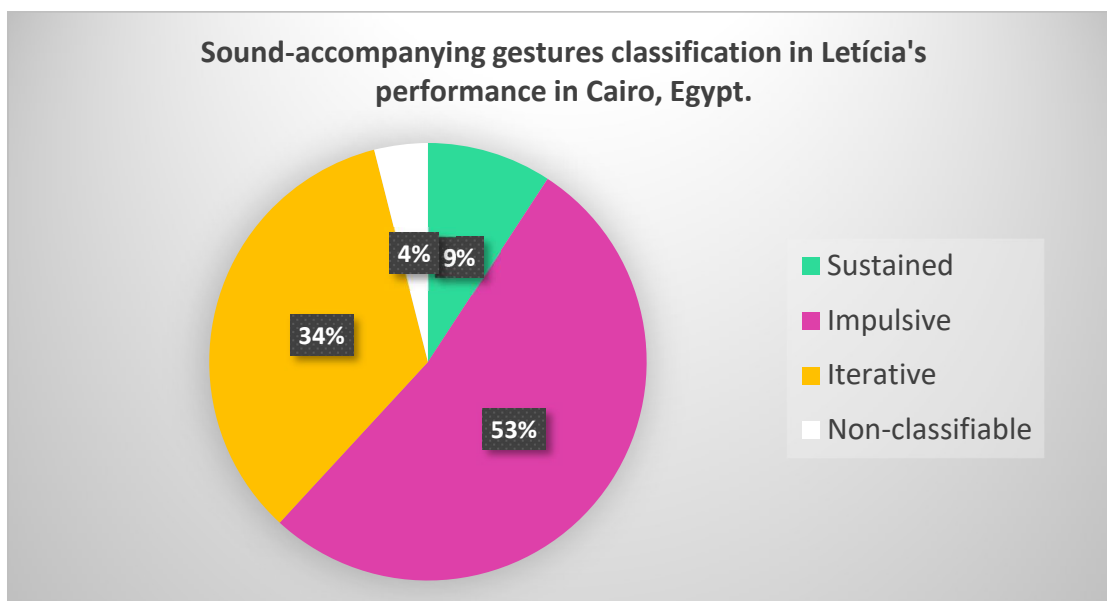
The first video has 35 seconds, in which were identified six phrases, with four bars and eight beats each. It is, therefore, a slow song that demanded slow gestures from the dancer. The steps used were mostly hip/waist undulations, circle figures and displacement steps such as turns, spins and arabesques. As these movements have as its main characteristics to be continuous, I had to identify them by the bars of the music, not by the beats (counting two beats each bar). I ended up with 24 bars, therefore, 24 classifiable movements. From these 24 movements, 18 were identified as Sustained (undulations, arms gestures, scenic steps, arabesques and turns), four were identified as Impulsive (hip beats and hair effect), one identified as Iterative (fast hip circles) and one was not classified, as it was just a displacement step. The proportions can be seen in the chart below.



**Fig. 9 - Chart with proportions of sound-accompanying gestures in São Paulo's performance.**

The predominance of Sustained steps is noticeable with these being performed slowly, and the dancer occupying the stage space, using turns and displacement steps. Gestures with the arms are important, framing her body, undulating along with the hips and sustaining the arabesques, offering a counterweight to the leg gestures. There is interaction with the costume when she grabs the edge of her long skirt and uses it as a prop for scenic effect.

On the other hand, the second video has 42 seconds, in which were identified 19 phrases with 4 beats each, thus, a faster song than the previous one. In this case, I classified the movements by each beat, not by the bars, as it was required for the type of movements performed. I ended up with 76 beats, therefore, 76 classifiable movements. From these, 40 movements were identified as Impulsive (hip beats, torso and hair accents, hands gestures as clapping), 26 movements identified as Iterative (hips and chest shimmies), seven movements identified as Sustained (hip circles and hand gestures) and three beats with non-classifiable movements (just normal displacement steps). The proportions are illustrated by the graphic bellow.



**Fig. 10** - Chart with proportions of sound-accompanying gestures in Cairo's performance.

The predominance of Impulsive and Iterative movements is clear in this second performance, in which she uses many more hip beats, hip and chest accents, single clapping to mark the end of musical phrases, the hip and the chest shimmies, which, as she said, were required by her manager. The movements are faster and precise in the music beats, not continuous as in the previous performance, and there are less

displacement steps, because the “stage” is smaller. There is also an interaction with her costume but, instead of using it as a prop, as in the previous performance, she pulls the tight skirt down twice to prevent it revealing more skin than she would want.

The classification of the movements performed in and registered from the two videos into Godoy’s sound-related gestures gives information about the kind of movements that are demanded in each different situation, which are connected both to the kind of music but also to the entire context in which the performances occur. It could then be argued that in the Brazilian venue where *Letícia* used to work, there was a bigger tendency to value Sustained movements, normally characterised as ‘elegant’ or, as told by *Letícia*, embodying a “princess style”. On the other hand, in the Egyptian Cocktail Bar, there was a demand for Iterative and Impulsive movements, characterised as being fast and abrupt, which are normally identified as being ‘rude’ or ‘vulgar’.

The classification of a dance as being ‘princess’ or ‘vulgar’, however, has reasons and implications that encompass but extrapolate the execution of single movements. It depends on the song that is being interpreted, the dancer’s costumes and facial expressions, and the interaction with the public. The three non-Egyptian dancers I interviewed [Chirstine; *Letícia*; Samia, 2019] stated that they preferred to dance to the Egyptian public because of the energy that was exchanged with the audience. Despite the stigmatisation they suffer when off the stage, the dancers claim that the happiness of the audience, their understanding of the songs and the joy they demonstrate in relation to the performance is what attracts them in the work in Egypt. Such interaction does not exist in other cultural settings, such as the Brazilian, where belly dance is an alien expression. In general, the audience do not know and do not understand the songs, assuming a passive role in relation of what it is being performed, interpreting it according to the references that are available for them. As already pointed out, representations of the “orient” in Brazilian mass culture highlight exotic and erotic stereotypes that Brazilian belly dancers have to dialogue with, producing specific modes of dealing with that through dance. The different styles of dance that are manifested in the different contexts as a result from the interaction with the general public will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.2 - Discussing the dichotomy: ‘princess’ versus ‘vulgar’**

From what has already been discussed in this dissertation until now, it is evident that dancers, historically, have suffered pressures regarding their dance style in order to

conform to commercial demands and expectations with respect to gender roles and ideas of femininity. The dichotomy between ‘princess’ and ‘vulgar’ could be compared with the Madonna-Whore Dichotomy (MWD) that ‘denotes polarized perceptions of women in general as either good, chaste, and pure Madonnas or as bad promiscuous, and seductive whores’ (Bareket *et al.*, 2018:519). This dichotomy comes with a demand for dancers to be ‘sexy without being vulgar’ to be elegant but also aggressive, to denote sexual availability without making it evident. Such exigencies create the paradoxes that are manifest throughout the discourses about dance reproduced both by dancers, in Brazil and in Egypt, and by the Egyptian public, as outlined in previous chapters.

There is a common tendency for individuals, in all the groups quoted above, to say that “belly dancing is a dying art” and to point to the past, mainly to the dancers of the “Golden Age” as a true source of belly dance as an artistic form. The Golden Age is what the period of Egyptian cinema, mainly from the 1940s and 1950s is called. This is also the period that made the fame of dancers such as Samia Gamal, Taheya Karioka, Naima Akef and Nagwa Fouad, commonly referred to with great admiration nowadays both by belly dancers from different nationalities and by the Arabic speaking public<sup>59</sup>. In Brazil, courses on the Golden Age style are offered by dance schools and the general comments are that these dancers represent “the true essence of oriental dance”. Among the Egyptian public, the comments are similar, as illustrated by the statement below, given by, an Egyptian middle-class woman and folkloric dancer:

I grew up loving belly dance. My idols were Taheya Karioka, Samia Gamal, Naima Akef. (...) But these belly dancers are something and what we see today is something completely different, ok? What these dancers used to do is try to interpret the music, they hear with their body. It’s the simplest form. (...) It’s not like today. Today, belly dancers are provocative. The image and the smiles, and the hints, and the eye glances, it’s... It’s provocative, it’s vulgar, it’s, ahh... it’s sexually... argh! It’s not right! It’s like basically provoking people to look at me in a way that’s not a decent and... In a non-decent way. This is not what the belly dancers of our Golden Age used to do [Sahar, 2019].

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<sup>59</sup> Not only in Egypt, but through the Middle East, as Egyptian cultural industry was, and still is, a reference for Arabic speaking countries.

Interestingly, many of the films in which the Golden Age dancers acted, portrayed dancers as degenerate women, often having dramatic ends as punishment for their indecent profession or, at least, portrayed as provocative artists that seduced men with their dance. Nonetheless, the statement that belly dancing is being changed and transformed in a pejorative way, mainly by foreigners, is endorsed even by non-Egyptians. For example, the Australian dancer when commenting on the popularisation of *mahraganat/shaabi* after 2011 adds that the “Russian style with the splits and hair stuff” also became popular among dancers [Christine, 2019]. As already mentioned in the second chapter, the Russian dancers and their style are a matter of similar ambiguity: their white skin and their “aggressive” movements are both a demand and a target of criticism. *Leticia*, for example, gives the example of a Russian dancer as a model that the new dancers must follow, explaining that “That's the idea of superstar belly dancer that they have here [in Egypt]. And we have to follow her because she is the one who is making money and who makes money remains in the market.” [Leticia, 2019]<sup>60</sup>.

Therefore “vulgarity” is a feature both criticised and pursued in the Egyptian belly dance market as it is the ‘Egyptian authenticity’ of the Golden Age. Managers, trying to please the public and make as much money as possible, pressure dancers to use revealing costumes, to have toned curvy bodies, use heavy make-up and hair extensions, dance to the trendy songs and use the trendy “aggressive” movements. Dancers, trying to be competitive, adapt to the exigencies, reproducing and endorsing this logic but end up being criticised and even more stigmatised by different segments of Egyptian society.

On the other hand, the Brazilian belly dance market has different exigencies but similar dichotomies. As it is self-sustaining, being produced and consumed mostly by dancers, the public for dance classes and performances is predominantly feminine. This feminine public creates a demand that encompasses individual and collective goals, as was discussed in the third chapter, and also creates responses to broader Brazilian common-sense representations of belly dance. As discussed by Salgueiro (2012: 157), Brazil has its own orientalist productions, and the image of the ‘odalisque’, the common term for referring to belly dancers, is often related to eroticism, and farcical exoticism. In her words: ‘The practitioners evidently respond to this by moving away from any sign that relates dance to the obvious eroticism present in mass culture’ (Salgueiro, 2012:

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<sup>60</sup> Original in the Appendix 5, Interview quotation 15.

160)<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, the mysticism, the sacredness and artistic aspects of the dance are what practitioners' value and pursue in order to distance themselves from these commonplace and caricatural representations.

Another aspect of the Brazilian market, which is extremely important and is aimed for, is the “authentically Egyptian”; however, the view of such authenticity passes through many cultural filters. The Egyptian market is accessed by most of the Brazilian practitioners through videos on the internet – of old movies, stage performances or social media accounts of dancers – and due to the big geographic, cultural and linguistic distances, their contexts are hardly understood. The few practitioners who have the opportunity to travel (remembering that travel abroad is possible for only the few Brazilians who can afford it) gain their experience of Egyptian reality through tourism and festivals: the same festivals that do not allow Egyptians to participate. The nuances and differences between the dance that is practised in different venues for different publics, the class stratification and differentiation in terms of dance styles and the fact that belly dancers in Egypt are highly stigmatised is much neglected by Brazilian practitioners, who tend to romanticise the Egyptian opinion on their dance.

It is possible then to argue that there are huge differences but also points of intersection between those two markets. On both sides of the Atlantic, the past is regarded with nostalgia and the Golden Age style is valued – only in discourse, as such a style is not commercial in either of the places. Furthermore, in both contexts, belly dance is regarded as a sensual and feminine dance (although also practised by men) and, because of that, it is affected by the ‘Madonna-Whore Dichotomy’ represented by the requirement for ‘being sexy without being vulgar’. Also, in the two realities there is a masculine influence that it is often made invisible by the discourse of belly dance as a feminine style. As posed by Karam (2010), men of Arab descent in the figure of musicians, husbands of belly dancers or owners of belly dance schools and venues in Brazil offer the pursued “authenticity” and validation to light-skinned Brazilian dancers who,

taking Arab stages names and donning Orientalist costumes, reinforced the ostensibly Middle Eastern quality of the dance, but also appropriated it through the idea that it belongs to women around the world. Whether staking ethnic masculine or universal feminine claims

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<sup>61</sup> ‘As praticantes evidentemente respondem a isso afastando-se de qualquer signo que relacione a dança ao erotismo óbvio da cultura de massas.’ (Salgueiro, 2012:160).

to the belly dance, Syrian-Lebanese men and non-Middle Eastern women inflected the male sexual privilege and the whitened mixture of Brazilian nationalist ideology (Karam, 2010: 108).

However, as it was possible to distinguish through Leticia's adaptation to the Egyptian market, the two contexts produced different dance styles. In Brazil, as exemplified by *Leticia's* first video and testimony, dance festivals and competitions are won by dancers that show an accurate and super-developed technique, big and scenic movements, and embody the idea of performance for an audience on a large stage (even when the setting is not on such a scale). On the other hand, in Egypt – depending on the social level and on the kind of venue – there is a demand for 'vulgarity' that is highly attacked and even prohibited by the government (*Leticia* would have undoubtedly been fined for the short skirt and the bare waist if the police appeared to inspect her show). With these considerations in mind, I end this chapter hoping to have demonstrated the complexities involved in the discourses on and performances of belly dance in Brazil and in Egypt, that will be summarised in the conclusion.

## Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, my aim was to disclose and discuss the many contrasts in the practice of belly dance in Egypt and in its transnational community, focusing on the Brazilian experience in this setting. North Africa and the Middle East are considered the cradle of this dance, which has become immensely popular outside of this region. The appropriations and adaptations to other contexts create specific cultural exchanges that I have tried to grasp in my fieldwork, being a Brazilian belly dancer myself who interacted with Egyptians and other Brazilians in Egypt. In this research, I came across a complex reality full of ambiguities, paradoxes and contradictions.

Firstly, belly dance is a popular style of dance in Egypt, which produces a significant working market related to it: venues with belly dance shows that are crowded seven days a week; weddings with belly dance presentations; specialised shops with belly dance costumes and dance festivals. However, belly dance is heavily stigmatised, having a low social status in Egyptian society. Although the famous dancers are wealthy and popular, regularly appearing on television shows, in films and in advertisements, they are constantly criticised by the media and public opinion. The mediatisation of scandals involving belly dancers ‘inciting debauchery’ (Nabbout, 2019), being arrested, fined or convicted for moral misdemeanours worsens dancers’ association with low morals. The consequences of this on their daily lives was reported to me by dancers of different nationalities during my fieldwork, as exposed in my text.

The presence of non-Egyptian dancers in the Egyptian market brings us to another contradiction. On the one hand, it is evident that belly dancers from all over the world seek knowledge and professionalisation in Egypt. This is because the country is considered the “source of authentic oriental dance” and therefore the origin of the musicality, the aesthetic, the celebrated teachers and the prestigious dancers. On the other hand, in Egypt there is a common understanding that belly dance is a national style and that the true, authentic dancers are Egyptian. However, the market does not reflect this and on many occasions, there is a clear preference for non-Egyptian dancers. The presence of foreigners, especially of Russians and Ukrainians, is a matter of intricate conflicts. Their style is often criticised as too aggressive, sexual, and acrobatic with provocative facial expressions and gestures, overall lacking in feeling despite good technique. Nonetheless, they rival, and sometimes overpower, the Egyptian stars in popularity and wages. My aim here is not to explain this contradiction – as there are many



possible reasons that should be further investigated. These could involve commercial, racial and gender aspects along with dynamics of power that capitalise on the female dancing body. Instead, I point to these ambiguous aspects to understand better how they are articulated in the international community of practitioners.

The third contradiction discussed emerged through a belly dance festival that takes place in Egypt, attracting dancers from all over the world to learn the dance “from the source”, but which does not permit Egyptians to participate either as competitors, learners or spectators. As explained in the third chapter, the *Marhaban* festival plays an important role in the local and international dance market. The organisers are Egyptians and invite teachers to give classes and dancers to perform in the Galas through networking during and outside of the festival. However, the paying participants are all foreigners and the predominance of Russians and Ukrainians both in the number of attendees and as winners of the competitions, mostly judged by the international board of teachers, was clear. Nonetheless, the festival was seen by the Brazilian group with which I was in contact as a path to experience and learn “authentic” belly dance with Egyptians in their own land.

Therefore, considering the Brazilian experience of the festival it was evident that, for those dancers, belly dance had specific meanings and purposes. The practice was often associated with an ancient, feminine, and sacred artform, aspects which they sought in their trip to Egypt. However, the sacredness and ancientness of belly dance are issues not even mentioned by any of the Egyptians with whom I talked, who mainly referred to it as an entertainment form or a “dying art” that is becoming “vulgar”. It is then interesting to suggest that these esoteric descriptions and attitudes regarding belly dance in Brazil are specific to the Brazilian cultural context. Such imagery operates as a response – elaborated by practitioners – to the Brazilian mainstream culture that often associates belly dance with sexualisation and seduction.

Finally, I investigated how a Brazilian dancer, through her stage presentation and use of her body, tackled the differences inherent in the belly dance styles practised in Brazil and in Egypt. Through her testimony and the analysis of her performance in a tea house in São Paulo compared to her dance in a cocktail bar in Cairo, it was possible to discuss those contrasts previously mentioned in terms of the commercial requirements of the two different venues. In Brazil she performed what she called “the princess style”, using specific songs that are considered “classic” accompanied by slower, interpretative, large and continuous movements. On the other hand, in Egypt she had to adapt to the requirements of the public and of her manager who asked for *shaabi* songs, faster

movements focused on the torso and breast shimmying, and a different interaction with the audience, less performative and more engaging.

In summary, I hope to have contributed to a greater understanding of the relations between these two poles present in the transnational belly dance market. Such interactions are marked by differences of understandings and by political and economic disputes. As posed by Grau (1999):

Dance is a social fact, conveying meaning through human interactions; thus it reflects ideologies and world views. Yet dance can also be used to explore and manipulate the social reality, with the potential to influence decision-making in other social contexts and occasionally to prefigure political actions. (Grau, 1999: 165)

Being belly dance a highly commercial style, that movements a whole economic network with goods and services related to it, the politics of dance encompass the different social realities of the different countries where it is practised. The complex relations of the insertion of belly dance in the global capitalist market and the participation of Brazil and Egypt in this dynamic must be acknowledged having in mind that those are extremely stratified societies in terms of social classes, ethnicity and religion. Therefore, it is important to consider the class, gender and race relations that operate in both of these contexts. In Brazil, belly dance is mostly a white middle-class female phenomenon, although nowadays there have been efforts by both men and black people to be valued for their participation in the market.

In Egypt, *raqs baladi*, the non-professional version of belly dance is widely practised by women and even by men in private settings and celebrations of different social classes. In contrast, professionally there is a class stratification, dividing venues, the dancers and its audiences into specific niches that usually do not mix: a dancer coming from the unprivileged social class is unlikely to dance in a five-star hotel. Furthermore, the tendency is that the higher the class of the venue the whiter the dancer employed, with absolutely no opening in the market for black dancers or bodies that do not fit normative female beauty standards in Egypt.

All these subtleties, contrasts and ambiguities, are under the scrutiny of a growing number of academics, as demonstrated in the literature review. There is an increasing effort and demand for significant historical and anthropological explanations about belly dance in a global setting and, especially in Brazil, where the already substantial market is

increasing each day. I finish this dissertation with the aim to share the results with the Brazilian public, where there is a clear demand for in-depth comprehension of the dynamics and meanings of belly dance in the Middle East. At this point, I hope to have contributed to the English-speaking academic world, bringing perspectives from a Latin American country on belly dance, and, more specifically, how Brazil plays out in the global market of belly dance. There is still a long way to go in fully comprehending the emergence and effects of the contradictions described in this dissertation, and this demands a longer immersion in the field and further theoretical analysis. However, I hope that the seed has been planted and that it inspires future researchers interested in the subject.

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### **Interviews:**

Gamal (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção 09 July.

Andreia (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção, 16 July.

Lúcia and Mariana (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção, 18 July.

Christine (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção, 06 August.

Sahar (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção, 20 August.

Samia (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção, 22 August.

Letícia (2019) interviewed by N. Assunção 04, 05, 06 September.

### **Answers to e-mail questionnaire:**

Judite (2019) Answer to email questionnaire elaborated by N. Assunção, 27 July.

Bruna (2019) Answer to email questionnaire elaborated by N. Assunção, 02 August.

Alicia (2019) Answer to email questionnaire elaborated by N. Assunção, 05 August.

Malu (2019) Answer to email questionnaire elaborated by N. Assunção, 05 August.

Teresa (2019) Answer to email questionnaire elaborated by N. Assunção, 28 August.

## Appendix 1 – Glossary

*Awalim* – Plural of the singular *almeh*, which designates “cultured woman”. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were considered to be artists of a higher class, having a reputation for being talented and cultured singers, able to memorise a vast repertoire of songs, often religious, having received formal training as poetry chanters in the homes of the Ottoman-Egyptian elites. Although coming from popular classes, they used to entertain elites in the domestic environment of the harem and it is likely that, among the skills these women held, dance was the least developed of them. However, the view that they acted strictly as dancers and their confusion with the *ghawazee* dancers were motivated by with the European presence in Egypt. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century they had lost their social and cultural status and the term started to designate the dancers that used to perform in entertainment halls of Egyptian cities. Spellings can also appear as *awaleem*, *awalin*, *awalem*, etc. (plural) and *alme*, *almah*, *halmeh*, *alimeh*, *halimeh* etc (singular).

*Faluca* – Small boats used in Nile navigations.

*Galabeya* – Traditional Egyptian dress. The masculine version is normally white, black or grey, has long wide sleeves and goes down to the feet. Feminine versions can be colourful, with patterns and, in case of dance costumes, with embroidery and sequins.

*Ghawazee* – In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the term designated the professional dancers who performed on the streets of Egyptian cities or at festivals and private parties. The ethnic and historical origin of this group and the very meaning of the word are still under discussion among researchers, but the term was consolidated to refer to “public dancers” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term mostly refers to the lower class of dancers in Cairo or the Upper Egyptian traditional dancers of public festivities and weddings. The spelling of this term can also appear as *ghawazi*, *ghawaze*, *ghawázee*, *ghawa'zee*, *ghawâzî* (plural) and *ghazia*, *gaziah*, *ghazeah* (singular).

*Khalwals* – Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was the plural term in Arabic to designate “male dancer”, also called *gink*, *çengi* or *koçek*, in Turkish. Nowadays, *khawal*, in Arabic, is clearly a reference to a homosexual man and in contemporary Turkey *koçek* covers “transvestites and transsexuals”.

*Mejance* – Musical composition or arrangement, normally only instrumental (no singing) created specifically for belly dance, normally used as the entrance song for the belly dance

show to introduce the band and the dancer (in the case of live music). ‘The mejançe format resembles that of an overture. It offers a preview of diverse melodies and musical styles that the audience can expect to appear later in the show’ (Shira, 2016). There are also recorded versions of these sort of songs and, in Brazil, they are known as “Rotina Clássica Oriental” (Oriental Classic Routine).

*Shaabi* – “Popular” in Arabic. It designates the working class neighbourhoods, their costumes, their people or the working-class form of popular music and dance.

*Maraghanat* (meaning “festival”), also known as 'electro-shaabi' is the new tendency in terms of music and dance in Egypt.

*Shabaka* – Cover only for the belly made of elastic cloth, normally transparent. Its usage is mandatory for the dancers that work in Egypt and the non-accomplishment of this rule can result in fines for the dancer and the venue.



**Fig. 11** - The Egyptian belly dance star Souhair Zaki wearing a white *shabaka* in performance for the movie “Alo Ana El Qitta” (1975). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GooW9HyUnC8> (Accessed 25 June 2020)

*Shimmy* – Small, repetitive, alternate and constant gestures performed with hips, shoulders or chest resulting in an apparent vibrational movement.

*Tabla* - Main percussion instrument of the Arab orchestra. It has a cylindrical shape with a narrower band in the centre. In the old days, these were made of ceramics and goatskin. Today, most are made of aluminium and acrylic film. Also called, *darbuka*, *doumbek*, *derbak*, *derbaque*, *durbak*, *dirbakki*, *darebukkeh*.



**Fig. 12** - Egyptian *tabla*.

*Tanoura* – Dance style inspired by the Dervish swirling dance/ritual. Generally danced by males, with a long and coloured skirt (“tanoura” means “skirt” in Arabic) and the use of different props.



**Fig. 13** - Tanoura dancer in a Nile Boat in Upper Egypt. Screenshot from a video footage, fieldwork archive (Assunção, 2019).

*Tarab* - It is a general term in Arabic that describes a kind of aesthetic ecstasy in relation to some artistic object related to the act of listening, which may be a song or a poem. It

can be related to a style of music and musical performance in which these states are evoked and awakened, therefore, ethnomusicologists describe *tarab* as an emotional state provoked in the audience as a result of the dynamic interaction between the artist, the music, the lyrics, the audience, the dancer (Dib: 2013) .



## **Appendix 2 – Informants list (with pseudonyms) with short biography**

### ***Abdalla:***

He is a 26-year-old Egyptian graduated in marketing. He was introduced to me through a Choreomundus classmate and became a good friend of mine. He shared his perspectives and ideas with me in informal conversations during and after fieldwork.

### ***Alicia:***

She is a 31-year-old Brazilian belly dancer. Professional dancer with experience in belly dance and tribal fusion. Owns a dance studio in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was her second time in Egypt and in the *Mystical Egypt Tour*, therefore, she went just to participate in the dance festival: attending workshops and competing in different categories. Shared her ideas and experience with me via an online survey sent by email.

### ***Andreia:***

She is a 54-year-old Brazilian dance teacher. has experience with gypsy dances and oriental dances, and gives classes and workshops in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was her second time in Egypt and she participated in the two stages of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*. Shared her ideas and perspectives with me through a formal interview and informal conversations.

### ***Bruna:***

Around 40 years old Brazilian belly dancer from Rio de Janeiro. Went to the festival with the goal to participate on the workshops and dance in the stage of the festival. It was her third time in Egypt and said that, normally, she stays long periods in the country – from one to three months – to study. Shared her experience and ideas with me via an online survey sent by email.

### ***Christine:***

Around 45 years old Australian belly dancer with Russian origins and more than 20 years of experience living and working in Egypt as a dancer. I met her by chance, when I was in Dahab, in the Red Sea, having dinner with my flatmate from Cairo and a friend of hers (both are Egyptians). This friend of my flatmate was *Christine's* belly dance student and called her to our table (that was placed on the street) to introduce me. In that occasion I briefly talked about my project, and she invited me to attend one of her dance classes, that she gives to beginner students from different nationalities in in a small hotel in Dahab. Therefore, she shared her ideas, experience and dance with me through this class that I

attended and observed, and through a formal recorded interview made in a restaurant in Dahab a couple of days later.

***Judite:***

Around 50 years old Brazilian amateur dancer from Rio de Janeiro. She is a lawyer and works as civil servant in Brazil. Went to Egypt to participate in the festival, attending some of the workshops and performing, and in the Nile Cruise. Shared her experience with me through informal conversations and via an online survey sent by email and answered by WhatsApp.

***Leticia:***

She is a 30-year-old professional Brazilian belly dancer. She had nine months of experience working in Egypt when I did the interview with her through WhatsApp in September 2019. In Brazil, used to give belly dance classes and perform in an influential belly dance venue of São Paulo and work as an accountant. Shared her ideas, experience and dance with me through a formal recorded interview via WhatsApp and through social media.

***Lúcia:***

She is a dance teacher from Rio de Janeiro, of around 40 years old, organizer of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*. Has a long career as dancer and dance teacher, with experience as a performer in Arabic countries, such as Bahrein, Catar, Lebanon and Tunisia. Own a dance school in partnership with *Mariana*, organise dance events, give courses and workshops all over Brazil since the 2000s, and travel regularly to Egypt since 2001. Shared her ideas, experience and dance with me through workshops (that I attended in 2017 and 2018 in Porto Alegre, Brazil), a formal recorded interview and informal conversations.

***Malu:***

Around 60 years old amateur Brazilian dancer from Rio de Janeiro. Went to Egypt to participate in the dance festival and in the Nile cruise. Is a professor on the literature department of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Shared her ideas and experience with me through informal conversations and via an online survey sent by email.

***Mariana:***

She is a dance teacher from Rio de Janeiro, of around 40 years old, organizer of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*. Initiated her occupation as a dance teacher in 1999, thereafter joining *Lúcia* as partner/co-owner of a dance school and organizer of dance festivals in Brazil. Went to Egypt for the first time in 2010 and go regularly since then. Shared her

ideas, experience and dance with me through workshops (that I attended in 2018 in Porto Alegre, Brazil), a formal recorded interview and informal conversations.

***Mohamed:***

He is a 23-year-old Egyptian. He was a master degree student in engineering when I met in Trondheim, Norway, becoming a good friend of mine. He shared his ideas with me through informal conversations and a recorded formal interview made when we were still in Trondheim, in June 2019.

***Mostafa:***

Attendant in the hostel I stayed for the first ten days of my fieldwork in Cairo. Had around my age and was really passionate about belly dance, which resulted in interesting conversations about the subject.

***Teresa:***

Around 40 years old amateur dancer from Rio de Janeiro Brazil. Went to Egypt to participate in the dance festival and in the Nile cruise. It was already her third time in the country, along with the group of the *Mystical Egypt Tour*. Shared her ideas and experience with me via an online survey sent by email.

***Sahar:***

Around 40 years old professional Folklore dancer from Cairo, Egypt. She is the director of a Folkloric dance ensemble but works full time as employee in a bank. I got her contact through the webpage of the folklore ensemble on the internet, exchanged some e-mails and was invited to attend a workshop she gave in a dance studio in Cairo on Egyptian folklore dance. I attended this workshop, one of the rehearsals of her dance ensemble and met her in a coffee shop in Zamalek, Cairo, for a formal interview. Therefore, she shared her ideas, experience and dance with me through a workshop and a formal recorded interview.

***Saad:***

He is a 26-year-old Egyptian public relations manager. I met him in a party in Cairo and he became a good friend of mine. Shared his perspectives and ideas with me in informal conversations during and after fieldwork.

***Said:***

He is a 25-year-old Egyptian photographer and English translator. He was introduced to me by *Abdalla*, so we became friends and travelled together in a group with other Egyptians to Dahab, in the Red Sea. Therefore, he shared his perspectives and ideas with me in informal conversations during fieldwork.

***Samia:***

She is a 27-year-old French dancer of Moroccan origins, that had been working in Egypt for five years when I met her. She participated in the dance festival in July, being on the board of teachers, judges of competitions and performing on the Closing Gala. When trying to contact dancers for interviews in August, I sent her a message through Instagram, where I introduced myself and I explained my project. She answered that she remembered me from the festival, going around with my laptop and invited me to go with her to work that same night, so I could grasp a bit of her working routine. As she would have a performance in a cabaret of Haram Street at midnight and another in a nightclub of Maadi at 3am, she offered to give me an interview in between the shows. However, that same day, she messaged me again saying that the cabaret show was cancelled, but we could meet at midnight anyway, to make the interview. So, we met in a bar in Haram Street, where the interview happened. As she invited me to go with her to the nightclub afterwards, we went to her house to get her costume and wait until 3am to go to the nightclub. The next day, I followed her in her work in one of the boat venues she had that night. Therefore, she shared her ideas, experience and dance with me through a formal recorded interview, informal conversations and showing me her work routine.

***Gamal:***

Administrative organiser of the *Marhaban Festival*, son of the director and dance teacher that idealized it. He is Egyptian and was around 50 years old. He agreed on giving me some information about the festival while he was working in the administrative room of the event. This information, therefore, was shared through a formal, non-recorded interview.

***Zeina:***

She is an 18-year-old Egyptian medicine student. She is the sister of *Mohamed*, so I met her when I visited his family. Shared her perspectives and ideas with me in informal conversations during my fieldwork.

### **Appendix 3 – Online Survey Model**

#### **Online survey with the Brazilian dancers that participated in the *Marhaban Festival* and in the *Mystical Egypt Tour***

**Interviewee:**

**Date:**

**Local:**

**1 – Um pouco sobre a tua trajetória na dança: quando, como e por que tu começaste a dançar e o que te faz continuar.** [A little about your trajectory in dance: when, how and why you started dancing and what keeps you going.]

**2 – Como foi a experiência de dançar no Egito para ti?** [How was the experience of dancing in Egypt for you?]

**3 – Tu achas que ter vindo para o Egito mudou ou vai mudar a forma como tu danças ou entendes a dança?** [Do you think that coming to Egypt has changed or will change the way you dance or understand dance?]

**4 – Qualquer outra questão que queiras dividir comigo sobre a tua apresentação, a tua vinda pro Egito e dança em geral.** [Any other observation you want to share with me about your presentation, trip to Egypt or dancing in general.]

## **Appendix 4.1 - Letter of information and consent, English version:**

### **Are you interested in taking part in the research project “Choreomundus fieldwork 2019 - Dance, Heritage and Tourism in Egypt in the 21st Century”?**

**This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to document, analyse and interpret dance practices and dances of the world. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.**

#### **Purpose of the project**

Choreomundus is a Master Degree that investigates dance and focuses on fieldwork, documentation and formal analysis of movement. Each student implements her own fieldwork/internship project in the period of summer between two study years. The material collected encompasses video and sound recordings, pictures and interviews. The aim of the fieldwork is publication of a master's thesis. This specific project regards Dance, Heritage and Tourism in Egypt in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and aims to recollect material mainly about Belly Dance and Egyptian Folk Dances practiced nowadays in this country.

#### **Who is responsible for the research project?**

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is the institution responsible for the project. The Norsk Senter for Folkemusikk og Folkedan and the Norwegian Centre for Research Data are responsible for archiving and protecting the data being collected. All the contact information of these institutions is given in the end of this letter if you need any further consultation.

#### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

You have been selected to be part of this project because of your relationship with the subject being studied, as a dancer, someone connected with the dance field in general, a tourist or a consumer or practice of dance in any form.

#### **What does participation involve for you?**

The methods of research will include mainly interviews, observation, video and sound recording and maybe online/paper-based survey. Information about your background in dancing will be collected and will be recorded (electronically, on paper and sound/video recording). We also will collect information about you, if of any relevance, from other sources – such as registers, records/journals, information available on the internet, social media profiles, other project participants. All this data is going to be archived in the The Norsk Senter for Folkemusikk og Folkedan and protected by NSD, the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

#### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be

made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

### **Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data (name, participation on observations, interviews, photos, videos, sound recordings) for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). Only the project supervisor, the Choreomundus students and the staff of archive managed by the Norwegian centre for traditional music and dance will have access to the personal data. We will store the list of names and contact details separately from the rest of the collected data such as interviews, sound and video recordings on a research server, locked in a room. Your personal data will be processed in OneDrive cloud according to the agreement between Microsoft and NTNU. A participant of the project will not be recognizable in publications unless the participant gives an explicit consent and specifies what type of personal information might be published.

### **What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end 15 September 2020. *At the end of the project your personal data (photos, videos, sound recordings) will be stored in the servers of the Norwegian centre for traditional music and dance for purposes of follow-up studies and archiving for future research. Only staff of the centre will have access to it. Our programme deals with the intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding. Therefore, we intend to store your data indefinitely for future generations.*

### **Your rights**

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

### **What gives us the right to process your personal data?**

We will process your personal data based on your consent. Based on an agreement with Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

### **Where can I find out more?**

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Norwegian University of Science and Technology via Prof. Dr. Gediminas Karoblis by the e-mail [gediminas.karoblis@ntnu.no](mailto:gediminas.karoblis@ntnu.no).
- Our Data Protection Officer: Thomas Helgesen by the e-mail [thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no](mailto:thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no)
- Norsk senter for folkemusikk og folkedans by the telephone +4773557003 (Marit Stranden, director) or by the e-mail [postmottak@folkemusikkogfolkedans.no](mailto:postmottak@folkemusikkogfolkedans.no)

- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by the telephone: +4755582117 or by email: [personverntjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personverntjenester@nsd.no)
- The student responsible for the project: Naiara Müssnich Rotta Gomes de Assunção, by the email [naiara.rotta@gmail.com](mailto:naiara.rotta@gmail.com) or the telephone: +44 7780 931140

Yours sincerely,  
Gediminas Karoblis  
(Project Leader and Research Supervisor)

Naiara M. R. G. de Assunção  
(Student and Researcher)

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## Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “*Choreomundus fieldwork 2019 - Dance, Heritage and Tourism in Egypt in the 21st Century*” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in individual and group interviews that are going to be sound/video recorded
- to participate in dance video/sound recordings
- for my personal data to be processed inside and outside the EU
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for follow-up studies

I also give the right to use my image for scientific purposes (publications, conferences and classes) and I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project (September 2020).

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(Date and signature of the participant)



## Appendix 4.2 - Letter of information and consent, Portuguese version

### **Você está interessada(o) em participar do projeto de pesquisa “Trabalho de campo Choreomundus 2019 - Dança, Patrimônio e Turismo no Egito no Século XXI”?**

Este documento apresenta informações sobre a participação em um projeto de pesquisa cujo objetivo principal é documentar, analisar e interpretar práticas de danças do mundo. Nesta carta, forneceremos informações sobre o objetivo do projeto e sua participação em seu desenvolvimento.

#### **Objetivo do projeto**

Choreomundus é um mestrado que investiga dança, focando em documentação e análise de movimento e manifestações culturais relacionadas à dança. Cada estudante implementa seu próprio trabalho de campo entre os dois anos de estudo do programa. O material coletado engloba gravações em vídeo e som, fotos e entrevistas. O objetivo do trabalho de campo é a publicação de uma dissertação de mestrado em julho de 2020. Este projeto específico diz respeito à Dança, Patrimônio e Turismo no Egito no século XXI e tem como objetivo o recolhimento de material principalmente sobre Dança do Ventre e Danças Folclóricas Egípcias praticadas atualmente no país. Os dados foram produzidos durante o trabalho de campo realizado em julho e agosto de 2019 em diversas cidades do Egito.

#### **Quem é responsável pelo projeto de pesquisa?**

A Universidade Norueguesa de Ciência e Tecnologia (NTNU) é a instituição responsável pelo projeto. O *Norsk Senter for Folkemusikk og Folkedan* (SFF) e o Centro Norueguês para Dados de Pesquisa (NSD) são responsáveis por arquivar e proteger os dados que estão sendo coletados. Todas as informações de contato dessas instituições são dadas no final desta carta, caso você sinta necessidade de nos contatar.

#### **Por que você está sendo convidado a participar?**

Você foi selecionado para fazer parte deste projeto por conta de sua relação com o assunto sendo estudado, como um dançarina(o), alguém conectada(o) com o campo de dança em geral, como turista, consumidor(a) ou praticante de dança.

#### **Como será a sua participação no projeto?**

Os métodos de pesquisa incluirão, principalmente, entrevistas, observações, gravações de áudio e vídeo, questionários online e em papel. Informações sobre sua formação em dança serão coletadas e serão gravadas (eletronicamente, em papel e gravação de áudio e som). Também coletaremos informações sobre você, se de alguma relevância, de outras fontes - como registros, periódicos, informações disponíveis na Internet, perfis de mídias sociais, e via outros participantes do projeto. Todos esses dados serão arquivados no *Norsk Senter for Folkemusikk og Folkedan* e protegidos pelo Centro Norueguês para Dados de Pesquisa (NSD).

#### **Sua participação é voluntária**

A participação no projeto é voluntária. Se você escolheu participar, você pode retirar seu consentimento a qualquer momento sem dar qualquer motivo. Todas as informações

sobre você serão anônimas, se assim você quiser. Não haverá consequências negativas para você se você decidir não participar ou depois decidir desistir de dar seu consentimento e queira que suas informações sejam deletadas.

### **Sua privacidade: como vamos armazenar e usar seus dados pessoais?**

Usaremos apenas os seus dados pessoais (nome, participação em observações, entrevistas, fotos, vídeos, gravações de áudio) para os objetivos especificados nesta carta. Processaremos seus dados pessoais de maneira confidencial e de acordo com a legislação de proteção de dados (Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados e Lei de Dados Pessoais). Apenas o supervisor do projeto, os alunos do Choreomundus e os funcionários do arquivo gerenciado pelo Centro Norueguês de Música e Dança Tradicionais terão acesso aos dados coletados. Armazenaremos a lista de nomes e detalhes de contato separadamente do resto dos dados coletados, como entrevistas, gravações de áudio e vídeo em um servidor de pesquisa, trancados em uma sala. Seus dados pessoais serão processados na nuvem do OneDrive de acordo com o contrato entre a Microsoft e a NTNU. Os participantes do projeto não serão reconhecidos em publicações, a menos que o participante dê um consentimento explícito e especifique que tipo de informação pessoal pode ser publicada.

### **O que acontecerá com seus dados pessoais no final do projeto de pesquisa?**

O projeto está programado para terminar em 15 de setembro de 2020. No final do projeto, seus dados pessoais (fotos, vídeos, gravações de som) serão armazenados nos servidores do Centro Norueguês de Música e Dança Tradicionais para fins de estudos de acompanhamento e arquivamento para futuras pesquisas. Somente o pessoal do centro terá acesso a ele. Nosso programa lida com o patrimônio cultural imaterial e sua salvaguarda. Portanto, pretendemos armazenar seus dados indefinidamente para as gerações futuras de pesquisadoras e pesquisadores interessados no assunto.

### **Seus direitos**

Desde que você possa ser identificado nos dados coletados, você tem o direito de:

- acessar os dados pessoais que estão sendo processados sobre você;
- solicitar que seus dados pessoais sejam excluídos;
- solicitar que os dados pessoais incorretos sobre você sejam corrigidos / retificados;
- receber uma cópia dos seus dados pessoais (portabilidade de dados);
- enviar queixas ao responsável pela proteção de dados ou à autoridade norueguesa para a proteção de dados relativamente ao tratamento dos seus dados pessoais.

### **O que nos dá o direito de processar seus dados pessoais?**

Processaremos seus dados pessoais com base no seu consentimento. Com base num acordo com a Universidade Norueguesa de Ciência e Tecnologia (NTNU), o Centro Norueguês para Dados de Pesquisa (NSD) avaliou que o processamento de dados pessoais neste projeto está de acordo com a legislação de proteção de dados.

### **Quem financia este projeto?**

Choreomundus é um programa de mestrado Erasmus+ Joint Master Degree EMJMD 2017-2021. O programa é oferecido por um consórcio de quatro universidades internacionalmente reconhecidas por sua liderança no desenvolvimento de currículos inovadores para a análise de práticas de dança e outros movimentos: Universidade de Clermont Auvergne (UCA, coordenadora), Clermont-Ferrand, França; Universidade Norueguesa de Ciência e Tecnologia (NTNU), Trondheim, Noruega; Universidade de

Szeged (SZTE), Hungria; Universidade de Roehampton, Londres (URL), Reino Unido. O programa é financiado pela instituição Erasmus através de bolsas de estudos individuais concedidas às alunas e alunos através de processo seletivo.

Para maiores informações, consultar: <https://www.ntnu.edu/studies/choreomundus>

### **Qual a duração do projeto?**

O programa de mestrado Choreomundus tem uma duração total de dois anos, nos quais alunas e alunos têm a oportunidade de estudar nas quatro universidades do consórcio e realizar um trabalho de campo em um país de escolha própria durante os meses de junho, julho e agosto entre os dois anos de estudo. O presente projeto foi iniciado em setembro de 2018 e só será finalizado em setembro de 2020, portanto ainda está em vigência.

### **Como posso adquirir mais informações?**

Se você tiver dúvidas sobre o projeto ou quiser exercer seus direitos, entre em contato com:

- Universidade Norueguesa de Ciência e Tecnologia, através do Prof. Dr. Gediminas Karoblis, pelo e-mail [gediminas.karoblis@ntnu.no](mailto:gediminas.karoblis@ntnu.no).
- Nosso diretor de proteção de dados, Thomas Helgesen, pelo e-mail [thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no](mailto:thomas.helgesen@ntnu.no)
- Centro Norueguês de Música e Dança Tradicionais (SSF) pelo telefone +4773557003 (Marit Stranden, diretora) ou pelo e-mail [postmottak@folkemusikkogfolkedans.no](mailto:postmottak@folkemusikkogfolkedans.no)
- NSD - Centro Norueguês para Dados de Pesquisa, pelo telefone: +4755582117 ou por e-mail: [personvertjenester@nsd.no](mailto:personvertjenester@nsd.no)
- A estudante responsável pelo projeto: Naiara Müssnich Rotta Gomes de Assunção, pelo email [naiara.rotta@gmail.com](mailto:naiara.rotta@gmail.com) ou pelo telefone: +44 7780 931140

Sinceramente,  
Naiara M. R. G. de Assunção  
(Estudante e Pesquisadora)

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## **Formulário de consentimento**

Recebi e compreendi as informações sobre o projeto “Trabalho de campo Choreomundus 2019 - Dança, Patrimônio e Turismo no Egito no século XXI” e me foi dada a oportunidade de fazer perguntas e sanar todas as minhas dúvidas. Eu dou o consentimento:

- para participar de entrevistas individuais e em grupo que serão gravadas em áudio e vídeo
- para participar de pesquisas com formulários online
- para participar de gravações em áudio e vídeo de performances de dança
- para que os meus dados pessoais sejam processados dentro e fora da União Europeia

- para que as informações sobre mim sejam publicadas de uma forma que eu possa ser reconhecida(o)
- para que os meus dados pessoais sejam armazenados, após o final do projeto, para estudos de acompanhamento

Também dou o direito de usar minha imagem para fins científicos (publicações, conferências e aulas) e dou meu consentimento para que meus dados pessoais sejam processados até a data final do projeto (setembro de 2020).

-----  
Data e assinatura da(o) participante

## Appendix 4.3 - Letter of information and consent, Arabic Version

هل أنت مهتم في أن تكون جزء من مشروع بحثي؟

كوريوموندوس – عمل ميداني 2019

الرقص، التراث والسياحة في مصر في القرن الواحد والعشرون

“Choreomundus fieldwork 2019 - Dance, Heritage and Tourism in Egypt in the 21st Century”?

هذه الرسالة هي بمثابة طلب مشاركة بمشروع بحثي حيث الهدف هو توثيق و تحليل وتفسير الممارسات الرقصية والرقصات حول العالم. في هذه الرسالة سوف نُطلعكم على المعلومات، هدف البحث وطبيعة مشاركتكم به.

### غرض البحث:

"كوريوموندوس" هو درجة ماجستير متخصص في الرقص ويركز على العمل الميداني، التوثيق والتحليل الرسمي للحركة. يقوم كل طالب بتنفيذ عمله الميداني الخاص به في فترة الصيف بين السنتين الدراسيتين. المواد التي يتم جمعها تشمل تسجيلات فيديو وصوت، صور و مقابلات. الهدف الأساسي من العمل الميداني هو كتابة رسالة الماجستير (مشروع التخرج).

هذا المشروع بالتخديد يهتم بالرقص والتراث والسياحة في مصر في القرن الواحد والعشرون ويهدف لجمع معلومات بشكل رئيسي عن الرقص الشرقي والرقصات الشعبية المصرية الممارسة حالياً في مصر.

### من هو المسؤول عن هذا العمل البحثي؟

الجامعة النرويجية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا هي المنظمة المسؤولة عن هذا المشروع.

Norwegian University of Science and technology (NTNU)

المركز النرويجي للموسيقى الشعبية والرقص الشعبي والمركز النرويجي لبيانات البحوث هم المسؤولين عن أرشفة وحماية البيانات والمعلومات المجموعة.

The Norsk Senter for Folkemusikk og Folkedans and the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

معلومات التواصل الخاصة بهذه المراكز، معطاة في نهاية هذه الرسالة إن كنت بحاجة لمزيد من المعلومات.

### لماذا تم اختيارك للمشاركة؟

لقد تم اختيارك لتكون جزء من هذا البحث نظراً لعلاقتك مع الموضوع الذي تتم دراسته، كراقص، أو مُرتبط بمجال الرقص بشكل عام، كسائح أو مرتبط بممارسات رقصية من أي نوع.

### ماذا تتضمن أو تنطوي مشاركتك؟

أساليب البحث تتضمن بشكل رئيسي مقابلات، مراقبة، تسجيلات فيديو وصوت ويمكن أن تتضمن استبيان ورقي أو إلكتروني. معلومات عن خلفيتك في مجال الرقص سوف يتم تسجيلها (إما إلكترونياً أم ورقياً أو عبر تسجيلات صوت أو فيديو). سنجمع معلومات أيضاً من مصادر أخرى – مثل السجلات، مجلات والمعلومات المتاحة على شبكة الانترنت، مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي أو من خلال مشاركين آخرين. كل هذه البيانات سيتم أرشفتها في المركز النرويجي للموسيقى الشعبية والرقص الشعبي ومحمية من قبل المركز النرويجي لبيانات البحوث.

### المشاركة تطوّعية:

المشاركة بهذا المشروع تطوّعية. إن اخترت المشاركة يمكنك سحب مشاركتك وإلغاءها من دوت إعطاء أي سبب. كل المعلومات المجموعة عنك ستكون مجهولة. لن توجد أي عواقب سلبية في حال رفضك المشاركة أو في حال سحب مشاركتك في المستقبل.

خصوصيتك الشخصية – كيف سيتم حفظ واستخدام بياناتك الشخصية:

سنستعمل فقط بياناتك الشخصية (الاسم، المشاركة أو المراقبة، مقابلات، صور، فيديو، تسجيلات صوتية) للأهداف المذكورة بهذه الرسالة. سنقوم بمعالجة بياناتك الشخصية بسريّة ووفقاً لقانون حفظ البيانات (قانون تنظيم حماية البيانات والبيانات الشخصية العامة). المشرف على البحث، طلاب كوريوموندوس وموظفو الأرشيف تحت إدارة المركز النرويجي للموسيقى الشعبية والرقص الشعبي فقط سيكون لديهم حق الوصول إلى بياناتك. سيتم تخزين

الأسماء ومعلومات التواصل بشكل منفصل عن باقي البيانات مثل المقابلات والتسجيلات الصوتية والفيديو، وسيتم التخزين على مخدّم ألكتروني مقفل في غرفة خاصّة. بياناتك الشخصية سيتم معالجتها في برنامج "وان درايف" اعتماداً على عقد اتفاقية بين الجامعة النرويجية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا وشركة مايكروسوفت.

OneDrive cloud according to the agreement between NTNU and Microsoft.

لن يتم التّعريف أو تمييز المشاركين بهذا المشروع ما لم يمنح المشارك موافقة حصريّة بتحديد المعلومات الشخصية الموافق على نشرها.

**ماذا سيحدث لبياناتك الشخصية عند نهاية المشروع البحثي؟**

تم تنظيم هذا المشروع لنهاية 19 أيلول، 2020. عند انتهاء المشروع، معلوماتك وبياناتك الشخصية (صور، فيديو، تسجيلات صوتية...) سيتم حفظها في نظام المركز النرويجي للموسيقى الشعبية والرقص الشعبي لأهداف دراسات قادمة وأرشيف لبحوث قادمة. فقط طاقم الموظفين سيكون لهم حق الدخول إليها. يتعامل برنامجنا مع التراث الثقافي غير المادي وصونه. لذلك نعتزم تخزين بياناتك لأجل غير مسمى للأجيال القادمة.

**حقوقك:**

طالما يمكن تحديد هويّتك في البيانات المجموعة، لديك الحق في:

الوصول لبياناتك الشخصية المجموعة.

طلب حذف بياناتك الشخصية المجموعة.

طلب تصحيح أو تعديل بياناتك الشخصية الغير صحيحة.

طلب نسخة من بياناتك الشخصية المجموعة.

إرسال شكوى إلى موظف حماية البيانات أو هيئة حماية البيانات النرويجية فيما يتعلق بمعالجة بياناتك الشخصية.

**ما الذي يعطينا الحق في معالجة بياناتك الشخصية؟**

سنعالج بياناتك الشخصية وفقاً لموافقتك الشخصية. بناءً على اتفاقية مع الجامعة النرويجية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا قام المركز النرويجي لبيانات البحوث بالإقرار أن معالجة البيانات الشخصية في هذا المشروع تتوافق مع تشريعات حماية البيانات.

**كيف أستطيع معرفة المزيد؟**

إن كان لديك أسئلة عن المشروع، أو تريد ممارسة حقوقك، يمكنك التواصل مع:  
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مع فائق الاحترام،

غيديميناس كاروبليس (قائد المشروع ومشرف البحث)

نيارا م. (طالب وباحث)

نموذج الموافقة:

لقد تلقّيت وفهمت معلومات عن "العمل الميداني – كوريوموندوس - الرقص, التراث والسياحة في مصر في القرن الواحد والعشرون" وتم إعطائي الفرصة في طرح الأسئلة, أعطي موافقتي على:  
--- المشاركة في المقابلات الفردية أو الجماعية التي سيتم تسجيلها كصوت أو فيديو.  
--- المشاركة في تسجيلات تتضمن الرقص, فيديو, صوت.  
--- معالجة بياناتي الشخصية داخل وخارج الاتحاد الأوروبي.  
--- نشر معلوماتي بشكل يمكن التعرف علي.  
--- لحفظ معلوماتي الشخصية بعد انتهاء المشروع لدراسات قادمة.  
أيضاً أعطي الحق في استخدام صورتي لأغراض علمية (منشورات ومؤتمرات وفصول دراسية) وأوافق على معالجة بياناتي الشخصية حتى تاريخ انتهاء المشروع (أيلول, 2020).

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(التاريخ وتوقيع المشارك)

## Appendix 5 –Interview quotations made in Portuguese in the original

Interview quotation 1:

Porque, infelizmente, por mais, é, maravilhosa que ela seja em cena, por mais que ela seja uma bailarina estudiosa, por mais que ela seja, tecnicamente, uma puta bailarina, isso aqui não vende, né. O que vende é um corpo bonito em primeiro lugar. Depois vem a técnica, né. Isso é, infelizmente, muito triste. Mas é a realidade daqui. Porque aqui é dinheiro. Fluss. Aqui tudo giram em volta do dinheiro. Tudo. Absolutamente tudo. [Leticia, 2019].

Interview quotation 2:

Porque no início eu tique que, é..., trocar tudo, né. Fiz um investimento aí porque aqui, se você não tiver seio grande ninguém te assiste, se você não tiver mostrando uma perna ninguém te assiste, é... O seu figurino, quanto mais ousado, mais atenção do público seja homem, mulher. Eu não sei se você percebeu isso quando você veio, mas isso pra mim é, hoje, é muito nítido, né. Tinha um manager meu que falava isso pra mim no início. Falou “Leticia, quanto mais pelada, mais star”, ele falava assim, tipo, quanto mais pelada você tiver, mais chance de estrela você vai ser. Sim, isso é muito zoadado, isso é muito pejorativo, né, pra gente. Mas é a realidade, né. A realidade daqui é: você tem quem ter o peito grande, tem que mostrar as coxas, tem que, é..., ousar, né. Quanto mais do seu corpo tiver à mostra na sua performance, mais chances de você ser vista, ser reconhecida. [Leticia, 2019].

Interview quotation 3:

Mas eu já fiquei em um que na hora que eles sabiam que eu era *bellydancer*, eles tratavam a gente como lixo, né. [Leticia, 2019].

Interview quotation 4:

A DV me aconteceu numa época em que eu tinha me separado e a alma feminina ancestral me chamou. Um apelo inesperado. Fui. A dança do ventre cura as feridas femininas. Se estamos permeáveis às mil e uma luzes e vozes que a ancestralidade do ventre entoia, conseguimos transformar dor em arte. [Malu, 2019].

Interview quotation 5:



Por isso que posso afirmar que continuo na dança porque ela sempre me ajudou a me aceitar e a me amar mais, e com isso posso ajudar outras pessoas nessa mesma carência. E é gratificante ver que minhas alunas passam a se sentir melhor com elas mesmas depois que criam esse contato com essa dança milenar é mágica. [Alícia, 2019].

Interview quotation 6:

A experiência que eu tive foi que eu me senti um... é uma mágica. Uma magia. É como se eu tivesse me encontrado com os antepassados, com amigas de longas vidas atrás. Foi mágico o momento. Foi maravilhoso. [Judite, 2019].

Interview quotation 7:

É muita responsabilidade dançar algo que pode se considerar mais deles é na terra deles (egípcios). Tipo... Quem sou eu pra provar que consigo fazer tão bom quanto eles? Mas foi surpreendente o retorno positivo que eu tive! Ainda mais da própria dona do festival! Meu coração ficou muito feliz! E me fez criar motivo para ir mais vezes!!! [Alícia, 2019].

Interview quotation 8:

E aí é interessante você ver como as pessoas vivem lá, o clima, o ambiente. Você entende melhor. A dança sempre também é uma expressão cultural, né? Você acaba com o contato com o Egito e com as professoras do Egito, você entende melhor. [Teresa, 2019].

Interview quotation 9:

E foi maravilhoso. Porque ninguém me impediu, eu fui respeitada pelos músicos – esse ano quando eu cheguei, todos me reconheceram –, eu saí no edital do ano passado e eu não tinha nem ensaiado a música. Eles escolheram a música na hora pra mim. (...) O que mudou? Quando eu saí do palco, que eu vi as pessoas chorando, alguns professores egípcios vieram falar comigo, e eu fiquei mais impactada do que quem tava assistindo. Porque, na realidade, é isso que a gente quer. A gente quer voltar para o ventre. Assim, uma metáfora, né? A gente quer voltar pro primitivo, a gente quer pisar na terra de novo. E há várias coisas que o mundo te engole. E quando eu voltei pro Brasil, foi assim..., as minhas aulas aumentaram, as minhas alunas começaram a me procurar, as pessoas começaram a me respeitar melhor. Pela apresentação? Não sei. Pela coragem? Também não sei. Mas eu sei que eu mudei [Andreia, 2019].

Interview quotation 10:

Então. Voltando. É... Você sabe que a dança do ventre, o mercado da dança do ventre no Brasil é visto mais como uma forma de expressão artística, né. Lá, é... toda a cultura, todos os estudos são voltado pra isso, né? E as bailarinas, tanto nas performances quanto nos figurinos, elas, é... tendem a seguir esse estilo... princesa, esse estilo mais, ahn... como é que eu posso dizer? [suspiro] É... flores e arco-íris, passarinhos, enfim, é essa coisa bem, é... fantasiosa que eles criaram lá. Ba, ba, balerizisticando, né. Tem a tendência do ballet também muito forte lá no Brasil, né. Só que aqui não [Leticia, 2019].

Interview quotation 11:

Os meus primeiros dias o meu gerente me assistiu e ele só falou assim “*Leticia*, você vai ficar aqui em Sharm até você aprender, né. Você vai precisar treinar bastante o que a gente precisa aqui, né. Porque esse seu estilo não funciona aqui.” Ele foi bem direto comigo. Ele falou “Olha, essas músicas não funcionam”. E eram músicas que eu achava anteriormente que eles iam, gostariam. Eram Umm Kulthum, Abdel Halim, Warda. Eu utilizava esse tipo de música nos meus primeiros shows. Mais aí me cortaram, falou “Não! Você tem que colocar músicas alegres, músicas felizes, né. As pessoas querem entretenimento, elas não querem chorar, elas não querem [risos] é... cortar os pulsos.” Ele falou desse jeito pra mim. Então você tem que colocar músicas pra cima e você tem que fazer essa coisa acontecer, né. Que é trazer o público pra você. [Leticia, 2019].

Interview quotation 12 :

Aqui a, a dança, é muito simplificada, né. Se tu faz um movimento ondulatório de peito, faz um movimento shimie no quadril, interage com o público – a interação, às vezes, é mais importante que a técnica em si. Porque, como eu te disse, tem bailarina aqui que trabalha aqui, que não sabe dançar, mas ela sabe interagir, ela sabe interpretar música, ela canta, ela consegue cativar o seu público, então essa bailarina vai continuar trabalhando independente de ter técnica ou não. Porque, às vezes, o mais importante é trazer o público pra você, né. Como eu sempre gostei dessa coisa do povão, de interagir, de cantar, de pular, eu me identifico muito com o trabalho aqui, né. Porque muitas vezes é isso, muitas vezes as pessoas só quer, né..., participar de algo, né. Elas querem serem inseridas no seu show. Elas não querem ficar ali assistindo uma pessoa fazendo performance. Aqui a performance não funciona. Você até chega, é..., fazendo performance, mas se você quiser

continuar, você tem que desmistificar tudo isso daí. Você tem que, é..., mudar completamente [Letícia, 2019].

Interview quotation 13:

Aqui o contexto é diferente. Tanto é diferente como o que eles esperam da gente também é diferente. Os meus figurinos seguiam a onda do Brasil, né. Completamente fechados nas pernas, é..., os, o seio não precisava de enchimento porque isso não era quesito importante no Brasil, né. Ninguém se importava com o tamanho do seu peito e... eu tive que, simplesmente, mudar tudo, né. Tanto que hoje em dia eu nem uso mais os figurinos que eu trouxe. Eu só uso os daqui, que é os daqui que, é..., garantem o meu salário, né [risos]. [Letícia, 2019].

Interview quotation 14:

Eu morei uma parte desses nove meses com a [amiga] – ela está aqui há dois anos. E ela teve que passar por esse processo também de adaptação, porque aqui a dança é completamente diferente do Brasil. Ela fez aula com algumas egípcias, né, nas quais as egípcias falavam pra ela, é..., como que era a dança, como que teria que ser, é, o desenvolvimento cênico, a importância de usar mais o tronco do que a parte de baixo, porque os egípcios gostam mesmo é de peito balançando, né. Isso era o que as egípcias falavam pra ela. E, quando eu cheguei, ela que ajudou a me, a moldar a minha dança, né. E é a minha, me ajuda até hoje, né, quando eu às vezes esqueço ou às vezes eu paro de treinar, é..., o que eles tão realmente buscando no mercado, né. [Letícia, 2019].

Interview quotation 15:

Essa é a ideia de bellydancer superstar que eles têm aqui. E a gente tem que se basear por ela porque ela que tá dando dinheiro, quem dá dinheiro permanece no mercado, e assim vai, né. [Letícia, 2019].

## Appendix 6.1 – Dance Analysis Table: Leticia performing in São Paulo, Brazil

Dance Analysis table, using Music-Related Gestures Analysis:  
 "Leticia", from Brazil, dancing in a tea house in São Paulo, Brazil.  
 Video posted on her Instagram account in November 2017.

Time code	Beats	Phrase	Bars	Hips and chest movements	Arms/hands movements or position	Feet/body movements or position	Music Related Gesture
00:00:02	1, 2	1	1	Hip undulation (camel going down/inside).	Open as an arch to the front at the height of the shoulders.	Stepping right feet back. Body faces back side.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right.
00:00:03	3, 4		2	Vertical/down hip eight (right and left)	Open as an arch to the front at the height of the shoulders. Right arm slightly higher.	Weight on the right feet. Spin left feet to the back (180° turn). And step (weight on left feet). Body faces front side.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/left.
00:00:04	5, 6		3	Hip undulation (camel going down/inside).	Arms com from the sides (open position) to the front: hands cross in front of the body.	Step back with the right feet and full change of weight. Body faces right side.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right
00:00:05	7, 8		4	Neutral	Right arm straight to the front, height of the shoulder. Left arm up, straight.	Bring weight back to the left, extend right to the right side and step, dislocating the body to the right. Body faces the front. Body faces right side.	Slow step - Sustained - big dislocation to the right side
00:00:07	1, 2	2	1	Neutral	Right arm goes down to be raised up, while left arm comes down, close to the body.	Left leg crosses in front of the right and steps, turning the body to her right. Body face faces back side.	Arm gesture - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right
00:00:09	3, 4		2	Makes half of a horizontal/backwards hip eight with the right hip to bring the weigh to right leg.	Right arm closed in front of the body, touching left hip and left arm touching the head.	With the weight in left leg, spins the body backwards 270° and steps in the right leg in a backward position in relation do the left.	Hip horizontal eight and slow turn - Sustained - small dislocation backwards/right
00:00:10	5, 6		3	Hip undulation (camel going up/outside).	Open as an arch to the front, slightly lower in relation to the shoulders and finalize movement with arm undulation. First left, then right	Right leg steps to the front. Body faces right side.	Hip and arms undulation - Sustained - small dislocation to the front.
00:00:12	7, 8		4	Hip pushes the turn	Right arm makes a semi circle in front of the body and ends down close to the hip. Left arm makes a semi-circle, to the side, ending up.	Right leg steps to the back. Body faces right side. Then, steps with the left leg, turning 90° to the left. Body faces the camera (front).	Arabesque - Sustained - small dislocation to the right side.
00:00:13	1, 2	3	1	Neutral	Left arm up, right arm down, then open, making a circle down-up (opening to the sides, then closing again).	Big step with the right leg to the front. Changes the weight to the left leg, then turns 90° backwards, stepping the right leg backwards.	Slow step and turn - Sustained - big dislocation to the front.
00:00:14	3, 4		2	Hip undulation (camel going down/inside), when the leg steps backwards.	Folded right arm makes a semi-circle down-up, going in the direction of her head.	Finishes the step, bringing all the weight to the right leg backwards, with the back to the camera.	Hip undulation - Sustained - small dislocation back.
00:00:16	5, 6		3	Right hip pushes the turn to the right	From the two arms above her head, left arm goes down straight and right arm passing in front of her face, bent up.	With the weight on the left leg, turn 180° backwards to face the front, changing the weight to the left leg that was in front, now is back	Arm gesture and slow turn - Sustained - no dislocation but change of body direction.
00:00:18	7, 8		4	Small and fast round figures (rebolado).	Arms meet each other in front of her body then open to the shape of a W. Elbows far from the body, palms of the hand facing down.	Weight on the left feet, backwards. Right feet slightly to the front, leg slightly bent.	Quick hip circles - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:20	1, 2	4	1	With the right hip: one strong beat up and forward and one strong beat up down backwards, following the 2 beats of the music.	Arms in a shape of a W, elbows a bit closer to the body, palms of the hand facing down.	Weight on the left feet, backwards. Right feet slightly to the front, leg slightly bent.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:21	3, 4		2	One hip beat with the right hip to the side when putting the weight on the right leg and one hip beat up (left leg free of weight).	Arms go down to the height of her hips: left arm on the back of the body and right in the front, then up again, back to the W position.	Turn 180° to the left, just changing the weight to the right leg. End up position: weight on the right leg and left leg to the front, slightly bent. Back to the camera.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation but change of body direction.
00:00:22	5, 6		3	From the up position, left hip go down in two beats, marking middle and down in the first beat, then marks up and down with the hip,	Left arm goes a bit up in an arch position in the height of the shoulder and right arm is pointing up, slightly bent.	Weight on the right leg and left leg to the front, slightly bent. Still has her back to the camera.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:23	7, 8		4	Right hip goes up to neutral position.	Right arm still up but hand comes closer to the head. Left arm goes down to grab the skirt toward the hem.	Weight on the right leg. Left leg is bent back so, with the foot, she can take the hem of the skirt with her left hand. Starts the change of weight to stap with the left to the front.	Do not apply - just a leg and hand gestures
00:00:25	1, 2	5	1	Hip is neutral for arabesques	Right arm is open to the side and bent a bit in front of the chest in the change of weight. Left hand is holding the skirt close to her left hip with elbows out.	Steps with the left leg to the front, arabesque with the right leg, touching the point of right foot to the side.	Arabesque - Sustained - small dislocations with arabesques.
00:00:27	3, 4		2	Hip is neutral for arabesques	Right arm wide open to the side. Left hand is holding the skirt close to her beat, arm bent with elbows out.	Crosses right leg in front of the left and steps. Opens left leg to the side, finishing the change of weight to the right leg.	Arabesque - Sustained - small dislocations with arabesques.
00:00:28	5, 6		3	Hip neutral for spin.	Right arm is up and bent over her head (right hand almost touching her forehead with the palms out). Left hand is holding the skirt close to her beat, arm bent with elbows out.	With the impulse of changing the weight to her right leg, she gets impulse to spin to the left/forward: 360° turn, finishing hith her back to the camera.	Slow spin - Sustained - spin with no dislocation.
00:00:29	7, 8		4	The hips are neutral. The torso is bent a bit to the front and she uses a spin of her head to make an effect with her hair in the end of the spin. Drops the skirt in the end of the movement.	Left hand is holding the skirt close to her beat, arm bent with elbows out and right arm is in the same position, close to the right side of her body.	Arriving from the spin, the weight is in the right leg. Right leg is to the front, slightly bent.	Slow head/hair movement - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:31	1, 2	6	1	Half of a horizontal/backwards hip eight with the left hip 'jewel movement'.	Both arms close to her body.	Two small steps to the front: left then right. Her back is facing the camera.	Hip horizontal eight - Sustained - small dislocation to the front.
00:00:32	3, 4		2	Hip neutral for the arabesque.	Left arm is straight and extended to the left side for the arabesque impulse, right arm extended to the front. With the arabesque, left arm goes up and right arm goes down.	Steps with the left leg to the front, arabesque with the right leg and steps it to the front.	Arabesque - Sustained - big dislocation to the front.
00:00:34	5, 6		3	Hip makes a big round figure, pulling the turn.	Arms begging together closed in front of the chests, elbows up. Then she opens her arms for the impulse of the turn, bringing close to her body again.	With the weight on the right leg, she begins a 450° turn to the right/forwards, splitting the weight in the two legs.	Big hip circle - Sustained - spin with no dislocation.
00:00:37	7, 8		4	Torso goes down, to the direction of the floor, and then up, bringing the head with impulse to make an effect with the hair.	Arms go in the direction of the floor. Then left arm remain close to her body, hand in the height of her hip and right hand extends to the front.	Finishes the turn wigh weight in both legs, feet close together.	Hair beat - Impulsive -no dislocation.

## Appendix 6.2 – Dance Analysis Table: Leticia performing in Cairo, Egypt

Dance Analysis Table, using Music-Related Gestures Analysis:  
 "Leticia" from Brazil dancing in a Nightclub in Cairo, Egypt.  
 Video posted on her Instagram account in September 2019.

Time code	Beats	Phrase	Hips, chest and head movements.	Arms/hands movements or position	Legs/feet movements or position	Music Related Gesture
00:00:03	1	1	Simple hip beat to the right side. Head looks right.	Right arm extended straight in front of the body on the height of the chest. Left arm is closed in front of the body, height of the waist, left hand touches her right side.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight of the body is transferred to the right leg with the beat to the right side.	Hip beat - impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:04	2		Simple hip beat to the left side. Head looks left.	Right arm extended straight in front of the body on the height of the chest. Left arm is closed in front of the body, height of the waist, left hand touches her right side.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight of the body is transferred to the left leg with the beat to the left side.	Hip beat - impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:05	3		Simple hip beat to the right side. Head looks right.	Right arm extended straight in front of the body on the height of the chest. Left arm is closed in front of the body, height of the waist, left hand touches her right side.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight of the body is transferred to the right leg with the beat to the right side.	Hip beat - impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:06	4		Hip neutral position. Head looks to her front.	Both arms open to the side then come close to the body.	Transference of weight to the left leg.	Do not apply - just steps
00:00:06	1	2	Hip projected towards her front side to begging a big round figure. Torso slightly bent backwards.	Both arms straight close to her body, making a counter-weight in rotation to her hips	Start of the transference of weight to her right leg, so weight in both legs.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:07	2		Hip projected towards her right side. Second stage of the big round figure. Torso projected to the front and head facing her front too.	Both arms straight close to her body, hands close to her hips, but not touching.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight in both legs.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:07	3		Hip projected towards her back, finalizing the round figure. Torso projected to the front and head facing her front too.	Both arms straight close to her body, hands close to her hips, but not touching.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight in both legs.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:08	4		The posture with the hip projected towards her back, torso projected to the front and head facing the public is maintained.	Right arm closes in front of her body, in the height of the waist, right hand touching the left hip. Left arm bends in front of her and left hand touches her cheek.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight in both legs.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:08	1	3	Maintaining the previous posture, right hip is projected to the right side. Head accompanies the hip and face the right side.	Arm posture is maintained: Right arm closes in front of her body, in the height of the waist, right hand touching the left hip. Left arm bends in front of her and left hand touches her cheek.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight is transferred to the right leg to do the hip movement.	Hip/head accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:08	2		Maintaining the previous posture, left hip is projected to the left side. Head accompanies the hip and face the left side.	Arm posture is maintained: Right arm closes in front of her body, in the height of the waist, right hand touching the left hip. Left arm bends in front of her and left hand touches her cheek.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight is transferred to the left leg to do the hip movement.	Hip/head accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:09	3		Maintaining the previous posture, right hip is projected to the right side. Head accompanies the hip and face the right side.	Arm posture is maintained: Right arm closes in front of her body, in the height of the waist, right hand touching the left hip. Left arm bends in front of her and left hand touches her cheek.	Feet are parallel on a wide position. Weight is transferred to the right leg to do the hip movement.	Hip/head accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:10	4		Head goes down to take an impulse, throwing the hair down. Hips in neutral position.	Both arms are bring down, straight close to her body, hands close to her thighs.	Feet are parallel and are brought a bit closer together. Weight in both legs.	Head accent - impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:10	1	4	With the impulse, brings head up to throw the hair to her back, bringing the torso to a straight position. Hips neutral.	Arms straight close to her body and hands grab the edges of her skirt.	Feet are parallel and weight remains distributed in both legs.	Head accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:11	2		Finalizes the movement, bringing the torso to a straight position. Hips neutral.	Arms straight close to her body and hands pull her skirt down, marking this movement in the beat with the "svikt".	Feet are parallel and weight remains distributed in both legs. Bents and straight the legs to mark the beat with a "svikt".	Posture bouncing - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:11	3		Chest shimmie (rapid alternated torsion of the torso)	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position (basic arms position in belly dance).	Feet remain parallel but she brings the weight to the left leg.	Shoulder shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:12	4		Right hip is brought up, do a small beat down and is brought up again.	Bring hands together to do one clap on the beat, finalizing the phrase.	Weight on the left leg, right feet in brought to the front of the left one.	Hip beat and clap - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:12	1	5	Right hip do a beat down.	Left arm is brought straight up, close to her head, left hand pointing to the roof. Right arm straight to her right side in a L figure.	Most of the weight on the left leg, right feet in front of the left one. Shares the weight to the right foot quickly, when performing the beat, to turn the left foot to start the turn.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:13	2		Hip is brought up and pulls the turn to the right/backwards.	Left arm is straight up, close to her head, left hand pointing to the roof. Right arm straight in her right side in a L figure.	Weight on the left leg, right feet in front of the left one. Using the left feet as pivot, turns to the right/backwards.	Hip accent - Impulsive - no dislocation but body turns.
00:00:13	3		Right hip do a beat down.	Left arm is straight up, close to her head, left hand pointing to the roof. Right arm straight in her right side in a L figure.	Most of the weight on the left leg, right feet in parallel to the left one. Shares the weight to the right foot quickly, when performing the beat, turning the left foot to the back.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation but body turns.
00:00:14	4		Left hip performs a lateral beat.	Left arm is brought down and with arms parallel and both elbows open, hands touch in front of the chest and then open again in a W position.	With the weigh on the left leg, brings the right foot in a parallel position to the left one, finishing the turn and stopping with her back to the public.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation but body turns.
00:00:15	1	6	Strong lateral hip beat to the right side.	Arms extended laterally in an open "W" position at the height of the shoulder.	Feet parallel. Weight is transferred to the right leg with the hip beat.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:15	2		Strong lateral hip beat to the left side.	Arms extended laterally in an open "W" position at the height of the shoulder.	Feet parallel. Weight is transferred to the left leg with the hip beat.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:16	3		Strong lateral hip beat to the right side.	Arms extended laterally in an open "W" position at the height of the shoulder.	Feet parallel. Weight is transferred to the right leg with the hip beat.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:16	4		Small lateral hip beat to the right.	Hands are brought together in front of her chest to clap in the last beat of the phrase	Transfers the weight to the left leg and bring the right leg backwards, slightly turning her body laterally, in relation to the public.	Impulsive - no dislocation but body turns.
00:00:17	1	7	Hip beat up on the front diagonal (hip is twisted).	Arms in L figure: left arm up, in a diagonal to the front and right arm slightly bent forwards on the height of her shoulder.	With her body facing the left side of the stage (in her perspective), left leg has the weight and right feet slightly touches the ground, a bit forward.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:17	2		Hip does a semi-circle, going down and beating in the backwards diagonal (hip is twisted). Head turns, so face looks on the direction of the hip.	Arms in L figure: left arm up, in a diagonal to the front and right arm slightly bent forwards on the height of her shoulder.	With her body facing the left side of the stage (in her perspective), left leg has the weight and right feet slightly touches the ground, a bit forward.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:18	3		Hip does a semi-circle, going down and beating in the front diagonal (hip is twisted). Head turns to face ahead again.	Arms in L figure: left arm up, in a diagonal to the front and right arm slightly bent forwards on the height of her shoulder.	With her body facing the left side of the stage (in her perspective), left leg has the weight and right feet slightly touches the ground, a bit forward.	Hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:18	4		Hip does a quarter of a circle, going down and beating up with no twist. Head turns to face the public.	Arms in L figure: left arm up, in a diagonal to the front and right arm slightly bent forwards on the height of her shoulder.	With her body facing the left side of the stage (in her perspective), left leg has the weight and right feet slightly touches the ground, a bit forward.	Hip accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:19	1	8	Hip starts a small round figure forward.	Both arms are bring down, straight close to her body, hands close to her thighs.	With her body facing the left side of the stage (in her perspective), weight is completely changed to the left leg, right feet a bit forward and bents, 90°, leaving the ground.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation.
00:00:19	2		Hip finishes the small round figure forward, using it to turn the body in the direction of the public.	Arms straight close to her body and hands grab the edges of her skirt.	Right leg touches the ground, weight is transferred and she turns 90° right/backwards.	Hip circle - Sustained - no dislocation but body turns.
00:00:20	3		Hips in neutral position.	Arms straight close to her body, hands hold the skirt and push it down.	Weight is transferred back to the left leg and right leg opens laterally and steps.	Do not apply - just steps - dislocation to the right side of the stage.

00:00:20	4		Hips in neutral position.	Hands go to the direction of her neck to grab her hair.	Right leg comes closer to the left leg, steps and both legs bent and go up, marking the final beat of the phrase with a "svikt".	Do not apply - just steps - dislocation to the right side of the stage.
00:00:21	1	9	Hips in neutral position.	Hands grab her hair and bring the hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Performs a small jump to mark the beat of the music.	Small jump - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:21	2		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:22	3		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:22	4		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. Small "svikt" to mark the last beat of the phrase.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:23	1	10	Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, starts to dislocate slowly to the left.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - dislocating to the left.
00:00:23	2		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - dislocating to the left.
00:00:24	3		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:24	4		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:25	1	11	Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:25	2		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:26	3		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:26	4		Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:27	1	12	Hip shimmie	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:28	2		Hip shimmie - In the eight beat performing this movement, she finishes a 360° turn doing shimmie in the point of her feet.	Hands grabbing her hair to the front, hiding her face. Elbows are open. Head facing down.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Transferring the weight quickly from right to left to perform the shimmie. With the weight transference, dislocates slowly to the left, turning backwards.	Hip shimmie - Iterative - no dislocation, turning backwards.
00:00:29	3		Hips in neutral position.	Along with a small jump, with both hands, throw the hair up and back.	Both legs parallel and feet close together (one foot of distance between each other). Gives a small jump to mark the beat of the music and transfers the weight to the left leg.	Small jump and hair accent - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:29	4		Hips in neutral position.	Arms do a lateral circle to throw the hair backwards and going up again, parallel, hands pointing to the roof.	Opens right leg to the right and performs a large lateral step to right, transferring the weight mostly to the right leg.	Hands/arms big circle - Sustained - dislocation to the right.
00:00:30	1	13	Hips in neutral position.	Arms to the front in the height of her shoulder, elbows bent, hands touch each other three times, making a gesture that I understand as "spending money".	Both legs parallel in a wide position. Whole weight in the right leg, body slightly slanted to the right, left leg making a gesture to the left, left toe touching the ground.	Hand gestures - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:30	2		"	Movement performed in 2 beats.	"	
00:00:31	3		Hips in neutral position.	Arms to the front in the height of her shoulder, elbows bent, hands bent and open as saying "goodbye".	Steps with the left leg, transferring the weight and turning her body to the left.	Hand gestures - Impulsive - dislocation to the left.
00:00:31	4		Hips in neutral position.	Arms to the front in the height of her shoulder, elbows bent, hands bent and open as saying "goodbye".	Steps with the right leg, walking towards the left side of the stage.	Hand gestures - Impulsive - dislocation to the left.
00:00:32	1	14	Hips in neutral position.	Arms to the front in the height of her shoulder, elbows bent, hands touch each other three times, making a gesture that I understand as "spending money".	Both legs parallel in a wide position. Whole weight in the left leg, body slightly slanted to the left, right leg making a gesture to the right, right toe touching the ground.	Hand gestures - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:32	2		"	Movement performed in 2 beats.	"	
00:00:33	3		Hips in neutral position.	Arms to the front in the height of her shoulder, elbows bent, hands bent and open as saying "goodbye".	Transfers the weight to the right leg, brings the left leg in front of the right and steps with the left leg.	Hand gestures - Impulsive - dislocation to the right.
00:00:34	4		Hips in neutral position.	Arms go a bit down, hands find each other to clap, marking the final beat of the phrase.	One more step with the right leg towards the right, fully transfers the weight to the right leg. Has her back to the camera	Clapping - Impulsive - dislocation to the right.
00:00:34	1		Left hip perform a diagonal beat down (hip is twisted)	Arms bent in front of her body. Claps to the first beat of the phrase.	Weight mostly on the right leg. Left leg is bent, slightly in front of the right. Point of the left foot touches the ground.	Clapping/hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:35	2		Left hip perform a diagonal beat up and goes to the diagonal down, twisting the hip.	Left arm extended in the height of her shoulder and bent in front of her body. Right arm performs a gesture having the arm in the same position, but beating the air over the other arm.	Weight mostly on the right leg. Left leg is bent, slightly in front of the right. Point of the left foot slightly touches the ground.	Hand gesture/hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.

00:00:35	3	15	Left hip perform a diagonal beat up and goes to the diagonal down, twisting the hip.	Left arm extended in the height of her shoulder and bent in front of her body. Right arm performs a gesture having the arm in the same position, but beating the air under the other arm.	Weight mostly on the right leg. Left leg is bent, slightly in front of the right. Point of the left foot slightly touches the ground.	Hand gesture/hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:36	4		Left hip perform a diagonal beat up and goes to the diagonal down, twisting the hip.	Left arm extended in the height of her shoulder and bent in front of her body. Right arm performs a gesture having the arm in the same position, but beating the air over the other arm.	Weight mostly on the right leg. Left leg is bent, slightly in front of the right. Point of the left foot slightly touches the ground.	Hand gesture/hip beat - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:36	1	16	Hips in neutral position. Torso slightly bends laterally to the left.	With both arms closed in front of her body, in the height of the chest, she rotates her hands in concentric circles really fast in anti-clockwise direction.	With the weight on the right leg, bends the left leg, feet close to the knee and steps with the left leg to her front (she still has her back to the camera).	Arms gestures - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:37	2		Hips in neutral position. Torso slightly bends laterally to the right.	With both arms closed in front of her body, in the height of the chest, she rotates her hands in concentric circles really fast in anti-clockwise direction.	Feet parallel close to each other. Transfers the weight to the right side bouncing with the two knees.	Arms gestures - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:38	3		Hips in neutral position. Torso slightly bends laterally to the left.	With both arms closed in front of her body, in the height of the chest, she rotates her hands in concentric circles really fast in anti-clockwise direction.	Feet parallel close to each other. Transfers the weight to the left side to bend a bit to the left, bouncing with the two knees and turning her body to the right/forward to face the camera again.	Arms gestures - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:38	4		Hips in neutral position. Head makes a small gesture to throw the hair to the back.	With both arms closed in front of her body, in the height of the chest, she rotates her hands in concentric circles really fast in anti-clockwise direction.	Transference of weight to the right feet. Left feet is raised to the air to begin a step forward on the direction of the camera.	Arms gestures - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:39	1	17	Hips in neutral position. Chest shimie.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Steps to the front with the left leg, walking towards the left side of the stage. Bends the right leg close to the knee.	Chest shimie - Iterative - dislocation to the left.
00:00:39	2		Hips in neutral position. Chest shimie.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Steps to the front with the right leg, walking towards the left side of the stage. Bends the left leg close to the knee.	Chest shimie - Iterative - dislocation to the left.
00:00:40	3		Hips in neutral position. Chest shimie.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Steps to the front with the left leg, walking towards the left side of the stage. Bends the right leg close to the knee.	Chest shimie - Iterative - dislocation to the left.
00:00:40	4		Hips in neutral position.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance). Claps to mark the final beat of the phrase.	Bring feet together, close to each other in a parallel position. One "svikt" gesture, bouncing the knees, to mark the last beat of the phrase along the clap.	Clapping - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:41	1	18	Hips in neutral position.	Right arm bent and down, close to her body. Right hand touches right hip in the front. Left arm is extended to the side, bent in a "half W" position.	With the feet together, close to each other in a parallel position, she bounces her body quickly.	Bouncing - Iterative - no dislocation.
00:00:42	2				Movement performed in two beats	
00:00:42	3		Hips in neutral position.	Right arm bent and down, close to her body. Right hand touches right hip in the front. Left arm is extended to the side, bent in a "half W" position.	With the feet together, close to each other in a parallel position, she bounces her body quickly. Using the bouncing, she slowly turns to the right/backwards.	Bouncing - Iterative - no dislocation but turns her body to the right.
00:00:43	4		Hips in neutral position.	Right arm bent and down, close to her body. Right hand touches right hip in the front. Left arm is extended to the side, bent in a "half W" position. Claps to mark the final beat of the phrase.	With the feet together, close to each other in a parallel position, she transfers her weight to the left leg.	Clapping - Impulsive - no dislocation.
00:00:43	1	19	Half of "hagalla" movement with the right hip.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Feet in parallel position, weight on the left leg. Raises right feet.	Hagalla - Impulsive - dislocation to the right.
00:00:44	2		Hips in neutral position. Chest shimie.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Steps with the right leg and raises left leg on the height of the knee.	Chest shimie - Iterative - dislocation to the right.
00:00:44	3		Hips in neutral position. Chest shimie.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance).	Steps with the left leg to the left side of the stage, crossing in front of the right	Chest shimie - Iterative - dislocation to the right.
00:00:45	4		Hips in neutral position.	Arms opened to the side in a "W" position at the height of her chest (basic arms position in belly dance). Claps to mark the final beat of the phrase.	Steps with the right leg to the left side of the stage, and bring left leg close to it, without weight.	Clapping - Impulsive - no dislocation.