



**NATIONAL INVENTORY
OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF GREECE**

RECORD OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ELEMENT

1. Brief presentation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element

a. How is the element known to its bearers:

The traditional practice of irrigation with the "Raised Channel" (to Sikoméno Avláki) in Kyriakochóri, Fthiótida.

b. Other denomination(s):

Traditional irrigation with channels; irrigation by slight inundation; gravity-fed irrigation.

Bearers also call it "the Raised Channel" or simply, "the Channel".

c. Brief description (Up to 100 words):

The *Raised Channel* in Kyriakochóri, Fthiotida, is a hydraulic structure that has been used to irrigate crops since the eighteenth century. The people of Kyriakochóri divert water from a tributary of the Ináchos (Vistrítza) mountain river using a weir. Relying solely on gravity, they then convey the water along a long irrigation canal and store it in a large open-air cistern. Finally, they distribute it to each garden in turn via smaller channels. With this traditional practice, they produce valuable agri-food products and strengthen the local community, always with respect for the natural environment.

d. Field of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Oral traditions and expressions
- Performing arts
- Social practices, rituals and festive events
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe
- Traditional craftsmanship
- Management of local natural resources

e. Area where the element is found (100 words):

Kyriakochóri, Regional Unit of Fthiótida (Greece).

f. Key words (50 words):

weir; irrigation canal; channels; kófra (cloth-wrapped stone stop); cistern / reservoir; distribution laterals (*katapótes*); water steward (*nerofóros* — community-appointed operator who opens the gate and manages turns);

gravity-fed irrigation; water heritage; river management; water management; soil management; mountain hikes on the Raised Channel; flora and fauna of Western Fthiótida; cultural events of the Association at Profitis Ilias.

2. Identity of the bearer of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage

a. Who is/are the bearer(s) of the element? (200 words)

- The seventy families of Kyriakochóri who irrigate their gardens and orchards with water brought from the mountain by the Raised Channel.
The village technicians, responsible for maintaining the Raised Channel throughout the year; they hold the know-how for collecting water from the river, channeling it into the main water conduit measuring five and a half kilometres in length, and storing it in the open-air cistern.
- The Local Community of Kyriakochóri, which, through its President, oversees the proper implementation of rules governing the rights and obligations of irrigators.
- The Forest Office of Sperchiáda, which in 1950 undertook the conversion of the entire hydraulic work (weir and canal) from earthen to stone/concrete.
- The Cultural and Beautification Association of Kyriakochorians worldwide, as well as local cycling and hiking/mountaineering associations.
- In addition, individuals whose activities highlight and promote the traditional practice of irrigation with the Raised Channel.

b. Contact details

Cultural and Beautification Association of Kyriakochorians of Fthiotida (worldwide)

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Local Community of Kyriakochori, Fthiotida

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Individual community members (bearers):

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Aikateríni Tzánni
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Konstantínos Tsiampoúlas (son of Fótios)
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c. Additional information about the element:

Person in charge

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3. Detailed description of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element as it is found today (between 500 and 1000 words)

Kyriakochóri is located in the western part of Fthiótida, at an altitude of 927 metres above sea level. It is situated 76 kilometres south-west of Lamia and 30 kilometres from Sperchiá, within the municipality of Makrakomi. Located at the foot of Vardoúsia, the area boasts numerous drinking water springs and is situated between the rivers Vistrítza (Ináchos) and Malinísta, which are tributaries of the Spercheiós. The landscape is characterised by an abundance of chestnut, oak and fir forests, providing a habitat for diverse wildlife including hares, foxes, wolves, roe deer, deer and wild boar. The low temperatures, snowfall, and very heavy rainfall during the months from November to March do not allow for cultivation or the production of agri-food products in Kyriakochori. The growing season is limited to the months from April to October, during which the traditional practice of irrigation using the Raised Channel is applied.

A weir (Dési) has been built on a tributary of the Vistrítza (Ináchos) at a place called Kritarió, on the Robóla ridge, at an elevation of 1,300 metres, to collect water for irrigation. The water is then channelled into a concrete conduit, which is deeper along the first hundred metres to prevent it from overflowing. After travelling five and a half kilometres through the channel and descending a vertical difference of three hundred metres through the wild landscape, the water reaches the highest point of the village at Agia Paraskevi, where it fills the open-air reservoir, constructed for the storage of water and the more efficient irrigation of the crops. From there, the water is distributed to the “katapótes”, that is, channels which carry it to specific locations, where it is then redistributed to the gardens and tree crops belonging to that area.

According to oral testimony from local elders, the traditional irrigation practice involving the Raised Channel dates back to around 1700 and is integral to the village. G. Balagiannis reports that, according to his records and the oral testimonies of his ancestors, in 1700 the second renovation of the Church of Agios Nikolaos in Kyriakochori took place following an earthquake, and at that time they used the water brought from the mountain by the Sikwomeno Aflaki.

In the spring, men, women and children would climb to the Robola mountain peak and “catch” the river water with stones, wood and leaves — in other words, they constructed the Desi (a weir). From that point downwards, they would carve an earthen channel, following the natural mountain terrain, stretching for many kilometres as far as the village. They took care to give the channel the appropriate gradient so that the water would flow smoothly, without causing erosion or landslides.

In the autumn and throughout the winter, the entire hydraulic system would be destroyed, and every spring they were forced to rebuild it exactly the same from scratch. The stone weir and concrete channel that exist today were permanently constructed in 1950, with the assistance of the Sperchiada Forest Service, precisely in the same location, along the alignment of the former earthen and wooden structures, and they truly relieved the people of Kyriakochori from this arduous annual work.

Evángelos Láios, Apóstolos Skarlátos, Koula Skarlátou, Konstantía Skarlátou and others confirm that the Channel has been there for at least four generations. “The Channel has always been here,” they say, “and each year we brought water to the village via the Channel.” They advise the younger generation: “Safeguard the Channel for

yourselves and your children.” The Channel is called 'Raised' because of the technique used in one section: over a horizontal distance of 50 metres, the natural ground level drops sharply, no longer favouring the natural flow of water. Thus, 500 metres from the weir, a 2.5-metre dry-stone wall was built, and the Channel was raised to a higher level.

Traditional irrigation with the Raised Channel relies on the simple natural law of gravity. The people of Kyriakochóri know that some water is lost along the way from the weir to the fields with this practice. Part of the water seeps into the ground, either through the channels themselves or through the soil of the garden, before reaching the plant’s roots, or it evaporates. Evaporation is the transformation of some of the water from liquid to gas and is inevitable, since the channels are open along their entire length. However, the water that is lost and does not reach the crops is beneficial for the environment, as it replenishes the aquifer and supports the wild vegetation of the area..

As water is a precious resource and traditional irrigation methods inevitably result in some losses, the people of Kyriakochóri faithfully observe unwritten rules. These rules concern the fair distribution of water and define the rights and responsibilities of the irrigators, ensuring that water is not wasted. They also take measures to maintain the entire hydraulic system.

In Kyriakochóri, water allocation is based on the time it takes the reservoir to empty. Each landowner, depending on the area of their field to be irrigated, is allocated a time “share,” during which they receive all the water, before passing it on to the next owner. These “water shifts” concern every day a different group of irrigators using the same *katapoti* (channel), who are connected either by family ties or simply by neighbourhood relationships.

The tradition of the Raised Channel passes down, from generation to generation, experiential and practical knowledge regarding the management of the soil and the river’s waters. Those who maintain the system know that the channel should run through shaded areas because, according to the laws of physics, an increase in water temperature from sunlight promotes evaporation, and therefore “loss” of water. They also know that flocks of sheep and goats grazing on the mountain drink water from suitable points along the channel, where the ground is not sloping and there is enough space to move to the right and left of the banks without causing damage to the channel with their trampling. Additionally, they recognise that using the cistern-reservoir improves the efficiency of irrigation. In sloping fields, they understand the importance of creating level terraces supported by “demata,” that is, stone walls built to facilitate cultivation. They are familiar with the properties of the soil and, according to the weather conditions, calculate the actual water needs at each stage of the plants’ growth.

In 2021, 70 families used water from the Raised Channel for irrigation. A 2020 survey showed that all respondents born in or from Kyriakochóri (including in-laws) were familiar with this traditional watering practice.

During the irrigation period, the same ritual is followed every day. At 6:30 in the morning, a villager, after prior arrangement (many years ago this was the water steward, the *nerofóros*), walks a thirty-minute route, opens the reservoir valve, and channels the water into the settlement’s main conduit. At the same time, within the village, the users—that is, the villagers who are irrigating—come out of their homes early; their greetings and discussions can be heard in the quiet of the morning. They clean the main channel that runs outside their property and adjust the

position of their “koftra” (this is a stone wrapped in fabric or a sack, located at each garden entrance or channel branch, which functions as a water switch). Inside the garden, they carve a main earthen channel along a level surface, at the highest point within the garden, called the “kefalari,” which receives the rushing water from the main channel and significantly reduces its speed. They then carve very narrow earthen branch channels, offshoots of the main channel, called “kleidia” (keys), which, using gravity, direct the water to a precise distance from the root of each plant.

The first person to receive the water calls out, “Hey neighbours! The water’s here. The next person should pick it up in about an hour.” Everyone waits patiently for their turn. When it is their turn to water, they open their kófta and ensure that all the water flows onto the next garden. The last user climbs back up to Agia Paraskevi to “cut off” the water in the reservoir. Each person is an important link in this chain of actions. If a user is unable to participate for a serious reason, the others will help when it is their turn.

On watering days in the neighbourhood, there is a festive atmosphere and excitement. All members of the family whose garden is being watered take part in some way. The children wake up early to the sound of water in the main channel and play with it. Some float their little boats in the water and hold races, others play “slish-splash,” and some grumble because the water didn’t let them sleep a little longer. The housewives do not prepare elaborate meals on this day, as they will need to help with watering the garden. Once the process is finished, everyone continues with their other daily activities and waits for the water to return eight days later, since until then, other properties will have their turn each day.

The tradition of the Raised Channel keeps the village alive. The permanent residents and bearers of the element base their livelihood on the agricultural products they grow in their gardens using the running water from the mountains.

Bearers who live far away and travel many kilometres to reach the village also rely on these high-quality village products, which are very different from what they find in the city, for their diet. The Raised Channel is also closely linked to animal husbandry and its produce, as the flocks that move from the village fold to the Robóla ridge in summer are watered from it.

4. Space, facilities, and equipment associated with the performance/exercise of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element

With the traditional irrigation method of the Raised Channel a number of spaces and installations are connected to one another in a significant and necessary way

The Dési weir lies at an elevation of 1,300 metres on a tributary of the Vistrítza (Ináchos) river, in an area known as “Kritarió”, on the Robóla ridge of Vardoúsia. The water travels 5.5 km in the irrigation canal from the weir to the village. Along the canal's course, it passes places known locally as the Raised Channel (the section where the Channel is physically raised), “Monachódendro”, “Leptokaryés”, “Trani Sára”, “Díaselo”, “Mikrí Sára”, “Kapsála”, “Proftis Ilias”, “Fragméno Choráfi”, “Kefalári” and “Agía Paraskeví”. The settlement has been designed so that the channel, which runs alongside the road, provides access to all the houses and gardens. At the entrance to

each garden, there is a *kóftra*: a stone wrapped in cloth, which is placed at each garden inlet or canal junction to divert or block the water flow.

The necessary tools for Channel irrigation can be found in every household, old and new, and even in abandoned homes. They include the *skeparniá* (hand adze), *tsougrána* (rake), *ftiári* (shovel or spade), *axína* (pick-mattock), *tsapí* (hoe), *dichaláki* (small forked hoe), *drepani* (sickle), *skalistiri* (hand hoe), *síta* (sieve) and *vérge* (rod). Galoshes and a hat or headscarf (for women) are also essential items for Channel users. The community office in the village square is where issues concerning the Channel's maintenance, cleaning and repair are resolved, and where the relevant documents and villagers' personal work records are kept.

The area known as “Trani Sára” is of particular interest. It is named after the large cliff that borders one side of the Channel. Walking alongside the Channel at this point is awe-inspiring, and many stories and legends are associated with it. G. Balayiánnis recalls that, fifty years ago, whenever he, his mother and their mule passed that section of the Channel on their way to the mountain, the mule would stop. No visible obstacle was present on the narrow path, yet the mule would not move until a whirlwind rose from the depths of the ravine, climbed upwards and vanished. Other villagers have also reported seeing black-clad women descending and disappearing, as well as terrifying, motionless human figures when looking down. Kyriakochórians never passed “Trani Sára” on horseback; only mules or donkeys were used: the cliff was so steep and the path so narrow that a horse's clumsy gait posed a real risk of an accident occurring. Today, the path is wider and landslides over time have smoothed the steep cliff, so crossing it is no longer a problem.

The place called ‘Ai Liás’ (Profitis Ilías / Prophet Elias) is closely connected with the Raised Channel, where until the 1940s, a waqf (endowed) watermill operated, powered by the Channel's water. Here stands the Church of the Prophet Elias, built in 1900 of local stone with a characteristic traditional slate roof, which has been preserved as such to this day. Kyriakochóri's religious festival is dedicated to the Profitis Ilías and takes place around the church and beside the Channel, where villagers cool their drinks and fruit in the running water.

The locality of Kefalári is also of great importance. It contains a “Sacred Oak Grove” where tree felling and sheep and goats grazing are prohibited, and passage is permitted only along a specific path, for both flocks and people. The area has always been, and remains, of significant importance to the village, as it guards it against landslides, retains rainwater to help prevent flooding, and blocks the strong winds that sweep through the area. The forest is called “sacred” because of its close connection with religion: most of the “Uplifted Trees” (Ypsoména Déntra) were located there.

In the early eighteenth century, before the municipal and judicial authorities we know today existed, the council of elders (the oldest man from each family) and the priest marked out the Uplifted Trees around the village to protect it from disasters, disease, and evil. They marked the trees by making a slit in their trunks and placing inside them the *ýpsoma*, a piece of *Prosphoron* (Holy Bread) that had been blessed during the Sunday liturgy. These trees were not to be cut down; anyone who violated this rule was liable to a fine, community service or, worst of all, the anáthema (the community's curse), which resulted in public shaming. The worst part, of course, was that they bore the “curse” of the others and were publicly blamed. Today, G. Chondroyiannis, V. Mentzos, K. Tsiampoulas, G. Balagiannis, N. Balagiannis, K. Psychogios, and other villagers recall that they were afraid to cut down an

Uplifted Tree, because from a young age they knew that something bad would happen to them or their family. They even remember incidents in which offenders had fallen from their horses or had poor harvests, and these misfortunes were attributed to God's punishment.

Some Uplifted Trees still survive today, recognisable by the large diameter of their trunks, which is evidence of their age of at least three centuries. They are found near springs and churches. Notably, although the Forest Service designated the Kefalári area suitable for logging due to the age of the trees, no felling has taken place because the community of Kyriakochóri prohibits logging there for religious, cultural, and environmental reasons.

The locality of "Agía Paraskeví" also plays a significant role — that is where the Church of Saint Paraskevi (built in 1901) is located. It is opened once a year on July 26. An open-air water cistern was constructed at this site in 1973 to facilitate irrigation and support local water management.

5. Products or associated tangible elements resulting from the practice of the ICH element

The Raised Channel is directly linked to agri-food production in Kyriakochóri. Bearers hold the belief that the mountain water brought by the Channel, contributes, through its components, to the good performance of the crops. This view is supported by a chemical analysis carried out by the Chemical Laboratory of Lamía in June 2021, which examined a water sample from the Channel at the village square, found it suitable for irrigation, and ranked it in the highest quality tier for crop performance.

From years of experience, irrigators believe that the good performance of the crops also depends on the low temperature of the water, which is around eight to ten degrees Celsius. This temperature can indeed be beneficial for cultivation, since, according to Georgios Ioannis Nycha and Efstathios Panagou, professors at the Agricultural University of Athens, most pathogenic microorganisms develop between twenty-five and forty degrees Celsius.

Another factor cited by bearers is that the water is running: it carries beneficial substances and washes away harmful ones, whereas stagnant water favours the growth of bacteria and fungi.

In the early eighteenth century, the people of Kyriakochóri mainly grew rain-fed wheat. The Raised Channel enabled the villagers to grow more water-demanding crops. The village has traditionally produced beans, potatoes, courgettes, tomatoes and maize in large quantities, as well as smaller quantities of other vegetables such as aubergines, cucumbers, peppers, onions, cabbages and leeks.

6. Historical data on the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage (up to 700 words)

Kyriakochori appears on an Ottoman map showing the villages and towns of Western Phthiotis during the period 1514–1550 (Balomenos, 2021). The information available in the village, or from oral testimonies, refers to a later period and begins in the early 18th century, such as the inscription carved in 1740 on the masonry of the Church of Agios Nikolaos in the village and the centuries-old oak tree located in its courtyard. The existence of a developed culture in the village in the early 18th century is also evidenced by objects that have been found and are preserved as valuable treasures.

Some Kyriakochórians fought in the 1821 uprising. The fighters in the 1821 uprising came from Kyriakochori. The official census of 1844 recorded 214 inhabitants for the village, a figure which rose to 494 by

1879. G. Chondrogiánnis notes that the cemetery was formerly located at Agios Nikólaos. To accommodate the growing community, it was relocated to its current location at Ai-Giórgis (St George) in 1900. There were already a small chapel and private property at Ai-Giórgis in 1900, which were donated to the community. The writer Nikólaos Loréntis, in *Geographia neograece*, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1838, p. 561), records: “Kyriakochori, a village lying beside the borders of Turkish Thessaly”; and the traveller Dimitrios Loukópoulos, writing in 1929 (p. 20), notes: “we took the main road, the one that comes straight from Kyriakochóri, and it has neither ascent nor descent. It passes the Raised Channel, where the other road branches off towards Paloúki and Artotína, leaving it there”.

The Raised Channel is a historic cultural feature and a passageway for people, cultures, ideas and changes. Located close to one of the oldest Greek routes, it bypassed the Spercheiós River, linking Epirus and Thessaly with southern Greece and the Peloponnese. This point is now part of the European E4 long-distance path. According to testimonies, in Ottoman times travellers carrying produce to the Sperchiáda market from Grammeni Oxiá, as well as travellers from the mountainous region of Nafpaktía to Gardíki and back, would meet at the Channel to quench their thirst.

The precise origins of this traditional irrigation practice in Kyriakochóri remain unknown, but it can be dated to the early eighteenth century, a period for which other evidence of the village's culture also exists. The development of local society, including population growth, the operation of watermills, the construction of churches and houses, and the painting of church icons, would not have been possible without a water supply reaching the village. The way in which the community has managed local water resources is similar to that of many other Mediterranean peoples. Gravity-fed irrigation is an ancient technique with roots stretching back thousands of years, as documented by the EU's Euromed Heritage IV programme.

The technique of building a raised channel has been known since antiquity. The largest raised Channel in Greece is the Kamares of Kavala, which has exactly the same length (six kilometres) and vertical difference (350 m). However, this one is elevated by twenty-five metres and was used for water supply and irrigation in ancient Kavala. It is an ancient monument, originally of Roman construction and finally completed during the Ottoman period (Ministry of Culture, 2006).

The inhabitants of Kyriakochóri achieved household self-sufficiency due to environmental, cultural and other factors. On their property, they had space for their house, their animals (“the belongings”), their vegetables, and their water from the fountain, which they either found there before settling or later “tapped from an underground spring” and kept as part of their property. The village fountains had, and still have, drinking water for common use. However, only specific properties had the right to use the fountains within the village for irrigation, and even today these binding rules are still observed.

Kyriakochórians know how much water each crop requires from sowing to harvest and can therefore calculate how many plots of land a given fountain can supply with water. This is usually the case for the plots closest to the fountain, where the terrain allows for a gravity-fed flow. In most cases, those who irrigate from the same fountain are also related. They have an oral agreement—known to and accepted by the whole community—that only they will draw irrigation water from that fountain.

As the population grew, it became necessary to find an additional source of water for irrigation, which resulted in the construction of the Raised Channel. The original Channel, built in the eighteenth century, was made of earth. Starting above today's weir, it ran essentially along the same route as the current Channel, with only a small difference in level, reaching Profitis Ilías. It fed the waqf watermill of Profitis Ilías and then continued to the village and to land beyond the houses. The construction of the Channel led to increased development in the village, as 350 *strémmata* (\approx 35 ha) were cultivated with potatoes, maize, beans, alfalfa and vines.

The whole family took part in cultivation and irrigation. Small children walked kilometres along the mountain path beside the Channel to bring food to older family members working the fields; many stories were told of ghosts and fairies in the 'wild nature' by the Channel. There were many threshing floors and eight flour mills in the village; the last ceased operating in the 1960s. The entire process of flour production took place in Kyriakochóri. Today, only the ruins of the water mills remain.

Following the increasing urbanisation of the 1950s, many young Kyriakochórians migrated to the cities, and the distant plots were no longer cultivated. It was then that the remaining villagers worked on the Channel, lining it with concrete to bring water into the village. Each family, including small children, was assigned a set number of days of personal labour according to the number of its members and the area irrigated. All Kyriakochórians were considered to have an inalienable right to access the Channel's water. The village has had mountain water from the Raised Channel ever since, and a large cistern was built in 1970 to improve its management.

Throughout its history, the Raised Channel has been a conduit for the transmission of knowledge and skills relating to the sustainable management of natural resources. Thanks to this, the bonds between community members have been forged and strengthened. At the start of the irrigation season each year, the village bell would ring and everyone would gather in the square before going up to clean and repair the Channel as volunteers.

To ensure that the rules were respected and disputes between irrigators were resolved, the community appointed a water steward, known as a *nerofóros*. This was responsible for maintaining the watering schedule and order, timing each person's turn, ensuring that irrigators used water sparingly and resolving technical issues in the network of channels. He was strict but fair, ensuring that traditional irrigation could proceed smoothly.

7. The significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage today

a. What is the significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage for its bearers? (between 100 and 300 words)

The Raised Channel is a living heritage, owing to its great significance to those who have cared for it, and to its invaluable contribution to the survival of the settlement over the past three hundred years and into the future. It brings vitality to our village, particularly from May to October. This cultural heritage inspires pride, as it has provided us with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for managing the river's water and soil, and for producing the high-quality foodstuffs that formed the basis of our forefathers' frugal diet. Our intention is to safeguard the biodiversity of our agricultural landscape and bequeath it to our children.

Through the tradition of the Raised Channel, all residents, whether permanent or not, take part in the collective process of irrigating our gardens and orchards with water from the mountains. By doing so, we strengthen our bonds with each other, with our ancestors and with the land and history of our place of origin. We also share this heritage with visitors to the village. During the summer, our children and grandchildren, along with relatives and friends, come together to enjoy the green, cultivated gardens within the settlement. We also join organised hikes along the historic path beside the Channel through the wild landscape and celebrate at the religious festival of Profitis Ilías by the Channel.

The Raised Channel is important because it is a symbol of collective memory and shared experience. It has the power to bring Kyriakochórians back to their homeland, stimulate the local economy, and contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation on the mountain massif.

b. What is the significance of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage for contemporary Greek society?
(between 100 and 200 words)

The tradition of the Raised Channel, together with the knowledge it contains, the unwritten rules by which it is governed, and the social values it passes on from generation to generation, has equipped the community with the skills, attitudes, and perceptions that are necessary for the sustainable management of local natural resources, the conservation of biodiversity, and the promotion of local well-being. This traditional gravity-fed irrigation practice is more advantageous, both economically and socially, than modern irrigation systems. Even where improvements incorporating contemporary water-saving measures are required, the tradition will continue to contribute to the area's sustainable development with respect for the natural environment.

Accordingly, the Raised Channel is a valuable element of cultural heritage for contemporary Greek society and humanity as a whole. With the help of experts in this field, it can serve as a good example of the interaction between the natural landscape and people, worth sharing with other peoples.

c. Was the community involved in preparing the registration of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the National Inventory, and if so, how? (between 200 and 300 words)

Community outreach took place during the lockdown period of the pandemic. As travel and gatherings were restricted, villagers were electronically informed of the intention to register the Raised Channel as an element of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the National Inventory of Greece. All of them expressed their agreement with the initiative taken by the Cultural and Beautification Association of Kyriakochórians. They contributed to the preparation process by completing a questionnaire highlighting what the Raised Channel means to them and by providing information and material to support the completion of the element sheet.

Following the lifting of movement restrictions on 18 May 2020, numerous in-person discussions were held in the village. The president of the local community convened a meeting at the community office, where everyone present offered to help collect documentation proving that the Raised Channel is an element of Intangible Cultural Heritage. During the consultation held in person in June 2020, many villagers wrote personal letters to express their commitment to promoting and safeguarding the Raised Channel in the future.

8. Preservation and Promotion of the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage

a. How is the element of Intangible Cultural Heritage transmitted to younger generations today? (between 200 and 300 words)

The Raised Channel tradition is passed down from generation to generation, with no formal teaching system in place. It is an ongoing, experiential learning process that starts in early childhood through playing in the Channel water, observing and participating in collective irrigation using water from the mountains. A survey conducted after Easter 2020 revealed that all respondents had learned the traditional watering method, the unwritten rules that govern the practice and respect for the natural landscape from their parents or immediate family. They had also experienced the significance of the Raised Channel alongside their relatives from a young age.

This experiential learning is a valuable resource for both children from large cities and local youth. As of 2021, five of the seventy irrigators (bearers) are over eighty years old, forty are aged between fifty and sixty-five, and twenty-five are between thirty and fifty years old. This is evidence that the tradition has already been passed on to younger generations. The current priority is to ensure it is also passed on to those under thirty.

Encouragingly, around twenty young people aged 16–23, who spend their summers in the village, expressed an interest in learning more about its history and the Raised Channel when they heard of the intention to include it in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Greece. For this reason, the local community decided to appoint the ten youngest irrigators as 'ambassadors' of the Raised Channel during 2020–21, and to organise an educational programme on irrigation.

b. Measures for the preservation and promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage element that have been taken in the past or that are being implemented today (on a local, regional, or broader scale) (between 200 and 300 words)

The Raised Channel was originally built as an earthen canal when the village was founded. However, water was lost along the route to the village, and landslides occurred along its course. To safeguard both the irrigation system and the soil from erosion, the people of Kyriakochóri lined the canal with concrete and rebuilt the weir in stone, beginning work in 1950. To improve the canal's water supply, the Dési weir was built a little further downstream on the same stream in 1966, enabling the canal to receive water from two tributaries. Around 1970, a cistern was built in Agía Paraskeví to capture the night-time flow in the canal. This meant that more gardens could be watered the following morning, either directly from the canal or from the cistern. In that way, the need for night-time watering by lamplight was eliminated. Until about ten years ago, the community-appointed water steward (*nerofóros*), who opened the gate and managed turns, was responsible for upholding the unwritten rules and ensuring fair distribution of water to all.

Up until the present day, families who irrigate from the Raised Channel carry out minor repairs to the canal during the irrigation season under the leadership of the president of the local community, while the municipality undertakes major maintenance works. In 1952, Kyriakochorians who had migrated to Athens founded the Cultural

and Beautification Association of Kyriakochorians (Worldwide). According to its statutes, the association aims to protect the natural, historical and archaeological environment of Kyriakochori, particularly its flora and fauna. Kyriakochórians who had migrated to Athens, Thessaloniki, abroad and elsewhere before and after the Second World War began returning to the village for holidays in the 1960s. They came to regard walking along the canal up to the Desi as an important leisure activity for the whole family.

A major landmark along the canal is the Church of Profitis Ilías, where people of all ages picnic, play in the water and cool their drinks and fruit by placing them in the running water of the canal. In 2010, the Cultural Association built a public shelter with three walls, a grilling area and a traditional oven at Profitis Ilías, which drew even more people to the canal area.

From 2017 to 2019, the Cultural Association restored the traditional form of the Ai-Liás religious festival, held at midday beside the mountain church after the service, returning it to the village square. The success of the festival was due to the natural landscape and the canal's fresh water: for three consecutive years, around three hundred people gathered beside the canal to celebrate together, enjoying traditional music and food while always respecting the cleanliness of the water and the natural landscape. The route along the canal up to the Dési is of outstanding natural beauty and has attracted many visitors and organised events for at least sixty years. In recent years, four mountain hikes have been organised and successfully completed.

The first Mountain Hike on the Raised Channel was organised by the Cultural Association of Kyriakochórians, the Local Community and the Roumeli Cycling Club on Sunday 30 October 2016. This was followed by a second hike on Sunday, 29 October 2017; a third on Saturday, 13 October 2018; and a fourth on Saturday, 12 October 2019. All four hikes were successful, with 80–100 participants at each. Among them were a Greek Olympic medallist and a Greek mountaineer who has reached the summit of Everest. At the end of each hike, the association presented commemorative diplomas and wooden medals (*xylalia*). Traditional bean soup or boiled chestnuts were always provided, as these foods hold particular nutritional and cultural importance in Kyriakochóri.

From 2014 to 2018, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th “Roumeli Cycling Feat”—with cyclists from across Fthiótida and other parts of Greece—passed through the village and spent the night at Profitis Ilías beside the canal, where they enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Cultural Association, the local community and the villagers.

In 2015 and 2017, the 2nd Scout Troop of Papágoú held its summer camps at Profitis Ilías beside the canal. The area was filled with Scouts of all ages, respectful as always of the natural landscape, brought life to the village as they walked Channel by Channel down to the square and played scouting games with locals.

On August 17, every year since 2017, the Cultural Associations of the villages of the Ináchos, including Kyriakochóri, have organised the revival of the “Great Dance of Love”. The Association of Kyriakochorians (worldwide) participates each year, showcasing the cultural heritage of the Raised Channel and demonstrating its role in conserving biodiversity, as well as highlighting the valuable agri-food products produced by irrigating gardens and trees with cold mountain water. However, the 2020 revival was cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In 2007, the Cultural Association published a historical-folklore book to preserve information about the agricultural occupations of our ancestors. This book is also available to read online on the Association's website.

Finally, in 2010, the Association created a two-part digital photo album containing black-and-white photographs gathered from all villagers, which is also posted on the Association's website.

c. Proposed measures for preservation and promotion to be implemented in the future (on a local, regional, or broader scale) (between 300 and 500 words).

The local community of Kyriakochóri has already agreed to set up a hands-on workshop to promote and safeguard the traditional method of irrigation. The workshop will be a village garden irrigated with mountain water and producing wholesome agri-food products. The garden owners, who are the custodians of this tradition, will act as volunteer facilitators, demonstrating the watering method to individuals and groups. The Cultural and Beautification Association of Kyriakochorians (worldwide) has undertaken to include group visits to this community experiential workshop in its summer programme for both children and adults.

On 29 February 2020, the Mayor of Makrakómi agreed to take the necessary steps to preserve the Kyriakochóri Primary School, with the aim of converting it into a folklore museum. The Cultural Association of Kyriakochóri plans to dedicate two of the museum's walls to extensive material, including photographs and posters, as well as a screen for video and documentary screenings, focusing on the Raised Channel. Collection of material has already begun.

During the public consultation held on 6–7 June 2020, the president of the local community proposed reconstructing the watermill that existed in Profitis Ilías until around 1950, which operated using water from the Raised Channel. A villager has already offered to sponsor the reconstruction of the roof. It was also proposed that the historic path alongside the Channel through the forest, from Profitis Ilías to Dési, be maintained to enable safe hiking and potentially cycling.

On 23 June 2018, the Association of Kyriakochórians submitted a topographical study for the creation of a cultural–environmental park in the Profitis Ilías area to the Municipality of Makrakómi. The study was prepared by a fellow villager. In addition to enhancing the appearance of the Channel with fountains and bridges, the plans also include the construction of a small open-air theatre adapted to the natural surroundings, as well as the restoration of the old watermill. This major project could contribute to the promotion of the Raised Channel's intangible cultural heritage in the future.

Production has already begun of an ethnographic documentary aimed at introducing younger audiences to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Raised Channel — and, by extension, Greece. There are also plans to develop a comprehensive environmental education programme in collaboration with the Environmental Education Centre of Central Greece (KPE) and/or primary and secondary schools. This programme will contribute to environmental education for pupils across the country.

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10. Additional Evidence

a. Texts (sources, archival records, etc.)

14 letters

1 set of minutes

2 sources evidencing the element’s significance from the questionnaire

2 historical documents

2 certificates for the 1st and 3rd Mountain Hikes

b. Maps

6 maps

c. Visual and audio materials (drawings, photographs, audio, video)

10 photographs, 2 drawings, 2 videos

d. Report — water sample analysis by the Chemistry Laboratory of Lamía

e. Online sources (hyperlinks)

Το Σηκωμένο Αυλάκι ως υποψήφιο στοιχείο ΑΠΚ [The Raised Channel as a candidate ICH element] on the Association’s website, with the initial application by former Association President Pávlos Tzannís and the Ministry of Culture’s initial approval, plus link to the questionnaire:

<http://www.kyriakochori.gr/%cf%84%ce%bf-%cf%83%ce%b7%ce%ba%cf%89%ce%bc%ce%ad%ce%bd%ce%bf-%ce%b1%cf%85%ce%bb%ce%ac%ce%ba%ce%b9/>

Questionnaire: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf76i6Rw1ShzYfUGIUQ4V9oj7q-ElJr5QpgmaqiTvIRoShZxQ/viewform>

Το Σηκωμένο Αυλάκι — κύριος προορισμός αναψυχής / θέμα πεζοποριών [Raised Channel — main leisure destination / theme of hikes]:

<http://www.kyriakochori.gr/oloklirothike-i-2i-orini-pezoporia-dite-to-video/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqUMLi7Lvb0&feature=youtu.be>

Το πανηγύρι του Κυριακοχωρίου “Του Αϊ-Λια”, δίπλα στο Αυλάκι [Kyriakochóri festival of Prophet Elias, beside the Channel]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrQQMhhFcls>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r97i01nC-a0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t1KwTqsAkg>

Facebook Κυριακοχωρίου / Δημόσια ομάδα (διαχειρίστρια Ránia Skarlátου, Πρόεδρος του Συλλόγου) [Kyriakochóri Facebook public group]:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/42352292846/>

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<https://el-gr.facebook.com/KYRIAKOXORI/>

Facebook Ποδηλατικού Άθλου Ρούμελης/ Δημόσια ομάδα(διαχειριστής Γιάννης Katsikas) — οι ποδηλάτες κατασκηνώνουν συχνά στον Αϊ-Λιά, δίπλα στο Αυλάκι [Roumeli Cycling Feat — public group]:

<https://el-gr.facebook.com/podilatikosathlosroumelis/>

Συγκεκριμένο άλμπουμ[specific album]:

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=ms.c.eJxFUImSRVEE21EXYtz~%3Bxro4l~%3BebIjIQAVOOKImZcf3JAGwJyWzOB3givUQQ~%3BAFIMSvpHxDwntDacjgexwLC6BWAvhVXbyArvgmU94rmNxHJ5SWMWiCqz2rodzYsWrqWn3RIkyqvUq~_aK6rrhWqU0uoIjgFKzknBshixbpVaWGHPSnYeXMKXmI5bkZ3wcSvrxcv8JRaXqbxMf0BfKVpznhNh0UbogSkqqY50Qi7BceCRrIv6oDStoYkvAjPvk23ausFxCNd5QAdt2RLSjmpYwFTaR2AbIEZDVBUl5rTCzlfIwmpjSnffEtWzFnI3ZCbVZUFuB3Nu6sz49p4Th0igq~%3Bx~%3BV5B4tbMeoJs1UKffZJ~%3BgE0oqA3.bps.a.2228263863869490&type=1&_tn_=HH-R

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<https://www.facebook.com/kyriakochori.contest/>

iCloud — Το Σηκωμένο Αυλάκι / Κοινόχρηστος σύνδεσμος με σχετικές φωτογραφίες του Πάνλος Tzannis (πρόην Προέδρου και εμπνευστή της υποσηφιοτήτας) [iCloud shared album — Raised Channel photos]:

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<https://fonografos.net/v1/1%ce%b7-%ce%bf%cf%81%ce%b5%ce%b9%ce%bd%ce%ae-%cf%80%ce%b5%ce%b6%ce%bf%cf%80%ce%bf%cf%81%ce%af%ce%b1-%cf%83%cf%84%ce%bf-%ce%ba%cf%85%cf%81%ce%b9%ce%b1%ce%ba%ce%bf%cf%87%cf%8e%cf%81%ce%b9-%cf%86%ce%b8/>

Λοιπά άρθρα [other related articles]:

<https://fonografos.net/v1/?s=%CE%BA%CF%85%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%87%CF%89%CF%81%CE%B9>

Διοικητική εξέλιξη Κυριακοχωρίου [Administrative evolution of Kyriakochóri]:

<http://.kyriakochori.gr/plirofories/2/>

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- c. Place and Date Record Submission: Athens, June 29, 2020.

12. Last Update

June 30, 2021.