

**Abstract. Women photographers in Greece during interwar period: The case of Nelly's**

The interwar period, which in Greece spans from the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1919–1922) to the Greco-Italian War (1940–1941), is characterized by intense political turmoil, economic upheaval and instability, and significant societal change with the arrival of thousands of refugees and the creation of new residential areas. Within this space and time, women, mainly thanks to the development of industry and reforms in the field of education, managed to escape from the private sphere and progress – even if under supervision – towards paid labor. The social position of women strengthened over time, with the result being that more and more women turned to work to ensure their own financial independence.

During this period, Greek photography evolved dynamically. Creative activity intensified, as Greek photographers transformed their images from static and faithful depictions of reality to daring, and sometimes radical, artistic innovations. The paper demonstrates the contribution of women photographers who lived and worked in the country's capital such as Alice Dildilian, Ellie Papadimitriou, Maria Chroussachi and Voula Papaionnou focusing on the work of Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari, known better under the professional name Nelly's.

Having studied photography in Dresden, Germany, Nelly set up her photographic studio in a small apartment in Athens and with the characteristic tenacity along with her unrelenting work ethic, she attempted not only to establish herself but also to differentiate herself within the male-dominated environment of Greek photographic practice. She was the only Greek photographer of the interwar period who engaged with dance photography and studies of the nude form (female and male bodies), applying ideas and techniques she picked up during her studies with the established Hugo Erfurth and Franz Fiedler. During the course of her professional career in Athens from

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**WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS IN GREECE  
DURING INTERWAR PERIOD: THE CASE  
OF NELLY'S**

Aliki Tsirgialou

1924 to 1939, Nelly's carried herself with youthful enthusiasm and passion, following and adopting new technical and aesthetic developments in the field of photography while also continuously updating her thematic choices. Her large and diverse body of work combines boldness, a keen eye for detail, technical mastery, photographic astuteness and aesthetic certainty in perfect proportion.

**Keywords:** Greek photography, Women photographers, Nelly's, Voula Papaioannou, Ellie Papadimitriou, Franz Fiedler, Alice Dildilian, Maria Chroussachi.

The interwar period, which in Greece spans from the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1919–1922) to the Greco-Italian War (1940–1941), is characterized by intense political turmoil, economic upheaval and instability, and significant changes within the society due to the arrival of thousands of refugees and the creation of new residential areas. The world of visual arts and academia absorbed the negative consequences of the Asia Minor Catastrophe— and by this I mean the collapse of the *Megali Idea* (the “Great Idea” of expanding Greece's borders to include all those ethnically Greek and the

suffering of losing one's homeland. This along with the reverberations of the intense political activity that followed within the country, shaped new ideas, completely different from those which had come before. Greek artists felt the need to come together and look for new symbols "which would give a form to their expression free from foreign elements, based on Greek tradition"<sup>1</sup>. The state itself supported the search for a common cultural identity, as it systematically injected resources into artistic production, for the first time, aiming to shape a new form of art, with national characteristics<sup>2</sup>.

In the troubled interwar period, rife with contradictions, Greek photography evolved dynamically. Creative activity intensified, as Greek photographers transformed their images from static and faithful depictions of reality to daring, and sometimes radical, artistic innovations. In parallel with the artistic concerns of the period, they also sought out elements of "Greekness" in their photographic choices. They turned to the Greek landscape "as a wellspring of national identity and an inexhaustible source of original inspiration"<sup>3</sup>.

Within this space and time, women, mainly thanks to the development of industry and reforms in the field of education, managed to "escape from the private sphere and progress – even if under supervision – towards paid labor"<sup>4</sup> In the same period, women won, though under conditions, the right to vote in municipal elections<sup>5</sup>, while female organizations were founded, in a militant manner, that demanded women's rights at work and equal treatment. The social position of women strengthened over time and thus more and more women turned to work to ensure their own financial independence.

However, as the Greek historian Efi Avdela stresses the livelihoods and professional activities of women were multifaceted and correlated to their social strata. More importantly, "we are ignorant of those aspects of women's work which are difficult to document, either because they leave no trace or have not, to date, been

systematically studied"<sup>6</sup>. References are rarely made to those women who participated, often unpaid, in family businesses, resulting in their work ultimately not being recognized. In the area of professional photography for example, during the first decades of the 20th century, we find such cases in the figures of the daughter of prolific photographer Aristotelis Rhomaides, the wife of Carl Boehringer and the daughter of Spyros Milionis, who initially worked in their familie's photo studios, but subsequently, following the death of their relatives, took over the operation of the business<sup>7</sup>.

In the same context is the work of Alice Dildilian, member of an Armenian family which was renowned for its photographic activity in the Anatolia region. During the Ottoman period in Turkey, her father Tsolag and his siblings ran photography studios in the former city of Sepastia, now part of modern-day Sivas, and Marsovan (Merzifon)<sup>8</sup>. When they were forced to flee the land of their ancestors, at the end of 1922, they travelled to Piraeus and settled in the refugee area of Kokkinia, near the port of Pireaus. In an effort to establish a foothold in their new surroundings, they turned to photography, the subject they knew so well and already practiced with success, initially opening up a small studio<sup>9</sup>. A short time later, Alice's father fell seriously ill, which resulted in her dropping out of Pierce College in order to assist him in his work. After his death, she and her brother Humayag would continue the family's successful path in photography. Together, in the mid-1930s, they even expanded the business by establishing a modern studio in the busy port of Piraeus.

Alice Dildilian worked unassumingly in the field of photography without demanding acknowledgement. Her shots, though unsigned or under the trade name of the family company, possibly to reassure their established clientele, are not easily discerned from the photographs taken by her father or brother<sup>10</sup>. It should also be mentioned, however, that like her predecessor colleagues Lilika Rhomaides, Josephine Boehringer and

Filia Milioni, she must have loved the photographic medium growing up next to a passionate renowned photographer, and so her works would never have lagged behind in aesthetic quality.

Like Alice Dildilian, Ellie Papadimitriou (1906–1993) was also born and raised in Asia Minor. Coming from an affluent family in Smyrna, Papadimitriou had already studied agriculture in England shortly before arriving in Greece in early the 1920s. With her excellent language skills, she took part in the missions of the Committee for the Rehabilitation of Refugees and followed their path through the in-land and coastal settlements. She stayed with the refugees in the makeshift camps, and with her camera in hand “a box KODAK 6<sup>1/2</sup> × 11, and on rare occasions one of the service’s more complicated 8 × 10, on loan,”<sup>11</sup> she equally recorded these refugees struggle for survival in their new homeland as much as the very place that welcomed them (phot. 1, 2). With

authentic immediacy and “without a specific target, [...] subjects ready, and crowd directions none”<sup>12</sup> as she would write many years later about the photography in the regions of Epirus and Macedonia from 1928 to 1931. With the establishment of the Center for Asia Minor Studies in 1930, she collaborated with Melpo Merlier to preserve the cultural identity of the refugees by recording live testimonies and their musical traditions. Papadimitriou, according to her biographer Ioanna Petropoulos, was the pioneer initiator of collecting oral testimony in the Greek region, with the publication of *Ο κοινός λόγος* [The Common Word]<sup>13</sup> being the culmination of her creative career. The photos she took during the interwar period were only made known after the fall of the junta in 1973 in three topographical albums under the overall title “Old Photographs”,<sup>14</sup> situating her work within a new ideological framework stigmatizing the negative changes brought about by touristic development<sup>15</sup>.



Phot. 1: – Ellie Papadimitriou Nomads on the move, Epirus, Greece 1928/31 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives. Neg.no. [ΦΑ.19.630].



Phot. 2: – Ellie Papadimitriou Vlach women from Macedonia, 1928/31 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives. Neg.no.[ΦΑ.19.36].

In the 1920s there were 46 photo studios in operation in Athens. The field was dominated by male professionals such as Georgios Boukas (1879–1941),<sup>16</sup> Ioannis Georgalas<sup>17</sup> and Evangelos Mich. Evangelidis (1893–1963)<sup>18</sup>. As well as already established in Asia Minor professional photographers that settled in Athens like Nikolaos Zografos (1881–1967)<sup>19</sup> and Andreas Kokkonis<sup>20</sup>. In 1924, into the city's male-dominated environment, there arrived a young woman also from Asia Minor, Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (1899–1998)<sup>21</sup> better known by her professional name *Nelly's*. Having studied photography in Dresden, Germany and with the consent of her father,<sup>22</sup> as was most likely required by Greek law, she set up her photography studio in the center of Athens (on Ermou Street) with the equipment she had bought at the spring trade fair in Leipzig. Her studio was small and served also like a

gallery where she presented samples of her work in order to draw clientele. It measured approximately 10 square meters so when she wanted to photograph full-length portraits she had to place her camera in the next room. Later on, in 1931, she was able to move her establishment to a bigger space where she was able to successfully produce group portraits.

With her characteristic tenacity along with her unrelenting work ethic, she attempted not only to establish herself but also to differentiate herself. In terms of the domestic photographic scene she used groundbreaking practices, shooting techniques and printing methods (bromoil and öldruck), which she had been taught as a student of the established photographers Hugo Erfurth and Franz Fiedler. The Athenian middle class streamed to her atelier to be photographed and, before long, the young photographer was greatly sought after. She photographed members of the royal

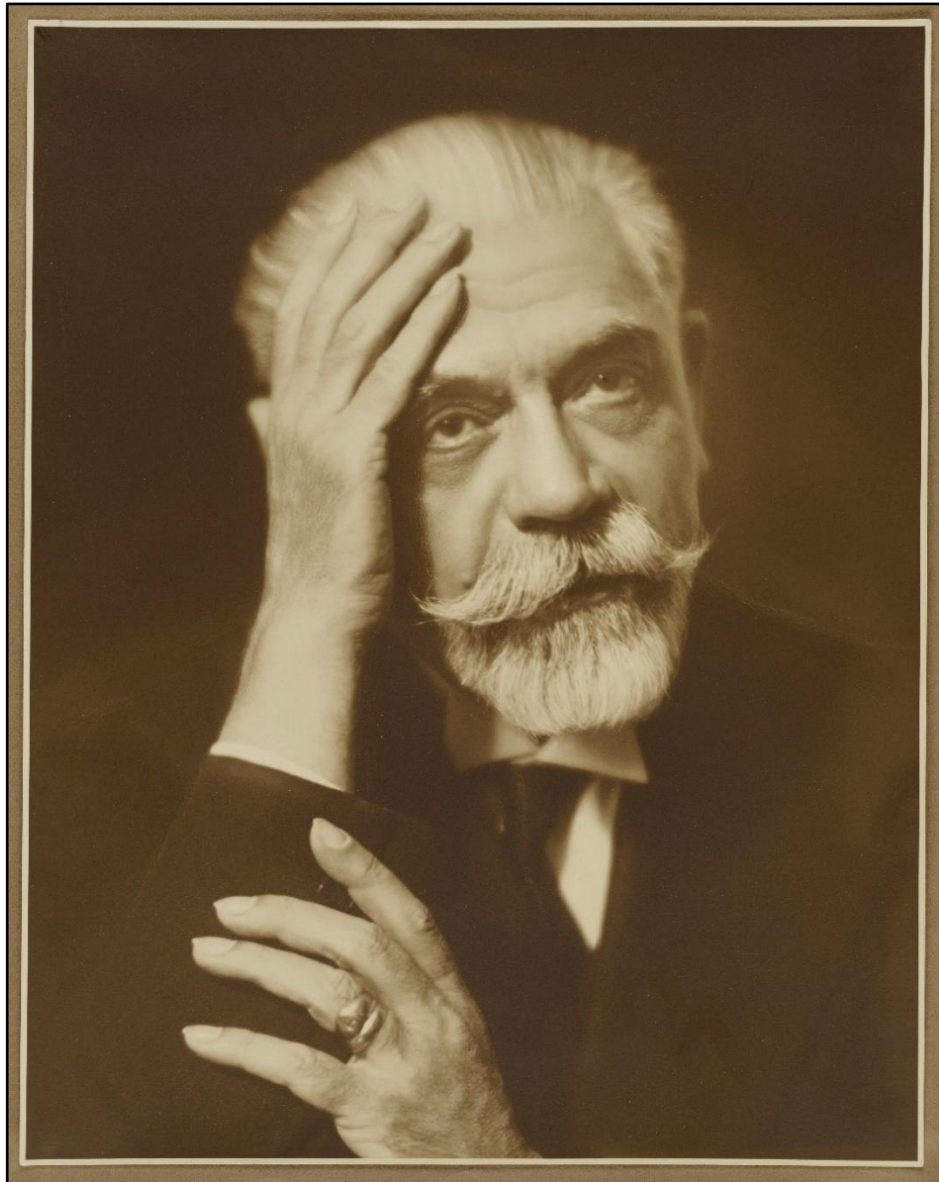
family (phot. 3) and outstanding personalities of the political world (phot. 4) as well as distinguished members of the artistic circles such as writers, poets, painters, musicians, actors, journalists as well as

famous people passing through the city. The glass negatives from this part of her work number up to more than 15.000 and they provide a unique representation of the athenian society in the interwar years<sup>23</sup>.



Phot. 3: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) Princess Irene, 1937-39 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.





Phot. 4: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) The politician Ioannis Tsirimokos, 1929–30 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

During the course of her professional career in Athens from 1924 to 1939, Nelly's carried herself with youthful enthusiasm and passion, following and adopting new technical<sup>24</sup> and aesthetic developments in the field of photography, while also continuously updating her thematic choices<sup>25</sup>. She was the only Greek photographer of the interwar period (and possibly the first in the history of Greek photography) who engaged with dance photography and studies of the nude form

(female and male bodies), applying ideas and techniques she picked up during her studies. The shots of Mona Paiva, prima ballerina of the Parisian Opéra Comique in 1925 at the Acropolis, and of the Russian dancer Elisaveta Nikolska five years later (phot. 5), which occurred during a period of intense theoretical and artistic discussion around the historical continuity of Hellenism, confirm the boldness and the aesthetic confidence of the photographer.



Phot. 5: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) The Russian dancer Elizaveta (Lila) Nikolska at the Acropolis, November 1930 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

The publication of these photographs in Greek newspapers caused a scandal within the conservative Athenian society of the interwar period as many critics accused Nelly's of 'desecrating' the monument. In her support, the influential writer Pavlos Nirvanas wrote effectively concluding the discussion: "I protest in the name of the Olympian Gods, who, as we know, not only walked about naked, male and female, but were even worshipped in their temples completely naked"<sup>26</sup>.

Among the efforts to revive ancient Greek culture with the aim of engendering a new national identity the Delphic Festivals (1927 & 1930) were held, designed by Angelos Sikelianos with his wife Eva Palmer. The grandiose vision of the great poet included theatrical performances, athletic events, a concert of Byzantine music, folk dances and handcraft exhibitions, in a search for representations of antiquity within

newer practices. Nelly's managed to secure the exclusive photography rights for the Second Delphic Festival<sup>27</sup>. For a month, before the official event, she and her husband rented a small house in order to be present during all the rehearsals; as such, Nelly's had the opportunity to carefully study her subjects. Inspired by the choreography, she took a series of portraits of the actors and athletes on site, wearing the costumes that were hand-made by Eva Palmer, in classical poses that referenced figures in ancient Greek vases (phot. 6). Using a 10 × 15 cm folding camera, Nelly's produced remarkable pictures that she then sold in the format of postcards to members of the audience, making the Delphic Festivals famous all over the world. These images, resembling tableaux vivants, as though set in an ancient Greek frieze, reflect the spirit of the Festivals as their creators had foreseen it.



Phot. 6: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) Members of the chorus of the Oceanids (Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound) posing at the ancient theatre of Delphi, First Delphic Festival 1927  
© Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

Nelly consistently photographed ancient monuments throughout her time in Greece, trying out a variety of photographic techniques. “As soon as I came to Greece I went up to the Acropolis, [...] whenever the weather changed and there were some nice clouds in the sky, I shot off [...] to take photographs”, she told Eurydice Trichon-Milsani, explaining her passion for ancient Greek civilisation, which is, in any case, one of the definitive qualities of her work<sup>28</sup>. Nelly's had no previous experience

from her training in photographing antiquities or museum artifacts. She was however familiar with the work of her fellow colleagues in this field like the Swiss Fred Boissonnas and the German Walter Hege adopting some of their photographic tricks. Following in their footsteps, Nelly photographed the colonnade of the Parthenon and the temple of Hephaestus, creating a “window”<sup>29</sup> through which the viewer's gaze is directed to a secondary subject, such as, for



example, a view of the city of Athens or of the Parthenon (phot. 7), as in the case of the first Greek National Tourism Organisation poster released in 1929<sup>30</sup>.

One of the subjects that she was especially fond of photographing was statues and busts in the country's archaeological museums<sup>31</sup>. She would place the objects either in the museum display cases, as she had done when photographing the Minoan artefacts in the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, or against a monochrome background to

isolate them from the other exhibits and to "bring them out clearly" as she notes<sup>32</sup>. She would sometimes utilise the shadows cast by the lighting to create unusual compositions or play with their forms, staging her image, as she had done in her depictions of the clay figurines in Tanagra (phot. 8). She shot the heads of the statues from strange angles (from below or sideways) like living beings, as she would do with models in her studio, bringing out, in her singular way, their sculptural and expressive qualities.



Phot.7: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) The Parthenon from the Propylaea, 1925–29 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.



Phot. 8: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly’s) Heads of clay figurines from Tanagra, National Archaeological Museum, 1925–38 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

In the spring of 1928, Nelly made her first extensive tour of the countryside with her teacher, Franz Fiedler<sup>33</sup>. Together they toured the Peloponnese and the island of Crete. Side by side, with their cameras in their hands,<sup>34</sup> they undertook a common journey of visual detection, exploring places unknown to them both. They sought their subjects in nature and captured the distinctive landscape of the Greek mainland. Fiedler remarked upon the alternating character of the countryside in an article: “The first impression of the Greek landscape is powerful. The shapes, the sounds, the colours, the light. The landscape is dry, barren, strange but expressive. In their exhaustive study of the Greek landscape, the two photographers included bucolic images of men herding their animals (phot. 9) and women spinning yarn.

Their lenses focused upon the figures of the local people. Fiedler, who had already spent some time exploring the ways a person could be depicted and the photographic rendering of their personality, found himself

confronted by an abundance of subjects, and swept his student along in his artistic pursuits (phot. 10)<sup>35</sup>. The rural people’s reaction to Fiedler ranged from wary to guarded. According to his descriptions in the *Deutsche Kamera Almanach* “the men were awkward, while the women, in their shyness, giggled and hid, making it hard to depict them in a natural way”<sup>36</sup>. Teacher and apprentice posed their models before neutral backgrounds, isolating them from the surrounding space, and brought out the distinctive features of their faces in their depictions. They approached their subjects exactly as they would if they had photographed them in the studio. A comparative study of their work indicates that the subject would look into Nelly’s lens one moment and turn their gaze towards Fiedler’s camera the next. In most cases, the experienced teacher chose the immediacy of a frontal shot, with his student apparently shooting simultaneously, but discreetly, from another angle<sup>37</sup>.



Phot. 9: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) Peloponnese,  
1928 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.



Phot. 10: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) Shepherd in the Peloponnese,  
1928 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

Nelly utilised her photographs commercially in a range of ways<sup>38</sup>. Her clients could browse through the portfolio she made available while waiting to be photographed in her studio and order signed prints on warm-toned photographic paper. She also created greeting cards for sale in central bookstores in Athens as well as postcards following the footsteps of her fellow colleagues. This activity secured a supplementary income for professional photographers, while contributing to the touristic promotion of Greece.

As already mentioned, the Greek interwar period was characterized by intense political instability. The strife between Royalists and Venizelists, the – temporary – abolition of the monarchy, the successive changes of government and multiple coups, led, ultimately, to the establishment of the regime of August 4, 1936 – that being, General Ioannis Metaxas imposing his right-wing dictatorship on the nation. During this period, Nelly's continued to work tirelessly, through the contribution of her pictures, with the campaigns by the Deputy Ministry of Press and Tourism seeking to promote Greece as a tourist destination. The photographic image was acknowledged at the time as the most appropriate medium for illustrating propaganda material – pamphlets, posters, postcards and albums – while the need was also apparent for an “official” photography of the country<sup>39</sup>. The state, for the first time, invited Greek photographers including women, to travel to predetermined locations and shoot them, with their work contributing to promoting Greece abroad as a tourist destination.

Nelly also assigned to travel to Epirus in 1937 and to Crete in 1939. In contrast to her spontaneous photographs from her

1928 tour of the Peloponnese, the images she created for the Deputy Ministry of Press and Tourism were, in the most part, staged. In terms of theme, they deal with agricultural works, animal farming, everyday occupations and the traditional way of life in mainland Greece. In this unit, the same people appear several times, such as the young shepherd whom she apparently met in the Vikos gorge (phot. 11) and ran into again, as if by accident, in conversation with a young woman at the doorway of a stone house. The women from the village of Delvinaki in their festive costume at Nelly's request<sup>40</sup>, appear several times in staged poses in a vineyard and in agricultural activities. In her images, the rural people are shown smiling and optimistic about the future. Human relations are accentuated through the selfless love of the mother for her child, the implicit respect of the young towards the elderly, and the solidarity shared between the residents of rural Greece. Some of these images that appeared in the illustrated quarterly publication of the Press and Tourism Office entitled *En Grèce* (phot. 12) bring to mind the work of the Swiss-Romanian photographer Adolph A. Chevallier (1881–1963) taken during the interwar period in the district/region of Bistrița<sup>41</sup>.

The young Voula Papaioannou (1898–1990) accompanied Panos Yeralis as his “assistant” when he set out to photograph the islands of Santorini and Mykonos for the Deputy Ministry of Press and Tourism<sup>42</sup>. The shots the apprentice photographer took on this trip are included in a handmade album entitled *Santorin – Mykonos* and bear the signature “photo Grecia”, the professional name she used as a young creator until 1938 (phot. 13). The same signature accompanies three more sets of photographs: capturing the exhibits of



both the Acropolis Museum and the National Archaeological Museum, as well as the representation of Athens and its monuments as encapsulated in the *Athènes* album (phot. 14). According to Fani Constantinou who studied her work in depth, “Papaioannou’s early photographic studies, with their harmonious compositions and gentle gradation of tones, follow the stereotypical trends of the time, while fragments of modernism can be discerned [though without] foreshadowing the power of her vision, which would be revealed through the photographs” she took in Athens during the German Occupation<sup>43</sup>.

Another female photographer of the interwar period that remains, like Papaioannou, mostly known for her postwar images is Maria Chroussachi (1899–1972)<sup>44</sup>. As a volunteer nurse with

the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) she travelled extensively and documented with her camera the nature and the people of the countryside. She also persistently sought to illustrate the traditional way of life, men and women in their traditional garments going about their daily activities: the baking of bread, herding animals, spinning wool, etc. We follow, almost cinematically, her journey with the HRC through the photographs she shoots while participating in its numerous missions. From the suburbs of Vyronas and Kaisariani near Athens, to Ierissos in the north in 1932 where she supported victims of an earthquake, to the hospital in Serres and the hospices of Thessaloniki. Carefully assembled in albums which are held in the National Gallery of Greece, her photographs embody the interwar photographic spirit with a romantic disposition and purity of soul.

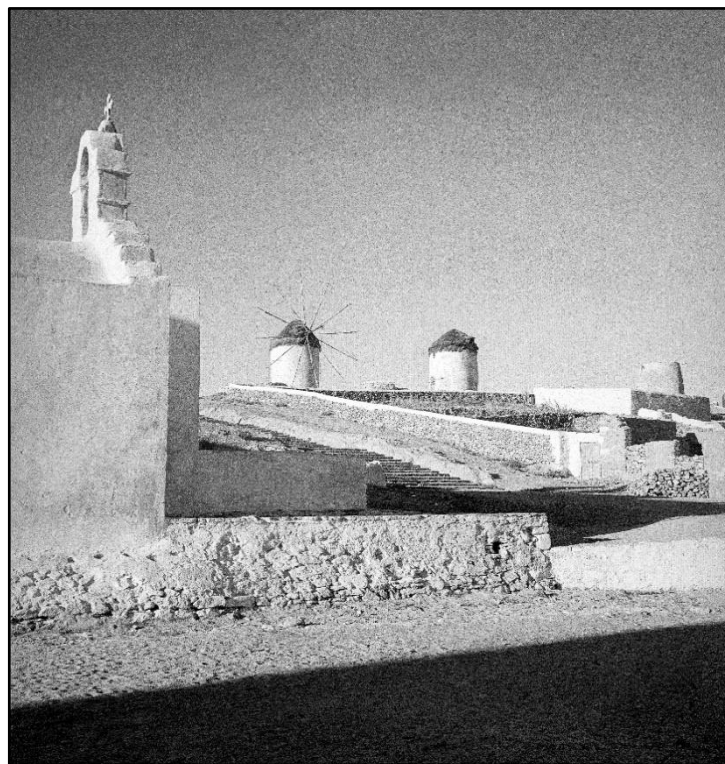


Phot. 11: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly’s) Shepherds in Epirus, 1937/38 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.

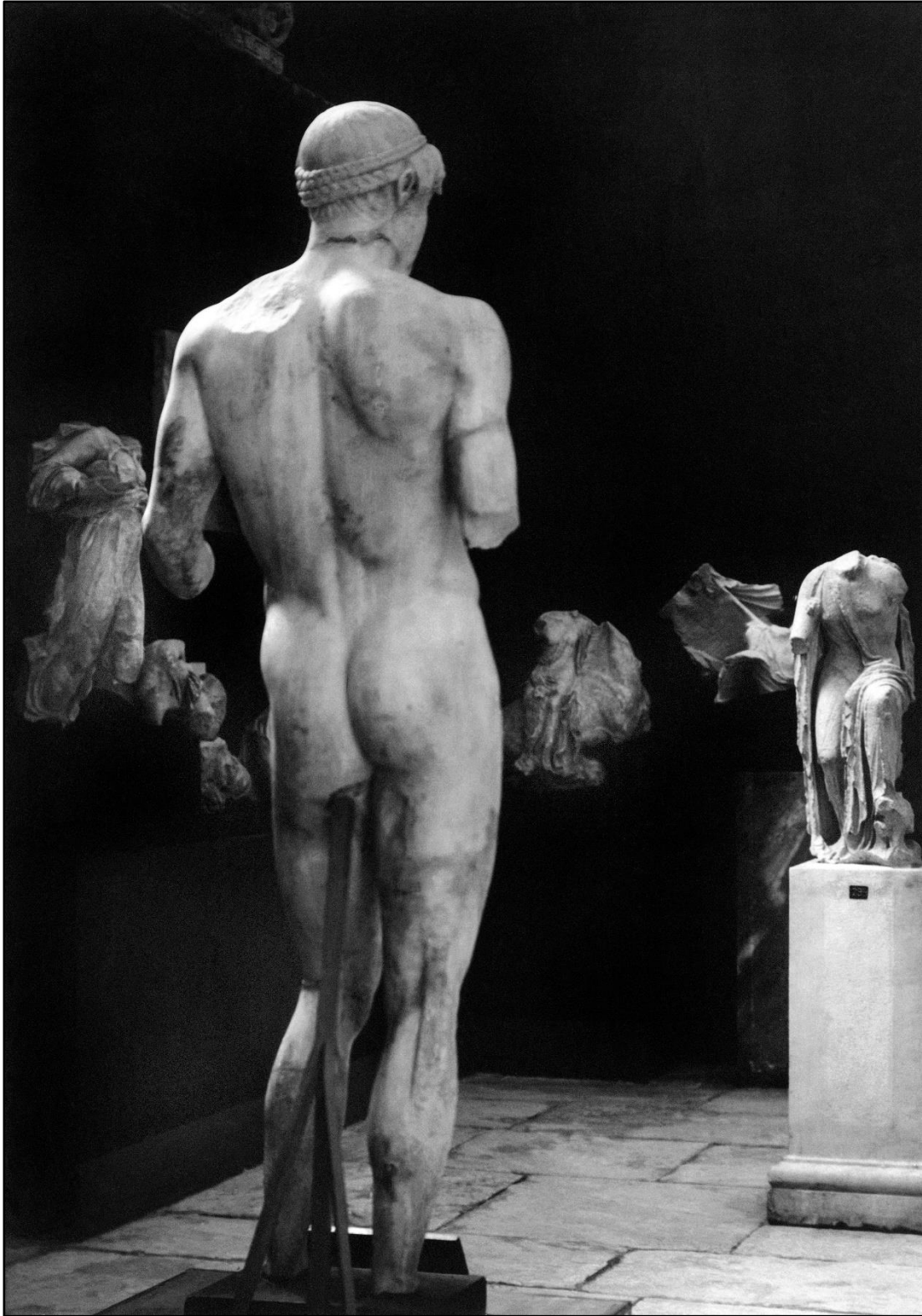




Phot. 12: – Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (Nelly's) Women in traditional costumes from Samos dancing, as part of the August 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations, 1937/38 © Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.



Phot. 13: – Voula Papaioannou Myconos, Greece 1935/36  
© Benaki Museum Photographic Archives.



Phot. 14: Voula Papaioannou National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece 1935/36  
© Benaki Museum Photographic Archives

The outbreak of war, like a catapult, suddenly interrupted that peaceful life and each of the aforementioned women would end up following a different direction. Alice Dildilian worked until 1947, when she decided to move to America permanently, to reunite with her brother Ara. Nelly's, in reaction to her visit to the New York World's Fair in 1939, where she participated with five large-sized photographic collages, left her successful business to her brother and went to test her mettle in the unknown, to her, in the field of American photography, working hard until her retirement in 1966. Ellie Papadimitriou, in April 1941, boarded the steamer *Elsi* to seek refuge in the Middle East. There, in the midst of persecution, her first poetry collection entitled, *The East* (Cairo 1942), emerged. The two friends,

Voula Papaioannou and Maria Chroussachi, each fought their own separate struggle during the period of Occupation. The former offered her services on the front lines and illustrated the harshness of war and the adverse conditions under which the Greek army was fighting. The latter, defying the prohibitions of the German occupier, resisted with her camera, capturing images of children and the elderly on the verge of death from starvation, with her shots being disseminated abroad so as to awaken public opinion and underline the urgency of sending aid. The liberation of the country would mean a new beginning for both of them as they, together with other women, would emerge into the post-war era, transforming the artform of Greek photography in line with the new trends that prevailed internationally.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Tony P. Spiteris, *Τρεις Αιώνες Νεοελληνικής Τέχνης 1660–1967* [*Three Centuries of Modern Greek Art 1660–1967*], vol. 2, Papyrus, Athens 1979, p. 126. “Back to the source, to the life force of the nation!”, fanatically declared Fotis Kontoglou, who hailed from Asia Minor, stressing that “[...] in the folk inheritance and the Byzantine tradition [...] lies absolute artistic truth.” Spiteris, pp. 127–128.

<sup>2</sup> Eugenios D. Matthiopoulos, “Οι εικαστικές τέχνες” [The visual arts] in Christos Hatziioussif (ed.), *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα, 1922–1940, Ο Μεσοπόλεμος* [*History of Greece of the 20th century, 1922–1940, The Interwar period*], vol. B2, Bibliorama, Athens 2003, pp. 403–404.

<sup>3</sup> Hercules Papaioannou, *Η Φωτογραφία του Ελληνικού Τοπίου. Μεταξύ μύθου και Ιδεολογίας* [*The Photography of the Greek Landscape. Between myth and Ideology*], Agra Publications, Athens 2014, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Tasoula Vervenioti, “Η αναδιευθέτηση του χώρου και του χρόνου των νέων στην Ελλάδα του μεσοπολέμου” [The reconfiguration of young people's time and space in the interwar period] in *Χρόνος της Ιστορίας, Για μια Ιστορία της Παιδικής Ηλικίας και της Νεότητας* [Times of history, For a history of childhood and youth] (Athens: Historical Archive of Greek Youth, General Secretariat for Youth, 1998), p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> In 1925 a law was passed which allowed women to vote in local elections, as long as they were 30 years old and had, at the least, attended primary school.

<sup>6</sup> Efi Avdela, “Οψεις της γυναικείας εργασίας, Οι πολύπλευρες βιοποριστικές και επαγγελματικές δραστηριότητες των γυναικών του μεσοπολέμου” [Aspects of women's work, the multifaceted subsistence and professional activities of women during the interwar period] in *SEVEN DAYS* of the newspaper Kathimerini (May 2, 1999), 29.

<sup>7</sup> Alkis Xanthakis, *Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Φωτογραφίας, 1839–1970* [History of Greek photography 1839–1970]. Athens: Papyrus, 2008, p. 173–174, 279.

<sup>8</sup> For information relating to the Dildilian family see Armen T. Marsoobian, *Reimagining a Lost Armenian Home, The Dildilian Photography Collection*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Armen Marsoobian, “Πάθος για τη Φωτογραφία: Η ιστορία της οικογένειας Διλδιλιάν” [Passion for Photography: The history of the Dildilian family] in *Παλιοί Φωτογράφοι της Νίκαιας, Μέρος Ι<sup>ο</sup>, Αρμένιοι Φωτογράφοι της Νίκαιας, 1922–1960* [Old Photographers of Nikaia, Part 1, Armenian Photographers of Nikaia, 1922–1960], ed. Maria Poulou (Municipality of Nikaia-Ag. I. Renti: Public Gallery of Nikaia, 2020), p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ioannis Moutsianos, curator of the exhibition *The Photographic Odyssey of the Dildilian Family: From Anatolia to the West* (Museum of Byzantine Culture Thessaloniki, October 11, 2023 – February 25, 2024) confirms that in the family archives there don't appear to be any signed photographs, works of Alice Dildilian.

<sup>11</sup> Introduction to *Παλιές Φωτογραφίες, Ήπειρο-Μακεδονία* [Old photographs, Epirus-Macedonia], Athens: Hermes Publishing, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Introduction to *Παλιές Φωτογραφίες, Ήπειρο-Μακεδονία* [Old photographs, Epirus-Macedonia], Athens: Hermes Publishing, 1977.

<sup>13</sup> Ioanna Petropoulou, *Έλλη Παπαδημητρίου: μια γυναίκα του 20ού αιώνα, Ο κανόνας και η παράβαση* [Elli Papadimitriou: a woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, The rule and its breaking], Athens: Hermes Publishing, 2022, pp. 15, 413–435.

<sup>14</sup> The albums were published in the order: *Ήπειρο-Μακεδονία* [Epirus-Macedonia]. Athens: Hermes Publishing, 1977, *Νησιά* [Islands], Athens: Kedros Publishers, 1978 and *Αθήνα – Πειραιά – Καισαριανή* [Athens-Piraeus-Kaisariani], Athens: Hermes Publishing, 1979.

<sup>15</sup> Papadimitriou stopped photographing after the period of “Supposition” (the period of modern Greek history after the fall of the junta in 1974). In 1976, she sold part of her photographic work to the Benaki Museum in Athens Greece.

<sup>16</sup> Georgios Boucas (Bougioukas) was born on Mytilini but raised in England, where he learned the art of photography. In 1917 he settled in Athens and opened a photography studio on Filellinon Street. See Xanthakis, *History of Greek Photography*, *ibid*, p. 291–295.

<sup>17</sup> Known under the studio name *Photo Radio*. Alkis X. Xanthakis, “Ιωάννης Γεωργιάδης, Ένας καλλιτέχνης φωτογράφος του μεσοπολέμου” [Ioannis Georgalas, A photographic artist of the interwar period] in the magazine *Φωτογράφος* [Photographer], no. 111 (January–February 2003), p. 72.

<sup>18</sup> Member of the great family of Macedonian photographers from who owned the company *Photo-Eva*. Georgios Tsigaras, *Ο ζωγράφος Μιχαήλ Ευαγγελίδης στην Ξάνθη* [The painter Michail Evangelidis in Xanthi], n.p., Xanthi 2012, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Xanthakis, *History of Greek Photography, 1839–1970*, *ibid*, pp. 284–285.

<sup>20</sup> Alkis X. Xanthakis, “Οι Έλληνες φωτογράφοι της Σμύρνης” [The Greek photographers of Smyrna] in the magazine *Opticon*, no. 22 (June–July 1994), p. 63.

<sup>21</sup> For further information on the life and work of Nelly’s see *NELLY’S. The work of the photographer Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (1899–1998)*, (ed. Aliko Tsirgiyalou) Athens: Benaki Museum, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> The Draft Commission for the Civil Legal Code established in 1930 that a woman required the consent of her husband consent to practice any profession. Six years earlier, in 1924, when Elly Sougioultzoglou opened her photography studio, she was still unmarried and we therefore assume that she would have needed her father’s consent to practice as a professional photographer.

<sup>23</sup> In 1984 Nelly donated her entire work to the Benaki Museum in Athens Greece. Her donation

includes fifty thousand negatives and transparencies, twenty thousand original prints, films and recordings of television shows from the 1980s and 1990s, correspondence and personal documents covering the time period between 1923 and 1998, diplomas and awards, cuttings from newspapers and magazines, books from her personal library, cameras with their accessories and the equipment from her darkrooms in Athens and New York. The above is supplemented by negatives and prints made by her husband, Angelos Seraidaris, as well as documents pertaining to the latter and his family. In 1997 she granted ownership over the entire body of her work and intellectual rights also to the Benaki Museum.

<sup>24</sup> Nelly was the first photographer in Greece who worked with color materials during the interwar period. See Desi Griva, “Materiality in the work of Nelly’s” in *NELLY’S. The work of the photographer Elly Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (1899–1998)*, (ed. Aliko Tsirgiyalou), Athens, Benaki Museum, 2023, 444–451.

<sup>25</sup> For as long as allowed by the successful operation of her atelier, she toured the country capturing the archaeological sites, as well as the landscape in an idyllic relationship with its inhabitants in an idyllic. From this material she chose subjects which she then printed (in 1930 using the rotogravure method) on letter cards which she stocked for sale in city center bookshops. This was in direct competition with her male peers who marketed their landscape shots in a similar way at the time.

<sup>26</sup> Pavlos Nirvanas, “Βεβήλωσις;” [Desecration?], *Estia* newspaper (24 October 1925), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> With the recommendation of Penelope Delta. In Delphi she crossed paths with the folklorist Angeliki Hatzimichali who was organizing small exhibitions of folk art and with Ellie Papadimitriou who had taken on the task of bringing together folk musicians, instrumentalists and dancers from Epirus and Macedonia so as to incorporate elements of modern Greek culture into Sikelianos’ project.

<sup>28</sup> Eurydice Trichon-Milsani, “Nelly: A Greek photographer”, in *Nelly’s. By Dionissis Fotopoulos*, Agricultural Bank of Greece, Athens 1990, p. 46.

<sup>29</sup> Irene Boudouri, “Nelly’s. Photographic approaches to ancient art”, in *idem* (ed.), *Nelly’s, Antiquities, Greece 1925–1939*, Melissa / Benaki Museum, Athens 2003, p. 17. Nelly refers to her acquaintance with Boissonnas in Kasdaglis (ed.), *Self-Portrait*, *ibid*, p. 110–111.

<sup>30</sup> In 1929, Eleftherios Venizelos founded the (EOT/GNTO) under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance, and its first director, Konstantinos Melas, implemented the suggestions by Nikolaos Lekkas immediately. Among other things, he arranged for the production of advertising material and its circulation abroad. It was thus that promotional posters were printed for the first time, intended to adorn the walls of travel agencies, major hotels, banks, railway stations, and so on.

<sup>31</sup> “I photographed them so that they’d exist”, she had said in 1996, in an interview given to Irene Boudouri, going on to add, “No one forced me to photograph them. I did it for my own purposes. I liked seeing them.” Irene Boudouri, “Nelly’s: Φωτογραφικές προσεγγίσεις των μουσειακών θησαυρών (1925–1939)” [Nelly’s: Photographic approaches to museum treasures (1925–1939)], *Ta Nea ton Filon tou Mouseiou Benaki* magazine (1996), p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> The dates quoted by Nelly for her first tour in her *Self-portrait* [Emmanuel H. Kasdaglis (ed.), *Nelly’s. Αυτοπροσωπογραφία*, n.p., Athens 1989] are incorrect. She writes on p. 92 that “in 1927 I attempted my first tour of Greece. I started from Argos and Naflpio”. The photographs in her archive from these locations bear similarities to those made by Fiedler, who came to Greece in the spring of 1928 for ten weeks. See Franz Fiedler, “Photographische Wanderfahrt in Hellas”, *Deutscher Kamera Almanach* magazine, issue 19 (1928), p. 112. Fiedler’s date of arrival was also confirmed by an article published in *Eleftheron Vima* newspaper (3 June 1928), p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Fiedler, shortly before visiting Greece, had purchased two lenses (a sharp-focus Tele-Tessar and a soft-focus Busch-Perscheid) for his camera (Mentor Spiegelreflexkamera 9x12) and a special monopod, custom-made by Mentor-Kamera, which doubled as a walking stick when he was hiking. The monopod in question could hold his camera steady for shots lasting up to one second, while being extensible to the desired height. See Franz Fiedler, “Photographische Wanderfahrt in Hellas”, *Deutsche Kamera Almanach* magazine, issue 19 (1928), p. 110.

<sup>35</sup> In Greece, Fiedler created a very distinctive series of “photographic psychograms”. See Antonín Dufek, “To know the new – not to discard the old: the quarter-photographer” in *Franz Fiedler, Photographs*, Moravian Gallery, Brno 2005, p. 85.

<sup>36</sup> Fiedler, “Photographische Wanderfahrt in Hellas”, *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> These images can be compared to the photographs depicted by Emil Otto Hoppé (1878–1972) during his itineraries in the south-east of Romania in 1923. He too, was attracted by the male typologies he encountered in Dobrudja and Herța. Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, “E.O. Hoppé and Romania” in *PhotoResearcher*, no. 34, 2020, pp. 54, 56.

<sup>38</sup> Nelly’s handwritten catalogue of photographic prints (July 1933–1958) has provided us with important information on the commercial use of her photographs (Benaki Museum / Photographic Archives – Nelly’s Archive).

<sup>39</sup> Irene Boudouri, “En Grèce et Le Voyage en Grèce. Deux revues touristiques de l’entre-deux-guerres” in *Le Voyage en Grèce, 1934–1939. Du périodique de tourisme à la revue artistique*, eds. Sophie Basch – Alexandre Farnoux (Athens, École française d’Athènes, 2006), p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> Emmanuel H. Kasdaglis (ed.), *Nelly’s. Αυτοπροσωπογραφία* [Nelly’s. Self-portrait], n.p., Athens 1989, p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> Adolph A. Chevallier captured staged images of his sisters and daughters, dressed in traditional costumes, in the natural environment. Fiorentina Buzenschi and Mihaela-Cristina Verzea, *Ad. A. Chevallier, Fotograful Curții Regale, Album Documentar*, Piatra-Neamț: Editura “Constantin Matasăă, 2021, p. 89–109, 113, 145–147.

<sup>42</sup> Fani Constantinou, “Γύρω από τη ζωή και το έργο της Βούλας Παπαϊωάννου” [Regarding the life and works of Voula Papaioannou], in *Η φωτογράφος Βούλα Παπαϊωάννου. Από το Φωτογραφικό Αρχείο του Μουσείου Μπενάκη* [The photographer Voula Papaioannou. From the Photographic Archives of the Benaki Museum], eds. Fani Constantinou – Johana Weber – Stavros Petsopoulos (Athens, Agra Publishing & Benaki Museum, 2006), p. 16, 36 note 36.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding Chroussachi see *Maria Chroussachi. Photographs, 1917–1958*, (ed. Marilena Kasimati), Athens, National Gallery-Alexander Soutsos Museum, 2000.