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Highlighting the Characteristics of Social Life and Dance Tradition of Mastichochoria, Chios

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Abstract

In Chios, an island known for its naval activity located in the Northeastern Aegean Sea, the social life of the inhabitants is connected with the ethics, customs, dances traditions and folkloric traditions of the island. Some of the customs and dances that accompany them are found all over the island, but the majority of them mainly related with the villages of Northern and Southern of Chios (Boulamandi, Tyrovola and Koutsouba, 2010). In the south, a complex of 21 villages, Mastichochoria, derives their name from the professional occupation of the locals with the harvest of Mastiha, a monopoly product that defined the socio-economic life of the inhabitants since Genoese period, and which still contributes to the enhancement of local communities. The references about the medieval settlements (Mesta, Pyrgi, Kalamoti, Kallimassia, Nenita, etc.) of Chios are based on testimonies of elderly residents, place names, information about the temples, ethics and customs, as well as studies on architecture and urban design of the villages (Misailidou, 2017). The folkloric tradition was based on the structure, composition and operation of Mastichochorian households (Damalas, 2010), while it was associated with the expression of the dance tradition in religious ceremonies (weddings) and social events (lullabies, dirges and strap-on dances). Each village had its own

distinct clothing, as female's and male's local costumes, and especially the bridal and wedding costume, were characteristic of the inhabitants' cultural identity (for example, a white wedding dress with a headband for women and a men's outfit with a waistcoat, a white shirt and a crossed black vest for the residents of Kalamoti). In the weddings of Mastichochoria, the largest expression of folkloric tradition, most couples married after an arranged marriage, on Sundays and in the central squares of each village a traditional feast was held with a variety of dances such as Syrtos, the Lemon of Crete, Tripatos or dance of Nenita, dance of Chios, dance of Pyrgi, the Sousta of Volissos, Hasapikos dance, Marou dance, as well as the Asia Minor dances and the Tsiftetelli.

Key Words: *Chios, Mastichochoria, Social Life, Dance Tradition, Folkloric Tradition*

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