

subject of doctoral dissertation:

Folklore approaches in Monastic Life

The Sisterhood of the Holy Monastery of The Almighty TAO in Penteli

ABSTRACT

The subject of this doctoral dissertation proposal is the portrayal and analysis of the Greek Orthodox monastic life, as it occurs at a “Holy Place”. This dissertation will be based on the case study of The Sisterhood of the Holy Monastery of The Almighty TAO in Penteli.

The research framework of the dissertation is set chronologically at the beginning of the 60s, (the reopening of the monastery by eleven nuns) till today. As the main research frame, it is suggested the folkloric study of the lifestyle of the nuns throughout a year time, of life and worship, in other words, their monastic way of life, which is being researched in association with the sanctity of the Holy Monastery of The Almighty TAO in Penteli as their place of dwelling. This research will also investigate the deaconships, the relations and furthermore the variety of activities in which the Sisterhood engages in a holy context (spiritual fathers, clergymen, other monastic sisterhoods), but also a secular context (worshipers and religious tourists, doners, dedicators and people who aid the monastery, religious and cultural associations), in an effort to illustrate and interpret the relations between the monastic community and the wider social milieu, as it emerges from the analysis of this particular case study.

The research question that is being posed in this dissertation is, if and to which extend the folklore mainly and the interdisciplinary, in general, study of the monastic life of this specific Greek orthodox Sisterhood as a case study, can showcase the spiritual and social notions and practices, as a result of the interaction between the nuns and their relations with other spiritual and secular communities. The aim of this thesis is the cross-sectional folklore approach of the monastic life of this specific cenobitic community. A way of life thriving today at a “Holy Place” which carries a long history through ages and oral tradition. The thesis’ aims the recording as well as the analysis of all the parameters that rule the life of the Monastery as a

community taking into consideration the social, spiritual, material and cultural expression, in addition to the ways the Sisterhood influences and is influenced by the secular environment.

This dissertation will be based on the methods that are currently used by the folklore science and they are based on the interdisciplinary scientific approaches and interchange. More specifically the following methodological approaches will be used: ethnographic inquiry on the field accompanied by practical observation, standard and nonstandard (narrations, free conversations) interviews, a full detailed Greek and foreign bibliography including domains concerning religion folklore, conventual studies, gender anthropology, dogma and mass theology and finally archives research planning a study on the history of the Monastery throughout centuries.

keywords:

The Holy Monastery of The Almighty TAO in Penteli, monastic life, monachism, Greek orthodox monachism, sisterhood, holy place, religion folklore, monastic studies.