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**The Shifts in the Significance of Symbolic Monuments:
The Case of the *Lion of Samos***

1. Theoretical considerations: The monuments as official and unofficial mnemonic landscapes

The concept of *monument* is so general that it can include everything, e.g., the architectural constructions of all ages, the works of art, and all human artifacts no matter when they were created or whether they are collaborative or individual creations. The monuments function as material imprints of history and reinforcers of memory of a wider civilisation “preserving and commemorating the values, the customs, the mentalities, the habits, the way of thinking and the volition of the era that produced them and the people that founded them,”¹ and are therefore valued as important tools for History learning.²

The monuments commemorating heroes (usually sculptured) as “official”/state mnemonic landscapes belong in a way to what Alois Riegi described as “conscientious monuments,”³ to those, in other words, that are connected and correlated with clear intentions and

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1. Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou, “Ιστορία–Μνήμη–Μνημείο,” in *Μνήμη και εμπειρία του χώρου*, ed. Stavros Stavridis (Athens: Alexandria, 2006), 273.

2. P. Bruce Uhrmacher and Barri Tinkler, “Engaging Learners and the community through the study of monuments,” *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice* 11.3 (2008): 225-38.

3. Terzoglou, “Ιστορία–Μνήμη–Μνημείο,” 262.

ambitions: to achieve an impressive and continuous mnemonic outcome. As Auster comments⁴ public monuments act as “important centres around which local and national political and cultural positions have been articulated.”

They have diachronically been public symbols of patriotism, faith in the sacred values of the Nation, symbols of perseverance and obedience;⁵ they are not mere artistic creations that adorn an outdoors space but they constitute living narrative practices, which enhance the collective memory⁶ or foreground self-determined or imposed elements on a society to consume. The symbolisms of the monuments are the visible traces of the invisible perspectives of a society and they motivate its members to participate in social and national endeavours.⁷

The “official” sculptured monuments, as human spatial constructions, as material foundations of memory, transform in the material evidence of the discourse that each official state articulates for the past and the history of the people. The monuments are icons of a concrete reading of the historical past that usually coincides with the national discourse each time in power and the related to it social memory. They constitute thus the visible version of the dominating

4. Martin Auster, “Monuments in a Landscape: the question of ‘meaning’,” *Australian Geographer* 28.2 (1997): 219-27.

5. Elias Mykoniatis, “Το Μακεδονικό Ηρώο της Θεσσαλονίκης. Τέχνη και πολιτική στον Μεσοπόλεμο,” *Ελληνικά* 44 (1994): 159.

6. See Maurice Halbwachs, *Η συλλογική μνήμη*, trans. Tina Plyta (Athens: Pappazisis, 2003).

7. Russell Johnson and Michael Ripmeester, “A monument’s work is never done: The Watson Monument, memory, and forgetting in a small Canadian city,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 13.2 (March 2007): 117-35.

national interpretation. As symbols⁸ and mnemonic landscapes,⁹ they realise the nationally, top-down imposed and “legitimising reading,” they reproduce the past in the present. The monuments – preserving the trace of the era that created them– bridge “the conception of space with the idea of the human, the history with memory.”¹⁰ In this sense, they are “entirely symbolic,”¹¹ since they are not a mere construction in a landscape but end to literally constitute a *text*, in which meanings on the basis of typologies, mnemonic associations, memories, ideas, etc. are attached. They refer, in other words, to things *other* than the *object* itself.¹²

The way the state power selects to construct and project its past through the monument always depends upon the prevalent conditions and needs of the present. The “national narrative” does not remain stable; it changes and is redefined, restated through new narrations and interpretations. As Seth Dixon maintains “statues and monuments are not merely static pieces of art, but fluidly constructed and contested touchstones of a collective national, political and social identity embedded within public spaces.”¹³ The each time hege-

8. Clifford Geertz described eloquently the meaning of symbols: the human beings adapt to everything but cannot face the irrational world they cannot foresee or control. The main mechanism they have invented in order to control the nature, comprehend themselves and the others and deter the evil are the symbolic systems. The systems of symbols –considered as knowledge sources– guide the people to their way of living; they constitute criteria of ethical conduct and regulatory terms which tune their action. They exist when they are recognised, put to oblivion or earned in the course of history. People are united or divided for symbols.

9. See Pierre Nora, ed., *Les lieux de la memoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984); idem, “‘Τόποι μνήμης’. Συνέντευξη του Πιερ Νορά στην Χρυσάνθη Αυλάμη,” *Ιστορη* 14 (2005): 179-98.

10. Terzoglou, “Ιστορία–Μνήμη–Μνημείο,” 262.

11. Auster, “Monuments in a Landscape,” 219-27.

12. *Ibid.*, 220.

13. Seth Dixon, “Symbolic landscapes of identity: Monumentality, modernity and memory on Mexico city’s *Paseo de la Reforma*,” PhD dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 2009, 10, <http://gradworks.umi.com/33/74/3374479.html> (accessed May 2015).

monic national classes control the production of culture, they practice their hegemony through it aiming at imposing the historical view that abides by their ideological world and thus they interfere with any shift in significance of the monuments in the course of time.¹⁴ As highlighted by Johnson and Ripmeester “the memory entrepreneurs will nurture those specific mnemonic traditions that best serve to legitimate particular understandings of the past. ...we are instructed as to the things we should remember as well as those things that we should forget” aiming at social conformity and smooth reproduction of the system. However, “popular expression of the past works to mediate this effort at control.”¹⁵

The monuments, therefore, constitute a continually transforming recording of the historic memory and play an important role in the creation and perseverance of the folk and collective memory. Their conceptual content varies, is interpreted in multiple ways not merely by the shifting of the ideological discourse of the state power but by the society or the micro group itself, confirming thus their characterisation as *living narrative practices*. The symbolisms that they include evoke mnemonic associations to the members of a particular society, they “demand” a general consensus, not, however, to an absolute degree since they remain “open” to different interpretations. Each society creates its own symbolic cosmos, its members feel at ease with it since abiding by it is reinforced by all relevant to social learning mechanisms targeting the preservation and reproduction of each society. Actually, individuals use the symbols on a daily basis and they thus consciously or unconsciously undergo their impact on them. In this sense, the x or y historical event and its iconic repre-

14. I remind that many traditions and memory landscapes have eventually been shown to be “inventions,” outcomes of construction procedures or invented traditions. See for the term Eric Hobsbaum and Terence Ranger, *Η επινόηση της παράδοσης*, trans. Thanassis Athanasiou (Athens: Themelio, 2004); and that the *memory landscapes* are the monuments, the historical sites, the museums, the artifacts, the documents of any kind, the traditions, the literary pieces, etc.

15. Johnson and Ripmeester, “A monument’s work is never done,” 119.

sentation on the monument is likely to embed new or altered expectations and meanings in order to continue to remain meaningful to the society which, however, cannot be controlled by the official state.¹⁶ In addition to the above, in wider groupings, namely, cities, states, nations, “the globe,” persons use the symbols “to express discriminations between different social units.”¹⁷

The monuments erected by other social associations (non state ones), such as, cultural associations, trade unions, ethnic groups, municipalities and communities, social groups of a right or left wing political direction, etc., either abide by the official ideology or express the unofficial memory, the counter-memory,¹⁸ the bottom-up one, their own collective memory, which is likely to be different from the one accepted by the ethnocentric or some other dominant narratives. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan call this “collective remembrance” because it is the outcome of the action of specific subjects or groups that act publicly.¹⁹ Such monuments are usually a reaction to the conscious silencing of historical particular events, to the manipulation of memory and the amnesia imposed *top-down* for such events or certain historical persons. The persons or certain groups of persons attribute at times different meanings and conceptualisations to memory landscapes, they transform them into a familiar mnemonic space, into a field that contributes to the formation, crystallisation and enrichment of their own collective memory. One example from the post civil-war Greece follows:

16. *Ibid.*, 120.

17. Joy Hendry, *Οι κόσμοι που μοιραζόμαστε. Εισαγωγή στην Πολιτισμική και Κοινωνική Ανθρωπολογία*, trans. Chrysoula Mentzalira (Athens: Kritiki, 2011), 174.

18. Michel Foucault, *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1977).

19. Giannis Giannitsiotis, “Ο Άρης Βελουχιώτης επιστρέφει στη Λαμία: Χωρικές διαμάχες γύρω από έναν μνημονικό τόπο,” in *Αμφισβητούμενοι χώροι στην πόλη. Χωρικές προσεγγίσεις του πολιτισμού*, eds. K. Giannakopoulos and Giannis Giannitsiotis, (Athens: Alexandria, 2010), 273.

The liberation of the country from the Nazi occupation has never become an official celebration day, the members of the resistance groups of both parties have never been honoured, the resistance movement has never become “a glorious part of the national reading of history,”²⁰ as has been done in the rest of Europe, since one part of this movement (the EAM one) had been associated to the communist activity.²¹ Therefore, it seems quite difficult to build a monument for the Greek anti-Nazi resistance that would express the full range of the Greek collective memory since it is highly divided in this aspect. During the same period, Europe, however, had invented “resistant narrations” and a dominant unifying European myth, which is absolutely necessary for the construction of the post-war European identity. De Gaulle considered the myth that created Vici as “something that never occurred.”²² Nora proved that the history of France was articulated around mnemonic landscapes, where history and memory interact and define each other.²³

The aim, nonetheless, in the aforementioned cases is for the viewer citizen to approach *emotionally* the historical reality (the emotional load that monuments carry is one of their symbolic elements)²⁴ to identify with the honoured heroes and turn them into its models, to cancel the time by connecting the past with the present. Consequently, the class in power that manipulates the past forms the social reality, instilling in the persons the system of ideas and representations embraced by it, which is the dominant ideology. The one who controls the past determines the future as Orwell said. The past

20. Eleni Paschaloudi, *Ένας πόλεμος χωρίς τέλος. Η δεκαετία του 1940 στον πολιτικό λόγο, 1950-1967* (Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2010), 31.

21. Typical is the example of Aris Velouhiotis. See indicatively, Giannitsiotis, “Ο Άρης Βελουχιώτης επιστρέφει,” 267-314.

22. Anna-Maria Droumbouki, *Μνημεία της λήθης. Τχνη του Β' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου στην Ελλάδα και στην Ευρώπη* (Athens: Polis, 2014), 40.

23. Nora, *Les lieux de la mémoire*, XXXIV-XLI.

24. Such issues are discussed in Joan Lewis, *Symbols and sentiments. Cross cultural studies in symbolism* (New York, S. Francisco: Academic Press, 1977).

is certainly continually affected by shifts in significance by the present, by the position and the role it has in our consciousness,²⁵ and simultaneously it creates and fosters identities. The persons come to know each other through it appealing to common experiences and traditions. The objects in general are *agents* since they have an effect on the human beings, they cause various feelings and they affect their social life. In this sense, the monuments –as objects– are not inactive subjects when viewed but they act. The symbolic memory that is embedded in monuments contributes to the self awareness, self evaluation and creative reinterpretation of the person since it links via the “shortest route” its past, present and future in one unit; they place a preponderant role in the process of creation of stable ethic values, especially the classical ones, since they imprint in space a permanent, durable trace which remains in the passing of time a foundation of the mnemonic and historical coherence of landscapes.²⁶ The persons’ tendency to be attached to the past (devaluing the present) is well-known and has been interpreted *inter alia* as an inner need to connect to what they were as a community/nation and “golden eras” of their prime in particular. This has to do with the persons’ existential, unconscious in most cases need to find a meaning in life. The visible monument-symbol constitutes in this sense a tangible evidence of what they are seeking for, given the fact that symbols are “tangible expressions of conceptions, abstractions of reality crystallised in observable forms, concrete incarnations of ideas, attitudes, judgments, desires or beliefs.”²⁷ Let us add here that the past tends to be “holified” by the people because of the cosmological perception of the cyclical structure of time, the perceptual recycling of everything according to which the present (and whatever takes

25. Antonis Liakos, *Πώς το παρελθόν γίνεται ιστορία*; (Athens: Polis, 2007), 121.

26. Terzoglou, “Ιστορία–Μνήμη–Μνημείο,” 273.

27. Clifford Geertz, *Η ερμηνεία των πολιτισμών*, trans. Th. Papadellis (Athens: Alexandra, 2003), 99.

place during it) constitutes a mere reiteration of what happened once for a first time (*ille tempore*, of M. Eliade).²⁸

Finally, the monuments have an artistic value; they are works of art that express simultaneously the degree of progress of the pictorial art during the specific period of time when the monument was created. They comprise several qualities (morphological, material choice, symbolisms, etc.) that compose the trends of the dominant aesthetics or in some other times a totally different, maybe avant-garde one or a completely traditional or obsolete one. Their evaluation as works of art undertakes numerous specialists, scholars, representatives of opposing waves, the “dominant rule” (or the “national rule of thumb) or another one consciously marginalised by the previous ones. The simple individual, however, facing the monument is invited to decode the system of its “signs” and thus, on the one hand, develops a social relationship with the monument, and, on the other hand, makes up their personal view of memory. I indicatively mention the “distortional artistic language” that rendered the recognition of the elements of the statue of the fighter for the liberation of Macedonia Kotta impossible (Florina 1960) by the people and caused a storm of protest by the local society. The depiction of the hero the very moment of his sacrifice was considered disparaging and anti-heroic.²⁹ Nowadays, to Gialouri, the aesthetics of the depiction of the embedded in each monument ideas becomes more abstract and aims at involving the viewer and at activating the dialectical relationship between the public and the public event more.³⁰

28. Mircea Eliade, *Κόσμος και ιστορία. Ο μύθος της αιώνιας επιστροφής*, trans. Stratis Psaltou (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 1999); idem, *Το ιερό και το βέβηλο*, trans. Nikos Delivorias (Athens: Arsenidis, 2002).

29. Sophia Tsiara, *Τοπία της εθνικής μνήμης. Ιστορίες της Μακεδονίας γραμμένες σε μάρμαρο* (Athens: Kleidarithmos, 2004), 171-85.

30. Eleana Gialouri, “Η δυναμική των μνημείων: Αναζητήσεις στο πεδίο της μνήμης και της λήθης,” in *Αμφισβητούμενοι χώροι στην πόλη*, 309.

2. *The case of the monument of Samos: A Great Tradition choice*³¹

In 1930 the century anniversary of the national Independence was celebrated with grandiose celebrations all over Greece (1830-1930). Apart from the celebration in the capital city of Athens, every other city was entrusted with the organisation of similar events at a local level. A relevant circular had been circulated by the government of Eleftherios Venizelos of that period, which additionally suggested the construction of “commemorating works of art” which, in turn, would constitute the centre of such manifestations. One hundred years after the national restoration the Greek state will thus reactivate some symbolic elements of its cohesion (the foundation of memory sites, celebrations, memory rituals, speeches, performances, etc.)³² so as to transform the living throughout the 19th century memory of the Greek revolution into a collective memory and thus become the possession of the national community. The centre of these manifestations through which the gratitude towards the fighters of the Greek revolution in 1821 would be expressed and the achieved national progress in various domains would be revealed was the foundation or erection of monuments which would either be symbolic or would depict historic persons. Committees of celebrations and erections of monuments were formed in various areas.

The local committee of Samos decided to build a monument of symbolic nature and assigned the task of finding the ideal for the case solution to the scholar Vasilios Theophanidis. This person, after having consulted Greek and foreign archaeologists (the Great tradition) ended with a monument that would depict a lion.

The sculptors Nikos Dimitriadis, Andreas Panagiotakis and Ioannis Koulouris sent to the referee committee their proposals. The lat-

31. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community, peasant society and culture* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

32. See Paul Connerton, *How societies remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

ter unanimously accepted Koulouris' proposal, which was then accepted by the Municipality Council of the city of Limin Vatheos Samos (Port of Vathy).



The lion was 2.5 metres high and from white marble from Penteli Mountain. It was erected on the 15th of July 1930 on a pedestal made of blue marble 2.75 metres high. On the main side of the pedestal the following inscription was engraved: TO THE 1821 FIGHTERS/SAMOS WITH GRATITUDE/1930 while on the left side: MAYOR G. D SOUTOS and on the right side: I. KOULOURIS/FROM TINOS MADE/ATHENS.³³

As soon as the above decisions were made known, the oppositional Press of the island, with the editor of the newspaper *Samos* being the leader, attacked sharply the committee and his opponent in politics Mayor of the city G. Soutos a supporter of Venizelos. He used cruel personal insults in this attack. In this sense, an issue connected to the herein highlighted terms “opposing Press” and “a “Mayor supporter of Venizelos” are set: the reasons behind the opposing persons’ reaction (editor of the aforementioned newspaper and its ideological supporters) have to do with pure political criteria, with a fanaticism against the opposite part, which motives are concealed behind the projected various arguments (historical, aesthetic, etc.). I would like to introduce a priori in this study the political motives of their actions as a likely interpretive parameter of the facts and situations that follow, the study of which, however, reveals that similar subsequent behaviours of the critics of the lion (see below) are possibly not spurred by such motives.

33. For all the above see the comprehensive study by Dora Markatou, “Τα δημόσια μνημεία στην Ελλάδα του 1930. Η περίπτωση της Σάμου και του Ηρακλείου,” in *Η Σάμος από τα Βυζαντινά χρόνια μέχρι σήμερα. Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου*, vol. 2 (Athens: “Nikolaos Dimitriou” Cultural Foundation of Samos, 1998), 299 onwards.

3. *The critique of the opposing the monument scholars. Queries and explanations*

The critique of the opposing the lion scholars and the interpretation of the symbol concluded to the following points. I discuss them under the prism of Turner's analysis³⁴ of the "level of endogenous interpretation/explanation" of symbols, and, in particular, the one connected to *manufactured/imported* symbols, in which the "anti-lion" group included the lion:

a. The decoding of a symbolic monument is difficult by the folk people

This is possibly the most powerful and convincing argument of the anti-lion group. The lion (the symbol that demands decoding) to them is incomprehensible because it does not belong to the realm of the familiar samian culture, it is irrelevant to the cultural memories of the folk people, it does not have any value for them, it does not evoke any feelings to them. This symbol has been imposed to them top-down by the Great Tradition, the national and scholarly one, which B. Theophanidis represents. I consider of crucial importance to cite his view about symbolism at this point that determined his choice: "Symbolism reveals a developed conceptualisation and it is the only medium that leads to the depiction of feelings and ideas. The impersonal and symbolic monuments speak deeply in the hearts of people because they represent a whole world. Therefore the idea of the construction of monuments dedicated to the 'Unknown Soldier' has been well embraced worldwide after the last great war."³⁵

Ortner's theory on key symbols³⁶ also facilitates the comprehension of the aforementioned argument: *key symbols* constitute the

34. Victor Turner, *The forest of symbols* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 50-51.

35. *Ανγλίον*, no. 1839 (8.4.1930), 1.

36. Sherry B. Ortner, "On key symbols," *American Anthropologist* 75.5 (1973): 1339.

only source from which the persons “discover, rediscover and transform their culture from generation to generation, because they belong to the public symbol system and as such they are easily recognised and elaborated by their users.” R. Brown believes that the symbols in general “make consensus possible as far as sensus of the social world is concerned, a consensus that has a fundamental contribution to the reproduction of the social class; the ‘logical’ integration is the prerequisite of the ‘ethical’ integration.”³⁷ Every society (wider or local) accepts the microcosmos of the familiar to them symbols, its members are used to them, they guide them since they embed their social values compliance is ought to.

b. Only Samians and not foreigners should have decided on the selection of the monument, therefore the Committee should have been purely “Samian”

This argument is very interesting from a folklore angle and has been verified in numerous research efforts in the Modern Greek case. The *foreigner* is generally projected in the local persons’ consciousness as the *Other* who invades with a plethora of usually manufactured qualities to conquer the local dominion. It constitutes a visible danger for the locality. It is usually considered irrelevant to the local culture and the needs of the bearer people. In this sense it is devalued and rejected by the social, cultural and economic activities. The risk that its entanglement in such activities would contribute to a more permanent presence in the future is also there. The “struggling localism”³⁸ is a diminution of the nation and its relation to the Othercoming from a different country.

37. In Pierre Bourdieu, *Γλώσσα και συμβολική εξουσία*, trans. Kiki Kapsambeli (Athens: Kardamitsa, 1999), 240.

38. I borrow this term from Efthymios Papataxiarchis, “Εισαγωγή. Τα άχθη της ετερότητας,” in *Περιπέτειες της ετερότητας. Η παραγωγή της πολιτισμικής διαφοράς στη σημερινή Ελλάδα*, ed. Efthymios Papataxiarchis (Athens: Alexandria, 2006), 36.

- c. The particular monument does not honour the Samian fighters or relate to the Lion of Cheronia since the latter expresses a fruitless battle

This is an argument of a historic character. The scholar editor interprets the symbol subjectively. Symbols are in any case unclear and part of their significance is subjective and thus subjectively interpreted, and in them the individuality along with the community/entirety are compromised; they receive a different meaning from people of various ages, education, social status or political orientation. They are transformed on the basis of systemic and personal factors.³⁹ The symbols epitomise and classify the conceptual categories of their users and orient them towards culturally acceptable activities. The symbolic knowledge is not merely knowledge of objects or words but one of memory of objects and words, representations of perception.

The editor nonetheless interprets the symbol-lion within the framework of the particular historical reading of the island of Samos. The battle of the Samian people for their incorporation in the national body (1912) possibly cannot be symbolised by the same motif/symbol that was used in a previous historical coincidence totally different from the Samian one; the Cheronia battle in Viotia signals in essence the beginning of the domination of the Greek political reality by the Macedonians for almost a century. The defeat of the federation of city-states by the Macedonian King Philippe at Cheronia sealed the end of the constitution of the city-state as such. During the period of the 4th century BC and onwards this crisis was culminated and new forms of coexistence of the city-states in wider unions were sought (sacred unions, communities, amphictyonies and federations). In this vein, using Foucault, the monument being a mnemonic landscape, constitutes *un espace autre* (ετεροτοπία), since it refers

39. Anthony Cohen, *The symbolic construction of community* (London: Routledge, 1989), 21.

to a different time to the one it wants to express and to other ideals and conceptions of the memory procedure.⁴⁰

d. The Lion expresses bragging about our ancestors and anachronism

The selected symbol is to them anachronistic and obsolete. The former criticism seems to imply and express political ideology terms (the case of modern Greeks bragging about their glorious ancestors). The latter expresses the criticisers' aesthetic preferences.

e. "it is far from the layful of the church the priests to burn incense in front of it during commemorative rituals"⁴¹

It is probably one of the weakest arguments. I remind herein that prophet Samuel is depicted in early Christian monuments (sarcophagus, cemetery paintings) been surrounded by lions. It has also been considered an emblem of the evangelist Mark,⁴² who is always depicted in one of the four bases of the domes of all churches. The story of Daniel "in the hollow of lions" symbolises God who redeems people from sin. *The Anapeson*, the icon of the painter Manouel Panselinos at the Protaton of Karyes at the Mount Athos, was inspired by Jacob's prophecy "Judas lion whelp; my son you have risen from a sprout, falling you slept as a lion and as a whelp. Who will raise him?" The lion also stands as a symbol of Jesus Christ, possibly due to its royal power and its magnificence. "Look at the lion coming from the tribe of Judas won, the root of David" (*Apocalypse* 5.5).⁴³

40. Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," in *Dits et écrits*, vol. II (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 1571-81. See Michel Foucault, *Ετεροτοπίες και άλλα κείμενα*, trans. T. Mpetzelos (Athens: Plethron, 2012), 255-70.

41. See *Ελλάς*, no. 1272 (12.7.1972), 4. (*Hellas*, Independent newspaper of Samos, owner-editor Kostas I. Ptinis, Samos).

42. Alberto Rizzi and Georgios Ploumidis, "Οι λέοντες του Αγίου Μάρκου," *Ηπειρωτικά Χρονικά* 36 (2002): 341-51.

43. Later, however, the animal is depicted (occasionally along with the dragon) as a symbol of the powers of Evil, the *roaring lion*, in contrast to the "good shepherd" Christ, who will liberate the faithful persons from its deadly mouth. The lion becomes thus a symbol of Devil.

Some folklore questions and some thoughts that should guide the reader deriving from the aforementioned arguments follow:

1. Can the local scholar editor be considered an expresser of the Little tradition that is the one of the people of the city? How many and who does he represent after all? His opponents as it is revealed at the apposition of their own rationale (see below) believe that his arguments have few supporters. We need to agree with their reasons on the basis of the following according to which, the monument in the course of time became the consciousness of the inhabitants of the city.

2. To what extent is the lion irrelevant and incoherent as a symbol to the (familiar, eternal, tested) symbolic system of the Samian society? Isn't it covered by a great cultural analysis, isn't it invested with familiar to the island cultural terms? Are what I refer in detail in the final section of this study totally disconnected from the Samian people? I believe that they are not.

3. How folk is the perception of the symbolism of a monument as the one of our case study? We are faced here with the issue of the theory of cultural duality which argued that the people reproduce what they accept as *gesunkenes Kulturgut* from the upper classes.⁴⁴ It goes without saying that the issue of whether the folk culture is self-existent or not has long been solved: elements from the "Great/upper" culture drop on the "lower" one and vice versa; Redfield's well known urban continuum. In our case I maintain that the prompted for the lion hegemonic discourse of the Press is what is "established" in the folk consciousness and moulds and eventually rein-

44. For relevant bibliography see Hans Naumann, *Grundziügr der deutschen Volkskunde* (Leipzig: 1922); Michael Meraklis, *Πέντε λαογραφικά δοκίμια για τη γλώσσα και την ποίηση* (Athens: Philippotis, 1985), 36; Stephanos Imellos, *Ιστορικά και μεθοδολογικά της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας. Τεύχος Α'. Από την προδρομική φάση μέχρι την επιστημονική αυτοτέλεια* (Athens: 1995), 9, fn. 6; Manolis Varvounis, *Σύγχρονοι προσανατολισμοί της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας* (Athens: Poreia, 1993), 15. For more bibliography see Manolis Sergis, *Εκκλησιαστικός λόγος και λαϊκός πολιτισμός τον 16^ο αιώνα: η περίπτωση του Παχωμίου Ρουσάνου*, (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Bros., 2008), 16-17.

forces in a top-down fashion the enriched with multiple interpretations and meanings initial symbolism of the lion (honour to the heroes of 1821).

4. *The enriched symbol and the shifts in its significance*

4.1. Signal of the city (*τοπόσημο*), part of its local identity

The monument of the lion was placed for obvious reasons on a central square of the city, the Pythagoras one as aforementioned, the one carrying the eminent name of the famous ancient Greek mathematician, philosopher. I remind here that the space constitutes the point where the social memory is projected and is socially constructed as is well known among folklorists; it is the outcome of a wide web of relations among groups of people and individuals. Just as the individual creates mnemonic spaces at a micro level of their wider personal space, the society, is demonstrating a similar characteristic, on space where it inscripts via the monuments its relation to the past.

For every city, region, or country there is a topography of memory, which depicts an hierarchy and thus “exemplifies the value of the various memories.”⁴⁵ The material monuments constitute points of orientation of memory in space; they are memory theatres,⁴⁶ real and symbolic street signs of memory. In this sense a citizen might lose his orientation for a minute if found in front of an empty space which used to be covered by a monument some time ago. Such experiences have been lived by ex-Soviet Union citizens, when the monuments of their “socialist culture memory” had been rapidly disappearing.⁴⁷ This fact confirms once more that the diachronic *damnatio memoriae* and the transfer of the political power from one group to another are interconnected and have always been expressed via the same media: burning of books, monument destruction, changes in language or imposition of another language, change of

45. Ute Schneider, “Ιστορία και κουλτούρες μνήμης,” *Ίστορι* 14 (2005): 29.

46. A term coined by R. Samuel, in Liakos, *Πώς το παρελθόν*, 110.

47. Schneider, “Ιστορία και κουλτούρες μνήμης,” 29.

place names, introduction of new calendars, etc. All these actions aim at the destruction of the memory and the past and the formation of new identities.

The lion remained in this location for forty three consecutive years and became, as described below, a familiar symbol but also a signal of the city since it was loaded with other symbolic interpretations.

First of all it gained other symbolic interpretations. The instrumental meaning of the symbols (their use and the emotional qualities connected to them) constitute to Turner important parameters. Being fluxional they can “adjust to the circumstances.”⁴⁸ It has become an inseparable part of the local identity⁴⁹ of the inhabitants of the city of Limenas. It is not only a symbol of their square (as elsewhere, e.g., an old plane tree or a fountain) but of the entire city, it has become its “trademark.” If the square⁵⁰ defines the central point around which the multitude of everyday activity of the inhabitants of the city takes place and the official time of celebrations is performed, the lion functions in this system as a signal of the city: it becomes a meeting point, a gathering point, an entertainment place, especially for children, etc. In this sense it gains in the inhabitants’ consciousness intellectual and spiritual qualities, it is personified and surveys all that happens under its gaze. As a supervisor of the everyday order and

48. Anthony Cohen, *Symbolising Boundaries: Identity and Diversity in British Cultures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 9.

49. For definitions of the concept, see Maria Komninou and Efthymios Papataxiarchis, eds., *Κοινότητα, κοινωνία και ιδεολογία. Ο Κωνσταντίνος Καραβίδας και η προβληματική των Κοινωνικών Επιστημών* (Athens: Papazisis, 1990), 332 onwards; Manolis Varvounis, *Εξελίξεις και μετασηματισμοί στον Ελληνικό παραδοσιακό πολιτισμό* (s.l.: Fragmenta, 1995), 91 onwards; Vassilis Nitsiakos, *Λαογραφικά ετερόκλητα* (Athens: Odysseas, 1997), 65 onwards; Manolis Sergis, “Η ‘περιπέτεια’ μιας τοπικής ταυτότητας: πραγματικοί και συμβολικοί ανταγωνισμοί σε ένα ποντιακό χωριό της Ροδόπης (1923-1970),” in *Εύπλοια. Εόρτιος τόμος για την Δεκαετηρίδα του Τμήματος Γλώσσας Φιλολογίας και Πολιτισμού Παρευξενίων Χωρών* (Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Bros., 2010), 252-54.

50. See Michael Meraklis, *Ελληνική Λαογραφία. Κοινωνική συγκρότηση, ήθη και έθιμα, λαϊκή τέχνη* (Athens: Kardamitsa, 2011), 35-36.

the “orderly conduct” of the celebrations it is pleased with the ceremonial atmosphere of the square “it laughs with all” the daily events, “with what is... heard strange and funny.” It contributes in other words to the cultural entrenchment... of the local society,⁵¹ it is through it that the city of Limenas is signalled. Actually every city portrays a particular way of living which is depicted on its monuments as Vassilios Aslanis maintains (in his way) in one of his articles: “the monument in our square has given to our city a characteristic form since 1930 and has turned into a distinctive mark of the city. All encyclopaedias, Greek and foreign, when they publish articles about Samos, they cite photographs of the square along with its lion. Millions of cards with the lion have been mailed to the end of the world and numerous photographs have been taken by the tourists who have kept visiting the island. A photograph of this well-known lion has been included in the recently published by the prefecture of Samos... well prepared album on the occasion of the celebration of the 150 years from the liberation of Greece. This album already adorns the libraries of the President of the government, the vice Presidents and all the Ministers, the Prefectures and Municipalities of the country and some other departments.”⁵²

Apart from similar to the above comments, our argument is supported by folk songs that were published during the period 1930-1973. Folk poetry is for Folklore a special and important “mnemonic space.” The folk poet, for instance Antonis Giokarinis published in *Grande-casa* in 1955 a long poem entitled *Pythagoras Plaza*, in which gracefully emerges its multi-dimensional social, economic, entertaining and theatrical dimension as a performance place:

*An old square full of grace – all the streets lead to it
And at all the lion laughs – which stands there in the middle.*⁵³

51. Cohen, *The symbolic construction*, 9.

52. *Ελλάς*, no. 1272 (12.7.1972), 4.

53. Antonis Giokarinis, *Απαντα. Ποήματα-πεζά-συνεντεύξεις-επιστολές*, ed. Manolis Varvounis (Athens: 1996), 205.

In another poem, on the occasion of the revival of the “wine celebrations” on the square in 1969, he wrote:

*Since it will take place⁵⁴ in the square now on
full of joy will be mentioned celebrations the marble Lion
which will laugh joyfully above the square
with all funny things and jokes that will be heard.⁵⁵*

Among the happenings included in the above mentioned celebrations, a parade of girls dressed seductively who “left none untouched” not even the lion:

*we were so aroused by the girls’ legs
that even the marble Lion⁵⁶ cast stolen glances at them,*

In the same vein at the Epiphany celebration:

*we celebrated joyfully the day before at Theophania
and when the girls’ band played
from the above the marble Lion enjoyed full of joy.⁵⁷*

The lion, therefore, enters and settles in an already structured cultural space (the square) that has not a distinct social profile (not loaded ideologically) but it is a social place of management of the spare time and the “sacred time” of people of all ages with the various performative practices of the rituals that take place there; a place of every day sociability. The monument nonetheless is not only integrated in the everyday life of people but it also provides an identity to the place that this life unfolds since it enriches and changes its

54. The celebration.

55. Giokarinis, *Απαντα*, 287.

56. *Ibid.*, 288.

57. *Ibid.*, 81.

meanings as will be shown below. Based on the aforementioned, the memory of the 1821 Greek revolution is located in the square.

4.2. Symbol of the Samian anti-Nazi resistance

The “psychic” unity between the monument/symbol and the Samian people has been further reinforced since the 1940’s when it was dressed with a wider mnemonic character. It was connected to the historic fate of the city, it was, in other words, associated to more modern aspects of the historic memory of the Samian people; it was feedbacked with new but similar historic symbolisations drawing from the modern Samian history. Since 1943 it turned into a *symbol of the resistance of the Samians against the Nazi conquerors of the island since its wounding by the bombardment of the city by the Nazis were identified with the wounds of the people who resisted to the Nazi occupation*; it commemorates as a monument the Nazi violence and remains ever since a continuous commemoration of the victims of the bloody bombardment. More specifically, I would say that it became a new mnemonic space of the Left. The scholar Aslanis writes in 1973: “the all white and plain symbolic work of art had been connected to the life of our society for 43 years and each one of us had associated it to a wealth of pleasant and even tragic memories. Its wounds from the barbarous Nazi bombardment in November 1943, have remained the only eternal commemoration of the 150 unable to fight and innocent victims.”⁵⁸ I also need to stress the fact that it was mutilated. In this way it was stigmatised. To me, this constitutes an example of the way the communicative power of a monument can be reinforced by its mutilated or plundered form.⁵⁹

58. *Ελλάς*, no. 1335 (24.12.1973), 1. From an article by Vassilis Aslanis once more.

59. See what Eleana Gialouri writes about the Acropolis in “Η δυναμική των μνημείων,” 356.

5. *The fight against the Lion continued: when the junta abolishes consecrated symbolic monuments*

The newspaper *Hellas* edited by Kostas Ptinis⁶⁰ undertook almost exclusively the defence of the lion in 1972 when the matter of its removal from the square had already become known (it thus takes the cane from *Aegeon* in 1930 for the defence of the lion). The “directing mind” behind the defence is the former notary (as he presents himself) aforementioned Vassilios Aslanis. His views on the issue ever since July 1972 are (to him) “the views of the great majority of the Samian community,”⁶¹ since the appointed by the junta municipal authority was carried away “by the opinion of a handful of citizens who have no adequate knowledge of history or aesthetics and dislike the symbolic representation of the lion on the monument.”⁶² The same person, in another article, clearly and fearlessly (the opponents of the Greek junta understand the meaning of these adverbs) discloses the *factional dimension* of the matter in 1930 and during the period 1969-1973.⁶³ The latter period is mentioned because the matter of the dismissal of the lion has been raised by the municipality with their n. 6/11th March 1969 decision according to which the lion should be dismissed from the square also ratified by the Prefecture. Therefore, to Aslanis, “none of the citizens took this information. In this way the two-month period when one could make an appeal to the court for this clear excess of power expired.”⁶⁴ The case is again defended with determined attitude by him in July 1972 when the decision of the municipal board leaked.⁶⁵ However, despite:

60. See fn. 32 in this study.

61. *Ελλάς*, no. 1274 (10.8.1972), 2.

62. *Ελλάς*, no. 1322 (8.9.1973), 1.

63. *Ελλάς*, no. 1272 (12.7.1972), 4.

64. *Ελλάς*, no. 1326 (11.10.1973), 4.

65. The Prefect of Samos in 1972 Loukas A. Fokas is taken to ignore the subject, since in response to Aslanis' article (12th of July 1972) a document signed by him was published in the newspaper *Hellas* addressing the Prefecture of Attica

- his struggle with deterring historical examples (“nowhere in our history such a dismissal of a monument is mentioned... Only after the communist hurricane has burst out... we observe this phenomenon.”),
- the fact that he brandished the law, a surely funny and ineffective argument for that “exceptionally democratic period in our country” (“our legislation, threatening with penalties, forbids any change or removal of historic monuments.”),
- the promotion of his dominant view about the “Greek Christian Culture” ([the lion is] “a symbol of the syncretism of the Greek ideology and the Christian faith; in other words it is the most perfect symbolism of the Greek Christian civilisation”),
- the evidence he provides about the political expediency in this case, which runs the risk of “contributing to the revival of the few remaining... elements of the accursed disunity of the nation”, he cannot eventually reverse the climate formed for a three-year period⁶⁶ and the Lion was dismissed miserably from its square. To the newspaper *Hellas*,⁶⁷ the Lion was removed “between the Town Hall and the church of Saint Spyridonas,” while the *Σαμιακόν Βήμα* [Samiakon Vima, edited by Michail K. Doukas]⁶⁸ mentions (with hatred) that its new position is “under the pine tree of the Town Hall where it belongs.”

The above mentioned descriptions, with an intense emotional shade, I believe, reflect the emotional loading of the majority of the citizens of the city of Limin Vatheos (Port of Vathy) since the fact

and Islands, in which he suggests that the Lion remains in the square and the “erection of the new monument in front of the to-be constructed governor’s building.” See *Ελλάς*, no. 1274 (10.8.1972), 1. Does the prefect ignore what he had signed three years before? Or isn’t the same prefect (we have not cross-checked this)? Nonetheless, when the carriage of the Lion took place at Christmas 1973 this person had been replaced by another prefect (since 20.9.1973. See *Ελλάς*, no. 1324 (25.9.1973), 1.

66. For all the above mentioned quotations see *Ελλάς*, no. 1272 (12.7.1972), 3-4.

67. *Ελλάς*, no. 1335 (24.12.1973), 1.

68. *Σαμιακόν Βήμα*, no. 2295 (22.4.1977), 1.

of the removal of the Lion coincides with (this association is gently made by Aslanis) the happy and joyful Christmas mood of those days: “the same fate as the babies of Bethlehem was kept these festive days, for the lion of our square, which has adorned with its lofty presence the monument of the 1821 fighters... for forty three years. The repulsive procedure of the depilation of the monument at Christmas time caused the love that the inhabitants of our city had for this lion to be demonstrated silently but spontaneously. They watched its cutting into pieces with inexpressible faces that nonetheless revealed a degree of wonder and surprise, and a query was timidly formed on their lips.... More surprise and psychic injury was caused to our children who for years have passed happy times in the evenings playing around the calm and dearest lion.”⁶⁹

In the same newspaper, in the regular column *Satirical Verses* the following poem entitled *The last Song of the lion of the square*, signed by The Lion, was published.⁷⁰ Most probably it is Aslanis’, if we assume that the poet “plays” with the Turkish origin of his surname (*aslan* means lion in Turkish). I believe it echoes the views and feelings of many of his co-citizens. The fact that the starting verse follows the pattern and reminds a folk song is quite interesting as well:

*Look at the time they selected, before charon takes me,
To be wrapped in green cactus grass,
So as not to see the Festival and the beautiful short skirts
Coming from Europe to burn the hearts...
For forty years I have been smiling silently to the pleiades,
Despite the ache at my croup.
Well, isn't this unfair, isn't this injustice for me,
Not to be drunk with the mini skirts and the flowers?
For those who erected me to guard them for years
Ungrateful they accept recently the scorn,
they don't grasp the envy and the heartlessness...*

69. *Ελλάς*, no. 1335 (24.12.1973), 2.

70. *Ελλάς*, no. 1180 (23.7.1970), 1.

they have an eternal Festival, a great KAVO-FONIA [Cape-Killer!]

Another dimension, a clearly satirical and caustic at some of its parts one, is attributed to the removal of the Lion by the folk poet A. Giokarinis:⁷¹

*All the burning issues have been solved indeed
And the marble lion was removed from the square
Where it has never known tranquillity
Since the then Mayor enthroned it there.
The quarrel for it has never seized
And it was harshly attacked by Doukas and Giagas
But it stood on its pedestal firmly
Since it was continually defended by a pen.
But it however did not stand this for long
And recently the Lion was removed at the Town Hall
Where it will guard the Municipality of Samos
And mainly its empty treasury.
The lion which was erected with ceremonies and a Band
It left the square and was kept aside
And that was its end – and of all these events
And (friend) Hercules has it as its companion now on!⁷²*

The “opponents” of the Lion, *Samiakon Vima* (= Michail K. Doukas) being the most important one, in an effort to provide an excuse for its removal, they repeat the criticism of 1930 without nonetheless preserving the matter for long, which is quite remarkable.⁷³ This was probably due to his feelings that his cause had been vindicated since the local political power was in the hands of adherent to his views persons (opponents of the lion) who could influence the central power which actually happened. At this point of my discussion, I

71. Giokarinis, *Άπαντα*, 118.

72. *Ibid.*, 89.

73. See, for instance, the issues of the newspaper after number 2187 of the month December 1973.

claim that the 1930 criticism was not spurred by factional reasons. At that period, El. Venizelos and the elected Mayor (supporter of Venizelos) were the target of this opposition. Now Doukas –and his followers– go together with the appointed by the junta communal authorities and the Prefecture. In this sense, there are no factional motives. Nonetheless they use the same arguments as in 1930: “The Lion, the carnivorous monster, which was unwisely put on a Sacred Monument... is finally removed to an unknown to us location.”⁷⁴

During periods of political turbulence (as was the case with the seven year Greek junta) when a new hegemony is established (Gramsci) we observe inter alia transformations mainly at the material representations of memory, the commemorating ceremonies which certainly associate to the establishment of the new ideology and the revision of the past; the novel rulers attach new interpretations to the materialism of memory with their new historical readings. In our case, the “opponents” of the Lion in 1930 simply revenged or the dictatorship regime being afraid of the association of the monument (since 1943) with the “left-wing” collective memory of the island looked to its removal, if not its complete disappearance as usually happens in such cases. (See, for instance, the removals of the communist leaders’ busts and statues in the ex-Soviet Union countries.) Most probably both are true. The erection of a monument and its removal constitute political actions with an expected huge ideological benefit for the new “new order” in power.

The empty place of the Lion was filled by a copper statue depicting a woman holding a sword, a *symbol of liberty* to its inspirers, “another monster” to the “hostile” to the Lion newspaper,⁷⁵ a view nonetheless published by Doukas after the fall of junta, in 1977!

The new monument was the aesthetic and ideological proposal of the persons who immediately associated with the junta regime; the

74. *Σαμιακόν Βήμα*, no. 2157 (8.2.1973), 1.

75. *Σαμιακόν Βήμα*, no. 2295 (22.4.1977), 1. In the issue no. 2304 (30.7.1977), 4, we read: “The statue of the woman has disappeared from the square. Was it afraid from the roaring of the lion, which will also receive wreaths and incenses? We are worth of praise oh! Lords of the Samian earth.”

local authorities appointed by the junta and the scholars and politicians who sympathised with it. The new monument was indeed a *symbol of liberty* to those who trampled upon it. It indeed referred to the Greek National Anthem, to well-known to the people conceptual and material presentations since they were drawn from its verses (the young woman/liberty, its sword). This symbol, however, turned to ridicule the regime of the time in the consciousness of the vast majority of the Samian people who quite cleverly ascribed the name “The shoddy Mary” or “Ritsa” (*Maritsa*). In this sense the monument lost completely the symbolic meaning that the political power wanted to attribute to it since, to those who know the microcosmos of the Samian society, this characterisation constituted a direct jeer *through the parody of an existing female person*, who was the subject of derisive comments on the part of the inhabitants of the small town. All the societies have their *fool* whom they invent even if s/he does not exist to feel safe. The whole issue, to our knowledge, took the form of resistance to the junta and the temporarily removed Lion was loaded with one more symbolic meaning; it turned into a symbol of the anti-junta fight of a large part of democrats of the Samian population, an island with strong “left-wing” political tradition. Its violent removal from the square was associated to the abolition of democracy in Greece since the square has always been the centre of democracy for modern Greeks; it constitutes the centre of the political dialogue, a place where political gatherings take place, new ideas are projected, political performances are staged, etc.

The monument-symbol of liberty remained in the place of the Lion during the seven-year junta.

6. *The restoration of Democracy in Greece and... the Lion in the Pythagoras Square (in 1974 and in 1977 respectively)*

V. Aslanis courageously had set the issue of the restoration of the Lion at Pythagoras square since 1973 with a “prophetic” warning to those who had removed it. He warned: “the people’s discontent is huge and the following days when the elections for the local authorities will be held the issue of the restoration of the monument will be

set again.”⁷⁶ So it happened and the matter was settled some years after the fall of junta in 1977 by the democratically elected municipal authorities of the city.

However, *Samiakon Vima* (signed by its editor) repeats the same criticism against the Lion on the occasion of its placing back on its pedestal at the square:

- a. he insists on connecting it to historical arguments (“But in which of our villages were the Samians exterminated fighting against the Lydians, the Medians, the Persians and the Turks to erect a similar to Cheronia marble lion to glorify them.”),
- b. he doubts its aesthetic value (“its legs look like the lamp-posts in our streets, a haircut and not a mane it has on its head, an open mouth and seated on its rear legs”),
- c. he speaks ironically (“why not erecting an elephant or a tiger which are more fierceful than the lion?”),
- d. he judges that this selection (“which is an insult to the Samian fighters”) “will insert sad thoughts and melancholic reflections to any well thinking Samian”.⁷⁷

On the other side of the moon, however, images and joyful feelings of the “days of 1977” are conveyed by the Athanasios Giannouloupoulos’ *Samiaki*. Its one and only issue we had in our disposal, he hosts a poem by G. Pyrgiotis framed by photographs of the gradual restoration of the statue to its previous location:⁷⁸

*To its old place the well known Lion of Samos returned
Its stone eyes saw again the green wonderful Malagari
A view deprived of it for an unknown reason by those who wished
its evil
And decided that it deserved to be put in jail, putting the blame on
it.
The poor lion smiled at them without harming them*

76. *Ελλάς*, no. 1325 (3.10.1973), 1.

77. *Σαμιακόν Βήμα*, no. 2304 (30.7.1977), 1.

78. *Σαμιακή*, no. 853 (5.8.1977), 1.

*It was not carnivorous or dangerous, never complained
 But its removal they sought and insisted on its returning to the
 jungle
 And maliciously they removed it from its pedestal almost ready to
 weep.
 But times have their ups and downs even for a lion
 And today it's back to its original place proud and happy
 And looks as if saying "I am back and have no hard feelings for
 anyone"
 I am the eternal symbol of Samos and I love all its people.*

7. The symbolism of the lion in the Greek folklore

In this last part of this study, being a member of the Great tradition myself, I abide by the view of the scientific team who undertook the task of supporting their choice in 1930. I identify with the conception of the monumental space via the symbol selected by the official national culture to develop and consolidate the dominant national collective memory. Within this framework, I explore whether the scientific group's arguments, who represent the national reading, coincide with the folklore interpretation of the symbolism of the lion. I state from the beginning that I will keep to examples from the Greek case to make known to the international readership the common – almost worldwide– elements of the symbol-animal.

The group of the lion's supporters defended the symbolic character of the monument, which, I maintain, *was familiar to the Greek audience*. What follows along with the fact that the first monument erected in the free Greek territory (at Pronoia Nauplio) contained a depiction of a lion and that, in 1930, a wealth of monuments comprising depictions of lions (e.g., at Karystos and the plans for the macedonian one which was never completed)⁷⁹ were constructed all

79. Markatou, "Τα δημόσια μνημεία," 311; Mykoniatis, "Το Μακεδονικό Ηρώο," 162-63. The first prize for the specific monument (designed by Emmanouil Lazarides) was a huge polyhedral pedestal, on top of which three lions

over Greece support my claim. The newspaper *Aegeon*, an ideological supporter of the Lion, undertook its defence with a plethora of articles and letters. From the numerous publications in the newspapers of Samos in 1930, I present below three quotations that assist my argumentation:

- a. “All cultures have their own symbolisms on which their entire history is summarised. For the construction the monument here the lion was selected as a symbol of faith and bravery.... By constructing such a monument symbolising the faith and bravery of the liberators in 1821 the ought-to honour and devoutness is demonstrated to all those who fought the great and sacred battle.”⁸⁰
- b. “The lion, this symbol of the fearless bravery and determination, the vigilant guard was erected then there... to state and proclaim that here once upon a time, when the Conqueror intended to enslave the free homeland, all the Greeks, united and fierce in front of the barbarian crowd they fought and fell to show that there is no higher and nobler sentiment than that of patriotism.”⁸¹
- c. “The placement of lions on the tombs... is undoubtedly a symbol of the bravery of the fighters.”⁸²

were put crowned by a winged Victory. The lions symbolised the three war periods of Macedonia (1903-1908, 1912-1913, 1914-1918). The third prize (by Kimon Laskaris) also included a lion.

80. *Αργαίον*, no. 1839 (8.4.1930), 1.

81. From an article by V. Theophanidis in *Αργαίον*, no. 1843 (19.4.1930), 1. See also *Ελλάς*, no. 1349 (13.4.1974), 1-3, at the column *Ημέρες του 1930*.

82. From an article by the archeologist Antonios Keramopoulos, a Professor and member of the Greek Academy, which was a reply to a letter by the Mayor G. Soutos (who asked for his opinion), in *Αργαίον*, no. 1862 (27.6.1930), 1. In the same issue we read P. Kastriotis (archeologist and Head of the National, Archeological Museum) and A. Sóchos (Professor of the Polytechnic University of Greece). I owe acknowledgements to Mr. Christos Landros (Head of the National Archives–Historic Archive of Samos) for his willingness to facilitate my study.

The lion therefore is a “sign” of *bravery, strength, determination, vigour, courage*, to its supporters, a view abiding by what the History and the Folklore maintain on this issue. This is testified by the presence of the lion on various monuments of the Greek art as a symbolic complement/jewel of a tomb or cenotaph usually dedicated to many men. The Greek art managed to attribute a high expression to the emblem of the lion and turned it into a symbol of heroic courage and strength. The tomb of Leonidas (and the dead Spartans) with Simonides’ inscription (“Θηρών μεν κράτιστος εγώ/θνητών δ’ ον εγώ νυν/φρουρώ, τω δε τάφω, λάενοσ/εμβεβαώσ”), the lion at Cheronia, the lion formerly standing at the entrance of the port of Peireas and now in Venice, the golden lions of the hearse carriage of Alexander the Great, the lion of Amphipolis, of Kea, of Naxos, etc.,⁸³ are but a few of such examples.

The Homeric tradition about the lion (to pass to the realm of the folk creation) is rich; it is mentioned 39 times in the *Iliad*, 12 in *Odyssey* and as *λις* three times.⁸⁴ This tradition, other ancient Greek myths (e.g., the myth of Alkathoos son of Pelopa who receives as an exchange the throne of Megareon and their princess),⁸⁵ the middle ages songs of Digenis who fought against the lions,⁸⁶ etc., influenced

83. For all the above, see Eythimios Kastorhis, “Περί του εν Χαιρωνεία λέοντος,” *Αθήναιον* 8 (1879): 501-03; Haris Koutelakis, *Το Πόρτο-Λεόνε. Ο Λέων του Πειραιώς. Η απαγωγή του στη Βενετία και τα προβλήματα που σχετίζονται με το μνημείο και τη χρονολόγησή του* (Piraeus: 2000).

84. Ioannis Giagias, *Λεοντάρι. Το αιμοβόρικο και δειλό θηρίο. Πώς το χαρακτηρίζει ο Ομηρος* (Karlovasi, Samos: 1973), 2. I owe acknowledgements to Manolis Varvounis (Professor at the Democritus University of Thrace) for his kindness to let me know about this study along with a corpus of “journalistic material” from the archive of Vass. Aslanis, which he has in his possession and is related to the “adventures” of the Lion of Samos in 1973.

85. See Minas Al. Alexiadis, “Οι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές για τον δρακοντοκτόνο ήρωα (Aarne–Thompson 300, 301A και 301B). Παραμυθολογική μελέτη,” PhD dissertation, University of Ioannina, 1982, 53.

86. See, for instance, the labours of Digenis in Nikolaos G. Politis, “Ο θάνατος του Διγενή,” *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα* 4 (1980): 98, 107; idem, “Η σελήνη κατά τους μύθους και τας δοξασίας του Ελληνικού λαού,” *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα* 3 (1931): 207. Here the hero, in his effort to get back his wife fears three monsters as his possible opponents, the dragon, the lion and Avritis River.

immensely the folk poets and the rest of the people. Even if someone claimed that the folk poet tends to ignore matters and motifs that are not clearly connected to his immediate perception, we could nonetheless presume that due to this detachment of the poet from the symbol, the latter gained a powerful position in the folk consciousness. The “remote” and the “exotic” enrich the imagination. In the course of centuries with the oral (in the beginning) and the written (later) tradition of the myths, the historic events, the legends, the middle ages and more recent songs, etc., its symbolic power gained even wider “folk” power. Such indicative examples from the Greek folk songs that support the symbolism of the lion as a sign of bravery, strength and courage follow:

*Tell me, have you seen where Mbroufas fights,
Who has steel feet and a lion heart*

*Miserable man, you are born as a mouse,
you become like a lion, like the dew you are spoilt,*

we have not found guerrilla fighters, we found lions⁸⁷

*I had a lion heart but it broke because of you
Oh I wish your mother...*

*I could not see you Mount Olympus, you lion,
Who rain in May and hail in summer*

*Like the roe-deer he throws the stones in the stream
And with a lion anger he uses his sword*

*Go to the war and fight like a lion
Along with all your co-fighters, along with all your army leaders.⁸⁸*

87. The guerillas are likened to lions.

88. All the above examples come from the Archive of the Historical Lexicon of the Academy of Athens.

This symbolism of the lion is further supported by its presence in the every day folk vocabulary, the surnames or the funny names attributed to people, in proverbs (“it is better to be eaten by a lion than hide in the fox’s shade”),⁸⁹ in *similes* (we already mentioned some of them), in derivative verbs synonyms of bravery, in magnifying folk compounds (*lionchild*, *liondog*, *lionfight*, etc.),⁹⁰ even in texts found in dream-books (“if you see a lion in your dream you will hardly win a battle,”⁹¹ “if you see a lion coming in your dream then this means a great enemy”).⁹² The same plethora of names is observed with the more “folk” version of its name, namely the word *aslani* (= lion) (“he is as healthy as an aslani”). It is used to address young men and women (“my aslana!”), it is used metaphorically for good looking and strong young men or animals (“his patron fed it well and made it aslani”). In Aristophanes’ comedy *Thesmophoriazouses* the new-born child is called lion (verse 514) as in modern Greek as well,⁹³ which is similar to the modern Greek *dragon*, wishing thus the child to grow brave and courageous; the protection of the child via the magic use of the name⁹⁴ since the strength and vigour of the lion is expected to have a positive impact on the new born baby which is identified with the carrier of the name.⁹⁵ The proverb

89. The appeal to the feeble ones is useless but to the strong ones...

90. See Aggelos Afroudakis, “Μια περίπτωση μεγεθυντικής/υποκοριστικής σύνθεσης στα νεοελληνικά ιδιώματα,” *Λεξικογραφικόν Δελτίον* 19 (1995): 29.

91. Fr. Drexl, “Das traumbuch des patriarchen Germanos,” *Λαογραφία* 7 (1923): 440, verse 125.

92. Fr. Drexl, “Das anonyme traumbuch des cod. Paris Gr. 2511,” *Λαογραφία* 8 (1925): 362.

93. Nikolaos G. Politis, *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα Γ* (Athens: 1931), 211, fn. 2.

94. Dimitrios D. Oikonomidis, “Όνομα και ονοματοθεσία εις τας δοξασίας και συνηθείας του Ελληνικού λαού,” *Λαογραφία* 20 (1962): passim. Antonis Georgoulas, *Αφανείς διαδρομές. Διαφοροποίηση, ταυτότητα, ονοματοθεσία* (Athens: Gutenberg, 1997), passim.

95. See indicatively Nikolaos G. Politis, “Παρατηρήσεις εις τα Σωζοπολιτικά παραμύθια,” *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα* 4 (1980): 319-20; Stilpon Kyriakidis, *Ελληνική Λαογραφία. Μέρος Α'. Μνημεία του λόγου*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Academy of

“it is better to be devoured by an *aslani* than by a jackal” (a brave death is preferable to a ridiculous one)⁹⁶ reveals the respect that the folk people had for the animal.

There are also some cases in the folk songs when the lion (*aslani*) is identified with other “imaginary animals” (a dragon or a monster). The substitution of the monster, for instance, in the dragon-killing episodes with other monstrous apparitions the lion included,⁹⁷ the narration of certain folk tales (“a huge lion came...”), the image of the ancient Greek dragon in the modern Greek consciousness,⁹⁸ folk verses (as the ones that follow) provide sound evidence for the aforementioned arguments. In this vein, it does not incarnate only the strength (to which we herein refer to) but also brutality, wickedness, aggressiveness, maniac chase, etc.⁹⁹

*I filled in seven fathoms with noses and tongues
The tongues were in the dragons and the noses on the lions*¹⁰⁰

*Neither a bird rose nor a swallow
Neither the dragon's bowshot, nor the lion's stone*

*Her way was cut by a dragon.*¹⁰¹

The lion is also a symbol of a vigilant guard of cities and dissuasion of any enemy attack against those whom it guards. The Gate of

Athens, 1965²), 353; Oikonomidis, “Όνομα και ονοματοθεσία,” 447 onwards; Sergis, *Εκκλησιαστικός λόγος*, in the entry *όνομα*, where all the remaining modern (international as well) bibliography.

96. For more relevant examples see *Ιστορικό λεξικό της νέας ελληνικής της τε κοινώς ομιλουμένης και των ιδιωμάτων*, vol. 3 (1942), 187, in the entry *ασλάνι*.

97. Alexiadis, “Όι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές,” 44, 45.

98. See indicatively Nikolaos G. Politis, *Μελέτη επί του βίου των νεωτέρων Ελλήνων. Νεοελληνική Μυθολογία*, vol. 1 (Athens: 1871), 154 onwards.

99. See, for instance, Alexiadis, “Όι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές,” 45, 109, 127.

100. Christos Pantelidis, “Κυπριακά άσματα,” *Λαογραφία* 6 (1918): 586.

101. These examples also come from The Archive of the Historical Lexicon.

the Acropolis of Mycenae is guarded by two lions as is the case with Nineveh, the Sion of the Old Testament, Hattousa of the ancient Hittites. The same meaning can be attributed to the presence of lions in front of temples, at the entrance gates of early Christian churches but also of the cathedrals of the western countries (e.g., Ferrara 1140 AD) or on both sides of the bishop thrones.¹⁰² Furthermore, due to the well-known solar character of the symbol,¹⁰³ and the justice being one of the main functions of the royal institution, the thrones of kings-sovereigns were adorned with lions during the middle age period while the ecclesiastical justice was attributed among stone lions that bordered some temples.¹⁰⁴

Since the central entrance to the house, as a liminal point, determines the transition to the private space from the outer one, the modern Greeks' tendency to depict a lion at the entrance of their residence is quite characteristic.

In addition to its symbolism as a guard, the lion is also a *fountain guard*, as the one that Polydefkis saw on a fountain in Athens.¹⁰⁵ The major role of the fountains in the folk community life and its transformation to a centre of dozens of rituals, the faith in demons and fairies, spirits and “ghosts” that were hosted in the waters, the appeasing offers and the relevant traditions created are numerous.¹⁰⁶ In

102. In Efthymios Kastorchis, “Περί του εν Χαίρωνεία λέοντος,” *Αθήναιον* 8 (1879): 505.

103. Jane Cooper, *Λεξικό συμβόλων*, trans. Andreas Tsakalis (Athens: Pyrinos Kosmos, s.a.), 62.

104. *Ibid.*

105. In Kastorchis, “Περί του εν Χαίρωνεία λέοντος,” 503, where one can find more relevant ancient Greek testimonies and lexicographic references.

106. See indicatively Nikolaos G. Politis, “Τα δημόδη Ελληνικά άσματα περι δρακοντοκτονίας του αγίου Γεωργίου,” *Λαογραφικά Σύμμεικτα* 4 (1980): 113, 210 onwards; Georgios G. Megas, *Ελληνικαί εορταί και έθιμα λαϊκής λατρείας* (Athens: 1956), 54, 69, 70; Alexiadis, “Οι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές” (see in specific the entries *λιοντάρια*, in the General Index: 179); Nitsiakos, *Λαογραφικά ετερόκλητα*, 55 onwards.

these lion-faced spouts¹⁰⁷ the lion is not the water holder, which is killed by the ancient Greek Kadmos or the Christian Saint George,¹⁰⁸ or the monster (ghost-dragon)¹⁰⁹ to whom the father-king of the Greek folk songs unwillingly hands his daughter as a gift to make him release the water of the well:

*Immediately he ordered her to be adorned as a bride,
to stand by the lion as a gift for it to dine.¹¹⁰*

it is, on the contrary, the guard of the water; it keeps it safe from the malicious powers that would probably hold the most precious good for life. The “appeased” monster functions in an almost homeopathic way and has eventually turned from victimiser to a guard and protector. It is thus met as a dominant symbol, after the cross,¹¹¹ on springs of water and fountains.¹¹²

The lion is used by the political rule as a *symbol of power and imposition*. In the ancient Greek civilisation it was connected to the power of rule since the late era of copper (1600-1100 BC) with the classic example of the aforementioned Gate of Lions at Mycenae. The hide of the lion of Nemea (met at the labours of Hercules) became one of the most representative symbols of the mythic hero and later of the king of Macedonia as depicted in the picture of Alexander the Great below.

107. See Adamantios Adamantiou, “Αγνείας πείρα. Μέρος Γ΄ Λαογραφικόν,” *Λαογραφία* 3 (1911-12): 437 and in specific fn. 4.

108. *Ibid.*, 437-38. The motif appears many times. See indicatively Politis, “Τα δημώδη Ελληνικά άσματα,” 189; Alexiadis, “Οι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές,” 179.

109. A wide-spread motif. See Politis, “Τα δημώδη Ελληνικά άσματα,” 189. Alexiadis, “Οι Ελληνικές παραλλαγές,” 44, 45.

110. Politis, “Τα δημώδη Ελληνικά άσματα,” 230, song 30, verses 16-17. See also verse 25. This is another example of the substitution of the monster by a lion.

111. Anna Papamihail–Koutroumba, “Ο σταυρός στους διάφορους κλάδους του ελληνικού εθμικού δικαίου,” *Επετηρίς του Κέντρου Ερεύνης της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας* 26-27 (1990), 188, Index, entry *βρύση, βρύσες*.

112. Lefteris Bardakos and Alexis Totsikas, *Κρήνες* (Athens: Odysseas, 1989), 53-55. For relevant photographs see the cover page of the book and pages 28, 49, 50, 52, 53, 57, 58, 74, 89, 94, 95, 114.



During the middle ages of Hellenism we have the remarkable tradition of the golden plane tree,¹¹³ which was constructed by the emperor Leon and destroyed by his son Michael C: “sparrows seated on its branches were made to sing by a machine, and...”¹¹⁴ Nikolaos Politis rightly maintains that “all this was necessary to impress the nations,”¹¹⁵ they constituted manifestations of a glorious luxury and rituals clearly selected for political reasons to exert imposition and demonstrate the superiority to the foreign visitors. The central part of this formidable construction was the lion. During the Venetian occupation the winged-lion made its appearance in most fortifications held by the Venetians.¹¹⁶ “German lions” are also depicted on the royal coat of arms of the first King of Greeks Otto. Nowadays it can be seen on many escutcheons, coat of arms, and elsewhere as in almost all peoples.

113. See Dimitrios D. Oikonomidis, “Χρονογράφου του Δωροθέου τα Λαογραφικά,” *Λαογραφία* 19 (1960-61), 17-18 for all the text of the tradition.

114. These are the views of Michael Glykas, in Oikonomidis, “Χρονογράφου του Δωροθέου,” 52, 53.

115. Nikolaos G. Politis, “Βυζαντιναί παραδόσεις,” *Λαογραφία* 6 (1918): 357. See Micheal Meraklis, *Λαογραφικά ζητήματα* (Athens: Μπουρας, 1989), 235-36.

116. Rizzi and Ploumidis, “Οι λέοντες του Αγίου Μάρκου,” 341-51.

Concluding remarks

The various decodings of symbols that are not connected a priori strongly with values and the cultural past of a society sometimes leads to disagreements. A symbolic monument being a polyphonic, mnemonic space becomes the field upon which conflicting interpretations of the collective memory, aesthetic views and ideologisms are projected.

Even if we abide by the view that the imposed by the Great Tradition symbol of the lion was not compatible with the cultural capital of the Samian people, it nonetheless included a “transferable capital” since the people converted the *foreign* and *the complex* to *familiar* and attributed to it acquired functions, they shifted its significance using material from the historical and social circumstances and created a common framework for the interpretation of the present. The symbolic values that the particular monument acquired and embedded in specific historical and social coincidences further support the view that the symbols are social representations, polysemous, subject to shifts in meaning and carrying many condensed conceptions.