



UNIVERSITATEA DIN BUCUREȘTI
MANOLIS VARVOUNIS

Doctor Honoris Causa

MANOLIS VARVOUNIS
DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA





As early as the 1970s, Greek folklore began to show certain clear signs of renewal and of the redefinition of consensus views regarding theory, methodology and directions in research. These developments, on which much important material is still being produced, are indissolubly linked with the work of Professor Michael G. Meraklis and the so-called 'Ioannina School', of which he was the founder. At various Greek universities, Meraklis' students continued with the basic direction of this school, at both a theoretical and practical level.

The fundamental achievements of Greek folklore studies that arose from this important development lie in various areas. They consisted of the adoption of field work, the application of a socio-historical method, which stressed both historical development and social functionality of the phenomena studied and the rethinking of the repertoire of subjects to be studied. They also included an engagement with matters which may have been included in various schemata of what constituted material for folklore research, but were not truly the object of folklore studies in Greece. Thus was born a new tradition in the study of folklore, which defined academic research in Greece down to about the end of the 20th century.

Manolis Varvounis



Laudatio | Manolis Varvounis

În luna octombrie a anului 2015 Universitatea din București organiza un eveniment științific de referință, al Treilea Congres Balcanic de Studii Neelene, la care participau peste o sută de eleniști nu doar din țările vecine, ci și din Europa Occidentală, America și Australia. Printre personalitățile de prim rang ce păseau atunci pentru prima dată pe pământ românesc se număra și *cel mai mare etnolog* al Greciei actuale, așa cum îl numeau mulți dintre participanții la congres, dornici să profite de ocazie pentru a-l cunoaște personal. Același lucru îl urmăreau și eleniștii ori etnologii români, care îi citiseră de multă vreme unele cărți și se așteptau ca profesorul Emmanouil (Manolis) Varvounis să fie un bătrân împovărat de trecerea timpului. Mare le-a fost însă surpriza când au întâlnit un bărbat viguros de doar cincizeci de ani, ce arăta însă cu mult mai tânăr, un om prietenos și deschis, cu un simț al umorului foarte dezvoltat, înconjurat ca întotdeauna de un grup de discipoli și de colaboratori. Căci pentru Manolis Varvounis misiunea universitarului nu este doar aceea de a crea o operă menită să îl impună în conștiința contemporanilor și a posterității, ci și aceea de a pune bazele unei școli în domeniu.

În puțină vreme, profesorul a reușit să își formeze propriii discipoli în România, oferind tot ajutorul de care aveau nevoie mai mulți masteranzi sau doctoranzi ai Universității din București. În plus, a acceptat nu doar să le transmită sfaturi prin intermediul poștei electronice, ci s-a deplasat special în capitala României unde a și predat o serie de cursuri în cadrul Facultății de Limbi și Literaturi Străine. Iar în anul 2017 a susținut prelegerea festivă anuală a Departamentului de Filologie Clasică și Neogrecă, vorbind unui public intelectual larg cu ocazia zilei naționale a Greciei (25 martie) despre mișcarea filelenică dezvoltată la începutul secolului XIX în Europa și legăturile acesteia cu descoperirea și valorizarea de către lumea occidentală a civilizației tradiționale grecești.

Totodată, adept convins al abordărilor interdisciplinare, profesorul Varvounis a inițiat colaborări fructuoase cu colegi români din domenii conexe, precum prof. dr. habilit. Liviu Franga, decanul Facultății de Limbi și Literaturi Străine, și prof. dr. Liviu Papadima, prorectorul Universității din București, contribuind la difuzarea și aprecierea operei acestora în spațiul elen. De asemenea, a lansat în februarie 2018 la Constantinopol, în prezența Sanctității Sale Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu, volumul profesorului Tudor Dinu *Οι Φαναριώτες στη Βλαχία και τη Μολδαβία. Μια ιστορία μέσω των εκκλησιαστικών προσωπογραφιών*, editura Porhyra

Atena, 2017 (în varianta românească *Oamenii epocii fanariote. Chipuri din bisericile Țării Românești și Moldovei*, Humanitas, București, 2018), ce avea să fie distins în decembrie 2018 cu premiul pentru istorie al Academiei din Atena.

În perspectiva anilor viitori, colaborarea profesorului Varvounis cu Universitatea din București se prefigurează tot mai intensă, el fiind, de exemplu, primul care s-a înscris cu o comunicare la congresul cu tema *Revoluția Greacă de la 1821 și Țările Române*, pe care îl va organiza Facultatea de Limbi și Literaturi Străine în noiembrie 2020.

Născut în 1966 în insula lui Pitagora (Samos), Manolis Varvounis a urmat studii de filologie și teologie la Universitățile din Atena (al cărei doctor a devenit la vârsta de doar 25 de ani – un caz unic în analele acelor vremuri) și Louvain (Belgia) și și-a început cariera universitară în 1992, punând pas cu pas bazele, pe atunci recent înființatei, Facultății de Istorie și Etnologie a Universității Democrit din Tracia (acum este una dintre cele mai reputeate din Grecia). În paralel cu susținerea unor cursuri diverse și atractive, a desfășurat o prodigioasă activitate de cercetare în domeniile culturii populare grecești și, respectiv, al istoriei, artei și tradiției bisericii și lumii ortodoxe în sens larg, ce s-a materializat până în prezent în nu mai puțin de o sută treizeci de volume de autor și mai bine de o mie patru sute de articole științifice.

Cele mai multe dintre monografiile sale sunt dedicate în mod firesc insulei natale, unde profesorul Varvounis a studiat *in situ* deopotrivă habitatul și arhitectura tradițională, bisericile și așezămintele monastice, dar și diversele forme de religiozitate populară, și, desigur, folclorul literar sub toate aspectele sale. La fel a procedat și în cazul patriei sale adoptive, Tracia, o zonă compozită sub aspect etnic și religios, în cadrul căreia interesul său s-a îndreptat nu doar asupra comunităților grecești, ci și asupra celor de pomaci, o populație musulmană slavofonă. De timpuriu, profesorul s-a arătat atras și de cultura și spiritualitatea învecinatăului Munte Sfânt Athos, aplecându-se deopotrivă asupra toponimiei din zonă, a arhitecturii civile și ecleziastice, a vieții monahale, dar și a metohurilor athonite din spațiul egean. Iar preocuparea sa pentru marele centru al monahismului ortodox s-a îmbinat în mod firesc cu cea pentru viața cotidiană și etnologia lumii bizantine, pe care a aprofundat-o pe baza informațiilor oferite de textele hagiografice, de cronicile în limbă populară, ori de manuscrisele păstrate în mănăstirile de la Meteora. În

paralel, profesorul a abordat și etnologia lumii grecești postbizantine, folosind surse mai puțin exploatare de alți cercetători, precum viețile neomartirilor ortodocși sau mărturiile călătorilor străini. În mod firesc, aceste cercetări l-au făcut să se oprească și asupra Patriarhiei Ecumenice și a rolului jucat de aceasta în timpul stăpânirii otomane în calitatea de instituție conducătoare a lumii grecești. Iar ca o complinire profesorul Varvounis a închinat studii și istoriei zburcimate a Patriarhiei surori a Ierusalimului și a locurilor de pelerinaj din Țara Sfântă (Biserica Sfântului Mormânt, Basilica Nașterii din Betleem, peștera închinării magilor). Nu a trecut însă cu vederea nici tronul Alexandriei, fiind autorul lucrării de referință pe plan mondial consacrată titlurilor și decorațiilor acordate de ierarhul ce poartă titulatura tradițională de „papă și patriarh al Alexandriei și al Întregii Africi”.

Pregătirea sa ambivalentă în domeniul etnologiei și teologiei i-a permis să pună bazele nu doar în Grecia, ci și pe plan mondial ale așa numitei etnologii religioase, domeniu care în ultimii ani stârnește un interes tot mai pronunțat printre cercetători. Totodată, el s-a arătat interesat și de fundamentarea teoretică a investigațiilor etnologice actuale, de predarea folclorului, dar și de istoria domeniului în Grecia, închinându-le monografiile unora dintre cei mai străluciți predecesori. În fine, profesorul Varvounis a cercetat și evoluția civilizației tradiționale grecești după cel de-al doilea război mondial, dedicând o carte premiată felului în care aceasta s-a confruntat cu apariția noului fenomen al turismului de masă.

Activitatea proteică de mai sus, ce i-a atras profesorului Manolis Varvounis apelativul de Nicolae Iorga al Greciei, a fost răsplătită cu un număr fără precedent de titluri, premii și distincții.

Astfel, pentru a recompensa cercetările dedicate istoriei și patrimoniului cultural al bisericilor Orientului, Sanctitatea sa Patriarhul Ecumenic Bartolomeu i-a acordat în anul 2005 titlul nobiliar bizantin de Archon Protector al Literelor. Doi ani mai târziu, în 2007, Preafericitul Teodor II, patriarhul Alexandriei și al întregii Africi, l-a numit arhonte păstrător al Arhivelor Tronului, în vreme ce în februarie 2011 patriarhul Ierusalimului Theophilos l-a hirotesit Stavrofor al Sfântului Mormânt al lui Iisus.

Recunoașterea meritelor profesorului Varvounis a venit în egală măsură din partea mediului laic, el fiind invitat să susțină cursuri sau conferințe

la universități, institute de cercetare sau societăți academice din nu mai puțin de optsprezece țări în afara Greciei (Germania, Belgia, Luxemburg, Danemarca, Suedia, Finlanda, Polonia, Lituania, România, Bulgaria, Serbia, Rusia, Turcia, Cipru, Egipt, Georgia, Statele Unite ale Americii, Australia), în vreme ce lucrările sale au fost traduse și publicate până în prezent în treisprezece limbi străine (engleză, germană, franceză, spaniolă, italiană, română, rusă, bulgară, sârbă, turcă, arabă, armeană, georgiană). Desigur, dintre zecile de semne ale recunoașterii propriei activități științifice primite în patrie nu puteau lipsi cele mai importante din Grecia precum premiul Academiei din Atena (2011) și, respectiv, Medalia de Aur pentru Arte și Științe (2012). Și mai numeroase sunt, însă, zecile de distincții cu care a fost onorat în întreaga lume, din Turcia până în Venezuela, din Elveția până în Statele Unite ale Americii, unde, printre altele, Universitatea Harding (2014) și, respectiv, Facultatea de Telologie Ortodoxă St. Seraphim (2015) i-au acordat titlul de *Doctor Honoris Causa*. În plus, șase academii de pe bătrânul continent (din Italia, Spania, Portugalia, Austria) l-au primit în rândurile lor ca recompensă a contribuției sale fundamentale în cunoașterea și valorizarea patrimoniului cultural comun european.

În aceste condiții, este o onoare pentru Universitatea din București să îl primească în rândul comunității sale academice pe profesorul Emmanouil Varvounis, acordându-i înaltul titlu de *Doctor Honoris Causa*.

In October 2015 the University of Bucharest organized a major scientific event, namely the Third Balkan Congress of Neo-Hellenic Studies, which was attended by more than 100 Hellenists not only from the neighbouring countries, but also from Western Europe, America and Australia. One of the prestigious personalities coming to Romania for the very first time was the greatest contemporary Greek ethnologist, as many of the congress attendees called him, eager to take this opportunity to meet him in person. Romanian Hellenists and ethnologists shared that objective, as they had already read a lot of his books a long time ago and they expected professor Emmanouil (Manolis) Varvounis to be an old gentleman, far gone in his years. Yet, to their great surprise, they met a robust fifty-year old man, who looked much younger, a friendly, open person, with a good sense of humour, always surrounded by a group of disciples and co-workers. In fact, for Manolis Varvounis, an academic's mission is not only to produce writings destined to command the respect both of his contemporaries and his posterity, but also to lay the foundations of a school in the respective field.

In no time at all, the Professor managed to gather his own group of followers in Romania, by providing his much needed assistance to several MA as well PhD students of the University of Bucharest. Moreover, he not only accepted to advise them by e-mail, but he also came to Bucharest again and delivered a series of lectures at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures. In 2017 he was the keynote speaker during the annual conference of the Classical and Neo-Greek Philology Department, when he addressed a wide intellectual public on March, 25th, Greece's national holiday. He spoke about the philhellenic movement which developed in the early 19th century in Europe and its connections to the discovery and appreciation of the traditional Greek culture by the Western world.

At the same time, as he is a firm believer in an interdisciplinary approach, Professor Varvounis launched a very fruitful co-operation with his Romanian colleagues active in related areas, such as Prof. dr. habil. Liviu Franga, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and Prof. dr. Liviu Papadima, Vice-Rector of the University of Bucharest, in this way contributing to the dissemination and appreciation of their work within the Greek space. At the same time, while in Constantinople, in February 2018, in the presence of His Most Divine All Holiness, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch, he launched Professor Tudor Dinu's volume entitled Οι Φαναριώτες στη Βλαχία

και τη Μολδαβία. Μια ιστορία μέσω των εκκλησιαστικών προσωπογραφιών, *published by the Greek publishing house Porhyra Atena, in 2017 (whose Romanian variant is People of the Fanariot period. Faces in the Wallachian and Moldavian Churches, published in Bucharest in 2018). That volume was to be awarded the prize for history by the Academy in Athens in 2018.*

And now, thinking about the future, Professor Varvounis' co-operation with the University of Bucharest is expected to be much more intense, as, for instance, he is the first to have submitted a paper for the congress entitled The Greek 1821 Revolution in the Romanian Principalities, which will be organized by the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures in November 2020.

Born on Pythagoras' island (Samos) in 1966, Manolis Varvounis studied philology and theology at the University of Athens (where he received his PhD at only 25 years of age, a unique occurrence back then) and at the University of Louvain, Belgium. He began his academic career in 1992, and he gradually managed to build the then recently established Faculty of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace, now one of high repute in Greece. While delivering various attractive courses, he also carried out his prodigious research work focussing on the Greek folklore and on the history, art and tradition of the Orthodox Church and Orthodox world in the broadest sense. He authored no less than 130 stand-alone volumes and more than 1,400 scientific articles.

Obviously, most of his monographs are dedicated to his native island, where Professor Varvounis conducted his in situ studies of the traditional habitat and architecture, churches and monasteries, as well as of the various forms of popular religiousness, and, naturally, all aspects of literary folklore. He acted in the same way with respect to his adoptive country, Thrace, which is a mixed area, both ethnically and religiously, where he studied the Greek communities as well as the Pomaks, a Slavik-speaking Muslim population. Very early in his career, Professor Varvounis showed an interest for the culture and spirituality of the neighbouring Holy Mount Athos, and studied the toponyms in the area, its secular and ecclesiastical architecture, its monastic life, but also the smaller monasteries dependent on Mount Athos and located in the Aegean area.

His interest in the major center of Orthodox monasticism went hand in hand with the one in the daily life and ethnology of the Byzantine world, which he

approached based on the information provided by the hagiographical texts, the chronicles in the vernacular language or the manuscripts preserved in the Meteora monasteries.

At the same time, Professor Varvounis also studied the ethnology of the post-Byzantine Greek world, using sources less employed by other researchers, such as the lives of the Orthodox Neomartyrs or the foreign travellers' testimony. Naturally, his research work made him approach the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its role as a leading institution of the Greek world during the Ottoman domination. In addition, as a counterpart, Professor Varvounis also wrote a number of studies on the troubled history of the sister Patriarchate in Jerusalem as well as that of the pilgrimage destinations in the Holy Land (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the manger of the Adoration of the Magi). Nevertheless, he did not overlook the throne in Alexandria, as he authored a world reference volume covering the titles and distinctions granted by the hierarch who is traditionally called "Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the whole of Africa".

His dual education in ethnology and theology allowed him to establish, not only in Greece, but also world-wide, the so-called ecclesiastical ethnology, an area which, lately, has stirred a lot of interest among researchers. Along this line, Professor Varvounis has been tackling the theoretical foundations of the current ethnological investigations, he taught folklore, and he has also focussed on the history of this area of study in Greece, thus dedicating a number of monographs to some of his most illustrious predecessors. Last but not least, Professor Varvounis has also studied the evolution of the traditional Greek civilisation after World War II, and wrote a book for which he was the recipient of an award and which approaches the manner in which the traditional Greek civilisation faced the new phenomenon of mass tourism.

The above-mentioned protean career, which won Professor Manolis Varvounis the name of Greece's Nicolae Iorga, has been rewarded with an unprecedented number of titles, prizes and distinctions.

Thus, in order to reward his research on the history and cultural heritage of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, in 2005 His Most Divine All Holiness, Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome,

and Ecumenical Patriarch honoured him with the Byzantine noble title of Archon Protector of Letters of the Great and Holy Church of Christ. Two years later, in 2007, His Beatitude Theodorus II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the whole of Africa, awarded him the title of Great Archon Keeper of the Archives, and in 2011 Theophilus, Patriarch of Jerusalem proclaimed him Crossbearer of the Holy Sepulchre.

Professor Varvounis has also enjoyed the recognition of his merits by the secular community, as he was invited to hold lectures and conferences at various universities, research centers or academic societies in no less than eighteen countries outside Greece (Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, Georgia, USA, Australia), while his writings have been translated and published in thirteen foreign languages so far (English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian). It goes without saying that among the tens of symbols of recognition of his scientific activity there could not be missing the highest Greek awards, such as the Academy of Athens prize (2011) as well as the Gold Medal for Arts and Sciences (2012). Much more numerous are the distinctions which honoured him all over the world, from Turkey to Venezuela, from Switzerland to the USA, where, in 2014, the Harding University and, in 2015, St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology, North Carolina, U.S. made him an honorary Doctor of Letters (LL. Doctorate – Doctor of Letters) and, respectively, an Honorary Doctor of Theology (DD – Doctor of Divinity). Moreover, six European academies (in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria) made him a member to acknowledge his fundamental contribution to the knowledge and appreciation of the common European cultural heritage.

Therefore, after having stated all that, let me tell you that it is an honour for the University of Bucharest to welcome Professor Emmanouil Varvounis as a member of its academic community, and award him the high title of Doctor Honoris Causa.



Curriculum vitae | Manolis Varvounis

Studies: Emmanouil Varvounis was born in 1966 on Samos, Greece, where he completed his primary and secondary education. He was subsequently a student of the History and Archaeology Department of the Philosophical School of the University of Athens and of the Theological School of the University of Athens.

He specialized in Folklore and in 1991 received his doctorate in Folklore from the Department of Primary Education of the University of Athens, which he wrote under the supervision of Professor M. G. Merakles. The subject of his doctoral thesis was *Folk Religion and Religious Behaviour of the Inhabitants of Samos*. During the period 1996–1997 he did post-doctoral research at the Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain – la – Neuve) in Belgium.

Career: Since 1992 Emmanouil Varvounis has been lecturing in Folklore in the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace. He was elected successively lecturer (1992), assistant professor (1998), tenured assistant professor (2002), associate professor (2004) and full professor (2012) in Folklore. He was also Vice-Chair of the Department (2010–2012, 2014–2015) and Chair (2016–present).

At the same time, he has taught at various times in the Department of Greek Language and Literature, in the Education Department and in the Department of Black Sea Language, Culture and Literature at the Democritus University. He has also taught on post-graduate programmes at the University of Athens, at the Panteion University and at the National Defence Academy. Since 2005, he has also taught at the “Free University” of the “Society of Friends of the People”, in Athens.

Academic Work: Emmanouil Varvounis is a member of many learned societies, both in Greece and abroad, such as the “Greek Folklore Society” (Athens), of which he is a Member of the managing committee, as well as Treasurer, of the “British Folklore Society” (London) and of the “American Folklore Society” (Washington).

He has published numerous studies, both as stand-alone publications and in learned journals and collective volumes. Books and studies by him have been translated and published in English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Serbian, Turkish, Russian, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic and Bulgarian.

The list of his works includes 130 stand-alone volumes and about 1,400 academic publications, pertaining to Greek popular culture, Greek Orthodox tradition and the tradition of the Greek people. He works with the *Lexikon der Byzantinistik* (Holland) και *Encyclopaedic Prosopographical Lexicon of Byzantine History and Civilization* (Belgium), both academic publications of international standing.

A large part of his academic publications concerns the history and folk culture of Samos. Others are studies of ecclesiastical history and art and of the history and monuments of Mount Athos. At the invitation of foreign universities and learned societies, he has given talks and lectures, both in Greece and Cyprus, and in Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, Denmark, Sweden, Egypt, Russia, Serbia, Lithuania, Finland, Turkey, Georgia, Poland, Romania, Australia, the USA and Bulgaria.

Research and Academic Activities: He was in charge of academic matters for the section for Samiot studies at the Samiot Foundation ‘Nikolaos Dimitriou’, and responsible for the publication of the academic journal ‘Samiot Studies’/‘Samiakes Meletes’(1992–2011) and is currently editor of the academic journal ‘Deltio Samiakon Spoudon’ (2012–present), member of the publishing committee of the academic journal ‘Laografia’ (2007–present), of the “Greek Folklore Society”, and of ‘Ekklesiastikos Faros’ (2008–present), of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. He is also referee for many academic annual publications and periodicals, in Greece and abroad. He has been chairman and member of the managing and academic committees of many Greek and overseas conferences, director of the following series; *Pilgrimages of Orthodoxy/Proskynimata tis Orthodoxias* (2004–present), published by Helandion, *Greek Places and Cultures/Ellinikoi Topoi and Politismoi* (2005–present), published by Alitheia, and *Sources and Evidence For Patriarchate History* (2007–present), of the Patriarchate Library of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. Member of the Scientific Commitee and Vice Director of the Historical Section of I.S.G.E.S.I. [Istituto di Studi Giuridici, Economici e Sociali Internazionali], in L’ Apuila Italia (2018).

Administrative Work: Emmanouil Varvounis has held or holds the following positions: Vice-Chair (2010–2016) and Chair, Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace (2016–present). Member of Senate, (1997–1998, 2015–present), of Research

Committee (2010–2013), of the Department of the Dean of the School of Classical Studies and Humanities (2015–present) of the Democritus University of Thrace. Secretary, Prefectural Self-Administration of Samos Cultural Organization (OPONAS) (2008–2010), member of the board of directors, Komotini Centre for Folk Events (1995–2003), of the Special Synodical Committee for Ecclesiastical Art (2006–2009) and of the Special Synodical Committee for Cultural Identity, Holy Synod of the Church of Greece (2010–present).

Member, board of directors of the Brotherhood of the Offikialoi of the Ecumenical Throne ‘Panagia i Pammakaristos/The Most Blessed Virgin’ (2005–2008), Special Secretary to Supervision Committee of ‘The Parnassos Literary Society/F. S. Parnassos’ (2010–2011). Member, board of directors, “Karpathos Institute for Folk Culture” (2013–present), Philosophical School, University of Athens and the Municipality of Karpathos. Member, board of directors, “Ecclesiastical Museum” of the Metropolitan of Samos and Ikaria (2011–present). Member, board of directors, “Centre for Thracian Studies”, Komotini Cultural Group (1995–present). Member, Metropolitan Council of the Holy Metropolis of Peristeri (2017–present) and of the Episcopal Council of the Holy Diocese of Botswana, the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. Director, “Centre for Ecclesiastical Historical and Cultural Studies”, Holy Metropolis and Samos and Ikaria (2013–present).

Member, board of directors (secretary), “Foundation for Pedagogical Studies and Applications” (2015–present). Director, “Laboratory for Folklore and Social Anthropology”, School of Classical Studies and Humanities, Democritus University of Thrace (2015–present). Member of the Coordinating Committee and of board of directors, “Academy of Folk Culture and Local History”, founded by the cultural body, ‘Magniton Kivotos’, Holy Metropolitan of Demetrias and Almyros (2017–present).

Member of «Giuseppe Sciacca» International Premiums (2018), S. G. E. S. I. (Istituto di Studi Giuridici, Economici e Sociali Internazionali) (2018) and of the Association «Human and Society», of «Giuseppe Sciacca» Foundation (2018).

Distinctions and Awards: In March 2005, the Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomaios honoured Emmanouil Varvounis with the title (*offikion*)

of 'Archon Protector of Letters of the Great and Holy Church of Christ'. In April 2007 the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, Theodoros II, awarded him the title (*offikion*) of 'Great Archon Keeper of the Archives', of the Archiepiscopal Throne of Alexandria. In March 2008, he was made, through the laying on of hands by The Most Reverend Metropolitan of Peristeri Chrysostomos, Reader. In February 2011, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem Theophilos proclaimed him 'Crossbearer of the Holly Sepulchre'.

He was made *Doctor Laureatus* of the "International Philo Byzantine Academy" of Valencia, Venezuela (2005). In 2006, he was awarded 'Pythagoras of Samos Prize', given by the "Samos Reserve Officer Association", and in 2009, the Peace and Friendship Prize, conferred by the "N.G.O. Lysistrate", for the totality of his research and his contribution to Greek folklore. In December 2010, he was awarded the "Academy of Athens" prize and in January 2011 he was awarded the Gold Medal for Arts and Sciences and in 2012 the Great Gold Cross of Honour by the "Österreichische Albert Schweitzer Gesellschaft". In 2010, he was elected honorary member of the "Society of Euboean Studies".

He has also been awarded the titles of 'Kentucky Colonel', of the State of Kentucky, and of 'Arkansas Traveller', of the State of Arkansas, by the Governors of the states in question. In 2014, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters (LL. Doctorate – Doctor of Letters) by "Saint Stephen's Theological College and Seminary, Harding University". In 2015, he was made an Honorary Doctor of Theology (DD – Doctor of Divinity) of the "St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology", North Carolina, U.S.A. In 2015, he received the 'Great Prize' of the "Foundation for Pedagogical Studies and Applications" for his foreign language academic work and for his contribution to the international promotion and study of Greek culture.

He was made Corresponding Member (*Accademico d'Onore*) of the "Accademia Constantina", Rome, in 2013 and Honorary Member (*Accademico di Merito*) of the "Accademia Bonifaciana", Italy, in 2014, which also awarded him its gold medal for the whole of his academic work. He was made Academician of Honour, of the "Norman Academy" in 2014. He was also made *Academic Corresponent a l' estranger* of the "Real Academia de Buenas Letras / Reial Academia de Bones Lletres", Barcelona, in 2015. In 2016, he

was *Accademico d' Onore* of the “Real Academia Sancti Ambrosii Martyris” of Portugal. Corresponding Member of the “Institute of Anatolic Studies” of the Patriarchic Library of Alexandria in 2013.

In 2013, he received a prize from the “Evthalia and Stavros Kalfiotis Foundation”, of Athens, for his body of work. He was made honorary member of the board of directors of the “Konstantinos and Maria Zimalis Foundation”, Samos, in 2014. This body also awarded him the ‘Epikouros prize for Arts and Letters’, for his contribution to knowledge and to the study of history and folklore of Samos in 2015. In the same year, he was awarded a gold medal by the “Comité des Récompenses de l’Action Nationale pour la Promotion et le Développement des Services Bénévoles”, France.

For his work in folklore, he has received various distinctions from the “Municipality of Samos Cultural Organization” (DOPONAS) (2013), from the “Brotherhood of Samians in Athens” (October, 2016), from the “Karpachos Institute for Folk Culture”, of the Philosophical School of the University of Athens (November, 2016), from the “Pythagoras Association of Samians of Northern Greece” (November, 2016), from the “Archive for Thracian Literature” of the Ethnological Museum of Thrace (2017) and from “American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association” (2017).

He was made honorary member of the “Union der Schweizer und Heimkunde Griechen of Switzerland” in 2013 and in 2014 member of *Accademico Benemerito* of the “Istituto di Studi Storici Beato Pio IX”. The same year, 2014, he was also made a regular member (*Accademico Ordinario*) of the “Pontifical Accademia Tiberina” of Italy. In 2015, he was awarded the Capitolino Prize by the Roger II University, in the state of Florida (U.S.A.). In the same year, 2015, he was made honorary member of the “Istituto di Cultura Universitaria e di Studi Superiori” of Accademia Tiberina, Rome, and Academician of the “International Academy of Social Sciences” (IASS) of the U.S.A. In 2017, he was made Member of the “Société royale des Médaillés et Décorés”, Belgium (2017).

He was awarded gold medal by the “Asociación Histórica Guardia Civil” of Spain in 2016 and by Trakya Üniversitesi / Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Görsel Kültür Anabilim Dalı in Adrianople, Turkey, in 2016. He also

received the 15th “Giuseppe Sciacca International Prize” in 2017. He was also awarded an *Honorary Professor* by the Department of Classical and Modern Greek Language and Literature (Departamentul de Filologie Clasica și Neogreacă) of the University of Bucharest, Romania, in 2017.

In 2017, he received a gold medal from “Euroclassica: Fédération Européenne des Associations de Professeurs de Langues et de Civilisations Classiques” and a gold medal from the “Academia Homerica”. In the same year, he was made an Honorary Member of the “Municipality of Chios” and of the “Municipality of Oinoussai”. In 2017 he was made Knight of the “Order of the Belgian Cross” of Belgium and Honorary Research Fellow of the “Institute of Ethnography” of the “Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts”.

In 2018, the “Asociación Histórica Guardia Civil”, of Spain, paid him the signal honour of awarding him the “Encomienda e Gran Cruz de Honor” for the whole of his academic work in the area of local history and folk culture. In the same year he was awarded the “Croix d’Honneur palme d’ore” and the “Grand Croix d’Honneur de Services Bénévoles Civiques et Humanitaires of France”. In 2019 he was awarded with the “World Championship in Anthropology” from “International Agency for Standards and Ratings”.

Member of Academia Scientiarum et Artium Europaea (European Academy of Sciences and Arts) (2018).

Furthermore, his academic, educational and social work has been honoured with numerous state and ecclesiastical medals, plaques and associated honorific even



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A. BOOKS

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55. Η παραδοσιακή θρησκευτική συμπεριφορά των συγχρόνων του στο έργο του Αλέξανδρου Παπαδιαμάντη [*Traditional religious attitude elements in the works of Alexandros Papadiamantis – in greek*]. Athens 1998, pp. 135 – with Nicoleta Souliotaki.
56. Αγία Τριάδα Παγώνδα. Ιστορικά και λαογραφικά μιας σαμιακής ενορίας [*The Parish of the Holy Trinity in the village of Pagondas, Samos. Historic and folklore elements – in greek*]. Athens 1999, pp. 53.
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61. Προσκυνητάρια της Σάμου [*Shrines in Samos – in greek*]. Athens 2002, pp. 38.
62. Η μονή του Αγίου Ιωάννη Θεολόγου στην Πάτμο και η Σάμος. Οικονομικές επαφές και πνευματικές παρακαταθήκες [*The monastery of St. John Theologos in Patmos and the island of Samos. Economic and spirituals relations – in greek*]. Athens 2004, pp. 318.
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Fragment | Manolis Varvounis

Greek Folklore at the Beginning of the 21st Century

(fragment)

As early as the 1970s, Greek folklore began to show certain clear signs of renewal and of the redefinition of consensus views regarding theory, methodology and directions in research. These developments, on which much important material is still being produced, are indissolubly linked with the work of Professor Michael G. Meraklis and the so-called 'Ioannina School', of which he was the founder. At various Greek universities, Meraklis' students continued with the basic direction of this school, at both a theoretical and practical level.

The fundamental achievements of Greek folklore studies that arose from this important development lie in various areas. They consisted of the adoption of field work, the application of a socio-historical method, which stressed both historical development and social functionality of the phenomena studied and the rethinking of the repertoire of subjects to be studied. They also included an engagement with matters which may have been included in various schemata of what constituted material for folklore research, but were not truly the object of folklore studies in Greece. Thus was born a new tradition in the study of folklore, which defined academic research in Greece down to about the end of the 20th century.

Today, when we are already close to the end of the second decade of the 21st century, we face a new situation, which has taken shape gradually, in part as a continuation of all the factors that we have mentioned and in part as a response on the part of the discipline of folklore to new conditions that are gradually evolving. Such conditions affect the object of our research and the results, in theoretical and practical terms, of folklore studies. They also certainly dictate the achievements of the social sciences more generally. This new reality will also shape the landscape in the contemporary study of folklore in the 21st century and so, one feels, such matters deserve our attention.

With the passing of time, the view is increasingly gaining ground that in terms of discipline the study of folklore is the true link that ties historical studies to the study of anthropology and studies in language and literature to the social sciences. That is, it functions as a substantial academic nexus, since the fact that its aim is the holistic study of the traditional activities of human communities means that it examines many and various such manifestations, which possess a historical background and relate to extremely varied areas of activity.

In any case, the distinguishing feature of the approach employed by the study of folklore is its methodology and its attempt to interpret the phenomena under investigation through use of the tools that folklore theory offers. And it is at this point that folklore adopts several of these analytic tools. This, of course, inevitably leads to the decoupling of the study of folklore from any requirements imposed by nationalism. It also leads to the removal of any political and national connotations that initially the promotion of the study of folklore displayed. It leads, lastly, to the attaining of a clear objectivity, which is the foundation stone in the attempts by the study of folklore to obtain a distinct place in the international academic system.

Because of the linguistic conditions pertaining to the need for knowledge of local idioms in every language in order that the primary material gathered should be comprehensible, the study of folklore may once have been a discipline organized, as it were, in 'national' terms. This, however, is certainly no longer true and anyway does not imply that it was ever a nationalistic discipline.

Today, the conditions and practices arising from globalization have led the discipline of folklore to acquire a more cosmopolitan perspective. Such a perspective does not ignore and or erase the colour and peculiarities of every local system of folk culture. It has, however, given a uniformity to the ways, methods and theories regarding the acquisition and reception of material, of recording it and of studying and interpreting it. The result is that all these procedures are compatible with a unified model of academic activity. And, naturally, in the course of this process the study of folklore in Greece in the 21st century has made clear and important progress.

What, then, are these conditions? A glance at whatever is currently prevailing in society gives a convincing and almost complete answer.

As for, say, folk literature, literacy now prevails, with the result that the production and circulation of works of folk literature now occurs in written form. This has brought new genres into being. Depending on circumstances, it has also shaped the terms in which the works are produced, bringing to the forefront the personality of the creator involved, which for centuries was hidden in communal anonymity. On the other hand, the appearance and prevalence of new technologies, as a basic feature of modernity, has led to the development of such phenomena, as the spread of cultural models. These have meant that customs, traditions and habits are transmitted with ease from region to region, thus enriching the local repertoire of traditions and leading to new avenues for popular creativity.

The use of new technologies by almost everybody has greatly facilitated the introduction and adoption of new cultural forms, with the result that new terms have evolved regarding what is regarded as ‘ours’ and what is regarded as ‘foreign’. This, in its turn, has shaped a new cultural landscape. At the same time, however, it has introduced new areas for study, such as the Internet, social media and various electronic sources. On the other hand, the gradual metamorphosis of Greece into a truly multicultural society has brought about a fertile and productive dialogue between the traditional and modern and between the indigenous and foreign. This has led to remarkable syntheses and composites, worthy of investigation.

As academic practices make clear, study of folklore in Greece has responded positively to these stimulants. A fundamental manifestation of this is the appearance and development of new branches in the discipline of folklore, such as folklore of modernity, urban folklore and digital folklore. The engagement with phenomena of modernity, with the folklore of urban space and with the Internet, not only as a source of information but as a ‘place’, as it were, to develop and create new folklore phenomena – all this forms a basic category of activities that defines the direction of the study of folklore in the 21st century. This activity also indicates that this is the direction in which a large part of research in folklore will move in the future.

The passage from the traditional to the popular is perhaps the most important aspect of this renewal, imposed by circumstances, in the

subject matter of the discipline. This, in its turn, particularly when it assumes the form of ‘urban folklore’, leads the study of folklore to a direct theoretical and methodological practices shared with the other social sciences and with sociology in particular. Thus the categories of ‘modernity’ and ‘post-modern’, as expressed through cultural practices with a broader diffusion and resonance in society, began to interest scholars of folklore, particularly from the end of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century onwards. This interest is reflected in the directions taken by academic folklore studies at undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral level.

As early as the start of the 20th century, Greek folklorists, such as Michael Merakles, Minas Alexiades, Dimitris Raptis, Evangelos Avdikos and Rhea Kakamboura, began to turn to similar subject areas. They looked at, for example, written folk literature and at urban society and its various components, such as fashion, greeting cards, photographs, advertisements, the press and at associations and their activities. In their studies, they adopted and introduced contemporary theoretical and methodological tools from other sociological, historical, linguistic and literary disciplines, while at the same time renewing research in folklore. The work has been continued in the same direction by young scholars, such as Nikoletta Perpatari, Giorgos Kouzas, Nikos Karpouzis, Alexandros Kapaniaris, Xanthippi Foulidi, all of whom from their post-graduate studies onwards have followed the same methodology.

As a result of these developments, various specialized branches of the study of folklore have grown up. This can be seen, for example, in the move from ‘folk religion’ to the examination of traditional religious behaviour, which borders on ‘religious folklore’. It can be seen, too, in the introduction of ‘digital folklore’, both as a matter for research and as a taught subject or in the folklore-based study of characteristic aspects of urban ethnography, such as beggars, street markets and jobs of low social status. New branches of study, to which other social sciences have already spread, have now begun to interest scholars of Greek folklore, such as for example, gender studies, represented, above all, by the work of Maria Gkasouka.

At this point, we should make an important distinction: As regards most of these matters, there are indeed reference to them in the work of

older folklorists as well, who either from intuition or from an excellent knowledge of their material were led in similar directions and to similar conclusions. The example of Demetrios Economides is typical. He spoke on occasions about questions of ‘urban folklore’ and of ‘the folklore of gender. What, however, distinguishes such cases is that they occurred in general without recourse to, and indeed without knowledge of, the bibliography on the subject. That is, such cases arose in a practical fashion, without any theoretical basis or infrastructure, and, indeed, without any contact with the international bibliography pertaining to the subject, in contrast to the developments that have occurred in the discipline during the 21st century.

All this led to another important development, the growth of a genuine academic dialogue with social anthropology and the related disciplines of ethnology and cultural anthropology, that is, with disciplines with which folklore initially had hostile relations. This convergence nevertheless maintains clear theoretical and methodological boundaries among each of these disciplines. Such a coming-together is apparent, however, both in terms of bibliography and in terms of strategically and institutionally important choices, for example, in the foundation in 2015 at the Department of History and Ethnology of the Democritus University of Thrace, in Komotini, of the first such academic research body, bearing the title ‘Study Centre for Folklore and Social Anthropology’.

Such collaboration was considered desirable for the discipline of folklore as long ago as the 1970s, at time of the criticism of folklore studies made by Alki Kyriakidou – Nestoros. This, although in part unjust and unjustifiably partisan, nevertheless made clear that, since social anthropology had now broken loose from its colonialist past and had now entered, in the form of ‘European ethnology’, the study of peoples who had previously made up the privileged territory of folklore, collaboration between folklore and social anthropology was a matter of necessity. About twenty years of academic acrimony followed. The violence of the convert and the arrogance of the omniscient, on the one hand, and the stubborn reaction on the part of the supposedly privileged proprietor of the field held up any real dialogue between the two disciplines.

Nevertheless, from the late 20th and the early years of the 21st, these barriers began gradually to be overcome and there started to appear

signs of rapprochement and dialogue, in both theoretical and practical terms. Proof of this lies in the work of scholars, such as Eleftherios Alexakis, Vassilis Nitsiakos and Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou, who have convincingly shown the power of similar approaches. This is apparent in theoretical and epistemological terms, as Alexakis has made clear in his discussion of 'ethnography at home', and in terms of research, teaching and writing, as Nitsiakos and Chryssanthopoulou have demonstrated in their cultivation of 'social folklore', on which Merakles had made his recommendations in the past.

This dialogue with social anthropology goes hand in hand with a renewal of the subject matter of the discipline. This, and the theoretical and methodological reorientation that we have already described, are together shaping the new face of folklore in the 21st century. Nor should we forget that, at the same time, the study of folklore, while honouring its past and not abandoning its academic identity, nevertheless, in contrast to the practices of anthropology, does not hesitate to study cultural continuities, which it believes that it can ascertain and document. This study of cultural continuities, however, is not to be set in any ethnocentric or occasionally nationalistic framework, something that may have occurred in the hands of amateur recorders of folklore in the 19th and early 20th century. Instead, it is based on the relationship between a material base and an intellectual superstructure, on which rest the 'longues durées' that historical research into these matters ascertains and examines.

Thus the study of Greek folklore in the 21st century continues its work of collecting material, employing old and new classificatory categories. Kyriakidou may have dismissed these, but they remain particularly useful for the study of the manifestations of folk culture. At the same time, the discipline studies the various phenomena of folklore as historical data, thereby avoiding an ahistorical view of such phenomena and employing the theoretical tools of the other social sciences to understand and to interpret them. The discipline uses theory to examine its material in a critical and interpretative spirit. It avoids the exclusive and binding relationship with theory that characterizes social anthropology, which rejects anything that cannot be linked to a particular theoretical framework. The study of folklore functions in this fashion, because it believes that the study of primary material will lead one from object to

theory, rather than the other way around. That is, the discipline believes that theory should aid in the interpretation of data culled from fieldwork and not become a bed of Procrustes for the scholar and his research outlook.

Among the features of discipline of Greek folklore of the 21st century we cannot ignore the outward looking spirit that increasingly defines the study of folklore in Greece. Since any nationalistic outlook has been superseded and new technologies facilitate travel and interpersonal contact, the achievements of the study of Greek folklore are becoming more widely known, since Greek folklorists now frequently take part in international conferences and collaborate with international journals and collective academic publications.

The growth of the literature on Greek folklore produced in languages other than Greek and the development of comparative studies in folklore, as witnessed by the work of such research centres, as the Greek Folklore Society and the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens, testify to this. This is truly an upward path and is reflected in the increasing literature in Greek on folklore.

In recent years, collaboration on the part of various research bodies concerned with folklore with similar institutions abroad has increased enormously, as has the planning and execution of programmes and actions both in south-east Europe and further abroad. An outward-looking spirit and contact with academic developments in folklore studies in other countries throughout the world have given the study of Greek folklore the character of a discipline whose name may be due to the singularity that it is Greek. It was, after all, instituted by the founder of the academic study of folklore, Nikolaos Politis. Nevertheless, the methods, the theory and research and interpretative practices are of the same kind as those employed by the same discipline, as it has developed, known under various and similar names throughout all the countries of the world.

Whether as 'folklore' or as 'Volkskunde', depending on various national linguistic traditions, or whether known by the contemporary names of 'Ethnologie' or the American term 'Folkloristics', this is one and the same discipline, which is developing at an international level and corresponds

completely to the study of Greek folklore. Indeed, this discipline has left behind any national frameworks in which it was once set and the conditions that created it, people by people and region by region. It is now organized at an international level, as it develops a common theoretical and methodological base, common and specialist academic tools and a common academic vocabulary, so that its scholars can understand each other.

All this indicates, I believe, that the study of Greek folklore at the start of the 21st century displays a new face, in terms of both theory and methodology and in terms of the subjects it studies and its outward-looking spirit. This is natural and to be expected of a discipline that studies folk culture and which should adapt to changes in the object of its study, while at the same time it develops the theoretical and methodological tools that will allow it to study fully and adequately new data, as it crops up, from a cultural system that is changing and reshaping itself.

The increase in the speed of the rhythm of life, due to the rapid spread of information thanks to the Internet, and the changes that cultural globalization has brought to folk culture have led to a series of speedy changes, to the incorporation of cultural elements of various origins in into daily life and to the rapid dismantling of old, traditional givens, that are being replaced by new elements and new cultural and social patterns. These phenomena, real and discernible in the daily life of the common people, form the object of the contemporary study of Greek folklore. They directly influence the character, the existence, the epistemological identity and the work of the discipline of Greek folklore in Greece at the beginning of the 21st century, in the manner presented in all of what has been given above.

Manolis G. Varvounis

Professor of Folklore
Department of History and Ethnology
Faculty of Classics and Humanities
Democritus University of Thrace

Notes

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Universitatea din București
Virtute et Sapientia

Bulevardul Mihail Kogălniceanu, nr. 36-46, București, România
Tel: +4021 307 73 00
Fax: +4021 313 17 60