

Greek Laography, Tradition, Culture & Traditional Art.

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(Digitisation and translation from Greek to English by George Lioukas)

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to review the history of Laography in Greece and its development as a framework for understanding and defining Greek tradition, culture and traditional art.

Keywords: Greece, Laography, Tradition, Culture, Art

Introduction



ΔΥΝΑΜΙΚΑ ΜΠΡΟΣΤΑ ΣΤΟ ΝΗΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗΣ 

ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ
«Ο Νικόλαος Γ. Πολίτης και το Κέντρον Ερεύνης της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας»

Μεγάλο γεγονός για την επιστήμη της λαογραφίας στην Ελλάδα ήταν το Συνέδριο που διοργάνωσε, από τις 4 έως τις 7 Δεκεμβρίου 2003, το Κέντρο Ερεύνης της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας της Ακαδημίας Αθηνών, με την ευκαιρία της μεταστέγασής του στο κτίριο που απέκτησε με δωρεά του Ιδρύματος Βουδούρη, επί της οδού Ηπίτου 8, στην Πλάκα. Στο νέο του κτίριο το ΚΕΕΛ, το σημαντικότερο ερευνητικό ίδρυμα της χώρας μας στον τομέα της λαογραφίας, θα μπορέσει αποτελεσματικότερα να στεγάσει τις συλλογές του και να αναπτύξει τις δραστηριότητές του.

Το συνέδριο ήταν αφιερωμένο στη μνήμη του ιδρυτού του ΚΕΕΛ, του Ν. Γ. Πολίτη, που ήταν συγχρόνως και εκείνος που εγκαθίδρυσε – και ονομάτισε στα ελληνικά – το γνωστικό αντικείμενο της λαογραφίας. Η Διευθύντρια του ΚΕΕΛ κυρία Αικατερίνη Κομηλάκη συγκέκρωσε σε αυτή τη συνάντηση, εκτός από τους άμεσους

συνεργάτες της, ερευνητές και πανεπιστημιακούς δασκάλους από τον χώρο της λαογραφίας και των συγγενών επιστημών, 60 συνολικά, για να συζητήσουν για την προσωπικότητα και την επιστημονική σκέψη του Ν. Γ. Πολίτη καθώς και για τις διαδικασίες συγκρότησης του ΚΕΕΛ, αλλά και άλλων ιδρυμάτων που ιδρύθηκαν την ίδια περίοδο και στο ίδιο πνεύμα. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, η κυρία Λίλυ Άντζακα, Συνέφορος του Τμήματος Εθνικών Παραδόσεων και Λαογραφικού Αρχείου και του Τμήματος Παραρτημάτων, έκανε ανακοίνωση με θέμα «Η ίδρυση του Λυκείου των Ελληνίδων και η ελληνικότητα».

Το συνέδριο κατέδειξε την ευρωπαϊκή και διεθνή εμβέλεια της προσωπικότητας του Ν. Γ. Πολίτη αλλά και τη δυναμική του ΚΕΕΛ, με το οποίο το ΛτΕ ελπίζει να έχει στο μέλλον την ευκαιρία να συνεργαστεί στενότερα.

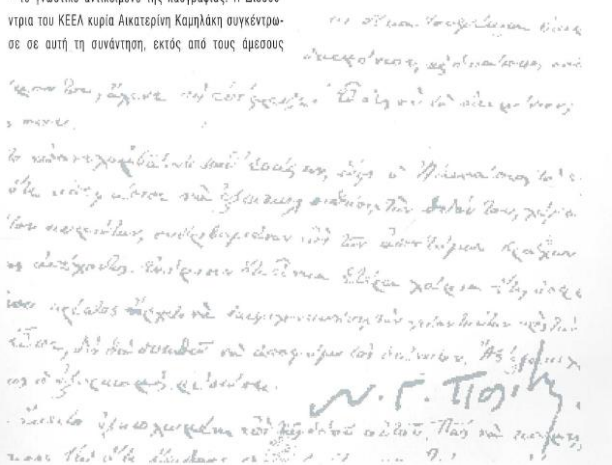


Figure 1 - Nikolaos G. Politis - International Scientific Conference 4-7 December 2003
Research Centre of Greek Laography

Nikolaos G. Politis (1909), is considered the Father of the History of Laography¹ in Greece through his work in establishing the subject of Greek Laography. Nikolaos G. Politis bases his definition on the traditions, as well as the spiritual and social life, of the people of Greece. (The International Conference demonstrated the European and International Scope of the personality of Nikolaos G. Politis).

Among the pantheon of brilliant scientists / scholars of Greek Laography, not every researcher can study the History of Greek Laography unless they investigate the sources and the brilliant scholarly Laographers² who founded the science of Greek Laography, which is the gateway to the values representing the identity and ancestral heritage of the people of Greece.

Through this study of Greek Laography, unadulterated cultural elements such as virtues, vices, moral character and universal spirit are revealed, through which the identity of Greeks and the National Tradition are signified.

An outside observer, approaching the History of Greek Laography, should examine Laography as a science and its history collectively with the struggle, the independence of the Greeks, the monuments of speech, the indivisibility of tradition, modelled on antiquity, the study of the popular soul and the influence of political ideas whether Nationalist or Socialist/Marxist in character, as well as the results of this political idealism and its relationship to Laography. By studying the history of Laography in a complete way, it will be possible to understand the life and character of the Greek people, and to investigate, study, the beliefs of enlightened Greek Laographers over time.

For the study of Laography, the following Bibliographic sources are available:

Politis (1909), Kiriakidis (1922, 1953) Loukatos (1964, 1965), Kiriakidou - Nestoros (1973, 1978), Romaios (1980), Kakoutis (1980), Herzfeld (1982), L Strauss (1958) Vol1:388, Skouteri – Didaskalou (1989, 1990), Meraklis (1992), Megas (1938, 1942, 1966).

A Journey Through Time with the Greek Laographers

Nikolaos G. Politis, (1909),³ who is considered the father of the history of Laography in Greece, bases his definition on the traditional acts and actions of the spiritual and social life of the people.

¹ Laography - the science that has as its object of study the traditional culture of people of a common ethnicity. In the English language this is also termed as "Folklore" (Folk=People).

² Laographer - a scientist trained in Laography. In the English language this vocation is known as "Folklorist".

³ "Laography examines the traditional manifestations of the spiritual and social life of the people through dialogue, that is to say, those manifestations which the first principle is unknown and do not arise from the influence of a superior person, which are therefore not due to upbringing and education, and those causes are a continuation or succession of a previous social situation, or are a change or corruption of rational manifestations of life in the past. It necessarily examines the manifestations of life which do not derive directly from tradition, but which are assimilated or closely related to those according to tradition", as shown in Skouteri - Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:35, Varvounis, 1993:16.

Next comes Stilpon Kyriakides (1922 - 1953)⁴ who proceeds to name the characteristics of popular culture by juxtaposing features of modern culture such as the “modern, the individual and the rational”.

George Megas (1938, 1947, 1966)⁵ complements the earlier Politis and Kyriakides, deals with the principle of ethnography and distinguishes the special character of a people, as it was made by the people themselves and shaped by history. Megas refers to folk traditional constructions and their character.

Dimitrios Loukatos (1964 - 1965)⁶ as well as George Megas include in their definition of Laography and the artistic manifestations of the life of the people and refer to the purposes of Laography as being "scientific, national, humanistic and internationalist".

Michalis Meraklis, (1984)⁷ - younger laographer - approaches the issue of defining Laography with an anthropological/social character and admits that Laography material often transcends national boundaries, resulting in international collaborations as is the case with the 'Laography atlases'.

⁴ "Laography is the science of popular culture." The characteristics of popular culture according to Kyriakides are: 1) traditional, 2) group 3) spontaneous (thought supposedly emanates directly from the human soul, without being logically processed). To these characteristics he contrasts the characteristics of modern or higher culture, namely (a) the modernity, (b) the individual and (c) the rational. (Skouteri – Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:33)

⁵ "More generally, Laography deals within the framework of a nation with the popular intelligentsia of those belonging to it. Laography i.e. It is not the personal ideas and the extraordinary achievements of individual persons through speech or deed, but those phenomena which are manifestations of the popular soul. For each popular group, the tribes, the peoples, the people in general, present themselves united and in clear spiritual unity, as well as in political and economic unity, and what makes them stand out among them is a general disposition and inclination of the soul and its various manifestations. Thus, Laography deals with the nature and species of each people, investigates its particular character, as it was produced by the blood of its bearers and shaped through history.

That is why the works of art of the people are not individual creations of their makers, but are rooted in tradition and, like the spiritual products, beliefs, customs and traditions of the people, they also reflect the popular soul. Therefore, everything that a people traditionally says, acts and does, are manifestations of the mental and social life of the people, aspects of popular culture, which are examined by a particular science, Laography." (at Skouteri - Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:33)

⁶ "We can immediately give an elementary definition of Laography. Laography in general is the science that monitors and interprets the manifestations of the people's life, spiritual, mental and artistic, those that constitute the culture of the people and the nation itself. In the primary form of these events, nation and people are identical. The Greek people always remain the main source from which the Greek nation draws the elements of its mental and cultural peculiarity. As for the purposes of Laography, we can briefly divide them into four categories. They are: scientific, national, humanitarian and internationalist." (Skouteri - Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:33)

⁷ "Laography studies cultures of peoples who are certainly at an advanced level. And it studies them as a rule at national level: basically it is a national science. A transnational comparative study is not excluded, which is why it has been carried out many times. The anthropological-social character of Laography material transcends national boundaries, so that there are permanent international collaborations, as is the case, for example, with Laography atlases".

"The concept of the people:

The people of Laography is a much-discussed concept. Those who, around the middle of the last century, created the new science, somehow failing to choose the word (Folk, Volk), since they had in mind only the peasant class, as the pre-eminent conservator of traditional culture, nevertheless anticipated the future: today a large part of Laographers, especially in Germany, accepts the word in its entirety as a multiclass and multi-layered concept. There exists today, alongside Laography interested in the cultural behaviour of the peasantry, an urban as well as a working-class Laography." (in Skouteri - Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 1989-1990: 33)

Alki Kyriakidou - Nestoros (1973, 1978)⁸ summarizes the words “laos” and “laikos” in a different adjective, “traditional”, which she believes represents the “concept” of tradition.

Kyriakidou - Nestoros, in her critical analysis of the theory of Greek Laography, refers to and manages to connect over time the protoscientific phase of Laography (romanticism, gender unity, language, folk song) (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1978:85) with the official Greek Laography, which negotiates through scientific research the common origin of the Greeks with evidence of the people's own manifestations. (Laography phenomena and comparison with those of the ancients).

He studies key words, such as folk customs and traditions, tradition as well as the occasional ideological approach to Laography science. It deals with the theoretical side of Greek Laography.

Nestoros studies the functions of Laography theoretically as well as the perceptions of the respective Laographers (Politis, Kyriakides, Megas) etc. She does not refer to the concept of people, and to the psyche of the people. She examines Laography in the history of the evolution of ideas and the evolution of the perception of tradition (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1978:99-110). As a point of reference she takes the evolution of the course of Greek Laography and the various stages through which it passes, through the flow of history, the evolution of the perception of tradition, and the evolution of its terminology. On the contrary, Hatzimichali, a laographer in much earlier years than Kyriakidou - Nestoros, follows the romantic path of N. G. Politis, and his Laographic method. (Hatzimichali, 1931:16). Kyriakidou-Nestoros methodologically provides a guideline, (although she is still attached to Greek Laography). (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1978:148).

Social anthropologist Herzfeld goes beyond Kyriakidou - Nestoros and perhaps complements Nestoros. He studies the subject of man - society from a distance. The approach to Greek Laography negotiated by Herzfeld reaches back to later years and continues where Kyriakidou - Nestoros left off.⁹

⁸ "Laography is the total study of traditional culture."

Nestor considers that both the word 'laos' and the adjective 'laikos' have a particularly vague meaning today. On the contrary, it accepts that the adjective traditional gives more substantially the most important feature of the concept it defines, namely "traditionally". Traditional culture is considered to be a historical phenomenon, which means that "in order to reveal its structure, it must be studied synchronically, but in an obsolete time: the time of its heyday", that is, when it functioned as an autonomous mechanism that on the one hand ensured the preservation of paradata, but on the other hand allowed and strengthened the creative efforts of gifted individuals which acted at least like elite forces, which kept the whole of civilization in constant motion." (Skouteri - Didaskalou, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:34)

⁹ Herzfeld approaches and studies Greek culture from antiquity to the present day, and the evolution of terminology regarding Laography people - tradition - traditional.

It refers to and evaluates the attitude and approach of various scholars towards tradition over time. Herzfeld sees in the science of Laography the soul of the people through the lens and prism of events and milestones that have passed and perhaps marked it (Herzfeld, 1982:5). As an outside observer, he approaches issues such as Greek independence, monuments of speech (Herzfeld, 1982:23, 24, 39, 53, 63), scholars, the indivisibility of Greek tradition based on antiquity (Herzfeld, 1982:78, 79, 117), and negotiates Laography as a science (Herzfeld, 1982:97, 98).

Herzfeld focuses more on the Greek aspects of the history of ideas with their contemporary critique, attempts a deconstruction in a way of the positions of Greek Laography from which positions he constructs a modern and realistic form.

Herzfeld attempts this because, as has been shown by the critical analysis of the theory of Greek Laography, ideology and Laography go hand in hand over time. The works of Kyriakidou - Nestoros (1978) and Herzfeld (1982) I consider reliable sources on the perception of the course of Greek Laography, as well as the way in which they approach the words "laos" and "tradition", although they do not refer to folk art and popular culture.

Herzfeld as a social anthropologist aims at the global knowledge of man, and studies his subject, [Greek] man, 'diachronically' but also 'synchronously', attempting an anthropological, social or cultural approach. And by this I mean that he studies everyday life in a specific space-time which is specifically defined in each case. Thus, in the case of social anthropology and Laography, perhaps we would say that it dares an anthropological approach to Greek Laography.¹⁰

The laographer Romaios moves with similar approaches, addressing the psyche of the Greek people and the indivisibility of tradition. With the same national orientation to prove the continuity of tradition, he starts from Homeric times, the carved shield of Achilles to the dances performed at festivals and weddings in the repeated Greek events of the life cycle of the Greeks (Romaios, 1980:12, 13, 14) and focuses his study on tracing the psyche of the Greek people. (Romaios, 1980:14) Romaios refers to Greek folk culture and traditional handiwork, (Romaios, 1980:10, 11) as do G. Megas, (Megas, 1979:140) and D. Loukatos, (Loukatos, 1978 Second Edition:170) refer to handicrafts woven embroidered in elements of folk culture.

Kakoutis (1980:11), who negotiates the beliefs of the people, their psyche, and folk songs, in order to prove the continuity of the cycle of life of the Greek people, is placed in the same nationalist parallel (as far as Laography phenomena are concerned). (Kakoutis, 1980:16)

Kakoutis focuses his study on oral tradition, collections of folk songs and folk songs collected in fieldwork, considering them "living monuments" like Kyriakides. (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:66)

Both Romaios and Kakoutis are not limited to proving the indivisibility of Greek tradition from the beginning of the myth until today but extend their reference to the

It examines the study of the popular Greek psyche, and the influence of political ideas (Nationalism – Marxism – Junta) and especially the results of this political idealism, and the relationship with Laography (Herzfeld, 1982:143).

Herzfeld makes no reference to Greek popular culture and there is no mention of traditional Greek handiwork.

¹⁰ Anthropology aims at the global knowledge of man [...] embraces its subject in all its historical depth and throughout its latitude, aiming at a knowledge that suits all human evolution from hominids to today's races, and aiming at conclusions that may be positive or negative but certainly apply to all human societies from the great modern city to the smallest race of Melanesia (Claude Levi - Strauss, 1958, in *Anthropologie Structurale*, *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 1.6.388, Paris, in Skouteri, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 1989-1990:13).

other elements of popular culture (handicrafts, sculpture, painting, etc.). (Kakoutis, 1980:13, Romaios, 1980:10, 11)

Varvounis (1993), one of the youngest Laographers, evaluates and negotiates with contemporary reflection the ideology of Greek Laography, and with a scientific approach examines the trends that were created or proposed over time, the evolution of the identity of the modern Greek with scientific thought, a trend adopted by Laographers from 1960 onwards (Varvounis, 1993:17, 18)¹¹.

The evaluation of the concept of people is done with respect to the past, but also with a critical mood based no longer on ideology but on the material that exists and which material is cross-checked and scientifically verified. (Varvounis, 1993:21) Without rejecting or rendering useless the older research and theory, Varvounis sees the people as an object of study, with the mirror of today's science he examines and admits the previous scientists, but he proceeds and evaluates his subject, in the context of a comprehensive study to deal with the traditional way of life. It attempts this because it takes into account the comprehensive understanding of forms and manifestations (traditional rural person, and city person). (Varvounis, 1993:2)

Thus, by enriching the subject of his study, scientific truth and accuracy, which is free from national expediencies and interventions of external factors, with national self-awareness, and not with ethnocentrism, he monitors the manifestations of the people and their culture. (Varvounis, 1993:80)

The author openly states that he does not follow the theory of "Laography applied science" which was treated and judged by Greek Laographers, but uses class and cultural criteria to achieve a more fruitful reflection in this regard. (Varvounis, 1993:18, 19)

Besides, he admits that the renewals of the above methodology brought a series of changes, perhaps even adjustments, "in ideology and Laography science in general" (Varvounis, 1993:20).

The result of these renewals caused the realization that Laography is "organic [...] a set of domains or life forms with a sequence and series of interactions ... so that the hermeneutics of one of these domains requires at the same time a consideration of all relevant elements involved ...". (Varvounis, 1993:21)

As for example in folk art, the content of which is not limited to the examination of decorative elements only, but 'proceeds' to the study of laboratory art, etc. Folk art,

¹¹ Besides, St. Kyriakides states that Laography science "is the whole human multitude, educated and uneducated, which connects a sense of common origin, similar customs, a common tradition and a common way of thinking, and usually a common language, and the Laography elements are diffused to all its constituents, rich and poor, peasants and city people, educated and uneducated.

Popular culture is parallel and symbiotic to the so-called superior, and is more or less diffused in all social strata from the lowest to the highest.

Only the analogy is different. To the inhabitants of the countryside, farmers and pastoralists, it is greater than to the inhabitants of the cities, especially the educated." (Kyriakides, Greek Laography A'. Monuments of speech, in Athens 1965 p.19, in Varvounis, 1993:17).

therefore, is not limited to an interpretative approach but is studied as an organic whole (sequence - interactions) and the relevant elements involved (systems - laboratories - laboratory relations, folk technology, product distribution, etc.) are taken into account.

Varvounis, referring to folk creation at laboratory and operational level, does not make even a small reference to the study of domestic folk creation, such as handicrafts (embroidery / weaving).

Through the studies of Herzfeld (1982) and Varvounis (1993), the tendency and the imposed classification of Greek Laography for scientific approach and course are clearly shown, free from the trends of the 18th and 19th early 20th centuries. (such as old attempts to prove both the indivisibility of tradition and Greek identity and ethnocentrism, which is not needed nowadays).

Greek Laography, ready to function as a science, takes its place among other social anthropological sciences (Herzfeld, 1982:44) and will be evaluated by scholars as a science that in the past showed the way to the Greek to know himself ("knowing himself").

Greek Laography was constructed and shaped, perhaps influenced, by the ideologies of the respective eras, unable to remain neutral, but played a catalytic role in defining and recognizing the organic whole of Greek Laography as a factor in the formation of modern Greece. (Herzfeld, 1982:144)

Both Varvounis and Herzfeld admit that it is time for Laography science to follow its scientific path, without ethnocentrism, enthusiasms, political ideas (such as Junta – Marxism), civil wars, but with national self-awareness.

Varvounis approaches his subject like a laographer. He studied, referred to and evaluated the concept of people, nation, popular culture from his own sphere of competence. He studied cultural events with the help of scientific truth. Similarly, Herzfeld comments on man, the evolution of Greek Laography through the flow of historical facts and scientific ideas.

Laography focused mainly on the study of the rural people in the traditional space, in traditional societies, and in the era when technology in the pre-industrial era was late. Therefore, Laography turned not only around the study of the 'primitives' but also to the problems that socially accompanied the emergence of technology in modern culture.

Such as the study of rural man and urban population. A comprehensive study of man. Global study of its subject, as observed by anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, structural anthropology. (*Anthropologie Structurale*, 1958, Vol. 1:388)

From the above clarification of the global study of man, derives the conclusion of the anthropological approach, whether it is historical or modern, resulting in the phenomenon called Society or Culture.

Therefore, from the anthropological view of Laography, it is determined that the above studies his daily life in a specific Space-Time which is defined in each case specifically.

The concerns arising from this activity regarding the study of everyday human life for anthropologists are: -

- a) the historical genetics of socio-cultural phenomena (their creation - evolution), and
- b) the functional view of the above phenomena (their mode of operation).
Functionalisation (function = function).

The main data come from

- 1) direct observation research recording of phenomena,
- 2) examination of written sources (historical documents and studies), as well as
- 3) by examining objects (products, objects of society).

When we refer to the global view of Laography we automatically accept the basic principle of the view, that the world is interrelated with things and relations, that is, the structural view (structuralism) (structure = the set of relations) and therefore we admit that the full significance of any whole or experience, in order to be deduced, must be integrated into the whole to which it belongs and in this case be integrated into the structure of which it is part. (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:21)

The sociological approach of Skouteri - Didaskalou (1989-1990) I consider a reliable scientific approach based on scientifically documented sources.

Besides, Skouteri-Didaskalou's opinion that:

"Laography is considered the collection of Laography material. Laography is the descriptive presentation of Laography material. Laography can be considered literature when it has folk themes. Laography is the national need to preserve and revive our national tradition. Laography is the making (production) of works of folk art or Laography events: dances, national costumes, celebrations, folk theater."

(Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1985:1-28)

The review of Laography sources helped me to understand the course of Laography science over time and above all to understand the concepts of people - sociological perception.

Folk Culture / Folk Tradition

Sources I found for the study of folk culture can be summarized:

(Hatzimichali, 1931, Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1973, 1975, 1978, 1983, Meraklis, 1973, Pikionis, 1981, Loukatos, 1981, Malevitsis, 1981, Theodorakopoulos, et al. 1981, Tsatsos, 1981, Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1982, Dede, 1983, Hosbawn, 1983, Roper, 1983, Dragoumis, 1981, Sideris, 1986, Voyatzoglou, et al. 1986, Sifakis, 1988, Chasiotis, 1992, Kiourtsakis, 1989, Levi - Strauss, Fernard Braudel, in Didaskalou - Skouteri, 1989–90, Babiniotis, 1998, Mavrogiannis, 1999, Averoff, 1999, Zora, 1981).

What is Popular Culture and what is the relationship between the concept and the handiwork?

According to Babiniotis (1998:991, 1458) culture is a set of material and spiritual achievements of a "social whole", i.e. a set of the actions of a group of people, whether that group is a social, national, or religious group.

Needlework is part of a popular culture and expresses experiences of yesterday. But what does popular culture mean, especially for Greek standards in the post-industrial era?

Chasiotis (1992:6, 8, 9, 10) talks about popular culture, referring to the events of the everyday life of the people.

The term culture is mentioned by the French Levi-Strauss, and Fernard Braudel, (*La Méditerranée écrite sur l'histoire*).

In European terminology the terms 'culture' and 'civilization' are used. The above two meanings in Greek are rendered with the word culture.¹²

Levi-Strauss argues that the culture and tradition of a people are studied in the space and time where it was created (in space-time).

"Space and time are the two systems of reference that we perceive social relations all together as a whole or individually, as a system. These dimensions of space-time reality do not in themselves have properties, they are determined only by the properties of social phenomena that 'measure' and organize."

¹² 'Culture' and the Greek word 'Politismos'

In European terminology two terms are used: Culture and Civilization.

In Greek, both terms are rendered with the word 'Politismos', i.e. culture (cultus = culture, education).

The lived set of socially acquired behaviour within a human group, civilization (civis = citizen, while Greek from 'polis'), generally means the most complex civilization characterized by advanced technology and high-level intellectual achievements in art and science. So civilization is a type, a kind of culture. The archaeologists G. Claude, G. Clark et al. but also several anthropologists e.g. R. Redfield use the term civilization only for societies where there are specialized professions, social hierarchy (i.e. stratification of society) and, above all, where verbal communication is done by writing." (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:21)

"Today most anthropologists and historians of the many definitions of culture (where there are 200) accept the one where the terms culture and civilization are considered synonymous and where civilization ultimately means an open system in store of balance." (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:21, 22)

(Free version from French)
(Claude Lévy-Strauss)

Before talking about the physical-geographical space in which a particular society is organized and created, perhaps we should take into account Braudel's view of the definition that characterizes the culture around space.

"A culture (says Braudel) is first and foremost a space."

"In this space a group of people who speak the same language therefore communicate with each other, using common symbols, develop a way of life."
(Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:30)

Therefore, the primary element in the 'knowledge of a particular society' is that it begins with the acquaintance and knowledge of the environment in which the 'system of culture of that society' is integrated. That is, with the familiarization of this society with its culture and the 'socialized' environment (and of course it should be emphasized that there is going to be talk of 'knowledge of a humanized environment'), the organization of the space, which a group of people - society (chooses to live in) and create its own way of life, plays an important role.

As far as the physical configuration of space and its meaning are concerned, there is no limitation, nor are the meanings of space predetermined, but they are "socially determined" (meanings), a reality which I mentioned above in Braudel's definition.

The environment is directly related to society, specific "natural or artificial environment". (Hatzimichali, 1931:8, Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:30)

Consequently, we must admit that both social processes and processes are the result of the way in which social organization is charged, and the role it plays in the specific physical space. In addition to the general meaning of the term culture, it is worth noting the term "modern Popular Culture", its meaning and temporal appearance.

Modern popular culture, according to Kyriakides, is the civilization that emerged in Greece after the industrial revolution from Europe, when the city imposed its domination over the countryside and the 'village' on a scale unprecedented in historical data.

The modern term "Popular Culture" guides a new conception of the living of the individual and his thought, which is in line with "industrial civilization" and is influenced by the threads of the theory of enlightenment and the industrial revolution.

The first recipients were the large urban centers which have the appropriate soil for its development.

Modern popular culture became a "global phenomenon" with the collaboration of two main factors: a) the unification of the world market of the 18th century, and the industrial revolution of the 19th century.

However, the emergence of this "modern popular culture" caused the concept of civilization to be dichotomized, even theoretically, outside its "cradle, confronted with the pre-existing cultures of the states in which it attempted to expand and assimilate with them, into the idea and name of "modernization":

As a result, civilizations that seized their tradition firmly and resisted the cogs of modernization of Western European civilization were called "traditional civilizations" with many differences between them, but with a common feature of their "opposition to "modern civilization".

(Kyriakides in Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1998-1999:269)

Folk Tradition

What and what is the Folk Tradition?

According to Kyriakidou - Nestoros, the concept of folk tradition is "a symbol and not reality, a symbol made of certain elements of reality chosen to serve a purpose".... In Kyriakidou - Nestoros' opinion, folk tradition is "a concept that does not belong to the field of science but to ideology".

If someone asks if there is a reality that corresponds to and corresponds to the content of tradition, and how we will know it, Kyriakidou - Nestoros answers: "and of course there is reality: it is the traditional life of the Greek people or else its traditional culture...".

And it is possible to know the culture of the people if we see and study its function with our own eyes, that is, the life of the people in the place where they live and in the conditions they live. (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1983:249)

In Meraklis' view, folk culture / tradition is constructed when in a specific physical space a group of people creates a culture, a tradition where through this "cultural becoming", other elements survive intact and others disappear or become fragments of the above culture and tradition. (Meraklis, 1973:14)

The historical development of tradition is presented in two parts, the literary and the folk tradition.

I will only refer to the first one to substantiate that the literary tradition lives on in its written texts. Unlike folk, which is oral, it represents the reality and transmission of the spoken word from generation to generation from where the experiences of all previous generations are discovered embedded "in the form of oral narration.

I refer to the evolution of oral tradition because there are many traditional designs that are handed down from mother to daughter orally at the time of weaving on the loom.

The transmission takes place, as well as the reception by the next generation, but not as such, resulting in the acceptance of the spoken word without the certification

of the truth of the narration, since it is accepted that in the spoken word there is a fluidity regarding the "past, present and future".¹³

(Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:122, 128, Sifakis, 1988:21-27)

According to Voyatzoglou, each generation of people feels around them the world that surrounds them, with their own sensibilities, tries to get to know this world, and after creating their own sense, their own inventions and their works she hands them over to the next generation.

She, in turn, adds her own "harvest" to the one she inherited and passes it on to the next generation. All this harvest and the wealth of collected data over time is tradition. Tradition does not remain static but is constantly evolving. According to tradition itself, the evolution of tradition is created when new elements come into contact with tradition.

The conflict that takes place between the new elements and the old results in the creation of other forms of culture, a synthesis of old and new. (Voyatzoglou, 1986:14)

A multi-layered and multi-class concept of folk tradition, on a national level, is attributed by Meraklis in terms of family, dowry, immigration, etc. (Meraklis, 1984:14, 57, 83)

Positions on the ideology of tradition are carried out in the spirit of the year 1979, the year of proclamation of Greek tradition by the Ministry of Education, with the primary purpose of honouring the roots of the Greek people, a reminder of tradition, and offering to the youth of Greece "in memory of the fathers of the nation".

For this purpose a series of texts was published, (1981:9-190)

Greek Tradition, in which twenty-four Greek intellectuals participate, with presentations - articles (1981:9-180), and nine speakers in two public debates in Athens and Piraeus. (Zora, 1981: 183-237 et al., Greek Tradition)

It is characteristic that the selection of the presentations and rapporteurs was made from the area of the Greek capital, Athens, and co-capital, Thessaloniki. There is a complete absence of presentations by scientists from the Greek countryside and the diaspora. An oxymoron in my opinion.

From the papers related to the topic of my study, I chose from the works that refer to Greek culture / tradition, weaving / embroidery.

¹³ "In traditional societies art constructs in the forms in which collective knowledge and memory, perception and interpretation of the world are formulated. That is, before any information, knowledge, belief or judgment is deposited in the treasury of collective memory, it must be formulated and shaped in a way that is clear and understandable by all, as well as suitable for memorization. This process of formatting, involving selection, abstraction, clearing, association, is made on the basis of an organic set of rules that we usually call conventions, denoting by this term both their general validity for all members of a society and their timelessness that they were not created overnight but are valid from time immemorial and probably formed several generations ago." (Sifakis, 1988:21)

Dragoumis calls tradition the memory of nations and conscious history. (Dragoumis, 1981:24)

The meaning of tradition is negotiated by Christos Malevitsis, who characterizes tradition as lived time and a diachronic course of the fabric of the core of life which was first formed in some place by some community, and therefore tradition has a dynamic, and not a static character, naturally presupposes a nucleus with a cultural evolution, which develops the thread of tradition progressively, from the inside out. (Malevitsis, 1981:89)

According to him, tradition is experienced and not lost, if the clarity of the records of lived time, and the authenticity - authenticity of the creators, indicate a strong consciousness. Malevitsis argues that the meaning of tradition operates under certain conditions, after the reconstruction of an experience in the consciousness of the individual, and this core of tradition remains alive. (Malevitsis, 1981:89, 95, 97)

Malevitsis' statement can be implemented in the traditional handiwork where the weaver receives the design, holds the fork and creates variations. (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:128)

Papanoutsos argues that originality in tradition does not exist, since in art in general each craftsman follows a pattern, and his work depends on the education and teachers he had. Each craftsman (he argues) gives his works the character of his own works / creations based on the works of the school in which he was taught, without omitting (the craftsman) to create something 'special', his own.

The craftsman "natural and spontaneous or more enlightened with the spirit of his time" creates. (Papanoutsos, 1981:119-121)

"Tradition should not be old from memorization nor new without memory"
(D. Pikionis, 1981:131)

Pikionis refers to the reconstruction of tradition in an article he wrote in 1946 and published in the magazine "Eklogi" in 1981. (Pikionis, 1981:124-132)

I. N. Theodorakopoulos expresses himself in the same parallel,

"the reduction of the form of the essentiality of tradition is a work of memory and amnesia together"
(I.N. Theodorakopoulos, 1981:131)

Pikionis negotiates the issue of the reconstruction of tradition, with a conscious approach, criticizes the ills of the 1946 era, and recommends that echelons of teachers begin to study tradition and the people, from the original origins of the village, and not from the armchair, and after these teachers are taught then only to teach the crowd.

(Pikionis, 1981:131) Dragoumis agrees with Pikionis' approaches. (Dragoumis, 1981:32) It is difficult to ascertain whether the positions of the above two scholars

were correct, what progress was made, and to what extent, and by what correct criterion, they were evaluated, and even whether their exhortations led to the proper study of tradition with regard to the daily life of the people, as this life really is.

Was the above research done with scientific observation and interpretation? or does it achieve the opposite by creating the plastic Laography Laography, (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1978:149) and which was adopted for tourist reasons (Kiourtsakis, 1984:60)? From what point of view did the teachers approach the subject and meaning, which is called the true tradition that Zora so strongly emphasized in the public debate in Piraeus? (Zora, public debate, 1981:237)

Zora in the public debate spoke not only about folk art, but also about the falsification of tradition, Laography and expressed with concern her fears about the leveling tactic of falsifying folk art, which tactics harm tradition. But she also expressed her satisfaction that eventually (in her opinion), the people tried to find their roots, and appreciate handicraft as an expression of folk art and creation. On the issue of falsification of folk art, Zora stressed the need to keep folk art, as well as tradition, authentic as it was handed down by previous generations. (Zora, public discussion Piraeus, 1981:224, 225, 237)

From the beginning of the presentations/articles, the romantic idealistic ethnocentric approach of the Ministry of Education in declaring the year of tradition (year 1979) is clearly shown. Only the commendable initiative as well as the efforts with their multifaceted manifestations should not be limited within the limits of this time (the year of tradition), because "it would look like a firework extinguished. It would be a fleeting impression on the memory of our children..." (Zora, public discussion Piraeus, 1981:224)

I consider it remarkable that most of the rapporteurs, as I mentioned, e.g. Dragoumis, Pikionis etc., urge the Laography teachers to study the original unspoiled cell of tradition, the village. On the contrary, however, the rapporteurs come (as has already been said) from the centres of the big cities of Athens and Thessaloniki.

The art of weaving / embroidery is rarely mentioned in the selected presentations of the book (the Greek Tradition), as a part of traditional art.

Few of the writers-rapporteurs present the problem of falsification of tradition and what measures should be taken to deal with the problems that arise and the precautions to be taken to safeguard the real tradition from any risk of destruction of the "treasure delivered".

This book is dedicated to young people. In the two public debates between Athens and Piraeus, the conversation takes place only between scientists. As has already been said, the effort of the Ministry of Education is "remarkable and commendable", if of course the young people were duly informed, because in no case is the presence of young people mentioned in the discussions, nor if young people were given time to express their own views. A book that does not correspond to today's

reality but, as Kyriakidou - Nestoros mentions, when the science that records the customs and traditions of the Greek people, Laography, was the healer " of a group of dreamers enlightened by the state apparatus. (see Tsatsos, 1981:9, 15, Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1978:69)

For the decline and decline of folk tradition, everyone must evaluate the situation, always bearing in mind that, through the "continuous development" of traditional popular culture, some elements survive intact, others modified or readjusted, or even disappear entirely, as has already been said. (Meraklis, 1973:14) Because the people express themselves through their culture, which they constantly recreate using elements of tradition along with new elements offered by the circumstances of their lives.

However, it is undeniable that globalisation of culture, as has already been mentioned, is a major blow to popular culture, which has taken many centuries to evolve and reach the stage it is today. (Kiourtsakis, 1989:42)¹⁴

In conclusion, it could be appreciated that the inherited technical tradition, developed with the "common understanding" of life, expresses the general feeling of a closed social group which is determined by the common mental mood of the group, the economic purposes, the common living conditions, and crystallizes in the customs which are respectfully observed as sacred laws and are received by the next generation of people. (Hatzimichali, 1931:8, Hosbawn, 1983:32, 4, 89, 14, Roper, 1983:4, 6, 7 in *The Invention of the Tradition*)

Therefore, it could be estimated that folk tradition includes all "works or activities that express the people and are characterized by anonymity, standardization, collectivity, etc.". (Babiniotis, Lex. 1998:1335)

Thus, "tradition is the knowledge that a society of people has hoarded for a long time and that is transmitted from generation to generation." (Averoff, 1999:45)

Therefore, tradition is the "treasured treasure" of a society.

¹⁴ The question and fear today is not how to preserve precious works of art, but how to keep alive and intact in our days "basic sources" that kept "the natural renewal" of the various artistic sensibilities, the cultivation of popular culture and of course this humanity. (Kiourtsakis, 1989:47)
The poet Seferis rightly wonders that, "The question is not so much what things ended [...] But with what we replace [...] (we who live, like every thing of life in decay and change) the things we lost." (G. Seferis, *Trials*, Third edition 1974, Volume II, p. 138, in Kiourtsakis, 1989.42).

Greek Folk Art

Critical Review of Bibliographic Sources

Bibliographic sources that respond to the objectives of reflections on Greek folk art were found in the following manuals:

(Hatzimichali, 1931, Kyriakidou-Nestoros, 1975, Megas, 1979, Zora, 1980, Sifakis, 1980, Skouteri-Didaskalou, 1989, 1990, Meraklis, 1992, Chasiotis, 1992, Babinotis, 1998, Mavrogiannis, vol 3:1999, Averoff, 1999). Since traditional handiwork is a type of Greek folk art, it has been discussed in more general studies and what is mentioned about its mission (I mean folk art) and its functionality also concerns traditional handicrafts woven / embroidery.

What is Folk Art and what are its characteristics?

Hatzimichali defines folk art as follows:

"Folk decoration is the objective expression and manifestation of the artistic feeling of a group soul, which depends on the conditions of the group, on the created technical tradition and is closely associated with practical ends, but without neglecting purposes that are not exclusively related to material life."

(Hatzimichali, 1931:7)

Meraklis believes that the

"Folk art is a process that starts from the satisfaction of practical needs, while it already contains the tendency, the entelechy for the manifestation of an 'artistic will', for the manifestation of a desire to decorate the superfluous."

(Meraklis, 1992:9)

In Babinotis' view, folk art is

"the art that flourished in Greece, from the end of the 17th century to the 19th century, including all decorative, characterized by themes, hagiographic compositions, the anonymity of the artist, etc. Art based on the production of works in the traditional way".

(Babinotis, 1998:991)

The many definitions that have been attributed to Greek folk art from time to time, because it is talked about, were created only to help and become the "scientific tools" to understand the phenomenon that each researcher undertakes to study.

"Of course there are no correct definitions. The definitions are human constructs, mental products, so they involve a large amount of arbitrariness. However, definitions are scientific tools, therefore "utilitarian products" that the scientist uses to give identity, that is, to define and limit the phenomenon he examines. Thus, on the

one hand, he clarifies his position towards the subject of research and, on the other hand, he simultaneously attempts a first understanding of this subject. In this respect, definitions function in the scientific process as 'working hypotheses', which are verified – or not – by theory and research."

(Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989, 1990: 16, 26)

If the same group (society) that made the utilitarian objects is conservative, it requires its traditional handicrafts to be not only utilitarian but also conservative in terms of folk art, which is less personal and accepted as a whole by the group that created it. Consequently, folk art is utilitarian, conservative, group/collective (Hatzimichali, 1931:8), most of the time anonymous, without omitting the expression of the 'magico-religious perception of the (Zora, 1980:14) world. Regarding the aesthetics of folk art products, Meraklis (1992:8) considers it characteristic that elegance coexists with collectivity and usability, so that the folk craftsman who manufactures his handicraft justifies his mission, without omitting to meet the needs of the group. Therefore, its manufacturer foresees that the popular construct must be distinguished by a collective functionality. (Meraklis, 1992:13) Meraklis, (1979:41) concludes that folk art is the expression of the "folk soul", a function of man's popular life and a reflection of his daily life. Consequently, folk art reveals the culture / tradition of the group, how it thinks its visions, how it operates and by what rules it is governed because through his works, the folk craftsman lets his perceptions, beliefs, fears / doubts about life, his preferences and his relations with the 'natural' and social environment become known.

Hatzimichali (1931:17) believes that when a researcher studies folk handicrafts, through them he gains the "peculiarity of culture" of the race, the socio-economic life of the country and folk art can be used as a tool of connection (a link) of man with the country he lives. Therefore, folk art is a key factor with a "civilizing horizon", with a socio-pedagogical and economic point of view and becomes a dynamic accomplice in the development of artistic life. Since the contemporary artist can study folk artifacts and draw 'schematizations and 'technical forms' and with the collaboration / relationship of matter and 'schematization' to create a new expression. Then, folk art, in Hatzimichali's view, manifests itself and plays the role of a living heritage that evolves into infrastructure, and a basic and diverse element with an educational character in the life of man. Hatzimichali (1931:17)

Regarding the multifaceted value of folk art, Megas (1979:142, 143) states that it was acknowledged by the congresses of Prague in 1928 and Paris in 1947, whose experiences were used for "ethnological and sociological" studies.

Despite the above fact, it is generally acknowledged by scholars that Greek folk art assimilates foreign influences without eliminating its national identity. The double influence she received from East and West was not able to eliminate the assimilative capacity of the Greek woman in terms of foreign influences and by this I mean assimilation capacity of these foreign influences, the reformation of foreign elements

into genuine Greek creations, with the relativity of the dynamic choice which resulted in the Greek woman choosing, always keeping the material that suited her own beliefs, and incorporating it into her own constructions / needlework. (Zora, 1980:14, Hatzimichali, 1931:13)

According to Chasiotis (1992:9), the simpler the above process seems, the more difficult it appears, since it is strengthened by foreign influences that are a consequence of the miscegenation of peoples, making it difficult to study the folk art of a tribe, especially in the case of Greece, confusion is caused due to the "diverse climate" of its geographical position and the multiple adventures that the race of Greeks had suffered. If we consider that the historical classification of works of folk decoration is very difficult because "almost always, in the works of each local group" there are mixed foreign influences. (Hatzimichali, 1931:14, Chasiotis, 1992:10). However, perhaps the above comment is not absolute, because all foreign influences do not come from historical life and are due to other relations of folk decoration, which, as already said, contribute to "explaining the difference of local forms so as to make it difficult to distinguish the various historical influences, such as conservation, and the localism of folk art". (Hatzimichali, 1931:14, Chasiotis, 1992:9, 10)

For the reason that the localism of folk art and conservatism preserve the prehistoric shapes which contributed each time "to assimilate to a large extent each new motif of the various eras". (Hatzimichali, 1931:14, Mavrogiannis, Vol. 3, 1999:211-213)

Hatzimichali and Chasiotis justify Mavrogiannis' above view,

"And thus prehistoric themes are presented united with Byzantine and merged with oriental, Venetian or Turkish forms. In other words, while receiving foreign influence, the manufacturer unconsciously repeated the traditional themes."

(Hatzimichali, 1931:14 Chasiotis, 1992:9,10)

For folk craftsmen there is a perception in the literature that the craftsman who delivers and teaches the technique of folk art to the next recipient, whether he is a "master on a minion" or a mother to a child, creates a mutual "personal relationship" which is based on a long-term observation of this art and on "oral learning always based on memory". This whole "accumulation of knowledge" works synthetically, since what the "student" is taught and assimilates in his memory are the motifs (themes), drawings, representations and "formulas", always with photographic memorization, despite the fact that in many cases "written" drawings, drawings, embroidery, "stamps", "footprints-patterns" for costumes, etc. come to help.

The craftsman uses all his experiences and memorized knowledge of the tradition of the society to which he belongs (narrow or wide) and does not need to copy other designs since he himself lives in a living tradition. The craftsman does not copy, but while using a design he makes his own variations which consequently depend first on the material and secondly on the technique. (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989, 1990:90). Many times the pattern is shaped from geometric shown at the beginning,

to written, and conversely, from written to geometric. A vivid example of stylization and change of forms is the rooster in the folk embroidery of the Balkans, (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1962:72, 1975:113), where the subject matter and morphology changes.

Impressive figures are found in Skyrian embroidery (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:118) but also in mainland Greece and other Balkan peoples (bridal mattresses, costumes, etc.).

Characteristic can be characterized the evolutionary course of the decorative themes of the rooster originating from the same geographical area Ormyleia on the peninsula of Halkidiki, (roosters in various variations on costume legs). (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:119)

(Roosters embroidered on the same geranium-colored cotton fabric, with a mesh stitch, in color compositions of red, yellow, white, orange, blue, and green).

The pattern varies from variation to variation in such a way as to distinguish the common origin of the archetypal pattern.

Changes are made at the will of the creator (e.g. like adapting a traditional motif), then the creator has the ability to be original and not to repeat, because he adds something of his own. (Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1975:127, Sifakis, 1988:27)

One element that holds back the originality of each creator is the fact that the people are attached to his symbols, most of which come from earlier times. The motifs of the symbols come from the observation of the animal and plant kingdom (such as florets, trees, birds, animals, fish, horses, etc.) and from observations from celestial bodies (stars, moon, sun, etc.), as well as from human actions, e.g. (running, fighting, defensive posture, etc.). Other symbols are national survivals such as the double-headed eagle, meanders, etc.). The above symbols are deeply rooted (motifs, symbols, signs, forms) in the soul of the people, in order to follow the immigrant, to the place of his settlement and to be a bond with his homeland since they speak his language. (Megas, 1979:143) Besides, Megas believes that this belief in symbols is a strong and important value of folk art, which not only speaks the language of expatriates, but also becomes and functions as a link (bridge) between the immigrant for an identification sign (symbol of his origin). Expressive forms of art and motifs come from the performative circle of the social group and for this reason, the forms are understood by the social whole, since man is always a part of this social whole and never an isolated entity. (Megas, 1979:142) Megas argues that folk art is irrelevant to artistic laws, and is based on ideological content, spirit, the idea that inspires the creator, and not on form, since it is based on its original origin. (Megas, 1979:140) Figures in folk art are symbolic and understood without additional explanation, e.g. a heart-shaped pin reveals the feelings of the person who offered it. (Megas, 1979:142)

Meraklis, (1992:12) adds that originality in folk art is passion, the movement of the soul, the formative element, which is capable of altering a stereotyped form, and it is

justly admitted that in folk art there is no violation of motifs but only the possibility of simple variation of them (motifs). Summarizing the literature on folk art, there may be a gap in Australia. Perhaps some questions are difficult to answer, such as what is folk art. Perhaps we should admit, among other things, Hatzimichali's view that "folk art is something useful and used, something that is preserved (and preserved) and that has value". (Hatzimichali, 1931:20)

Skouteri-Didaskalou observes that it is very difficult to give a precise definition, admits Hatzimichali's view and adds that in Folk Art everything is "simple and functionally utilitarian". (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:95)

The Averoff evaluates folk art as an expression of collective "spiritual and material conditions of human life". (Averoff, 1999:26)

It is a great reflection and quite difficult to determine precisely what art and traditional handiwork are in modern society and "what are the tools with which we can approach not only our eyes but also our ears for a "sensory view of it"... [...] and these difficulties ... are multiplied or oversimplified in order for so-called folk art. The easy solution, of course, rests on the view that in folk art everything is simple, or at least simpler than in so-called great art or modern art or literary art, everything is more natural (- closer to nature) everything is functional (- utilitarian). (Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990:95)

The concern becomes greater when we take into account that the criteria by which handmade traditional handiwork is judged (because this is what we are talking about) are not absolute.

In an effort to set certain parameters for folk art, crystallized ideas of scholars were documented and evaluated, such as (Hatzimichali, 1931, Megas, 1979, Meraklis, 1979, Zora, 1980, Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1983, Skouteri - Didaskalou, 1989-1990, Averoff, 1999, etc.), regarding the concept of traditional handiwork and its properties, such as (teamwork, collectivity, usability, conservatism, symbolism, functionality, artistic aesthetic appearance, etc.) (evaluation of the authenticity and authenticity of the handiwork). (Zora, 1980:14)

It would be futile to try to understand a work of folk art without first considering art as an integral part of human history, as a primary way of expression in the very heart of every society. (Averoff, 1999:25)

Folk art in Averoff must be investigated and evaluated as an expression of collective "spiritual and material conditions of human life", as has already been said. (Hatzimichali, 1931:7, Megas, 1979:140, Meraklis, 1979:4, Kyriakidou - Nestoros, 1983:2, Averoff, 1999:26)

As a natural consequence, traditional handiwork is the handicraft made with primary material (Pl. K) and includes the material and spiritual activities of human life collectively, as mentioned in the above documented sources.

Epilogue

Summing up, we could admit that Nikolaos Politis is considered the pioneer laographer and Father of Laography in Greece. With its definition, it supports the traditional actions, actions of the people, their spiritual and social lives (1909: 1).

A few years later Stilpon Kyriakides (1922-1953) goes on to name the characteristics of Greek popular culture by juxtaposing the "individual, the "modern" and the "rational" characteristics of modern culture. That is, Kyriakides proclaims the Group, the traditional and the spontaneous.

George Megas (1938, 1947, 1966) admits Politis and Kyriakides but goes on to refer to folk traditional constructions, deals with the principle of Ethnography, and studies the special character as shaped by the people themselves and their history, George Megas together with Dimitrios

Loukatos (1964-1965) include in the definition of Laography and the artistic manifestations of the life of the people. and refer to the purposes of Laography as being "scientific, humanitarian, national, and internationalist."

In 1984 the youngest laographer was Michalis Meraklis. He approaches the subject of Laography with an anthropological/social character and admits that Laography material often transcends national boundaries, resulting in international collaborations – as is the case in "Laography atlases".

The laographer Alki Kyriakidou-Nestoros (1973, 1978) summarizes the words laos, laikos in a different adjective such as "traditional", a word that Nestoros believes represents the concept of tradition. Nestoros proceeds to the critical analysis of the theory of Greek Laography, refers to and manages to connect over time the proto-scientific phase of Laography such as romanticism, unity of gender, language, folk song.

Nestoros studies key words such as folk customs and tradition, as well as the ideological approach of Laography science.

Herzfeld as a social anthropologist aims to:

In the global knowledge of man and studies his object man {Greek} diachronically, but also synchronically.

The laographer Romeos (1980) moves with similar approaches and addresses the psyche of the Greek people, and the indivisibility of tradition, refers to folk culture and traditional handiwork.

With a nationalist approach to Laographic phenomena, Kakoutis (1980) is also placed, who negotiates in oral tradition, collections of folk songs and folk songs collected in field research considering them 'living monuments' as Kyriakides in Nestoros (1975:66). Kakoutis believes that the spoken word and folk song in general characterize the life and character of the Greek people. Through his life, his soul, his

expression, his identity and the character of the spiritual development of the Nation are reflected.

Varvounis, one of the youngest Laographers (1933), negotiates the ideology of Greek Laography with a scientific approach to the evolution of the identity of the modern Greek with scientific thought, a trend adopted by Laographers from 1960 onwards. (Varvounis 1993:17,18).

Varvounis sees the people as an object of study with the mirror of today's science, he examines and admits the previous scientists, but he proceeds and evaluates his subject, in the context of a comprehensive study on the treatment of the traditional way of life. (Varvounis 1993:18,19).

The author openly states that he does not follow the theory of Laography applied science { ...} but uses class and cultural criteria to achieve a more fruitful reflection on this.

Through the studies of Herzfeld (1982), and Varvounis (1993) the tendency and the imposed classification of Greek Laography for a scientific approach and course free from the trends of the 18th and 19th early 20th centuries is clearly shown.

Greek Laography, ready to function as a science, takes its place among the other social anthropological sciences (Hersfeld 1982:44) and will be evaluated by scholars as a science that in the past showed the way to the "Greek to know himself" (Hersfeld 1982:44).

Varvounis as a laographer approaches his study of the concepts of people, nation, popular culture, through his own sphere of competence.

Laography focused mainly on the study of the countryside, the traditional space, traditional social groups and the era when technology in the pre-industrial era was late.

Therefore, Laography also turned to the social problems that accompanied the emergence of technology in modern civilization *Anthropologie structural* (1958, Vol. 1: 388) *A comprehensive study of man.* (Claude Levi-Strauss).

Therefore, from the clarification of the global study of man follows the conclusion

The anthropological approach, whether it is historical or modern, resulting in the phenomenon called Society or culture. Besides, the opinion of Skouteri - Didaskalou is considered important that:

"Laography is considered the collection of Laography material. Laography can be considered literature when it has folk themes.

Laography is the national need to preserve and revive our national tradition."

"Laography is the construction (production) of works of folk art or Laography events, dances, national costumes, celebrations, folk theater." (Skouteri-Didaskalou1985:1-28)

Folk Culture and Folk Tradition

I will have to testify what is the definition of Folk Culture and Folk Tradition.

According to Babinotis (1998:991, 1458), "culture is a set of material and spiritual achievements of a social group {.....} whether it is a group of people, or a social, ethnic, or religious whole".

Works of art are part of popular culture and express experiences of yesterday such as needlework. I. Chasiotis (1992:6,8,9,10) talks about popular culture and calls popular culture the events of everyday life.

The Frenchmen Levi-Strauss and Fernard Braudel (La Méditerranée écrite sur l'histoire) argue that the culture and tradition of a people are studied in the space-time in which it was created.

In European terminology, the words "civilization" and "culture" are used.

According to Braudel, culture is a place where people with the same characteristics use common symbols and develop a way of life (Skouteri - Didaskalou 1989-1990:30).

Modern civilization, according to Kyriakides, is the civilization that appeared in Greece after the industrial revolution in Europe.

Modern popular culture became a 'global phenomenon' with the collaboration of two main actors. a) the unification of the world market of the 18th century, and b) the industrial revolution of the 19th century. (Kyriakides in Skouteri - Didaskalou 1998-1999:269).

Kyriaki-Nestoros deals with Folk Tradition and points out that folk tradition is a symbol and not reality, but constructed from elements of reality chosen to serve a purpose, and classifies folk tradition "that it does not belong to science but to ideology, and is traditional".

Life of the Greek people or traditional culture (Kyriakidou - Nestoros 1983:249).

According to Meraklis, folk culture and folk tradition, historical development of tradition is presented in two parts: literary and folk. (Meraklis1973:14).

The transmission of tradition takes place as well as the reception by the next generation, but not as such, with the result that the spoken word is accepted without certification for the truth of the narration, since it is accepted that in the spoken word there is a fluidity regarding the present and the future (Kyriakidou-Nestoros-1975:122,128, Sifakis,1988:21-27).

The year 1979, the year of proclamation of Greek tradition by the Ministry of Education, "with the primary purpose of honoring the roots of the Greek people, "a reminder' of the tradition and offer to the young people of Greece in memory of the fathers of the nation."

For this purpose, a series of texts (1981:9-190) on Greek tradition was published, in which twenty-four Greek intellectuals participated with presentations - articles (1981:9-180) and nine speakers in two public debates in Athens and Piraeus. (Zora, 1981:183-237 et al. Greek Tradition).

It is characteristic that the selection of rapporteurs and presentations was made from the Greek capital, Athens and co-capital Thessaloniki. There are completely no presentations by scientists from the Greek countryside and the diaspora.

Dragoumis calls tradition a reminder of nations and conscious history. (Dragoumis, 1981:24).

Christos Malevitsis negotiates the meaning of tradition with a core with a cultural evolution that develops the thread of tradition progressively from the inside out.

(Malevitsis, 1981:89,95,97).

Pikionis refers to the reconstruction of tradition in an article he wrote in 1946 and published in the journal election in 1981: 124-132)

"Tradition should not be old from memorization nor new without memory."

Pikionis (1981:124-132). In the same parallel, N. Theodorakopoulos expresses himself, "The reduction of the form of the essentiality of tradition is a work of memory and amnesia together". (1981:131).

Greek Folk Art

What is folk art and what are its characteristics.

According to Hatzimichali, "folk art is the objective expression and manifestation of the artistic feeling of a group soul, which depends, on the conditions of the group, on the created technical tradition and is associated with practical ends, but without neglecting purposes that are not exclusively related to material life". (Hatzimichali, 1931:7).

According to Meraklis, folk art is a process that Meraklis (1992:13) starts from the satisfaction of practical needs, while it already contains the tendency, the "entelechy for the manifestation of an 'artistic will' for the manifestation of a desire to decorate the superfluous". (Meraklis 1992:9). The numerous definitions given from time to time for Greek folk art were created to help and become "scientific tools" to understand the phenomenon that each researcher undertakes to study.

In Babiniotis' view, "the folk art that flourished in Greece from the late 17th to the 19th century. including all branches of handicraft and decoration with characteristic

themes from tradition, symbolic and bibliographic compositions, the anonymity of the artist, etc. Art based on the production of works in the traditional way". (Babinotis 1998:99).

It is characteristic that the works of popular creation are utilitarian, conservative, and largely impersonal.

According to Meraklis (1992:8), elegance coexists with collectivity, usability, so that the craftsman who constructs a work justifies his mission.

According to Meraklis (1979:41), folk art reveals the culture / tradition of the group, the thoughts of the group, its visions and its daily life.

Besides, Hatzimichali believes that folk art reveals and plays the role of a living heritage, which evolves into infrastructure and a basic and diverse element, with an educational character in human life. (Hatzimichali 1931:17).

Meraklis concludes that ultimately folk art is the expression of the folk soul and a reflection of man's daily life. (Meraklis 1979:41).

Meraklis (1992:21) notes with regret that the factors of folk art do not present the same dynamism of yesterday but a sterility and stagnation, due to the change in the conditions of the rhythm of life of today's man. Consequently, folk art cannot remain irrelevant to the change in the living conditions of the individual and must be adapted to the modern conditions and perspectives of everyday life. (industrial orientation-industrialization of art).

Therefore, in this phase of the industrialization of art, folk art adapts to the rhythm of life.

Megas argues that if works of folk art are put "in iron forms, for mass production, then they will lose their folk character, and be transformed into industrial constructions".

The mood and originality, and consequently the originality of the handicrafts. from which folk art was born is destroyed. (Megas, 1979:140 ff.).

But it can be said that:

The localism of folk art and its conservatism is the reason why prehistoric shapes contributed each time to assimilate to a large extent each new motif of the various eras. (Hatzimichali, 1931: 14, Mavrogiannis, vol. 3, 1999: 211-213).

Hatzimichali and Chasiotis justify Mavrogiannis' above view, "and thus prehistoric themes are presented united with Byzantine and the latter merged with eastern forms. Venetian and Turkish. The manufacturer was unconsciously repeating the traditional themes." (Hatzimichali, 1931:14, Chasiotis1992:9,10).

The characteristic of Greek folk art is admittedly to assimilate foreign influences without eliminating its national identity. The double influence she received from East

and West was not able to eliminate the assimilative capacity of the Greek woman in terms of foreign influences and by this I mean the assimilative capacity of foreign influences, the regeneration of foreign elements, into genuine Greek creations, and with the dynamics of choice, the Greek woman always had the ability to choose, keeping the material that suited her own handicrafts. (Zora 1980:14, Hatzimichali 1931:13).

As a natural consequence, the construction of Greek art is the handicraft made with primary material and encompasses the material and spiritual activities of human life collectively as stated by (Hatzimichali 1931:7, Megas; 1979:140, Meraklis 1979:4, Kyriakidou - Nestoros 1983:2, Averoff 1999:26).

Reflections / Conclusions

Summing up, we could state that Laography is the collection of Laographic material,... The descriptive presentation of the Laographic material... literature, when it contains Laographic themes, the national need to preserve and revive our national tradition. Laography is the construction (production) of folk art or Laographic events: dances, national costumes, celebrations, folk theatre, according to Skouteri Didaskalou (1985: 1-28).

In the case of folk tradition, Kyriakidou - Nestoros summarizes that folk tradition is a symbol and not reality, a symbol made of certain elements of reality chosen to serve a purpose, and imputes folk tradition as a concept that belongs to the field of ideology, and not to the field of science. She believes that there is a “reality in tradition, which is the traditional life of the Greek people and therefore traditional culture”.

In the case of folk art, Hatzimichali considers folk decoration to be the objective expression and manifestation of the artistic feeling of "one" common soul of a communal group that depends on the conditions of the group on the created technical tradition and is associated with practical ends, but without neglecting purposes that are not exclusively related to material life (Hatzimichali 1931:7)

Meraklis concludes that folk art is the "expression of the folk soul, the reflection of everyday life, and of popular life".

Kiourtsakis asks with wonder: "The question and fear today is not how to preserve valuable works of art, but how to keep alive and intact in our days, basic sources that held the 'natural renewal', the diverse artistic sensibilities, the cultivation of popular culture and of course this humanity". (Kiourtsakis:1989.47)

Greek Folk Art slowly and quietly progresses towards decline, is lost, deformed or remains locked in the drawers of its creators, a faithful guard, and an enclave of Folk Culture and Tradition, is projected in the various Museums, a bright beacon and non-negotiable guardian of the life of older generations.

Valuable works are lost, signs of life from another era, at the turn of time disappear, or are sold in the markets for a negligible amount.

The conditions of the people who created them changed, it is not possible to resurrect traditional constructions such as textiles and handicrafts, they are not needed for one's subsistence in the 21st century.

However, it is worth the traditional constructions to remain in our memory, dynamic “evidence” with their presence, the dynamics of their speech, to make us better understand our place, ourselves, and above all to keep fresh the roots of our generation.

The journey we began with awe to study the various enlightened workers of the spirit, Philosophers, Laographers and Anthropologists, is coming to an end.

It would be desirable to study Laography at the roots of place and time within the place and from the “undefiled cell” of its creation, the isolated small social groups, the villages.

So the research will have the appropriate and authentic tools to promote our popular culture, our Laography, our tradition and our folk art – creation with a real combination and a living sequence of city and village, in both elite and popular cultural formations.

Our roots must be kept fresh and strong in order to keep our nation secure. Education therefore is an important tool for informing future generations as can be highlighted by the following historical quotations:

“Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but is life itself.” - John Dewey¹⁵

“The purpose of education is to give to the body and to the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable.” - Plato¹⁶

Of course, research should not be overlooked, but appreciated as a basic tool for proving the truth.

Finally, I would consider the question and logic as summarised by the poet Seferis:

"The issue is not so much what things ended {...} but what we replace with, {...} We who live like everything of life in decay and change... the things we lost." (G. Seferis, *Trials*, Third edition 1974 Volume II. p. 138 in Kiourtsakis 1989:42).

¹⁵ Source: <https://www.teachthought.com/education/john-dewey-quotes/> accessed 19th of May 2024

¹⁶ Source: <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/722178> accessed 19th of May 2024.

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