

The Music Section of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre of the Academy of Athens

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The Music Section of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (ex Folklore Archive) of the Academy of Athens was founded in 1914 (Law 432) originally as an independent Institution under the name of "National Music Collection". Its main aim was to preserve and collect the songs, dances and musical instruments of the Greek people. Unfortunately, due to the contemporary stormy political situation and because of the involvement of Greece in the 1st world war, the operation of the National Music Collection was suspended. In 1927 it was absorbed by the Folklore Archive (established in 1918) which was then placed under the aegis of the Academy of Athens. The National Music Archive constituted then the Music Section of the Folklore Archive which in 1966 was renamed the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre (Law 4545/1966).

In 1939 the Folklore Archive acquired recording equipment, but the use of it was not achieved before 1950 when it acquired a music research staff member. From that year the National Music Archive began to operate not as an autonomous institution but as a section of the Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, which absorbed all the aims of the National Music Collection. In the pursuit of these aims there are fieldworks organised all over Greece, financially supported by the Academy of Athens. In these fieldworks all staff members-researchers of the Centre, musicologists, folklorists, anthropologists, are normally engaged in the collection of folkloric material as well as in the registration of folk music, songs and dances. This has resulted to the collection of very important material concerning the use and function of music, dance and song in society, thus providing information for ethnomusicological and anthropological approaches to music. This material can be located in the Manuscript Archive of the Centre.

So far the Music Section has amassed some 30.000 items of folk music recorded on reel tapes and cassettes. These items have been catalogued and as part of a series of special projects, they have been copied in digital form in the Menelaos Pallantios specially equipped studio of the Centre. Much of the existing material has been transcribed into Western and Byzantine musical notation by specialists in music and has been musically studied.

Apart from these, the Music Section has a Library specialized in Music Folklore, Ethnomusicology and Musicology, it organizes international scientific Music Conferences and carries out publications of folk music material.