

Project: POLYPHONIA “Thematic Tourism Development Through the Preservation of Polyphonic Music, Unique Element of The Cross-Border Cultural Heritage”

2. Habits and customs in polyphonic tradition

The polyphonic singing was an integral part of customary procedures that were performed both in the cycle of life (birth, marriage, death) and the cycle of time (carnival, spring customs, etc.). Their operation lasted until the first decades after the Second World War, just before the internal and external migration of the active population created social issues.

We can trace the social dimension of polyphonic music tracks from the study of various collections of folk songs which were recorded in the past. If we arrange them according to their context we can see that they mainly relate to birth, marriage, death, religion, love, migration, labor, nature, as well as to some historical songs. A few examples of the above categories include Happy Songs, Lullabies, Legends –Covers, Laments, Historical Songs, Songs about Migration, about Marriage and Love, etc (Matsias 1988, fire - solver 1995 Lolis 2006).

The polyphonic song revives only in cultural events organized by associations and especially during the summer season. The modern study of the song is now restricted to the limited cultural events and not in the operation it has in some customary process of life or time. The form and function of the song is now studied through the events where it revives, the actions of individuals, the role of organizations and of course the relationships created that give a new character in the polyphonic singing.

Nowadays, several groups have created polyphonic songs at various cultural centers of Athens and Epirus, and they revive the polyphonic singing. It is significant that the relatively new associations that are created in urban centers, have members that aren't directly related to the birthplace of polyphonic songs. The names of certain groups (Plifono, Chaonia, Inora etc.) remind us of specific types of songs and in some cases, they define the wider region in which this singing took place. The selected songs are that are assigned by the above groups, originate from the wider field of polyphonic music. The

groups that have the same name as the birthplace of singers (Parakalamos, Ktismata, Dervitsani, etc.) mostly include members that come from the same village and have a "limited" local repertoire.

The transition is now clear, the oral learning process polyphonic song is gradually being abandoned and replaced by the systematic teaching (in most cases it is written) in public schools or private academies. The remaining experiential singers of polyphonic singing are very few. The experiential singers are those who were initiated orally in the polyphonic singing, in a community where this singing operated multilayer and it was an integral part of most customary procedures. The time boundaries of this procedure are limited to the first few decades after the Second World War.

Nowadays, most exponents of polyphonic singing learn the techniques of singing in a study center that promotes folk songs. Kanellatou (2010) informs us that since the early 21st century, special efforts have been made in order to promote polyphonic songs of Epirus. Through scientific articles, conferences and concerts in major urban centers, the polyphonic singing of Epirus, as well as younger performers unrelated to Epirus, become more popular in the public.

Distinguished centers, including the Museum of Greek Folk Musical Instruments by Phoebos Anoyanakis under the direction of musicologist Lambrou Liavas, the Music Department of the High-school of Women in Athens during the tenure of superintendent Christina Dragatakis and the Research Centre for Greek Singing under the supervision of the musicologist Vivi G. Kanellatou, have established departments for teaching polyphonic songs. In this way it becomes obvious the attempt for systematic study and promotion of this specific musical genre, which is a characteristic singing form in the Greek music (Kanellatou, 2010).