



Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece (Princeton Modern Greek Studies)

Jane K. Cowan

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Valued for their sensual and social intensity, Greek dance-events are often also problematical for participants, giving rise to struggles over position, prestige, and reputation. Here Jane Cowan explores how the politics of gender is articulated through the body at these culturally central, yet until now ethnographically neglected, celebrations in a class-divided northern Greek town. Portraying the dance-event as both a highly structured and dynamic social arena, she approaches the human body not only as a sign to be deciphered but as a site of experience and an agent of practice.

In describing the multiple ideologies of person, gender, and community that townspeople embody and explore as they dance, Cowan presents three different settings: the traditional wedding procession, the "Europeanized" formal evening dance of local civic associations, and the private party. She examines the practices of eating, drinking, talking, gifting, and dancing, and the verbal discourse through which celebrants make sense of each other's actions. Paying particular attention to points of tension and moments of misunderstanding, she analyzes in what ways these social situations pose different problems for men and women.



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