

Du terrain à l'archive

Les archives de folklore et d'ethnologie en tant que pôles de recherche, d'éducation et de culture



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de l'Académie d'Athènes (1918-2018)*

Sous la direction de Evangelos Karamanes

ATHÈNES 2019

ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ



ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

ΔΗΜΟΣΙΕΥΜΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΕΝΤΡΟΥ ΕΡΕΥΝΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΛΑΟΓΡΑΦΙΑΣ - 34

**Από την επιτόπια έρευνα στο αρχείο
Τα λαογραφικά και εθνολογικά αρχεία
ως πόλοι έρευνας, εκπαίδευσης και πολιτισμού**

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Students' Collections of Ethnographic Material in the Folklore Museum and Archives of the University of Athens: Continuity and Change in Folklore Theory and Methodology

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Summary: This paper deals with collections by students of ethnographic material in the Folklore Museum and Archives (henceforth FMA) of the University of Athens. It looks at the topics researched and the methods employed in recording and interpreting their data by students during the fifty or more years of the existence of this archival collection. Special emphasis is given to the issues of continuity and change concerning the methodologies of research and archiving employed over this period, as they express continuities and transformations both in Greek society and culture, and in the development of folklore in Greece. Moreover, I attempt to investigate the ways in which the FMA function nowadays as a place, a *lieu*, where students are introduced to the concept of cultural heritage, in its tangible and intangible dimensions, and trained in its study and management. I approach the subject of this paper both as a researcher and instructor in folklore in the Department of Philology, but also as somebody who had a personal connection with the FMA as a student.

Aims and questions raised

The 31st Conference of the Network FER-EURETHNO of the Council of Europe / 1st Conference of the Francophone Working Group, International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), which also celebrated the centenary of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens (1918-2018), has given me the opportunity to focus on a special category of folklore archives existing in Greece, namely university folklore archives¹. In this paper I examine the case of the Folklore Museum and Archives (henceforth referred to as FMA) of the Department of Philology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA). I reflect on their history, value and utilization in academic and public life. More specifically, I examine the ways in which the contents and

1. I would like to offer my congratulations to the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, where I had the honour and pleasure of working as a researcher for seven years (2004-2010), for the celebration of its centenary anniversary. May it carry on its valuable scholarly service to the international research community and its equally important social service to Greek society.

management of these archives reflect the theories and methodologies employed in folklore, as it has been taught at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and as these theories and methodologies have been redefined and changed over the past 54 years. Moreover, I attempt to show how such changes reflect important transformations in the ways Greeks address issues relating to their culture and its representations. First, I refer to the history of the FMA; then I focus on the ways in which the more recent ethnographic material contributed to the FMA by students and the activities taking place in these archives, reflect both continuities and transformations regarding the theory and methodology of folklore, as taught and practiced in this university department. More specifically, this paper attempts to comment on the function and value of archive-oriented fieldwork practices in the context of an academic institution and in interaction with education, public life and students' occupational prospects.

History and profile of the FMA

The history of the FMA of the Department of Philology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens is tightly linked to the history of the discipline of folklore (*laografia*) at this university and in Greek academic life, in general². The establishment and functioning of these archives are inextricably linked to the theory and practice of folklore in Greece, and to the training of folklorists and secondary education language teachers in the area of traditional Greek culture.

In 1907 Nikolaos Politis, founder of the discipline of folklore in Greece, first included the instruction of folklore in his courses as Professor of Greek Mythology and Archaeology at the University of Athens.

Politis introduced the term "laografia" in 1884 and endeavoured to create an academic infrastructure for this subject, which included the establishment of the Hellenic Folklore Society in 1908, of the Society's journal, *Laographia*, in 1909, and of the Folklore Archive in 1918, renamed the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (HFRC) in 1966³. As a distinct academic subject, folklore was first taught at the University of Athens by Georgios Megas in 1947. However, it acquired its own institutional structures through the dynamic and persistent efforts of Georgios Spyridakis, who held the chair of Folklore between 1964 and 1972. An academic of great experience and belief in the value of the study

2. On the history, aims and activities of the FMA, see Spyridakis, 1974; Milingkou-Markan-toni, 1987, 2016; Chryssanthopoulou, 2018; and Antzoulitou-Retsila, 2018.

3. For a comprehensive reference to Nikolaos Politis' personality and scholarly contribution, see Polymerou-Kamilaki, Potiropoulos and Kamilakis, 2012.

of folk culture, and a determined organizer, Spyridakis endeavoured to create a Folklore Library and proceeded to establish an archive of primary folklore material, to be collected and deposited by students. This archive today comprises ca 4,000 manuscripts (*syloges*) numbering more than four million pages and containing ethnographic material mainly from Greece, from Cyprus and from the Greek diaspora (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 556), thus rendering it the largest folklore University archive in Greece. Employing his experience as a researcher and then Director of the Folklore Archive/Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens (1944-1955 and 1955-1969 respectively), Spyridakis determined that the University archives of folklore were also to include the following categories of objects as distinct archives: the microfilm archive, containing some 13,700 microphotographs mostly of magical and medicinal nature deriving from 17^c-19^c Cretan manuscripts; the music archive, containing old recordings of folk songs and music on magnetic tapes, recorded by students; the legal documents archive, containing legal documents pertaining to customary law, such as dowry certificates, wills, bills of sale, loan and lease, etc., often included in the students' manuscripts; the photograph archive, made up of photographs also included in the students' manuscripts; and a museum collection of objects today numbering ca 1,100 items, relating to material culture, to folk art, and to social and spiritual life, mostly donated by students or by other donors (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 567). The Folklore Collection has been digitized and is partly available to readers through the digital repository of the University of Athens, Pergamos (https://pergamos.lib.uoa.gr/uoa/dl/frontend/browse.html?p.id=col_folklore).



Fig. 1. From the FMA holdings: Glass plates used by Nikolaos Politis in his mythology lectures.

The government decree establishing a “Folklore Library with a Folklore Collection at the School of Philosophy of the University of Athens” (*Spoudasterion Laografias meta prosirtimenis laografikis syllogis*) was published in the *Government Gazette A'*, 49, 14.04.1972. Spyridakis retired a few months later, but his work at the Folklore Library and Folklore Collection was carried out by Maria Milingkou-Markantoni, assisted by other instructors, librarians, by postgraduate and doctoral students, under the supervision of the Library and Folklore Collection’s Directors, till her retirement in 2007⁴. She was the leading spirit of the Folklore Collection and is fondly remembered by several generations of students whom she trained and advised in matters of fieldwork and of folklore manuscript creation.



Fig. 2. Portraits of Georgios Spyridakis, founder of the Folklore Library with a Folklore Collection (1972) and of his assistant, Maria Milingkou-Markantoni, in the FMA.

The Folklore Collection was transferred to the new building of the School of Philosophy in 1987, where it is currently housed in two rooms on the sev-

4. For a detailed reference to the names and contribution of various scholars, students and staff to the development and management of the Folklore Collection, see Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 567-572.

enth floor (Complex 734). In 2009 an initiative to turn the Folklore Collection into autonomous “Folklore Museum and Archives” (*Laografiko Mouseio kai Archeio*) at the University of Athens was embarked upon by Minas Al. Alexiadis and his folklorist colleagues, Marianthi Kaplanoglou, Georgios Thanopoulos and, later, Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou. In this initiative, he was inspired by the existence of similar institutions in other Greek universities, where folklore is taught, namely at the Universities of Thessaloniki, Ioannina, etc⁵. In June 2017 the FMA were officially instituted⁶. Towards the end of 2018 all specialized libraries including the Folklore Library, with which the Folklore Collection had coexisted for 43 years, were transferred to the Central Library of the School of Philosophy. After deliberation, the FMA have remained in their original place, but with very limited resources in terms of funding and personnel.

Folklore theory and practice in the FMA: A critical approach

As mentioned above, the establishment of folklore museums and archives as a necessary strategy and mechanism for the teaching of folklore is widespread in Greek universities⁷. In its double character of museum and archive, this institution suggests the strong connection between material and intangible manifestations of culture, which has always constituted a fundamental tenet in the teaching and research practice of folklore in Greece. In Politis' very words, the aim of *laografia* was to examine “the traditional manifestations by means of words, practices or actions, of the Greek people's spiritual and social life ...”

5. See Antzoulatou-Retsila, 2018: 57-59, where the author illustrates the lengthy and tortuous administrative struggle to have the FMA established.

6. “Decree for the establishment of Folklore Museum and Archives in the Department of Philology, School of Philosophy, and approval of their internal regulations”, *Greek Government Gazette B'* 1923/02.06.2017. In September 2018 Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou, Assistant Professor of Folklore, was appointed as the first Director of the FMA for a period of three years (“Election of Director of the Folklore Museum and Archives of the Department of Philology, School of Philosophy, NKUA”, *Greek Government Gazette*, issue Y.O.D.D. concerning administrative positions in public bodies and institutions, 518/14.09.2018).

7. See Antzoulatou-Retsila, 2018: 57-58, for a detailed reference to publications on these university museums and archives. For an overall presentation, see Korre-Zografou, 1997. For the museums and archives of the Universities of Ioannina and Thessaloniki, see selectively Vrelli-Zachou, 2002; Bada, 2003; Skouteri-Didaskalou, 2007; Chatzitaki-Kapsomenou, 2007. For the folklore archive of the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, visit <https://www.he.duth.gr/el/page/laografiko-arheio>; see also Varvounis (with Tsala, Botsi, Nounanaki, Potouri), 2010.

561). Moreover, a large number of the items which constitute the FMA museum collection have been donated by students, to accompany the manuscripts which they submitted. To use current academic terminology, then, the teaching of folklore at the University of Athens traditionally stressed both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage (ICH), perceived as intertwined in the items of the Folklore Collection/FMA, which prompted them to see traditional culture in its entirety⁸.



Fig. 4. Ethnographic manuscripts displayed side by side with ethnographic objects in the FMA.

The fact that the teaching of folklore has always been associated with the practicing of fieldwork leading to the production of ethnographic ‘manuscripts’ (*cheirografa*), constitutes a special feature of this discipline, in the way it has been carried out in Greek academic institutions. In this respect, one needs to stress the connection between the Folklore Collection/FMA – among other university museums and archives – and the Folklore Archive/HFRC of the Academy of Athens. The latter has embedded many of its researchers in Greek universities, thereby disseminating their theoretical and methodological ap-

8. For the text of the Unesco Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, visit <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

proaches as regards folklore teaching and research at tertiary level. Indeed, all of the directors of the Folklore Archive/HFRC and many of its researchers also held university positions. The Folklore Museums and Archives established at the Universities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Ioannina, are thus linked to the parent folklore archive of the Academy of Athens, the organization and strong research orientation of which they have also embraced (Chryssanthopoulou, 2013a: 113-116; Papachristophorou, 2013: 772)⁹.

Professors of Folklore had already been trained as researchers and as ‘compilers’ (*syntaktes*) in the Folklore Archive/HFRC, thus having learnt to classify and file ethnographic data contained in ‘manuscripts’ into specific categories, finally included in the questionnaires (*erotimatologia*) they produced to facilitate fieldwork and the classification of ethnographic and oral folklore material. They trained their students to carry out research and to organize data in their manuscripts by applying the same methods. This was certainly also the case with folklore teaching at the University of Athens. Indeed, ethnographic manuscripts that students of folklore prepared and deposited in the archive until 2007, have generally followed Spyridakis’ *Guidelines for Collecting Folklore Material* (Spyridakis, 1962). This was concise and covered the entire spectrum of the areas of folk culture that could be recorded during fieldwork.

In two recent publications, Marilena Papachristophorou has stressed the need to approach the questionnaires used by folklorists during fieldwork in a spirit of a “meta-ethnographic research” (Papachristophorou, 2017: 102-103). She suggests that we need to see them as encompassing the theory and methodology of the discipline of folklore, being in themselves the product of the folklorists’ long-term experience in the techniques and skills necessary for work in the archive: editing, classifying, filing, and final checking of the ethnographic material (Papachristophorou, 2013: 772). Researchers working in the Folklore Archive did conduct fieldwork, but this was based on an already existing classification of ethnographic data, so that their methodology in reality was equivalent to a “systematic management of ethnographic data in archival terms”, which used the perspective of the humanities and employed a historical rather than synchronic approach to the study of the cultural phenomena they recorded (Papachristophorou, 2017: 114-115).

9. Both Nikolaos Politis and Georgios Megas assigned fieldwork-entailing projects to students in their folklore classes at the University of Athens. See Karamanes, 2017, on early recordings of wedding customs from Vlach-speaking villages by Politis’ students; see also Varvounis and Kouzas, 2007, on the archive of 1,890 folklore manuscripts produced by Megas’ students as part of his *Laografikon Frontisterion* classes (1947-1962), eventually published as a catalogue.

However, a careful study of these student-produced ethnographic manuscripts over the entire period of the existence of the archive often shows features pointing to a dynamic rather than passive approach to the study of folk culture both as regards the content and the methodologies of fieldwork and manuscript preparation. Although 'salvage fieldwork' (*sostiki epitopia erevna*) had always been important for academic folklorists (Chryssanthopoulou, 2013a: 110), both Spyridakis and Milingkou-Markantoni stressed the need for students to "observe popular cultural events as part of living tradition" (Spyridakis, 1974: 8), and to

"record the new cultural elements appearing in an area apart from the old ones. Thus, the foundations are created for the collection of primary "urban" folklore material, which normally adapts to the needs of farming and pastoral communities. In general, these new elements, either authentic or transformed, co-exist harmoniously with older ones, since 'the urban function is now a fact'" (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 558-559).

Although Milingkou-Markantoni states that the primary ethnographic material recorded by students refers mostly to the past, even to the period before 1940, as described through the memories of the informants, nevertheless it was felt that the obvious socio-economic and cultural changes brought about by urbanization, industrialization, and the spreading of technology, should be recorded by the student-fieldworkers.

Although the students generally maintained the categories specified by the Spyridakis questionnaire to classify their fieldwork data and compile their manuscripts, there are clear indications that the students were not deprived of their right to include additional information that was seen as enhancing their projects. Milingkou-Markantoni describes at length how the initiative of including extensive biographical narratives of her informants, introduced by a student in 1968, was seen as a good practice and became adopted by the instructors. Up until then, students had to include simple and short biographical notes of their informants. Milingkou-Markantoni quotes Penelope Psani's reasoning for including such biographical narratives in her own text:

"So I asked my informants to describe their lives in detail to me, so that the reader may become acquainted with their labour, their difficulties and agonies, their painful experiences, their simplicity, faith, and commitment to traditional ethics. These could be said to be autobiographies, but they also constitute a continuation of the ethnographic material. In this sense, I think that they are valuable" (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 562).

The instructor comments that such biographies incorporate

"socio-historical and ethno-cultural elements, which cannot easily follow folklore classifications. They constitute an interpretative and contextual commentary of the ethnographic material, as well as a valuable example of the expres-

sion of the collective spirit of the people by one of its carriers ...” (op.cit.: 563).

In an Appendix to her article, Milingkou-Markantoni quoted three such autobiographical narratives provided by Psani in the language idiom of her informants, who were inhabitants of Polichnitos, Lesvos (op.cit.: 578-584). In this example one may discern respect for the students’ agency as fieldworkers, since their research insights were adopted as good ethnographic practice by their instructors in a democratic manner, thus being allowed actively to contribute to the development of the folklore archive both theoretically and methodologically. One may also discern the first attempts at more collaborative, interpretative, and reflexive fieldwork accounts, which have become commonplace in students’ fieldwork projects over the past decade or so, as I attempt to show below.

Current trends and practices in students’ fieldwork: The new ‘manuscripts’ of the FMA

The ethnographic projects – ‘manuscripts’ that students have been submitting to the collection of the FMA over the past decade are substantially different from those constituting the collection until 2007 and described above. Indeed, there are considerable differences as regards both the topics and methodology of research, and also the structure and appearance of the ‘new manuscripts’ of the FMA collection. These changes reflect the new socio-economic and cultural landscape of Greek society, which has become firmly embedded in the structures of technology, urbanization and globalization, while also suffering the effects of a lengthy and serious economic downturn. The latter has affected universities, with very restricted budgets and inadequate human resources, thus considerably increasing the teaching and administrative load of academic staff. At the same time, students also suffer from a sense of insecurity concerning future employment, while also often striving to make ends meet by working and studying at the same time, a fact which impacts upon the time available to them for research. With fieldwork requiring time and money, students nowadays are less able to devote enough time to it, especially if it occurs away from home. As a result, their fieldwork projects, with some exceptions, are generally of a smaller scale than in the past.

There are only a handful of courses of folklore offered in the Department of Philology, although they are popular with the students of other departments, too, such as the Departments of Philosophy, Education and Psychology, of Psychology, Music Studies, Russian Language and Literature and Slavic Studies etc. The cornerstone of our courses, however, is the ‘Introduction to Folklore’, taught to first semester undergraduates of Philology as a compulsory course. It is these young students aged 18 who become trained as researcher-folklorists and it is mainly from them that the largest corpora of ethnographic material

derive. We as instructors introduce them to the categories and methods pursued in recording ethnographic material in special seminars. We discuss with them and decide together the topics they wish to work on, which are normally linked to their personal and family backgrounds, then advise them throughout the preparation of their projects. In this task instructors are often assisted by postgraduate and doctoral students, thus working within an environment of apprenticeship which attempts to forge community bonds among instructors and students. In their turn, undergraduates who submit good folklore collections later present them to the members of a younger student year, and talk to them about the challenges and the benefits of this kind of research.



Καφενείο των Μουσικών, Σατωβριάνδου 29 (Προσωπικό αρχείο Δήμητρας Φιλίππου)

Σε δεύτερο επίπεδο, μετά την πρώτη αυτή γνωριμία, ίσως και δυο κουβέντες που μπορεί να ακούσει κανείς από τους παλιούς της περιοχής, γεννιέται η περιέργεια και το ενδιαφέρον για το δρόμο αυτό που φαίνεται πως κρύβει πολλά περισσότερα από όσα θα φανταζόταν κανείς αρχικά. Είναι ένας δρόμος, αναμφίβολα, πολυδιάστατος και πολυεπίπεδος. Ο χαρακτήρας του διαμορφώνεται από επαγγελματίες, τουρίστες, επισκέπτες, κτίρια, ενδιαφέροντα και συνήθειες άκρως διαφορετικές μεταξύ τους. Βαδίζοντας σε αυτόν είναι βέβαιο πως θα συναντήσει κανείς έναν μετανάστη που κινείται προς το σπίτι ή τη δουλειά του, ίσως ένα ναρκομανή που συχνάζει εκεί, έναν ηθοποιό που μόλις τελείωσε την πρόβα του στο θέατρο, έναν μουσικό που κατευθύνεται στο στέκι του, έναν ηλικιωμένο που παίζει τάβλι σε παραδοσιακό καφενείο, αλλά και έναν Αθηναίο που αγαπώντας τις παλαιές αθηναϊκές συνήθειες κατέβηκε στο κέντρο της πόλης για να αγοράσει την εφημερίδα του από τον πλανόδιο εφημεριδοπώλη.

Σημείο αναφοράς του δρόμου εδώ και αρκετά χρόνια, όπως δηλώνουν οι κάτοικοι και οι επαγγελματίες του, αποτελεί το πασίγνωστο και προσφιλέστερο στους φίλους της Ομόνοιας- σουβλατζίδικο του «Λευτέρη του Πολίτη», το οποίο βρίσκεται εκεί περισσότερο από 60 χρόνια, με σταθερή πελατεία. Προσελκύει τόσο απλό κόσμο που σταματά ώστε να κάνει ένα διάλειμμα από τη δουλειά του, όσο και καλλιτέχνες που φεύγοντας από τις πρόβες ή τις παραστάσεις τους κουρασμένοι και εξουθενωμένοι κάνουν μία στάση «ανεφοδιασμού» σε ένα από τα καλύτερα σουβλατζίδικα του κέντρου της πόλης, όπως παραδέχονται οι ίδιοι. Ενδιαφέρουσα και ιδιαίτερα περιγραφική είναι και η αναφορά του δημοσιογράφου Μιχάλη

Fig. 5. New topics of fieldwork in urban space: A page from Dimitra Filippou's research piece on "Chateaubriand Street: The varied life of a street of artists" (2013).

As regards choice of topics, today's students' fieldwork projects deposited in the FMA deal with both rural and, increasingly, with urban communities.

A start had already been made on research in urban areas, but it seems to have intensified over the past decade or so. This phenomenon is linked to both practical and to academic factors. Apart from the financial constraints on students' ability to be away from home, mentioned above, there is also the increasing orientation of folklore towards the study of everyday life and cultural phenomena in urban settings over the past three decades or so¹⁰. This shift in emphasis can be seen in the folklore classes offered to our students, including, for example, 'folklore and modernity' (*neoteriki laografia*) and 'folklore and social life' (*koinoniki laografia*). In all folklore classes, in general, apart from being introduced to the traditional scholarship of this discipline, students deal with new genres or old ones, approached in innovative ways. Thus, while taking a course on 'the folklore and history of the folk tale' (*laografia kai istoria ton paramythion*), or on 'literary folklore' (*filologiki laografia*), students learn about the importance of oral communication in today's social media and digital communication, get to do research on urban legends, on gossip and on fake news, and experience contemporary story-telling by modern story-tellers (*neoafigites*), which often takes place in the area of the FMA. Students are keen to conduct research on topics emerging in their everyday lives, which they would like to explore more and wish to share with others. Thus, several 'new manuscripts' explore phenomena such as the activities of cultural and regional associations and groups in urban areas, museums, festivals, sports and fans' groups and clubs, and church and parish life, among others. At the same time, much interest in 'discovering one's roots' is expressed by several students who decide to undertake fieldwork in the villages where their ancestors came from. They pursue the same path that generations of students who came before them followed, and employ the opportunity provided by folklore fieldwork to reflect upon their origins and local identities. Indeed, interest in the study of local cultures is another favourite student topic for field research, which proves the continuing importance of the local in a world dominated by the structures and ways of globalization.

As topics for research, social issues, such as research in communities of people undergoing therapy from addiction, with groups of third-age citizens, or indeed with groups of fellow students, have also been popular with contemporary students.

10. For a critical analysis of research orientations in Greek Folklore studies during the post-1980s period, see Chryssanthopoulou, 2014: 115-128.

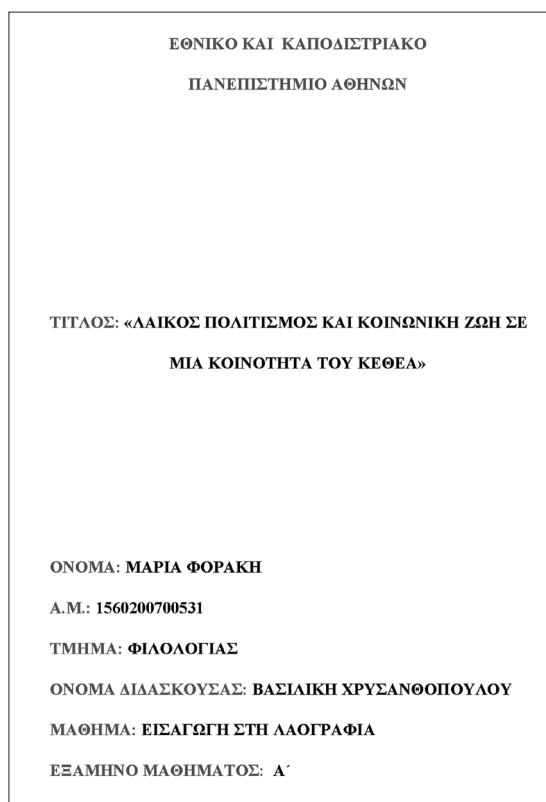


Fig. 6. New topics of fieldwork dealing with social issues: The title page of Maria Foraki's research piece on "Traditional culture and social life in a community for the therapy of addicted people" (2013).

Such choices of research topic bear witness to the fact that folklore as a discipline partakes of the social sciences, as well as the humanities, and cultivates social as well as cultural awareness, empathy and critical thinking among students (Chryssanthopoulou, 2013a: 100). The most popular topics for research projects among students, however, involve the recording of life narratives, or of narratives of personal, professional, or traumatic experience. Students consider these topics as 'easier' and more manageable, since they require less time than fieldwork proper. Their relatives or family friends and acquaintances often constitute interview candidates. Instructors endeavour to explain the requirements for the successful planning and conducting of an interview and advise students first to cultivate familiarity with the interviewee, to place the interview in its

historical context by specifying the time and place where it occurred, and to demonstrate great attention to ethics (namely, respect towards interviewees, especially as regards personal and sensitive data not to be disclosed). The instructors are concerned to cultivate among their students the idea of ethnographic work as the result of collaborative, equitable and democratic exchanges between researcher and his/her subjects of research (Chryssanthopoulou, 2017: 32-36).

Many of the students' narrative accounts can also be classified as oral history, especially those illuminating the experiences of people who lived through traumatic events or periods. However, instructors stress the fact that folklore research generally addresses everyday life and experiences and that its topics can be drawn from students' social milieu. The special interest in autobiographical narratives combined with concern with agency and reflexivity in folklore research has led to the creation of a specialized Archive of Autobiographies of Folk Poets, Singers, Dancers, and Other Artists (such as painters) recently established as part of the FMA. This archive, comprising about fifty life narratives by such folk artists, was initiated in 2010 by Georgios Thanopoulos, former Assistant Professor of Folklore, who assigned this task to his postgraduate students, thus giving lay popular artists (*erasitechnes laiki kallitechnes*) the opportunity to talk about themselves and cultivating his students' understanding of the process of folk art creation.

An important feature of contemporary fieldwork projects concerns the individuals and groups of people constituting the subjects of this research. Since its inception, the Folklore Collection has held a wide range of manuscripts as regards the language and ethnocultural features of the groups researched: among the pre-2007 manuscripts one comes across ethnographic accounts from various ethnocultural groups such as refugees and their descendants from Asia Minor, Gypsies, Greek Cypriots, and accounts of people from other parts of the world, such as Germany, Japan, France, Kenya, Egypt, Zair, Ethiopia, Russia, and Romania. Nowadays, large-scale migration to Greece, the influx of large numbers of refugees, the strengthening of transnational relations between Greek residents and diaspora Greeks, and the general impact of globalization and human mobility, have led to great changes in the demographic and socio-cultural composition of the current population of this country. The multi-ethnic and multi-cultural character of Greek society urges us to rethink the very concept of the 'people', of the 'laos' or 'folk' of *laographia*, which can now be said to respond more accurately to Michalis Meraklis' definition of it as consisting of many classes and of many layers (*polytaxiki kai polystromatiki*) (Meraklis, 2011: 13). Contemporary students have been brought up in such culturally diverse environments and are familiar with the multitude and variation of people's identities: local, ethnic, national, global, which many of them decide to explore further through conducting fieldwork or interviews with ethnical-

ly diverse communities and individuals. In 2011 a specialized Archive of Life Narratives of Migrants, Refugees and Diaspora Greeks was created by Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou as part of the FMA. It contains about fifty life narratives recorded by postgraduate and undergraduate students – proof of changes both in the subject matter of folklore and of Greek society itself (see also Chryssanthopoulou, 2013b).

Turning to the methods of students' recording their ethnographic data and depositing their manuscripts, these have altered considerably. When applicable to the research of their topics, the students still use the three ethnographic guides/questionnaires created by Spyridakis, covering all traditional folklore categories (1962), Megas (1975, referring more extensively to social life, rites of passage, belief and ritual, and cosmology, in general), and by Imellos and Polymerou-Kamilaki (1983, specifically on material culture). In seminars at which attendance is compulsory as preparation for fieldwork, the students are informed on the ways in which they consult these questionnaires, to acquire a general overview of certain areas of folklore, rather than use them in a binding and restrictive manner. If they decide to conduct biographical interviews, they are advised to consult specialized bibliography and questionnaires (such as Kakaboura, 2008; Abrams, 2010). Thus, the interdisciplinary approaches adopted while teaching are also employed in advising students on how to conduct fieldwork.

The logic underlying the compilation of earlier folklore manuscripts was that of providing 'raw' ethnographic data, recorded carefully in their informants' idioms and rendered in their historical context, so that the information could be of value to scholarship. It is for this reason that the student-compilers of these manuscripts were not very visible or audible in their own texts. At most, they could be discerned in some dialogues reported verbatim, or in the biographical accounts of some informants, who addressed them, as audience, while talking. Things have changed drastically in the manuscripts of the past ten years or so, to the point that their new forms present a challenge to the archive. Firstly, the Spyridakis questionnaire is followed much less than before. The students tend to classify the material they record in the field by devising their own classifications, which normally modify the categories provided by the questionnaires – always depending on the topic researched, of course. Moreover, they include research and reflexive diaries (*anastochastika imerologia*), in which they report the procedure of fieldwork as well as their thoughts and feelings caused by it. The project always starts with an introduction mentioning the incentives, the aims and the methodology pursued, which can be a combination of different methods employed by students to collect their data: from fieldwork and interviews, including some conducted long-distance, e.g. via Skype, to questionnaires distributed to people either physically or through the internet. The latter forms part of contemporary students' lifeworlds, thus

they are allowed to consult it and include some information in their projects, on condition that this is clearly stated in their methodologies and that it is separated from the primary data – unless it belongs to interview material¹¹.

The new ‘manuscripts’ are no longer handwritten, of course. They are typed, bound, and accompanied by USBs or CDs, which contain the text in digital form together with the sound and video files of primary data. The students are advised to keep the ethnographic material (namely, descriptions of activities and events, interviews, and narratives collected in the field) in a separate section, without any interference by the student researcher to the recorded data, while more ‘personal’, critical, interpretative and reflexive material is now contained in different sections of the collections. These new ‘manuscripts’, therefore, maintain the traditional ‘salvage ethnography’ approach of the archive, but in a different sense: the students record a wide range of social and cultural phenomena, which depict everyday life today, as well as their informants’ memories of past life and experience. Both contemporary and past ethnography is considered to be valuable for the researchers themselves, for scholarship and for the archive. The new ‘manuscripts’ may also function as realms of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) for various communities and individuals, such as migrants or refugees, in ways similar to the manuscripts produced by Cypriot students before the invasion of 1974. Milingkou-Markantoni mentions the case of Greek-Cypriot students originating from Northern Cyprus who would come to the Folklore Library with members of their families to read the manuscripts and reproduce photos of the villages, houses and people lost to them following Turkey’s invasion of the island (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 557).

New challenges, orientations and prospects for the FMA: Academic and public projects

There is no doubt that the FMA constitute a valuable infrastructural resource for folklore at the University of Athens. They are a repository of ethnographic information mainly on the Greek-speaking world spanning back to the first decades of the 20c. They are a valuable resource for academic research and for community education (we get visits from schools and we organize seminars and exhibitions for the academic and for the wider community).

The FMA function as a laboratory of ethnography and folklore for our postgraduate and doctoral students, sometimes for our undergraduate stu-

11. On the use of digitally produced ethnographic and oral history information by digital folklore and on the internet as ‘third space’ in the construction of identity, see Chryssanthopoulou, 2017: 103-114.

dents, too, a role in which we are often assisted voluntarily by retired academic colleagues, by colleagues from the HFRC and from the Ministry of Culture¹². This help is valuable, not only because it secures the polyphonic and interdisciplinary approach necessary in academe, but also because it fills a gap created by the depletion in human resources that has affected Greek universities over the past decade or so. Through training in the FMA, students of folklore are introduced to interviewing techniques and to conducting fieldwork, to recording and transcribing aural and visual material, and to classifying and organizing their ethnographic data into written reports. Postgraduate students have been trained in aspects of museological folklore, thus learning to identify, describe and classify museum objects, and to display them suitably in the context of an exhibition. In this way, by giving them professional skills and by attempting to link the FMA with other institutions and research networks, we also try to prepare our students for occupations available to humanities' graduates, a prospect especially useful during the current times when these disciplines have been undergoing a crisis. By being introduced to a well-grounded understanding of culture and of its representations, students of folklore can go on to become professionals in cultural management and cultural policy, thus being able to seek employment in museums and other cultural institutions. Therefore, the FMA can function as an educational structure with a practical and applied orientation, apart from its academic one, namely by introducing emerging folklorists to the professional prospects of public folklore in Greek society¹³.

The challenges the FMA face at present are related to the lack of both budget and of human resources. The FMA are supported by the Department of Philology, which has been facing cuts, like all other research institutions in Greece during the current crisis. We need to find ways to secure their sustainability and make them attractive to the academic community and to beyond. One way of achieving this is to develop properly the museological aspect of the FMA, which has been neglected due to the practical circumstances associated with the collection, namely the lack of space and resources that has confined the museum objects of the FMA in cupboards and closets, invisible to the students and to the wider community. Up to now, the emphasis has been given to the archival part of the FMA. The value of providing 'hands-on' experience and training to students and to the wider community is becoming clear as part of the recognition of the new role played by museums as places where people

12. I would like to express my thanks to them all.

13. For public folklore and its contemporary uses internationally, see Baron and Spitzer, (1992) 2007; and Baron, 2016. For the public character of folklore in Greece, see Chryssanthopoulou, 2013a: 106; Chryssanthopoulou, 2014: 127-128.

acquire knowledge and reflexivity vis-à-vis their identities and cultures. As regards folklore, in particular, “the interpretative and museological aspect of material expressions of traditional and popular culture plays a crucial role in the academic teaching of this discipline” (Antzoulitou-Retsila, 2018: 57).

The FMA is a university museum. As such, this institution expresses and promotes university heritage, since it contains “material and intangible specimens of human activity related to tertiary education, which need protection, safeguarding and maintenance” (ibid: 62)¹⁴. In our case, this heritage refers to the objects encompassing a corpus of knowledge relating to folk and popular culture in Greece, Cyprus, and the Greek diaspora, namely in the FMA manuscripts and in the various objects, documents, etc., making up this museum and archive. It also refers to the FMA as an environment of apprenticeship in the methods, theories, skills and values surrounding the study and management of these resources, and to the sense of belonging and of possessing a distinct academic tradition and identity shared among academic instructors, scholars, students, librarians and volunteers associated with and contributing to the FMA¹⁵. The student-contributors, in particular, are proud of their achievements in recording ethnographic information containing their insights and interpretations of cultural phenomena, to be preserved for future generations of researchers and for the public, in general. They develop respect for the archive and for the academic tradition of folklore which has given birth to it, as also do Greek and international scholars who use its resources in their studies and researches.

This particular sense of heritage is investigated and promoted in Stelios Plakas’ master’s dissertation consisting of a museological study of the FMA¹⁶. Plakas’ museological concept developed in his thesis views the FMA as “the

14. In her paper, Antzoulitou-Retsila refers to UMAC, the International Committee of University Museums and Collections, created in 2001 by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and to UNIVERSEUM, the European Academic Heritage Network, established in 2000. They purport to connect university museums and lead to collaborations and exchanges among them (Antzoulitou-Retsila, 2018: 61-66).

15. See Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 567-572 for a lively, rich and emotional account describing the creation of this sense of identity and belonging in the milieu of the Folklore Library with a Folklore Collection.

16. Stelios Plakas, a museologist and master’s candidate in Folklore in the Department of Philology, NKUA, is completing his dissertation on “The FMA collection of the Department of Philology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Its study and utilization.” I would like to express my thanks to him, as well as to colleague Zoe Zoupa, librarian and currently member of the Special Technical and Laboratory Personnel (ETEP) of the Department of Philology, for sharing with me their valuable knowledge and insights concerning the FMA.

home of folklore" (*to spiti tis laografias*) at the University of Athens. This concept is based on the basic principle which views the holdings of the collection of the FMA, manuscripts, objects, legal documents, etc., as being inextricably bound together and possessing a unified and inseparable character, to be displayed suitably in the area of the FMA, by employing the already existing, but also new material. The FMA exhibition will demonstrate Folklore as a discipline, with its distinct history and methodology, its contribution to scholarship and to society, in the past and at present. Folk and popular culture will be presented, studied and interpreted in their tangible and intangible dimensions and aspects in the "home of folklore." Through this permanent exhibition we hope to be able to articulate clearly the meaning and enhance the usefulness of the FMA to the scholarly and to the general community. Various improvements as regards the manuscripts (further categorization, digitisation, binding in volumes, conserving various items) and the objects (mainly, conservation, but also identification and classification of various objects) need to take place. Also, the FMA need to develop international connections by participating in research networks which will allow the students of folklore to interact with colleagues from other universities.

The FMA have always served the academic community and the general public. In 1995 Milingkou-Markantoni embarked on educational programmes for primary and secondary school students taking place in the area of the Folklore Collection. The programmes aimed at introducing them to the meaning of customs, folk art, and traditional culture, in general, by informing them about feasts of the annual cycle and allowing them to have 'hands-on' experience of various tools and items of traditional everyday and occupational life (Milingkou-Markantoni, 2016: 570-572). Despite our depleted and scant resources, we try to do the same by collaborating with other university and community institutions. I would like to mention two recent examples of the FMA's activities illustrating such collaborations. Firstly, in 2018 we collaborated with a group of postgraduate students of the Postgraduate Programme "Museum Studies", who carried out a project entitled, "Designing a communicative strategy for the FMA of the NKUA, in the process of establishment." The students proposed the creation of leaflets, a card and a logo, aiming at making the FMA's resources and distinct, student-derived and orientated character, known to the local community. Moreover, in February 2019, we hosted an event entitled "We remember our mother tongue by exchanging proverbs", to celebrate the Mother Tongue Day (*Imera Mitrikis Glossas*). During this event, organized principally by postgraduate student of Folklore, Spyridoula Tsoukala, a number of unaccompanied refugee adolescents living in the Hospitality Centre for Unaccompanied Children of the Greek Red Cross, exhibited their alphabets and talked to us about their proverbs, while also sharing some of their experiences from

their home cultures with students and staff of the School of Philosophy. This successful intercultural event has led to a collaborative project involving the Greek Red Cross, the FMA, and the Laboratory for Qualitative Research in Psychology and Psychological Health of the Department of Psychology, NKUA, on a topic entitled, "Narratives and life experiences of unaccompanied adolescent refugees: The contribution of folk culture to the constitution of their identities and to the cultivation of intercultural empathy." Apart from promoting the academic and public profile of the FMA and of folklore, in general, this project, already under way and involving instructors' and postgraduate students' interdisciplinary collaboration, is also hoped to contribute to the material of the specialized Archive of Life Narratives of Migrants, Refugees, and Diaspora Greeks of the FMA.

Concluding remarks

I have attempted to trace the history and development of the Folklore Museum and Archives of the University of Athens, which started functioning unofficially in 1965 and officially in 1972, initially as a Folklore Library with a Folklore Collection, and since 2017 as the FMA. I have demonstrated, I hope, how the life of this institution illustrates the theoretical and methodological development of the discipline of folklore in Greece, with its continuities and changes over half a century, which arose as a response to socio-economic, cultural and epistemological influences. I have illustrated the archive-linked research approaches existing in Greek folklore, and I have analysed the students' responses to them through creative, reflexive and interpretative innovations, in dialogue with their academic instructors, to show the dynamic nature of this archive.

The very concept of folklore museums and archives in Greek universities, and no doubt, in the universities of other countries, is a response to the meaning of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), since these institutions embody distinct academic traditions and identities, created by academic instructors and students in interaction, sustained and promoted by them, for the benefit of scholarship and of society as a whole. The FMA of the University of Athens, in particular, express another fundamental principle of ICH, namely the multi-faceted character of cultural heritage, in both its material and intangible aspects.

The FMA of the University of Athens provide an environment with a distinct disciplinary tradition, dynamic and ever-changing and adapting to new circumstances, in which folklore and ICH become cultivated and transmitted from one generation of scholars to the next. Looking back at my own experience, I remember how we were introduced to fieldwork by Milingkou-Markantoni and how I discovered a whole new social world in the life of the village

where my grandfather had his origins (Chryssanthopoulou, 1978-79). Several decades down the line, I have urged my students to do the same and have had the pleasure of seeing them produce interesting corpora of ethnographic material and of seeing them become acquainted with the values and practices of the communities they studied, thus developing an understanding of identity and otherness, while also cultivating empathy and critical thinking as regards man in society. Quite often these students develop into young community intellectuals with a vital role in public life.

The thematic and methodological innovations introduced both by instructors of folklore and by their students to the FMA ethnographic manuscripts over the last decade or so, responded to new needs, priorities, trends and interests as perceived by them. Such innovations had already taken place much earlier, but at a slower pace. These research exercises often entailed a dialogue between instructors and students, thus displaying a democratic attitude and including equitable collaboration with informants (see also Fournier in this volume). Over the past decade such dialogue between students and instructors of folklore to decide the topics and the ways in which their field research is conducted, have intensified. One is led to conclude that it is the very context of academic teaching that creates the possibility for such democratic exchanges which result in thematic and methodological transformations and innovations in the FMA and in folklore as a discipline, in general.

Education has always functioned as a factor in occupational success and advancement. As jobs increasingly cater to the industrialized and globalized world of today, educators and students who rethink their occupational strategies often orientate themselves towards disciplines that involve the management of cultural and social resources. Folklore and its related disciplines, such as ethnology, anthropology and cultural studies, can provide such training, especially if they happen to possess study and research facilities (laboratories, *ergastiria*) in which students may acquire skills and expertise necessary to deal with the demands of cultural management. The FMA function as such a facility for the training of students in aspects of ICH management and of public folklore. This training is especially valuable pedagogically, as it provides students with a solid theoretical background as regards culture, while also giving them 'practical' knowledge about cultural phenomena. This recent 'practical', 'applied', or 'public' turn of folklore has introduced new challenges, but has also brought new opportunities and innovative approaches to the practitioners of folklore internationally.

While commenting on the value of the manuscripts and objects of the Folklore Collection of the University of Athens, its founder, Georgios Spyridakis, wrote:

"The understanding in width and in depth of the importance and ines-

timable worth of these collections as regards their scholarly, educational and patriotic value, will grow as time goes on” (Spyridakis, 1974: 9).

The current development, at a period of recession, of the FMA into an institution mirroring the history of folklore at the University of Athens, faces serious challenges of an economic and administrative nature. In order to fulfil the distinct potential of the FMA, it is incumbent upon the University first to understand that the FMA constitute part of its own university heritage, as they embody the work of generations of instructors and students regarding Greek culture; then the University should support the FMA by recognizing the value of and by promoting the discipline of folklore, of which this institution forms part. It pains one to read Spyridakis’ words concerning the position of folklore in the early 1970s and to contemplate the current diminished position of this discipline in the academic curriculum:

“There were difficulties in my teaching at the School of Philosophy and in my efforts to initiate the students into the discipline of folklore, springing from the clearly disadvantaged position of the subject in the School’s curriculum” (op.cit.: 6).

Despite scarcity of human and financial resources, however, folklore and the FMA continue to contribute creatively to the academic and public life of the University by means of collaborative, interdisciplinary, and humanitarian projects, which introduce our students to perceptions of society and culture that abide by such values. This is part of the tradition of the subject, a tradition which is inspired by the idea of returning to the community the gifts that it has received from it.

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