



OBJECT ID	F2013.44
OBJECT NAME	Shoe, Tsarouxia
OBJECT COLLECTION	Nicholas Topping Collection (is part of)
MATERIAL	Leather
OBJECT ENTITIES	Topping, Nicholas (is related to)
ACCESS POINTS	Nicholas Topping Pom Pom Red Leather Shoe Tsarouhi Tsarouxia

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This seems to be a child's size of a tsarouhi. It is thought to be made out of red, patterned leather with light colored stitching. There are sequins sewed to the top of the shoe, along with a red, white and blue pom pom attached to the pointed toe. The tsarouhi seems to have a lot of wear to it, and seems dirty, with cracks on the heel.

ORIGIN

Tsarouxia are mainly associated with the Greeks, even though various versions of it were worn all over the Balkans from the Byzantine times. They were the most commonly worn shoe by urban and rural Greek men and women until Greek Independence in the early 19th century. After that, it was viewed as a sign of "backwardness" from urban Greeks, and only continued to be worn by people of rural areas and nomadic populations. They are now mainly worn by the Presidential guard and by Greeks celebrating festivals and performing traditional dances.

Tsarouxia are typically made of a number of pieces of stiff leather hand-sewn together and have a characteristic pointy nose, usually covered by a large woolen pompom. The latter was a relatively late addition, originally a way of making the shoe nose waterproof, but increasingly became an essential feature for their decoration. Simpler versions also exist, made from one piece of leather held in shape with thongs (a very common type found everywhere in the Balkans, e.g. Opanak or Charvuli) and without any decoration.

This tsarouhi comes from the shop, Topping and Co. International House, owned by Nicholas Topping, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A son of Greek immigrant parents, Nick was born Nick Topitzes, but anglicized his name at the age of 18 to avoid the rampant ethnic discrimination facing Greeks at the time. Nick received degrees in history and communications from University of Wisconsin, Madison, and was drafted into the Army for WWII, working counterintelligence in the Mediterranean. Returning from the war, he opened up Topping and Co. in order to supply the people of Milwaukee with imported food and goods from the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East along with books and music from all over the world. Nick is known in modern Milwaukee history as a soldier for peace and social justice and also a music impresario, who worked to bring ethnic and folk music to Milwaukee, including The Beatles.

CITATION

Shoe, Tsarouxia, Nicholas Topping Collection, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 03/29/24.
