



OBJECT ID	2012.24.9
OBJECT NAME	Undershirt
DATE CREATED	1967
MATERIAL	Cotton; Lace; Plastic
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 white, shiny cotton, sleeveless undershirt. There are three tiers of lace in the front in the middle of the shirt and a lace collar. This part would be visible. The back has two pearl colored buttons and string latches to go with them. The third button is missing from the bottom of the shirt. The shirt is sheer.

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. Foustanellas were the traditional uniform for men. These were 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.

CITATION

Undershirt, 1967, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 02/27/21.
