



OBJECT ID	2012.24.7
OBJECT NAME	Vest
DATE CREATED	1967
MATERIAL	Cotton; Metal; Velvet
OBJECT ENTITIES	Vlahakis, Stephanie (owned by) Stephanie Vlahakis, Traditional Greeks (is related to)
ACCESS POINTS	children, greek children, greek costume, traditional greek costume, foustanella, karagouna

## OBJECT DESCRIPTION

A velvet maroon vest with red lining, gold and white embroidery, and seven silver buttons on each side. The vest has a collar and two sleeves which are attached at the back. The sleeves are open except a band at the bottom which goes around the wrist of the wearing. The embroidery goes all along with edges, and is more intricate towards the middle of the vest, on the collar, and on the sleeves. In the middle of the vest, the embroidery is white and gold, and done in layers. At the bottom of this embroidery, there is a white swirly triangle which is embroidered on both sides, about 2 1/2 inches tall. The embroidery around the collar is white and gold, the two outside layers being white, and the three inside layers are gold. The embroidery on the sleeves is mostly gold, with a little bit of white in the top left corner. The golden part is done in a more severe way, with points and edges, while the white is wavy. The edges of the sleeves are outlined in gold embroidery. The back of the vest is also embroidered, it has 10 layers, the inner six are gold, and the outer four alternate between gold and white. These layers form a triangle, which is centered around a white, intricate, wavy design in the shape of a triangle. The vest has a metal clasp near collar.

## ORIGIN

Stephanie Vlahakis (former President of the National Hellenic Museum) and her family grew up in New Jersey. Many Greek children were given traditional costumes to wear for family events, special events (such as birthdays) and for ceremonies (both religious and secular).

It is unclear how often the donor, or her siblings, wore these items. However, this was a typical thing to do in Greek families.

Foustanelles were the traditional uniform for men. This was worn by diplomats and warriors. This costume was declared the national costume for men; it is found in mountainous areas and was worn mainly in the Central and Southern parts of Greece. The costume derives its name from the pleated white skirt (Foustanella) made by triangular shaped pieces of cloth called "langolia" which are sewn together diagonally. The Foustanella skirt consists of 400 pleats symbolizing the years during which Greece was under Ottoman rule. The Greek Fighters of the 1821 revolution wore the Foustanella while fighting the Turks. Today it serves as the official uniform of the Evzones, the Presidential Guard, who keep their vigil at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Athens. The remainder of the costume is composed of a white shirt with a very wide flowing sleeve, and embroidered woolen vest called the "fermeli" and has panels hanging from the back. The vest can be blue, black or maroon, the latter worn by the captain of the guard. A sash is worn around the waist, and pointed shoes which have large pompons known as Tsarouhia which were worn for mountain climbing.

The Karagouna is the famous female costume from Thessaly in Central Greece. The Karagouna costume is a wedding dress with bright colors. The name came out of the way the women could move only their heads because of the weight of the costume and their jewelry. Traditionally, this outfit consists of an undergarment which is a white dress with a thick black fringe edge, a wool coat with handmade tufts at the edges of sleeves and embroidery at the hemline, a white sleeveless coat "sayias" with decorated trim, a short red wool felt richly embroidered waistcoat, and velvet arm bands with black or multicolored

fringe. Worn around the waist would be a red felt apron with bands of embroidered gold thread. Finally there would be a black embroidered head kerchief scarf wrapped and then twisted around the head and decorated with gold coins across the forehead. Distinctive features of this costume, which symbolizing the wealth of the bride, are the many rows of chains of coins that are worn across the bosom. The apron would also decorated with a brooch and silver or gold chain piece.

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#### CITATION

Vest, 1967, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 04/26/24.

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