Form of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The art of drystone walling

I. Brief presentation of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)[1]

1. Name: The art of drystone walling

Other name(s) **For terraces**: *sétia* and *podómes* in Lesbos, *armákes* in Cephalonia, *déses* in Epirus,*aemasiés* in Andros, *skáles* in Tinos· *paravólia, tráfi, lourídes* and *lourídia, távles, desés, damákia, áspes, armákia* and *armiá* in Crete, *damákia* in Patmos, Leros, Kalymnos and Kos, *vastádia* or *vastaí* and *távles* in Nissiros, *damákia* and *louri* in Lipsi, *vastaí* and *louriá* in Northern Karpathos and in Kassos (from *Terraces of the Aegean. The example of the Dodecanese,* a book by Theodora Petanidou, to be published by Scientific Publications Parisianou S.A., p.14 and table in p.190. The citation is made upon verbal agreement of the author). Also, *htiá* or *ohtía* in Amorogs, *skáles* in Kithnos, *halákia* in Naxos and, finally, the names common to many places in Greece *anavathmí, pezoúles* and *lahídia*.

For auxiliary farm buildings and/or dwellings: *mitáta* in Crete, *vólti* in Lefkada, *kýfes* in Halki, *keliá* and*kalyváres* in Kithnos, *katikiés* in Naxos, Delos, Rinia, Mykonos and Tinos.

2. Identification and definition[2]: The art of building stone structures without any binding material.

3. ICH domain[3]:

□ **oral traditions and expressions**

□ **performing arts**

X social practices – rituals – festive events:

Drystone walling is linked with customs and practices related to the traditional organization of space, as well as to the specific character of each place (rural/urban, private/public). Drystone walling characterizes a space that is considered natural and uninhabitable (all the structures within it are agricultural, related to work or to leisure activities such as hunting). This technique is not suitable for urban areas, where construction is more elaborate, monumental and considered to be longer lasting. In an urban environment, drystone walling is used in infrastructure works (water channels, road retaining walls, etc.) or in areas that refer to nature (parks, squares, open-air theaters, etc.).

Dividing walls with typical crown blocks and piles of stones are used in the countryside in order to delimit land and mark the distinction between private and public space. From this viewpoint, the use of drystone walls is a cultural

choice and the presence of drystone structures socializes the space. The cultural value of these structures is also linked to the present-day growing awareness that the specific craftsmanship and its works are part of the cultural heritage of local societies in the Helladic space.

X knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

Drystone structures are directly linked to the knowledge of rocks and natural materials, and in general the knowledge of the surrounding environment (direction and intensity of winds and rain, risk of erosion, landslides, floods, etc.) During the construction of drystone works, these factors which shape and improve local natural conditions are taken into account.

X traditional craftsmanship

The knowledge of drystone walling is part of the skills necessary for the exercise of any agricultural activity.

X other(s)[4]

The creation of drystone structures has made the object of traditional games (e.g. the competition involving the construction of *volti* at Englouví in Lefkada, which challenges the skills and speed of participants, as well as the technical perfection of constructions). This traditional game is no longer played, but there are still many people who remember participating in it, bearers of a collective memory linked to drystone structures.

4. Place (administrative region, prefecture, municipality):

Drystone structures can be found throughout the rural space. Relatively recently (after the 1960s – 1970s) the technique was transferred to the urban space (road network, parks, theaters, walks, warehouses, etc.).

5. Key-words[5]**:** drystone, construction without mortar, organization of space, cultural landscape, traditional craftsmanship.

II. Communities, Institutions and/or individuals concerned

Individual(s), group(s), organization(s)

Individuals: Drystone craftsmen

- Parakevaidis Stavros G., Syritelis Vassilis (Lesbos)
- Feggaros Antonis (Patmos)
- Avgoulis Mihalis, Halas Tassos, Dramountanís Diamantís (Kos)
- Piperakis Manolis (Amorgos)
- Gavalás Giorgios (Folegandros)
- Psaltis Yiannis, Maravelias Minás, Gerodimos Vassilis (Tinos)
- Klonos Dimitris, Kontrafouris Dimitris, Maltezos Giorgos (Aegina)

- Dayiantás Zaharias and Dayiantás Yiannis (Crete)
- Kassianí and Dionissis Kourtis, Giorgos Vandoros (Lefkada)
- Nakos Apostolis and Nakos Spyros (Peloponnese and Stereá Ellada)

Group: ORAMA: Group for the radical restoration of paths in Amorgos, based at the Democritus University of Thessaloniki, formed by teaching staff, students and craftsmen, who since 2012 have been dealing with the restoration of paths in Amorgos (person in charge: Vivianna A. Metallinou, Architect-Historian of the Environment, SM in Architecture Studies MIT).

Organization: Members of the SPS: International Scientific Society for Interdisciplinary studies of Drystone walling / SPS.: Société scientifique internationale pour l' étude pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Sèche (Maison de l'Archéologie, 21 rue République, 83143 Le Val, France–tel. 0033494863924, fax 0033494864812, contact@pierreseche-international.org), supported by the volunteer participation of interested citizens (craftsmen, researchers, users) that recognize the value of drystone structures.

Identity[6]:

□ Local Administration (community, municipality, region)

□ society

□ union

□ parish

X association of interested parties

□ guild

X person

□ other[7]

Seat/place:

Specialized information on the element:

Person(s) in charge:

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III . Description of the ICH element

1. **Short description:**

(up to 50 words)

The term “art of drystone walling” indicates the construction of stone structures without any binding material (dry). Drystone structures can either be highly visible, as in the case of the impressive clusters of terraced cultivations, or discreet and humble, as in the case of farming structures. In any case, they are always tasteful and friendly to the environment.

2. **Description:** (up to 500 words)

Drystone structures are directly linked to the organization of the productive space in rural communities. Farmers themselves are interested in both the

construction of new drystone structures and the maintenance of existing ones. The technique pertains to simple constructions (dividing and retaining walls, road paving) or more complex ones (various rural structures for storage, processing of products, sheltering of animals, temporary shelter of persons). In non-cultivated or wooded areas, various closed places sheltering technical activities (quarry workshops, kilns, ovens, hunting complexes: small walls, lean-tos, seats, hunting pits) are built in drystone.

The technique is also used for all the installations contributing to land drainage, irrigation and water supply. The technique of drystone walling is preferred because of its technical advantages based on the functional qualities of dry construction (isothermy, regulation of ventilation and humidity), but also for the fact that drystone structures do not require special technical means. The use of drystone walling decreased sharply after the mid-1900 with the decline of the traditional rural society, mechanization of agriculture and the use of new means of transportation.

Yet, the contribution of drystone walling to the organization and formation of landscapes and identities has increasingly been stressed at international level. The possibilities for restorations and new constructions keep growing while the demand for similar constructions extends to new fields of activity (primary production, protection of the environment, cultural and environmental tourism, etc.) that move on the borderline between tradition and innovation, technique and artistry.

As to the technique itself, both simple and composite structures –mainly closed spaces- show a variety of methods and forms depending on the materials available in each place and on their end use. Composite structures are grouped according to the type of roofing. Thus we have structures with 1) spherical domes, 2) cylindrical (barrel) vaults, 3) flat roofs supported either by walls converging on their upper part or by parallel arches, in order to form the suitable distances supporting the slabs that will close the opening and will complete the roof. Similar structures are the circular buildings with a pole at the center (Tinos).

Today, drystone structures in Greece are mainly built by farmers, animal breeders and, sometimes, artisans. Particularly in the islands, drystone structures (walls, enclosures, closed buildings etc.) are quite widespread. In the mainland, drystone structures are less visible but just as important for the organization of space. The maintenance and extension of drystone structures is problematic today. The transfer of know-how to younger generations is increasingly limited and specialist craftsmen are usually elderly. Yet, at the same time, there is a growing recognition of the value of drystone walling for the environment and formation of local identities, while at the same time its role is promoted as testimony of man's toil for the survival of the species.

3. **Spaces and means of performance or implementation of the ICH element**

Spaces that are associated with the performance/realization of the ICH element:

Drystone structures can be found throughout the countryside, both within settlements and in places outside inhabited areas. A typical example of drystone structures is the retaining walls of horizontal terraces found in areas with sloped terrains. Other structures are walls combined with stairs, shelters, storage rooms, cisterns and water passageways, etc. Also, self-standing closed spaces (huts, kilns, overs etc.).

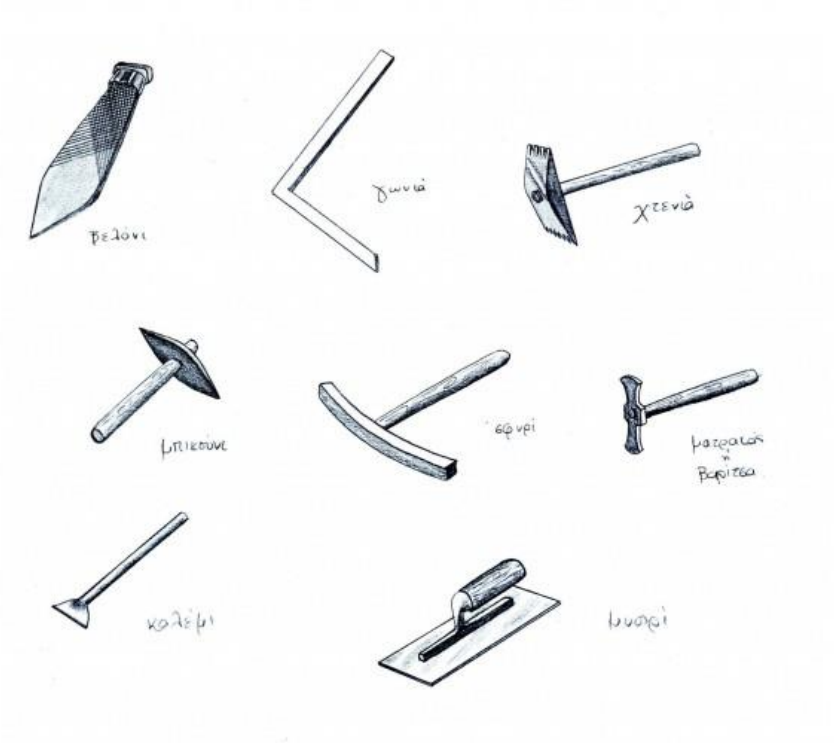
Equipment, modules and accessories (such as e.g. tools, utensils, uniforms etc.) that are used for the preparation and the performance of the ICH element:

All the tools used by farmers in order to prepare the soil and transport materials (hoes, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows) are useful in drystone walling. The preparation of structures is made by means of the simplest tools used for stone quarrying/mining and carving:

1. **hammers** for the separation of stones
2. **lump hammers and wedges**, steel tools for the initial treatment of stones
3. **chipping hammers,** similar to hammers (except that they have pointed rather than rectangular endings), for the squaring of boulders
4. **tooth axes and chisels**, steel tools for the smoothening (abrasion) of the surface of boulders
5. **L-squares** used to shape angles and level structures before the appearance of the spirit level.
6. **spirit levels** for the leveling of structures
7. **trowels** for the isolated cases in which mortar was used on the external surface of drystone walls (e.g. coating of cisterns)

http://5a.arch.ntua.gr/project/4247/5269 (accessed 20.02.2015)

Products or material objects in general (handicrafts, worship or secular vessels, goods, food, etc.) that are developed as an outcome of the performance or implementation of the ICH element:



The organization of space (structuring of fields and gardens, road network, protection of cultivations and cultivators from adverse weather conditions, water supply, storage, etc.) achieved through drystone structures (terraces, water management constructions/hydraulic works, retaining walls, fences, boundary setting works, drystone paving for passages and stairs) contributes to the improvement of agricultural and livestock production (cereals, pulses, vineyards, olive groves, dairy products, by-products, such as wool, olive pomace, wood by-products, etc.). This improvement results from the creation of favorable conditions (humidity, glare, protection from winds, etc.) for the cultivation or processing (drying, desiccating, etc.) and storage of products (wool, cheese, horticulture, fruits, etc.) by means of the apt construction of drystone structures to face adverse terrain and weather factors.

In farming areas, drystone structures are used to shelter animals and to provide temporary or seasonal sheltering to stock farmers. Technical buildings and temporary dwellings in drystone are also used for forestry and other related activities (logging, charcoaling, limekiln). Drystone structures contribute also to the operation of simple or complex pre-industrial installations for the in-situ processing of primary products such as olive presses, presses, windmills, watermills and fulling mills.

4. **Transmission of the ICH element from one generation to the next**

Description

Modes and duration of learning / apprenticeship / initiation

Knowledge on the art of drystone walling is transmitted orally from generation to generation, together with its practical application adjusted to the special conditions of each place. The transmission of the techniques for the shaping and valorization of rural space occurs during agricultural activities, in which most (young and old) members of a community participate. The craftsmanship is used during the preparatory phase of these activities for the repair of threshing floors, small walls, restructuring of pens, etc. The process of learning the art of drystone walling is linked to the feeling of belonging to a community/society, whilst at the same time it expresses family solidarity and tradition. However, the art of creating drystone structures is usually included in the general knowledge of a master mason or builder.

People or institutions that are involved in the transmission of the element

Family, rural community, specialized farmers/craftsmen considered experts and exercising the craft when needed.

IV. History and genealogy of the ICH element

Historical information or regional narrative about the emergence, continuity, presence and adjustments and/or modifications of the ICH element:

Drystone walling is a building technique known throughout the world. The elements that vary from case to case are the individual applications, the frequency of drystone structures and the way in which knowledge is transmitted. Extant historical and archaeological information is limited (Homeric poems, terraces and retaining walls of palaces, houses, temples and roads belonging to the Classical, Roman or Byzantine eras). The question of the inclusion of works such as cyclopean structures in the list of drystone constructions remains open. Reservations stem from the differences in the social environment and the political organization of the groups that planned and executed these works (presence of a central power that either imposes voluntary or forced labor or uses manpower with little or no remuneration).

The need for constant maintenance of these works results in their constant restructuring. Consequently, the element of age pertains mainly to the craftsmanship and much less to the extant structures and constructions. After the mid-20th century, the craftsmanship and its transmission decline noticeably without however disappearing altogether. The art of drystone walling continues being used and transferred, as it adapts to several types of terrains and cultivations, holding back the destructive consequences of water flow and erosion. The direct link between drystone walling and the natural/cultural

landscape is also part of the process of preserving the technique as an element of local identity. By this we mean the restructuring of the natural space by means of drystone structures, giving that a new appearance/form to the visible space, according to the way its inhabitants and users understand it.

In Greece, drystone walling – both technically simple structures (partition and supporting walls in rural areas, such as e.g. the farming areas of Delos), and more demanding structures such as beehive rural constructions – can be dated back to Antiquity. The older structures still extant today date in general to the Venetian occupation, without excluding earlier dating (see Triantafyllopoulos, Koutelakis, Sigala etc.)

In Europe, some drystone complexes are traced back to Antiquity (terrace cultivations, road networks, etc.). In the case of even older megalithic constructions, the issue of their social and political function, as described above, is always present. Drystone structures multiply during the 17th and 18th century both in Mediterranean and in northern countries (England, Scotland, Wales, Scandinavia), boosted by the official recording of land ownership. No systematic mapping has been carried out in Greece, also due to the absence of a land registry. The study of drystone walling in inscribed in the general study of popular architecture.

Historical information on the bearers of the ICH element:

Individuals: Usually, the people involved in drystone walling are the descendants of drystone craftsmen. Drystone walling is a family tradition which in our days needs protection and preservation.

Group: The ORAMA group has been active since 2012.

Organization: SPS

Fourteen international conferences on drystone have been held in Europe since 1987:

1. In 1987 in Bari (Puglia, Italy), as the result of the love of three people who happened to be born in Mediterranean countries (among them Greek architect Giorgis Petrakis).
2. In 1990 in Barcelona (Cataluña, Spain), where it was decided to organize meetings every two years.
3. In 1992 at Anogia (Crete, Greece), within the framework of the Integrated Mediterranean Programs (IMP), with Giorgis Petrakis being the person in charge.
4. In 1994 in Palma (Mallorca, Spain), where the universality of the matter emerged.
5. In 1996 at Triora, Ponte Di Nava, Pontedassio (Liguria, Italy), where it was decided to create theInternational Scientific Society for Interdisciplinary studies of Drystone walling (SPS: Société scientifique internationale pour l' étude pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Séche / Société Pierre Sèche)

6. In 1998 at Le Val–Carcés (France), where the International association was officially created with its seat in France (Le Val, Provence)
7. In 2000 at Peñiscola (Castelló, Spain)
8. In 2002 at Viege (Visp–Valais, Switzerland)
9. In 2004 in Mytilini (Lesbos, Greece)
10. In 2006 in Montalbán (Aragon, Spain)
11. In 2008 in Locorotondo (Puglia, Italy)
12. In 2010 in Ambleside (Cumbria, Wales)
13. In 2012 in Ogliastra (Sardegna, Italy)
14. In 2014 in Al Jadida (Morocco, Africa)

The 15th international conference will be held in 2016 in Argostoli (Cephalonia, Greece).

Updating of data (at least every 5 years):

V. Importance of the element for the Intangible Cultural Heritage

1. Enhancement

The inscription of the element in the National Inventory of ICH will contribute to enhancing the cultural value of the art of drystone walling, its importance for environmental balance, particularly in the case of areas that suffer from soil erosion and other adverse weather and soil conditions. Above all, it will highlight it as a form of documentation of the way in which the relation between man and nature developed over time in Greece.

2. Safeguarding measures (at local, regional or national level):

Several measures could be taken in order to boost the safeguarding of drystone walling. First of all, it is necessary to create local catalogues where the various drystone structures will be recorded, thus creating a national registry of these monuments. Nevertheless, the most important thing is not to protect drystone structures per se, given that many of them are, by nature, temporary.

Some drystone structures complexes in other countries have already been inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List. Among them, the *trulli* of Alberobello in southern Italy (1996), Portovenere, the Cinque Terre and the islands (Palmaria, Tino and Tinetto) in Liguria, Italy (1997), the cultural landscape Sukur in Nigeria (1999), the Alto Douro Wine Region in Portugal (2001), the Landscape of the Pico Islands Vineyard Culture in Portugal (2004), the Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana in Mallorca, Spain (2011), the Konso Cultural Landscape in Ethiopia (2011), the rice-paddies in the island of Bali, Indonesia (*Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy* – 2012) and the Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato in Italy.

Builders' schools and groups teaching drystone techniques are active in Great Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Spain (Balearic islands etc.), Greece (e.g. Cyclades), Cyprus, etc. In Greece there are few new drystone constructions and

the old structures are rather frequently maintained. The absence of a specific regulatory framework does not guarantee the systematic restructuring of spaces and the effective transfer of know-how.

Today, depending on the region, the transfer of know-how is in the hands of associations established within the framework of local communities for the transfer of knowledge or organized learning and apprenticeship organizations. Associations, clubs, local administrations award certificates (following exams) in England, Wales, Scotland (since the early 20th century), Spain, Switzerland (since the 1990s) and France, where certification is recognized by the State (since 2010). In Greece and in Cyprus, various groups of stone masons (stone cutters) are active from time to time, usually within the framework of European programs.

An important place in promoting the art of drystone walling as cultural good is held by the International Scientific Society for Interdisciplinary studies of Drystone walling (SPS) who, since 1987-1988, has been organizing every two years international conferences on drystone structures. At local or national level, conferences are also organized by several agencies, while various European programs have repeatedly dealt with the matter. Finally, the International Terraced Landscapes Alliance (I.T.L.A.) focuses in particular on terraced cultivations and cooperates with the SPS.

FILLED OUT BY THE SERVICE:

Pre-existing documentation

Available bibliography (indicative))

Apostolou M.–Koutelakis H., «Rural complexes, composite monuments of nature and man. Endangered species. The case of the *volti-alonia* at Englouví in Lefkada», letter to the quarterly magazine *Archeology-Arts*, vol. 103, Athens: Athinaika Nea S.A.- Lambraki Foundation, June 2007, p. 132-133.

Apostolou, M., "The complex of *volti* at Vouni, Englouví, Lefkada", Monumenta, *www.**monumenta**.org,*02.05.2007

Koutelakis H., «The *volti* at Englouví, Lefkada. Mutual influences on rural buildings between western Greece and southern Italy», paper presented at the International Symposium *Western Greece-Southern Italy. Cultural cross fertilization of Southern Italy and Western Greece through History*, University of Patras, September 2007. Volume with papers extracts, page 16 with the title: "The *volti* in Lefkada and in particular at Englouví" (paper B8).

Sigala Maria-Zanne, *Halki from the paleo-Christian era to the end of the crusaders' occupation (5th c.- 1523): monuments, architecture, topography, society*, Ph.D. thesis, 26.01.2012, National Capodistrian University of Athens, School of Philosophy, Department of History and Archaeology.

Triantafyllopoulos D. (Prof. of Byzantine archaeology, University of Cyprus, former director of the Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Ioannina), "Respect the monuments", newspaper *Lefkaditikos Logos*, April 2007, n. 871, pp. 1 & 3.

Available data

Agency:

Type of research:

Type of data:

Inscription of the element in other inventories

National Inventory– Technical sheet of the element

Place and date of drafting:

Author

Name and surname:

Title:

Accompanying documentary material

Bibliography-archive research:

In situ research-interviews:

Audio recording:

Photo recording:

Video recording:

1 An *ICH element* is understood to be the realization or accomplishment or performance of activities and actions forming a distinct ensemble that constitutes a representative expression of ICH.

2 Short presentation (one sentence) of the identity of the ICH element. Henceforth this will be the identity under which the element will be recognized.

3 ICH domain: The element can pertain to more than one domain.

4 If necessary add a category that is not included in the fields above, e.g. traditional games

5 Key-words allow the recognition of the identity of the element. e.g. ritual, celebration, events, artistic activity, traditional skills, traditional craftsmanship etc. .

6 Chose which among the categories below does the bearer of the ICH element belong to