

## **I. Brief presentation of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**

**1. Name:** Momoeria, New Year's celebrations

**2. Other names:** Momoyeri, Momoyerea, Momoeri, The Momoer', The Kochaman', The Karnavalia

### **3. Identification and definition**

Momoeria is a traditional performance that is held during the Greek-Orthodox "Dodekaemero", i.e. the twelve days between Christmas Day and Epiphany, incorporating dance, theatrical play and music. It originated from the mountainous Trabzon area (Turkey) and still survives in eight villages in the Kozani Prefecture.

### **4. Domain of ICH**

**Oral traditions and expressions:** the rhyming couplets that relate to the event, the leader's commands, the oral transmission of the mythos surrounding the elements of representation.

**Performing arts:** it is directly connected to theater, since it includes numerous theatrical roles and its overall structure is theatrical in nature. Dance (the "steps") and music also constitute structural elements that are transmitted from one generation to the next.

**Social practices, rituals and festive events:** the element is celebratory but also contains a significant "evetiria" aspect, i.e. the prosperity and happiness that people hope for and expect from the forthcoming New Year. Local communities wholly participate in the celebration and consciously function as an inextricable element in its realization and plot (which differs every year since it relies on improvisation and topicality). The customary practices and social behaviors concerning the householder that welcomes the procession (delicacies, wishes), the spectators' behavior (abducting the bride, setting fire to the "old man's" sack), and the role mimicry (theatrical part) all are directly tied to the element's social practices. Festive events are also held in every village towards the end of the element's realization.

**Traditional craftsmanship:** the traditional Momoeria costumes, especially the helmets (beads, small mirrors, ribbons) and wooden sticks they hold (specific dogwood or hazel braided with colorful ribbons, tassels and chimes) involve intricate craftsmanship and are created by specific people that have been taught the techniques from older ones. There are certain pieces of clothing that are woven by elderly women (socks, gaiters) and others that require silversmith craftsmanship (engolpion, amulets, chest jewelry).

**Other:** teaching of traditional musical instruments that accompany the events and, in numerous cases, their manufacturing ("aggeion" – a bagpipe, lyre, "ntaouli" – a tambour). The teaching of musical instruments is transmitted

from one generation to the next, as well as their manufacturing, which requires orally transmitted special knowledge (e.g. when the wood ought to be cut in relation to the position of the moon etc).

## 5. Place

West Macedonia Region, Kozani Prefecture, Municipality of Kozani (Tetralofos, Agios Dimitrios, Alonakia, Skiti, Protochori) and Municipality of Eordaea (Komnina, Asvestopetra, Karyochori).

## 6. Key-words

Tradition, Dodekaemero, Pontian event, Trabzon, Livera, Kozani, Pontian theater, street theater, helmet.

## II. Communities, institutions and/or individuals concerned

The bearers of the Momoeria custom are the residents of eight villages of the Kozani Prefecture (Tetralofos, Agios Dimitrios, Alonakia, Skiti, Protochori, Komnina, Asvestopetra, Karyochori). During the first years that followed the Greek uprooting, each community would organize events in its central coffee shop. When the first cultural associations were established (in the '70s and '80s), the organizational process of the celebrations was undertaken by them. Besides, most of these associations' founding members were Momoyeri themselves. As a matter of fact, cultural associations in Pontian villages do not consist of specific registered members (as is the case with associations in metropolitan areas), but rather of the local community as a whole. The **associations** of the eight villages that are committed to supporting the element's registration in any way possible are the following:

“Educational Folklore Association of Tetralofos, Kozani”

Papadopoulos Panayiotis (president and musician – lyre, “aggeion”)

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, West Macedonia Region, Telephone: 6942294679

“Pontian Educational Association of Agios Dimitrios – Riaki, Kozani”

Arapidis Dimitrios (president)

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, West Macedonia Region, Telephone: 6973073664

“Educational Association of Alonakia «Pontus»”

Lazaridis Theodoros (president)

Alonakia, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, West Macedonia Region, Telephone: 6942557844

“Educational Association of Skiti «Euxine»”

Alexandridis Savvas (president)

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, West Macedonia Region, Telephone:  
6974373580

“Cultural and Folklore Association of Protochori”

Siapanidis Panayiotis (president)

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, West Macedonia Region, Telephone:  
6944505973

“Pontian Cultural Association of Komnina”

Tsilfidou Maria (president)

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, West Macedonia Region, Telephone:  
6977809816

“Cultural Association of Asvestopetra”

Proskinitopoulos Aris (in charge of Momoeria)

Asvestopetra, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, West Macedonia Region,  
Telephone: 6936933457

“Pontian and Minor Asia Association of Karyochori «The Refugee»”

Savvaidis Pantelis (president)

Karyochori, Kozani, Postal Code 50200, West Macedonia Region, Telephone:  
6947827799

There is also a great number of **musicians, dancers** and expert costume **manufacturers** that are willing to concur in writing with the element’s registration:

### **Musicians**

– Folinas Vasilis, musician (“aggeion”)

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6948943871

– Matsaridis Anastasios, musician (“aggeion”, lyre)

Drepano, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6972141112

– Siamidis Giorgos, musician (“aggeion”)

Riakio, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6979222404

– Siamidis Kostas, musician (lyre)

Riakio, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6976577871

– Aramatanidis Ioannis, musician (“aggeion”)

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 2463031552

– Aramatanidis Christos, dance teacher and musician (“aggeion”)

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 6972482442

– Kokkinidis Nikos, musician (lyre)

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6942808346

– Pagkalidis Ilias, musician (lyre)

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6944439524

– Ksinopoulos Panayiotis, musician (“ntaouli”)

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6986742637

– Panitsidis Kostas, musician (lyre)

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6977434774

– Lazaridis Christos, amateur singer

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6937331713

– Sotiriadis Pavlos, musician (lyre)

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6942623910

– Sofianidis Giorgos, musician (lyre, “aggeion”) and singer

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6945256963

– Parcharidis Stathis, singer and Momoeria theatrical performer

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6948660086

– Kousidis Grigoris, musician (lyre)

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 2461099352

– Theodoridis Sotiris, musician (lyre)

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6989474958

– Mavropoulos Kostas, musician (lyre)

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6980110974

– Alexandridis Stathis, musician (lyre) and singer

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6987302932

– Vasiliadis Nikolaos, musician (lyre) and singer

Alonakia, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6942406502

– Korosidis Ioannis, musician (lyre) Alonakia, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6972914978

### **Leaders – dancers – theatrical performers**

– Pilalidis Theodoris, former Momoeria leader

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6944.398369

– Papageridis Dimitrios, association secretary and Momoeria leader

Alonakia, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6972282133

– Pilalidis Kostas, researcher and Momoeria dancer

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6937.094954

– Salakidis Anastasios, Momoeria leader

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6977.774291

– Mavropoulos Savvas, Momoeria leader

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6985615126

– Adamidis Konstantinos, former Momoeria leader

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6942.400328

– Adamidis Giorgos, Momoeria leader

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6977285771

– Siapanidis Giorgos, former Momoeria leader

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 24630.31502

– Andronikidis Ioannis, former Momoeria dancer

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 24630.31050

– Siapanidis Dimitris, former Momoeria leader

Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 24630.31183

– Pilalidis Ioannis, Momoeria leader

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6973747824

– Kousalidis Stefanos, Momoeria dancer

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6970808292

– Posinakidis Dimitrios, Momoeria dancer

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6983747152

– Pouaridis Konstantinos, Momoeria dancer

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6945789116

– Iosifidis Panayiotis, Momoeria dancer

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6942682718

– Kousalidis Theodoros, Momoeria dancer

Agios Dimitrios, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6976897086

– Misaelidis Thimios, theatrical performer

Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6972880015

– Panitsidis Nikos, element's researcher

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6997022830

– Sotiriadis Vasilis, Momoeria dancer

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6944101144

### **Researchers**

– Apatsidis Themis, element's researcher

Karyochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 6977094577

– Kosmidis Charalambos, researcher and former association president

Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6972138815

– Katsogiannou-Triantafillou Efthimia, element's researcher and municipal community vice-president

Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6947342224

### **Manufacturers**

Folina Roula, Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6947605369

Polichronidis Ioannis, Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6977646332

Lazaridis Ioannis, Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 2381089487

Georgiadis Nikolaos, Tetralofos, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6977436972

Andronikidou Stella, Komnina, Kozani, Postal Code: 50200, 6976996322

Kotsalidis Panayiotis, Skiti, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 6946006560

Theodoridou Anna, Protochori, Kozani, Postal Code: 50100, 2461099173

### **Pontian news media covering the element**

“Euxine Pontus” newspaper, publisher: Petalidis Foris, Lochagou Dourma 44, Postal Code: 56121, Thessaloniki, 6944549779, e-mail: efxinosp@gmail.com

On-line newspaper “e-pontos.gr”, “epontos.blogspot.gr”, editor: Kotsidis Theofilos, Dardanellion 79, Postal Code: 17124, N. Smirni, 6936992000, e-mail: theofilosk@gmail.com

### **Specialized information on the element**

Alexandridis Konstantinos

Actor, element's researcher

President of the “Greek Association for the Preservation and Promotion of our Cultural Heritage «The Momoyeri»”

Adress: Mantzagriotaki 38, Kallithea, Attiki, Postal Code: 17672

Telephone: 210.9593323, 6977708372

Fax: 2109593884

E-mail: kostasalexandridis@yahoo.gr

### **III. Description of the element of ICH**

#### **1. Short description**

Momoeria is a New Year's celebratory custom that takes place during the Greek-Orthodox "Dodekaemero", the twelve days between Christmas Day and Epiphany, in eight villages in the Kozani Prefecture. The bearers of the element are all the residents of the aforementioned villages, since the custom has been handed down through four generations of Pontian refugees from mountainous Trabzon. It includes dancing, theatrical and musical groups. All participants are male.

#### **2. Description**

More than fifty variations of Momoeria (meaning "priests of God Momus") have been recorded over the years. Nevertheless, there is but one variation that still survives in its entirety, while some others are occasionally revived by several of the element's bearers.

The Momoeria variation that was transferred from Pontus to Greece during the 1923 population exchange between Greece and Turkey is the one that originated in the Livera village in mountainous Trabzon. There are also written accounts from the first refugee generation about the event's performance in Livera. Both Livera and the broader mountainous Trabzon area (Matsouka) enjoyed numerous privileges due to the presence of the three largest monasteries in Pontus (Agios Ioannis Vazelonas, Panagia Soumela, Agios Georgios Peristereotas). Livera was also the homeland of Maria, later called Gulbuchar, a Greek woman that became the Sultan's wife and contributed significantly to ensuring greater freedom in the area.

Momoeria was thereby preserved and transferred to Greece. Among the very few material objects that Pontian refugees brought with them to Greece were Momoeria engolpions and helmets. Momoeria has incessantly been performed in Greece since 1924-25 with very few exceptions, such as in 1940 during World War II. The Livera variation of Momoeria still survives in eight villages in the Kozani Prefecture: Tetralofos, Alonakia, Skiti, Agios Dimitrios, Protochori, Asvestopetra, Karyochori, Komnina. The Momoeria groups usually take to the village streets for two days consecutively, from early in the morning until late at night.

Momoeria includes three separate groups: the dancing group (leader and dancers), the theatrical group (improvised dialogue) and the musical group (lyre, ageion, ntaouli). All of the groups' participants are in disguise.

All of them perform together, with cheers, screams, bell rings, dance steps, music, songs and simultaneous action from every theatrical performer. Not only do they attract the audience's interest, which then follows the procession

door to door, but they also seek its active participation in the multiple simultaneous events.

The Momoeria, dressed in helmets (“perikefalalaia”) and multi-pleated white skirts (“foustanella”) while holding wooden sticks, go on to visit each and every village house in song and dance. Among them and in interaction with the spectators is the theatrical group, which consists exclusively of men: two “brides” that the audience attempts to kidnap by paying a certain price, the “old man”, the “old woman”, the “devil”, the “bear”, the “doctor” that examines the “bride” and usually discovers that she has been abused, the “policeman” and many other characters. The musical instruments that accompany them are the lyre, the agegeion and the ntaouli. Each village’s dancing, theatrical and musical groups usually consist of approximately 30 people overall and their procession could be characterized as a type of street theater that satirizes certain aspects of social life or individual behavior through sing and dance.

Five of the eight aforementioned villages now belong to the Municipality of Kozani (after the unification of the former administrative units called “communities”) and three to the Municipality of Eordaea, a region where the “Kozanian” social and cultural elements (such as the “Fanoi” and other customs) are prevalent. The bearers of the Momoeria tradition, i.e. the eight villages’ residents, regard it as both recreational and propitiatory. A characteristic example is that of the emigrant villagers, who plead for the Momoeria procession to stop by their own houseyards, even though there is no one there to welcome it. The custom has already been handed down through four generations and is still held with undimmed interest and passion on both the participants’ and visitors’ part.

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

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

Momoeria is held in the streets, at the crossroads and squares and in the houseyards of each village. The procession usually begins from the square or the association and there is always a predetermined route. It is of primary importance for the Momoeria to stop by every house in the village. In each houseyard there is a highly decorated table with numerous delicacies, tsipouro, wine and traditional sweets.

#### **Facilities**

The local association’s space assists both the dancing group’s rehearsals and the preparation of the dancing and theatrical group before they take to the streets. There are no other ancillary buildings or facilities, since Momoeria is an event that is performed in the streets. During the past decade, Momoeria has become increasingly popular and is also performed in theaters and other entertainment venues by the villagers and other dancing associations, albeit not in its complete form (without traditional food, audience participation etc).

## **Equipment, modules and accessories (tools, vessels, uniforms, et al.) that are used for the preparation and performance of the element of ICH**

The twelve dancers of Momoeria have their own special costumes. They wear a “perikefalaiia” (helmet) that is reminiscent of the ancient Greek one, a “poukamiso” (shirt), “gileko stavroto” (cross waistcoat), a type of “foustanella” (a long, multi-pleated, white skirt), woolen “periknimides” (gaiters), “ortaria” (knitted socks), “tsarouhia” (traditional Greek shoes), silk “tarapoloz” (girdle) and they hold “matsoukia” (wooden sticks). Their chest is decorated by several chains, a watch and an engolpion.

Theatrical characters also require special costumes, especially for the two “brides”, the “old man”, the “old woman”, the “devil”, the “doctor”, the “bear” (whenever there is one), the “camel” (whenever there is one), the “tsantarmas” (policeman/judge). All roles are performed by men, and costume sizes are therefore created accordingly (e.g. the wedding gown).

## **Products or material objects in general (handicrafts, tools, religious or secular vessels, goods, food, etc) that are developed as an outcome of the performance or implementation of the element of ICH**

All food is shared for free and is not for sale. It is prepared by the housewives and varies according to each household. Tsipouro (a traditional Greek alcoholic drink) is essential and among the most common tidbits are “piroski”, “perek” and “tsirichta”, a type of Pontian pasta.

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

**Description:** When the element was first transferred from Pontus to Greece, it acquired almost mythic proportions. The first refugee generation felt the need to preserve Momoeria almost immediately after their settling in Macedonia. There is oral evidence that Momoeria was performed in 1924 and there are photographs of the event from 1926. From that time until nowadays, the element has been handed down through four refugee generations and has been performed annually with very few exceptions (German occupation, civil war, dictatorship). The collective memories of the first refugees are still vivid in the younger generation’s discussions, despite the absence of first-hand experience. Everyone is well aware of who was the best “old man” from Pontus or the most vigorous “leader”. Everyone is familiar with who were the most fabled first and second generation musicians and their “melodies” are still performed. All the older and more experienced Momoeria participants consider it their moral duty to transmit their love for the custom to their children from a very young age. Every child’s expectation is to be able to participate in Momoeria upon reaching adulthood. Everyone has memories of Momoeria since childhood and has heard numerous narrations from their grandparents.

The role of the Momoeria “leader” and dancing coordinator is usually undertaken by the association’s dancing teacher. Nevertheless, by the time rehearsals begin, the dance moves have already been learned and dancing becomes a process of mimesis according to each person’s experience. As far as theatrical roles are concerned, their transmission from one generation to the next is realized through the imitation of the older and more experienced performers.

**Modes and duration of learning / apprenticeship / initiation:** As has already been described, the duration of the learning process is the time period up until a person reaches adulthood and until he is regarded by the “veterans” as being ready to join the Momoeria group. It should also be mentioned that, since the Momoeria dancers are only twelve, potential participants are chosen according to their skills. The villagers have been familiar with the “leader’s” commands since childhood and tend to playfully repeat them with encouragement by their parents or grandparents.

**People or institutions that are involved in the transmission of the element:** The transmission of the element from one generation to the next is realized collectively by the local community and especially the older in age. Equally significant for the element’s transmission is the “leader’s” inspiration and guidance of the dancing group.

#### **IV. History and genealogy of the element of ICH**

##### **Historical information or regional narratives about the emergence, continuity, presence and adjustments or modifications of the element of ICH**

The bearers of the element believe it to have originated in Ancient Greece. Others regard it as a type of dithyramb due to the “dialogue” between the “leader” and the rest of the Momoeria performers, but also due to the improvisational interaction between the theatrical group and the spectators.

There are two of the bearers’ narrations that stand out from the rest. The first narration recounts that the twelve Momoeria performers are the priests of Momus, god of laughter and satire and personification of evil-spirited blame and unfair censure. The element’s researchers argue that, according to Plato, an act is perfect when even Momus cannot find anything critical to say about it (“Momus himself could not find fault with such a combination”, Republic, Book VI), since “Momus” also means someone who strives to find fault in everything. Besides, the Greek word “ἀμωμος” (“amomos”) signifies someone or something that is flawless or immaculate and is probably derived from the Homeric verb “μω” (“mo”) which means to look for flaws. Much like in the past, Momoeria performers nowadays deliver their rhyming couplets for satire and appease their countrymen’s “flaws”.

The second narration argues that the Momoeria performers represent the commanders of Alexander the Great. Both versions are supported by oral narrations and certain references by the element’s researchers. Either way, the

element's deeply inveterate and personal nature prevented its extinction, forcing even the church to "tolerate" its realization in between three of the most significance holidays of Orthodoxy (Christmas Day, St. Basil's Day, Epiphany).

There is a distinctive description about the event's realization in Livera, Trabzon by Chr. Dimitriadis in the "Pontian Hearth" journal (1953) that constitutes a milestone for all researchers or performers of Momoeria. Among other things, he also mentions the following:

*"On New Year's Eve, the members of the association would congregate in front of the Livera Cathedral and with the "ooo-hohoho" cry they would start visiting every household in the village. They would usually begin from the Falena neighborhood (which is on the edge of the village) and then proceed to Kolothanton, Kolenatan, Zamena, Hantzouka, Paralithi, Seitananton and Kastron. The following day they used to visit Magan and finally end up in the churchyard of Saint George, where they would organize a celebration. Whatever money was collected by the treasurer was then given to the president of the church committee to provide for the teachers' wages. At the end of the two-day event, all the Momoeria groups from the neighboring villages (Kapikoy, Hatzavera, Daniacha, Kouspidi, Veryzena) would meet in Cevislouk (nowadays called Maçka). It was an unprecedented spectacle to watch 150-200 performers in costume singing and dancing at the villages' squares..."*

As time went by, the event was occasionally met with interference and constriction. After the Greek Civil War (1949), masks ("storaes") were banned for security reasons. Cravats were also occasionally banned, since they were perceived as satire towards the bourgeoisie. Traditional wedding gowns ("zitouna") were in some villages replaced with standard wedding dresses. Nowadays the event's structure remains identical in all of the eight villages, with minor variations in dance steps and leader's commands.

There are several improvised alterations that keep the audience captivated. One such intervention is abducting one of the two brides. Afterwards, two Momoeria performers at their leader's command start searching for the bride and the kidnapper, both of whom they find in a short time. The doctor then examines the bride and diagnoses sexual abuse. The judge, who has already connived with the doctor, then imposes a financial penalty that is commensurate with the kidnapper's financial resources. The examination of the bride, who pretends to have been dishonored, is among the event's most comical scenes and is watched by the spectators with great interest. It should also be mentioned that whenever the Momoeria performers locate a spectator of considerable financial means or someone that is not from the village, he is shown to the bride, who then "abducts" him by holding him in "her" shoulders. This is a new element that was added quite recently to the Momoeria tradition.

### **Historical information on the element's bearers**

The bearers of the element, i.e. the residents of the aforementioned eight villages, have origins mainly from mountainous Trabzon. These villagers' cultural associations were founded during the '70s and '80s and their main goal

was the realization and preservation of the Momoeria tradition. This is also why the associations' founding members were bearers of the element themselves.

## **V. Element's importance for Intangible Cultural Heritage**

### **1. Enhancement**

#### **Actions, Promotion, Inter-Cultural Dialoge:**

The main objective of all the proposed measures is safeguarding of the element without affecting its structure and its evolution according to the bearers' choices. Most suited for implementing the safeguarding measures are the 8 associations of the villagers and Local Government in the respective Municipalities. The measures that have been prioritized include the following:

#### **SUPPORTING THE EXISTING ASSOCIATIONS**

- Financial support for the preservation of traditional costumes and the musicians' participation
- Actions for the element's and the associations' inclusion in tourist guides
- Exhibitions with photographs, audiovisual material and Momoeria costumes organized by the associations
- Supporting the associations in organizing seminars for initial contact with the element
- Invitation to an open dialogue with local associations for hearing their urgent issues

#### **EDUCATION**

- Introduction of educational material about the element for possible usage in the Flexible Zone program
- Organized school visits during the Momoeria celebration
- School projects about Momoeria
- Including the element in the curricula of university faculties that are directly related to it (Music, Theater, Folklore and Photography faculties)
- Organization of scientific meetings on "Dodekaemero" traditions in Greece and, comparatively, in the Balkans and Minor Asia – Formation of interdisciplinary committee

#### **DOCUMENTATION – FINANCING**

- Identification and categorization of the Momoeria variations

- Invitation to open dialogue with the element’s researchers and financing the digitization of all existing archives
- Organization of a conference with amateur researchers and academics (on the element’s documentation and for the submission of proposals)
- Updating Greek research facilities with audiovisual material in order for the element to be prioritized in their documentation programs

#### PROMOTION – ENHANCEMENT

- Promotion and enhancement of the element before the “Dodekaemero” as a traditional manner of welcoming the New Year instead of a mere folkloric event (television, radio)
- Sending a television crew and photographers in the villages (instead of the element’s bearers coming to the studio)
- Financing a documentary on Momoeria that will inscribe the element in the overall historical and cultural tradition of Pontian Greeks

Even if the aforementioned safeguarding measures are implemented, there is always risk of the element undergoing alterations, maybe even by the bearers themselves. It is evident that whenever there is danger of extinction, the people who regard the element as part of their collective identity become activated in order to preserve it, as was the case during the first decade after they settled in Greece. Contrarily, in times of unimpeded realization and promotion of the element, there is danger of modifying it for impression purposes or because of competition among villages. For these reasons, documentation ought to be immediate, while ensuring that the bearers of the element will be approached tactfully.

## **2. Safeguarding measures**

There is immediate need for the element’s documentation, and especially its different variations. This project could also be assisted by the Greek state by providing special scientists.

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