



Threads Crossing the Warp

MODULE 8

Weaving in folk customs and traditions



Partners



ΧΑΡΟΚΟΠΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
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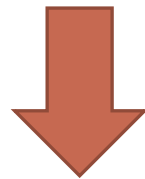


CULTURAL HERITAGE-DEFINITIONS

- **“Heritage”**: a property, something that is inherited, passed down from previous generations.
- **“Cultural heritage”**: it doesn’t consist of money or property, but of culture, values and traditions. It implies:
 - ✓ a shared bond,
 - ✓ our belonging to a community
 - ✓ and represents our history and our identity, our bond to the past, to our present, and the future.
- In an era of globalization, **cultural heritage**:
 - ✓ helps us to remember our cultural diversity
 - ✓ and its understanding develops mutual respect among different cultures.

WHAT IS TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE?

- Initially, cultural heritage referred to artifacts (paintings, drawings, prints, mosaics, sculptures), historical monuments, buildings, and archaeological sites.
- Gradually, however, it was grown to include all evidence of human creativity and expression: photographs, documents, books and manuscripts, instruments, etc. either as individual objects or as collections.
- Today, towns, underwater heritage, and the natural environment are also considered part of cultural heritage since communities identify themselves with the natural landscape.

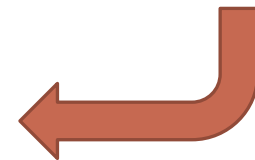


These all consist of **Tangible Cultural Heritage.**

WHAT IS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE?

- Cultural heritage is not only limited to material objects, but also consists of **immaterial elements**:
 - ✓ traditions
 - ✓ oral history
 - ✓ performing arts
 - ✓ social practices
 - ✓ festive events
 - ✓ traditional craftsmanship
 - ✓ representations
 - ✓ rituals
 - ✓ knowledge and practice concerning nature and the universe
 - ✓ knowledge and skills transmitted from generation to generation within a community

Intangible Cultural Heritage



WHAT IS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Intangible Cultural Heritage:

- the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and the knowledge and skills (including instruments, objects, artifacts, cultural spaces), that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage
- traditions, music and songs, theatre, dances, holy processions, carnivals, falconry, weaving traditions, shadow puppetry, the Mediterranean diet, etc.

Thus, **Intangible Cultural Heritage** is considered by to be part of a place's cultural heritage and is comprised of non-physical intellectual wealth, such as folklore, customs, beliefs, traditions, knowledge, and language.

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, 2003

WHY IS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPORTANT?

- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, founded in 1954, has adopted international conventions on the protection of cultural heritage, to foster intercultural understanding, while stressing the importance of international cooperation.
- Intangible cultural heritage is not important only for the cultural manifestation itself, but also for the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next.
- The social and economic value of the intangible cultural heritage is relevant for minority groups, but also for mainstream social groups within a community.

WEAVING — AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

- The art of weaving has a long history through centuries.
- In the ancient years:
 - ✓ Homer's epics: weaving in a loom is connected with women, while metaphorically weaving thoughts or an intrigue and set traps is linked to men.
 - ✓ Aristophane's *Lysistrata*: weaving is associated with politics [*"As we wash the sheep's wool, so we will wash away the filth of the state, we will ward off the bad people by beating them, we will gather all those who have something to offer in the city, whether they are foreigners or locals, we will collect the thread in a big tulip and we will weave a bridle for the municipality".*]

WEAVING — AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

- There have been attributed symbolic connotations to spinning and weaving:
 - ✓ spinning with its circular and continuous motion has been associated with the movement of the universe and people's fate,
 - ✓ weaving has been linked to the mechanisms of human notion, but also to reconciliation and peace.
- In Ancient Greece, mostly gods and upper class women would weave.
- The goddess who invented weaving and taught the technique to mortals was Athena (Athena-Ergani).
- In Panathenea, the great Athenian festival, girls from city were commissioned to weave a veil for goddess Athena, to show the gratitude of the citizens.

TALES ABOUT WEAVING COMING FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY...

1. The three fates
2. Athena and Arachne
3. Penelope Queen of Ithaka
4. Ariadne's Thread

1. THE THREE FATES

- The Fates (Moirs) are a group of three weaving goddesses who define the destiny of each mortal at birth.
- The three Fates who were Clotho (the Spinner), Lachesis (the Alloter) and Atropos (the Inflexible) had great power and even Zeus was unable to recall their provisions.
- Consistently portrayed as three women spinners, each Fate had a different task:
 - ✓ Clotho spun the thread of life
 - ✓ Lachesis measured its allotted length &
 - ✓ Atropos cut it off with her shears
- In the visual arts, Fates were usually depicted as beautiful women weaving or binding thread. However, in literature, they were often imagined as both old and ugly.

Clotho spins the thread of life
Lachesis measures its allotted length
Atropos cuts it off with her shears



2. ATHENA AND ARACHNE

- Arachne was a young woman and a wonderful weaver.
- She was very skilled in weaving multicoloured tapestries and rugs and people admired her work at her loom. Eventually she started to brag and become boastful of her talents.
- The villagers would often say that Arachne was given an amazing gift from goddess Athena who invented weaving, but Arachne claimed that she taught herself how to weave and that she was a greater weaver than Athena.

The Arachne story: Greek women weaving at a warp-weighted loom – Athens, 500s BC



<https://quatr.us/greeks/arachne-athena-greek-mythology.htm>



<https://www.skyloomweavers.com/blogs/news/the-weaving-contest>

2. ATHENA AND ARACHNE

- Athena watched Arachne from her throne on Mount Olympus and decided to pay her a visit. She disguised herself as an old woman and went to Arachne.
- Arachne told the old woman that she was the best weaver on the world, even better than Athena and that she would not ask for forgiveness from the goddess for saying so.
- The old woman, filled with rage, transformed back to goddess Athena and challenged Arachne to a weaving contest.

Minerva & Arachne, [René-Antoine Houasse](#), 1706



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arachne>

2. ATHENA AND ARACHNE

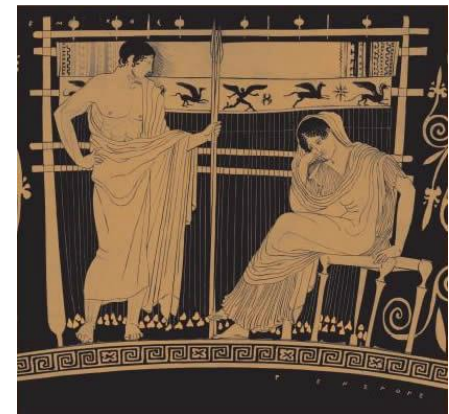
- Athena wove wonderful pictures of gods and goddesses performing heroic deeds.
- Arachne also wove pictures of gods portraying them as angry and foolish.
- Athena was infuriated when she saw how Arachne had depicted gods, but also because she realised that her skills were marginally better than Arachne's.
- Athena told Arachne that she and her children would be punished for making fun of the gods and magically altered her.
- Arachne became the world's first spider while Athena told her that from that day she would weave all day, but nobody would care for her talents; on the contrary, people would destroy her delicate woven webs, whenever they saw them.

Athena & Arachne (Antonio Tempesta)



3. PENELOPE QUEEN OF ITHACA

- Penelope was the faithful wife of king Odysseus and queen of Ithaca (an island of the Ionian sea, Greece).
- Odysseus left to participate to the Trojan war that lasted ten years and then it took him another ten year to reach his homeland.
- When he arrived to Ithaca, he disguised himself to a beggar, to test whether his wife had remained faithful to him.



<https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Mortals/Penelope/penelope.html>

<https://penelope.hypotheses.org/79>

3. PENELOPE QUEEN OF ITHACA

"Penelope Unraveling Her Work at Night", 1886
Dora Wheeler American



<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/16951>

- Meanwhile, Penelope had managed to keep all her suitors at bay, by telling them that she would choose one of them, once she finished weaving a burial shroud for Laertes, her father-in-law.
- Penelope wove the shroud during the day, but every night she unraveled everything she had woven.
- One of her servants revealed the secret and Penelope was obliged to choose a new husband, as everybody thought that Odysseus was dead.
- She said that she would marry the suitor that would be able to string Odysseus's bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe heads, a deed that only her husband was able to achieve.
- As expected, none of the suitors was able to complete the task. The disguised Odysseus asked if he could also compete and after being successful he killed all the suitors with the help of goddess Athena and of his son Telemachus. <https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Mortals/Penelope/penelope.html>

4. ARIADNE'S THREAD

- Ariadne was the daughter of Minos, the king of Crete and granddaughter of the sun god, Helios, by her mother's side.
- In retribution for his son's death in athletic games organized by the Athenians, king Minos besieged Athens and won the war.
- He demanded then that every year seven noble young men and seven noble young women to be sent to Crete, as a sacrifice into the Labyrinth, under Minos' palace, inhabited by Minotaur, a creature half-bull and half-human.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariadne>

<https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Mortals/Ariadne/ariadne.html>

4. ARIADNE'S THREAD

- One year, Theseus, son of the king of Athens Aegeus, volunteered to be one of the fourteen youth sent to Crete in order to kill Minotaur and end the sacrifices.
- When the ship from Athens arrived to Crete, Ariadne fell in love with Theseus and decided to help him.
- She gave him a sword to fight Minotaur and a ball of scarlet thread. Ariadne advised Theseus to tie one end of the thread at the entrance of the Labyrinth and let the thread unroll as he delves deeper into the twisting and branching paths. That would allow him to escape the labyrinth after slaying Minotaur and return to the entrance, where Ariadne would be waiting.
- Ariadne's thread is a thread of divine connection, the thread that leads someone home.

Theseus, about to enter the Labyrinth, holds Ariadne's thread in his hand. 4503: France, debut de XIXe siècle: Ariane et Thésée. Musée des beaux arts, Rouen.



<http://www.maicar.com/GML/Ariadne.html>

WEAVING IN THE BYZANTINE ERA

- In Byzantine years, looms could be found in every house and both men and women could weave.
- The art of weaving has always been passing down from generation to generation.
- Designs could be traditional, but weavers often developed their personal patterns and that contributed to the renovation of tradition.
- Later, many women were involved professionally in weaving.



WEAVING IN THE BYZANTINE ERA

Constantinople was the first significant silk-weaving center in Europe. Silk was one of the most important commodities in the Byzantine economy, used by the state both as a means of payment and of diplomacy

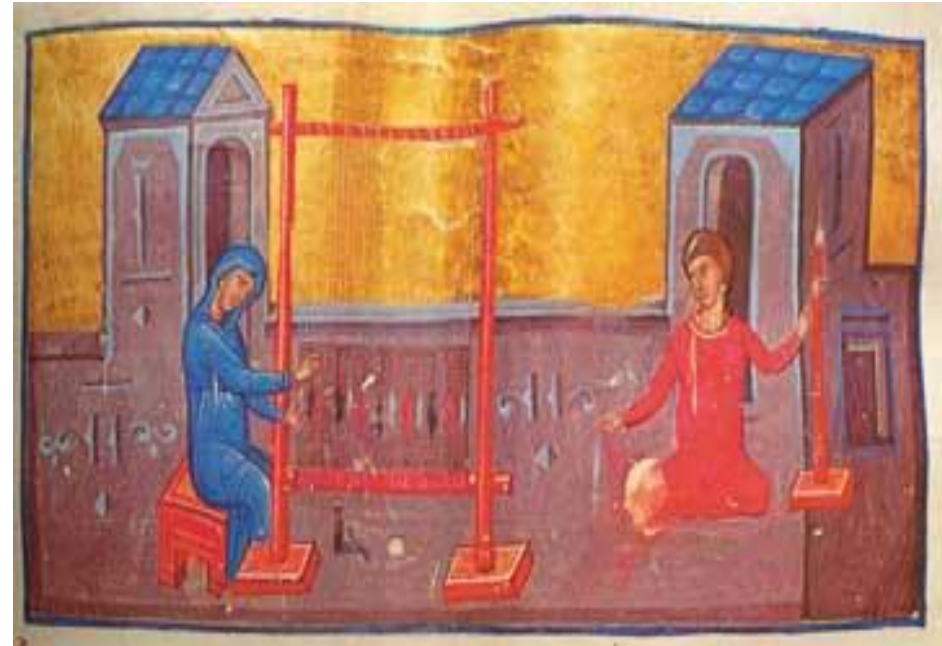
Byzantine workshops were also known for woven tapestries and richly embroidered textiles with decoration that often included figurative scenes. Embroidered religious scenes were also used for vestments and hangings



WEAVING IN THE BYZANTINE ERA

Throughout the years, weaving facilitated multiple purposes:

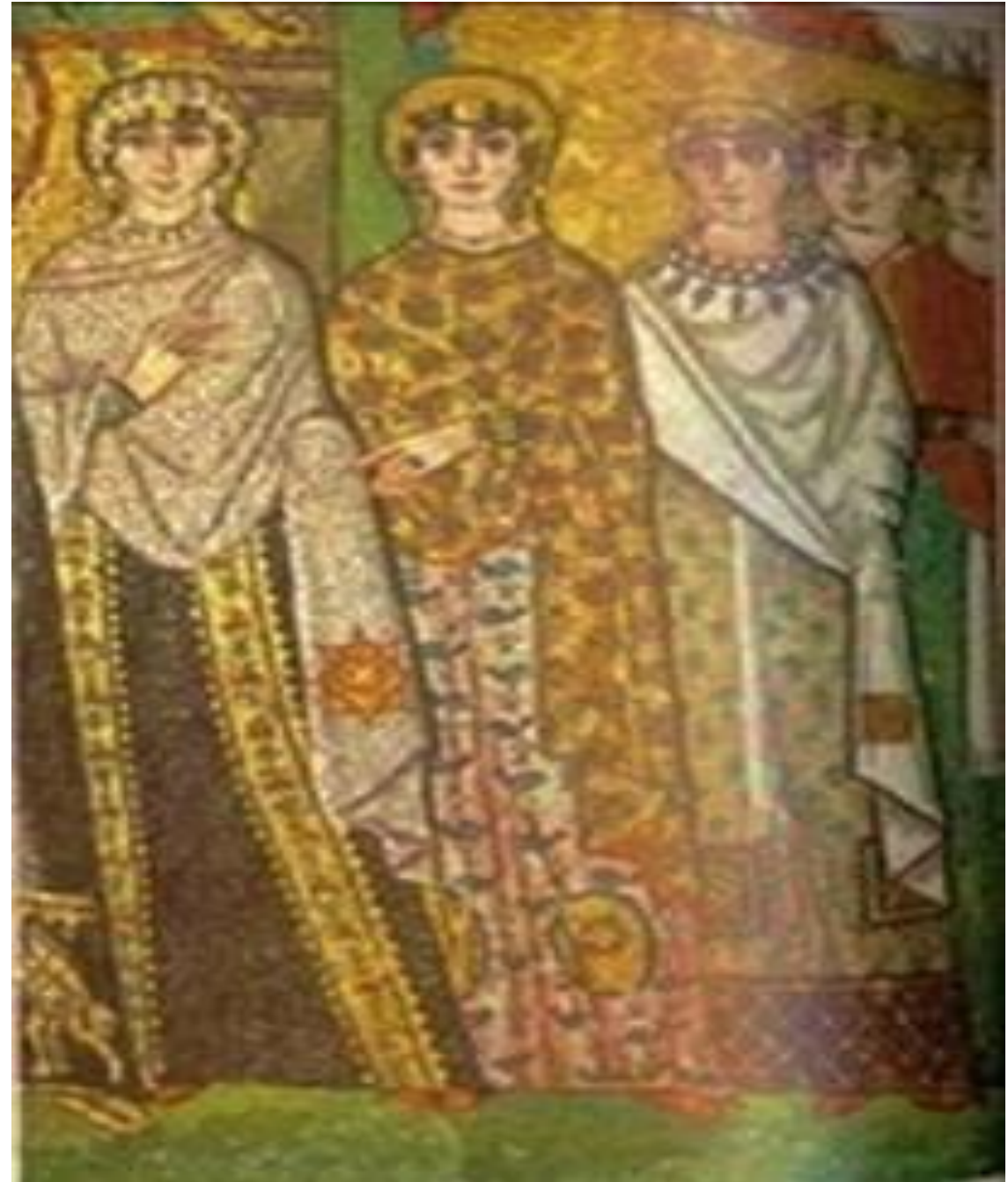
- ❖ ensured the carpets, bedding, blankets, sheets, tablecloths, curtains, cushions, and clothes of the family
- ❖ decorated the house
- ❖ secured the dowry of young girls
- ❖ granted an additional financial support to the family
- ❖ provided a creative outlet for women who could express through their designs their emotions
- ❖ helped the communication of cultural identity and the continuation of tradition



WEAVING IN THE BYZANTINE ERA

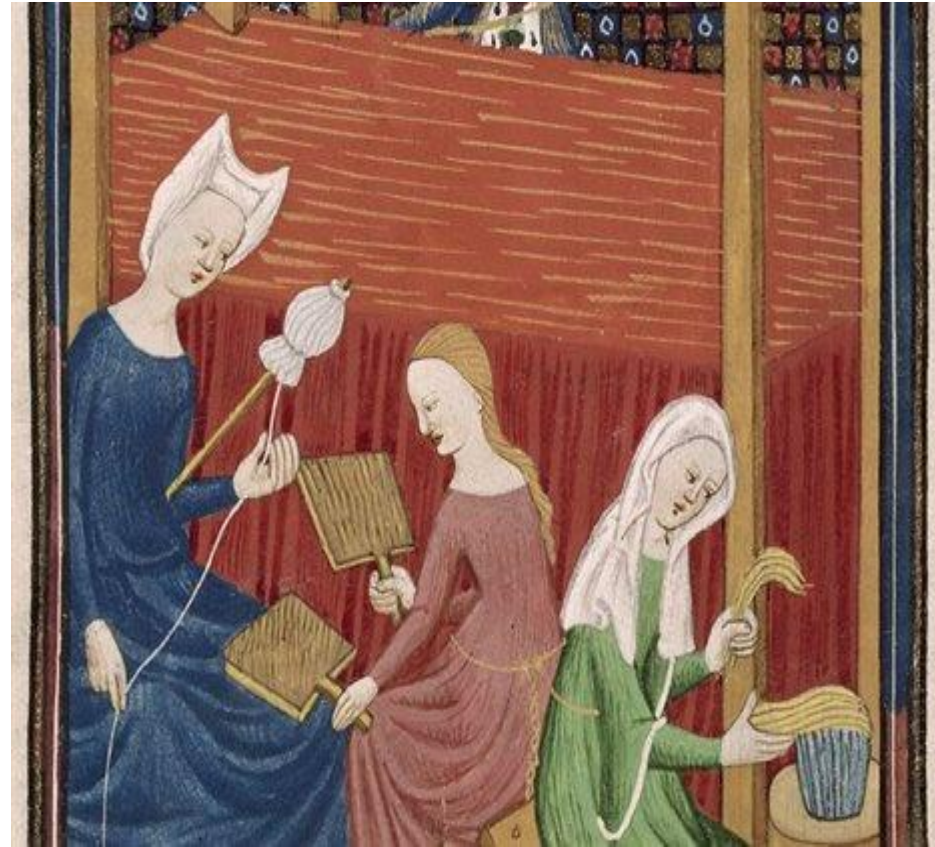
In 1147, during the Second Crusade, Roger II of Sicily attacked Corinth and Thebes, two important centres of Byzantine silk production, capturing the weavers and their equipment and establishing his own silkworks in Palermo and Calabria.

After the capture of Constantinople in 1204 by the forces of the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and the establishment of the Latin Empire (1204–1261) and other "Latin" states in the Byzantine territories, the Byzantine silk industry contracted.



WEAVING AND TRADITIONS IN EUROPE

- The creation of textiles, including those intended for dowry, has been practiced over several centuries, covering all social classes worldwide. The household store demonstrated social rank and household sufficiency. The production of dowry linen often fell to girls and young women who for years would toil diligently to accumulate this household 'store' of items for their trousseau which would, upon marriage, furnish their future home.





TALES ABOUT WEAVING

In later European folklore, weaving retained its connection with magic and a lot of fairy tales were associated with spinning and weaving...

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Once upon a time, there lived a King and a Queen who wished to have a child. One day, as the Queen was bathing in a spring, a frog crept out of the water and told her, "Your wish shall be fulfilled. Before a year has passed, you shall bring a daughter into the world."

The child was so beautiful that the King could not contain himself for joy. He wanted to celebrate and thus, he invited all his friends. He also invited the fairies to make wishes for the child. There were thirteen fairies in his kingdom, but as the King only had twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of the fairies had to be left out. None of the guests was saddened by this, as the thirteenth fairy was known to be cruel and spiteful.

An amazing feast was held and when it came to an end, each of the fairies presented the child with a magic gift. One fairy gave her virtue, another beauty, a third riches and so on -- with everything in the world that anyone could wish for. After eleven of the fairies had presented their gifts, the thirteenth suddenly appeared. She was angry and wanted to show her spite for not having been invited to the feast. Without hesitation she called out in a loud voice:

"When she is fifteen years old, the Princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead!"

Then without another word, she turned and left the hall.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

The guests were horrified and the Queen fell to the floor sobbing, but the twelfth fairy, whose wish was still not spoken, quietly stepped forward. Her magic could not remove the curse, but she could soften it so she said,

“Your daughter shall not die, but instead shall fall into a deep sleep that will last one hundred years.”

Over the years, the promises of the fairies came true - one by one. The Princess grew to be beautiful, modest, kind and clever. Everyone who saw her could not help but love her.

The King and Queen were determined to prevent the curse placed on the Princess by the spiteful fairy and sent out a command that all the spindles in the whole kingdom should be destroyed. No one in the kingdom was allowed to tell the Princess of the curse that had been placed upon her for they did not want her to worry or be sad.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

On the morning of her fifteenth birthday, the Princess awoke early. She was excited! As it was still very early in the morning, she wandered about the whole palace, looking at rooms and halls as she pleased and at last she came to an old tower. She climbed the narrow, winding staircase and reached a little door.

A rusty key was sticking in the lock and when she turned it, the door flew open. In a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax. The old woman was so deaf that she had never heard the King's command that all spindles should be destroyed.

"Good morning", said the Princess. "What are you doing?"

"I am spinning," said the old woman.

"What is the thing that whirls round?" asked the Princess and she took the spindle and tried to spin too.

But she had scarcely touched the spindle when it pricked her finger. At that moment she fell upon the bed which was standing near and lay still in a deep sleep.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

The King, the Queen and the servants had all started their morning routines and right in the midst of them fell asleep too. The horses fell asleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the doves on the roof and the flies on the wall. Even the fire in the hearth grew still and went to sleep. The wind died down and on the trees in front of the castle not a leaf stirred.

Round the castle a hedge of brier roses began to grow up. Every year it grew higher until at last nothing could be seen of the sleeping castle.

There was a legend in the land about the lovely Sleeping Beauty, as the King's daughter was called, and from time to time Princes came and tried to force their way through the hedge and into the castle. But they found it impossible for the thorns, as though they were alive, grabbed at them and would not let them through.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

After many years a Prince came again to the country and heard an old man tell the tale of the hidden castle and the beautiful Princess who had slept within for a hundred years. He heard also that many Princes had tried to make it through the brier hedge but none had succeeded and many had been caught in it and died.

The young Prince said, "I am not afraid. I must go and see this Sleeping Beauty."

The old man tried to persuade him not to go, but the Prince would not listen.

Now the hundred years were just ended. When the Prince approached the brier hedge it was covered with beautiful large roses. The shrubs made way for him of their own accord and let him pass unharmed.

In the courtyard, the Prince saw the horses and dogs lying asleep. On the roof sat the sleeping doves with their heads tucked under their wings. When he went into the house, the flies were asleep on the walls and the servants asleep in the halls. Near the throne lay the King and Queen, sleeping peacefully beside each other. In the kitchen the cook, the kitchen boy and the kitchen maid all slept with their heads resting on the table.

The Prince went on farther. All was so still that he could hear his own breathing. At last he reached the tower and opened the door into the little room where the Princess was asleep. There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her. He bent down and gave her a kiss. As he touched her, Sleeping Beauty opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

Throughout the castle, everyone and everything woke up and looked at each other with astonished eyes. Within the month, the Prince and Sleeping Beauty were married and lived happily all their lives.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

Once upon a time, there was a poor miller with a beautiful daughter. One day, he wanted to impress the king and told him: "I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold".

The king said to the miller: "If your daughter is as skillful as you say, bring her to my castle tomorrow".

The next day, the king led the girl into a room that was filled with straw. Giving her a spinning wheel and a reel, he said: "Get to work now! Spin all night and if by morning you have not spun this straw into gold, you will have to die!" The king locked the door and left.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

The poor miller's daughter did not know what to do. She had no idea how to spin straw into gold. She was very afraid and she began to cry. Suddenly, the door opened and a little man stepped inside.

"Good evening, why are you crying?“, he asked.

"Oh!" the girl answered. "I am supposed to spin straw into gold and I do not know how to do it."

The little man said: "What will you give me if I spin it for you?"

"My necklace" said the girl.

The little man took the necklace, sat before the spinning wheel and until morning all the straw was spun and all the spools were filled with gold.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

At sunrise, when the king came and saw the gold, he became greedy for more gold. He took the miller's daughter to a larger room filled with straw and ordered her to spin it in one night, if she valued her life. The girl did not know what to do, and started to cry. Once again the door opened and when the little man appeared, he said: "What will you give me, if I spin the straw into gold for you?"

"The ring from my finger", the girl answered.

The little man took the ring and began once again to whir with the spinning wheel. By morning, he had spun all the straw into glistening gold. The king was very happy, but he wanted more gold. Thus, he took the miller's daughter to a still larger room filled with straw and told her: "Tonight you must spin this, too. If you succeed you shall become my wife."

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

When the girl was alone, the little man returned and said: "What will you give me this time, if I spin the straw?"

"I have nothing more that I could give you", the girl answered.

"Then promise to give me your first child, after you are queen".

Not knowing what else to do, the miller's daughter promised the little man what he demanded. In return, he once again spun the straw into gold. In the morning, the king announced his marriage and the beautiful miller's daughter became a queen.

A year later she brought a beautiful child to the world. She had forgotten all about the little man, but suddenly he appeared in her room and said: "Now, give me what you promised me!".

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

The queen offered the little man all the wealth of the kingdom, if he would let her keep her child, but the little man denied it.

As the queen was crying, the little man took pity on her and said: "I will be back in three days' time. If by then you can tell my name, then you shall keep your child."

The queen spent the entire night thinking of all the names she had ever heard. In the morning, she sent a messenger into the country to inquire for other names and when the little man returned that evening, the queen told him all the names she knew. After each name the little man said: "That is not my name."

The second day she sent inquiries into the neighbor country, as to what names people had. She recited the most unusual and most curious names to the little man that evening, but his answer was always: "That is not my name!"

On the third day, the messenger returned and said, "I haven't been able to find a single new name, but when I was approaching a high mountain, in the woods I saw a little house. A fire was burning in front of the house and a little man was jumping around the fire, singing:

Today I'll bake, tomorrow I'll brew.
Then I'll fetch the queen's new child.
It is good that no one knows,
Rumpelstiltskin is my name.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (GRIMM BROTHERS)

You can imagine how happy the queen was when she heard that name. Soon afterward the little man came in and asked: "Now, Madame Queen, what is my name?"

She first asked, "Is your name Kunz?"

"No."

"Is your name Heinz?"

"No."

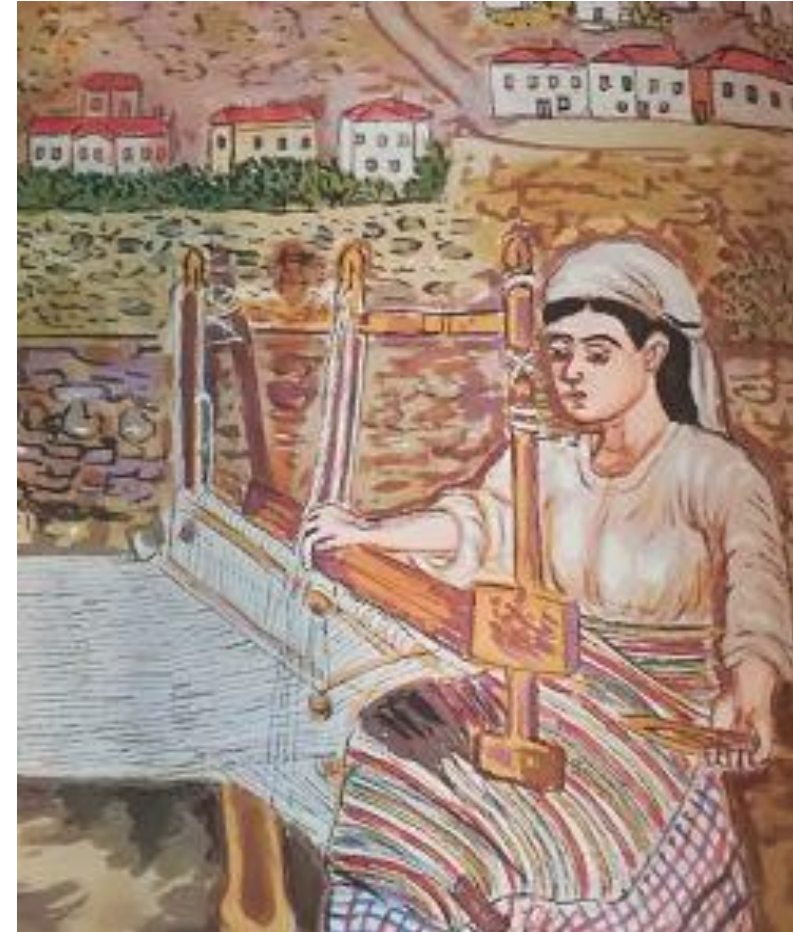
"Is your name perhaps Rumpelstiltskin?"

"How did you know that? How did you know that?!", shouted the little man with anger. He stomped his right foot so hard on the ground, creating a huge hole. The little man fell in that hole and disappeared forever.

Everybody lived happily ever after!

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Greece)

- Throughout the centuries, weaving flourished in Greece. In that helped that the country had a developed livestock, but also cotton crops, which provided the raw materials.
- During the 18th and 19th century, Greek folk art bloomed. Weaving gained a special place among the Greek population. People weaved at home, but also the first organized weaving workshops appear.



WEAVING AND SONGS (Greece)

- There are several folk songs referring to the loom, to weaving and to the endeavor of the girls who weaved.
- There are folk songs describing weavers' difficulties:

"Embroidery is a feast and rocket is a stroll, but weaving in the loom is slavery, slavery too great.

Since this morning my tears have been flowing on the loom, the shuttle is too heavy and my fingers hurt". (Greece)

- Other songs refer to the motifs and weaving patterns:

"I collected all the stars and the golden moon, I spread them on my loom and on my textile. The return of the chair and the beating of my comb, will bring birds from the forest and seagulls of the sea ". (Greece)

Other songs narrate the efforts of the girl to make their dowries:

"Shuttle, move as fast as you can the golden silk, my love is coming at Easter, golden clothes to find". (Greece)

WEAVING AND SONGS (Greece)

Following there are some song regarding the loom and weaving:

Greece:

Takou, takou, the loom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYGi7rnJ9Iq>

The golden loom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5wmGTMY4M8>

Girl that you weave at the loom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fok8U3GvUx0>

If you don't know how to weave: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g3aMaBQCa0>

The loom: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Qf2iERZYf8>

RIDDLES AND PROVERBS ABOUT WEAVING

(Greece)

Riddle:

I have a tall sister with a tooth on top.

What is it?

(the spindle) (Greece)

Proverbs:

— ***Who asks you about threads and you say six skeins?*** Meaning: why you interfere to our conversation. (Greece)

— ***We became hair tangles.*** Meaning: we had a big quarrel/ a brawl. (Greece)

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

Romania:

In the region of Bucovina, The Virgin Mary is considered the protector of spinning and especially of weaving.

It is believed that the cloth belongs to The Virgin who gave it to humans to create the *crijma* (the cloth worn at baptism). It was also believed that The Virgin sits on her knees next to the weaver and helps her finish the work (it is said that when taking the loom outside, you must measure the cloth because The Virgin remains on Her knees until you measure the cloth)



WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

In the tradition of the Romanian village spinning and weaving were performed during the Cășlegile Crăciunului, meaning the period between Christmas and the beginning of the Lent; during the Păresimi (the 40 days of Lent) the traditional shirts used during holidays were sewn. We have to state that Maundy Thursday (the Thursday preceding Easter) is the deadline for weaving flax and hemp. There are two weeks when spinning, warping and weaving is forbidden – the first week of the nativity Fast and the second week of Lent.

Wool had to be washed until Saint George's day (23rd of April) and the cloth had to be bleached by Saint Elijah's Day (20 July).

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

Days of the week

- Monday, the beginning of the week, is a good day for any start: spinning, weaving, cutting (all week will be as it was on Monday);
- On Tuesday God created Earth and that is why women would not warp, cut or sew clothes;
- Wednesday is the day of The Virgin, it is a good day filled with good luck;
- Thursday is dedicated to saint Nicholas, it is a lucky day, good for work;
- Friday is a day of fasting and that is why many works are forbidden, spinning included
- Saturday is the Day of the Dead; it is not advised to start a new work;
- Sunday is a day of prayer, it a holiday when “time changes”

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

Marțolea

It is an “unholy” being that appears during Tuesday nights and in the first night of March, when it was believed to be her day

It was believed that she was an ugly old woman that leaves her home on the other world in order to come and punish women that spin on Tuesday evening, thus forgetting to honor Wednesday

She is dangerous for girls and women that do not spend Tuesdays working. To those that start spinning on Tuesday evenings she brings many spindles down the chimney that have to be filled, and from the thread they have to weave her a cloak by morning or otherwise they lose their life.

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

Joimărița

It is considered to be the servant of Maundy Thursday.

She walks around the villages to see if women finished spinning the hemp and weaving the cloth before the Holy day of Easter.

Joimărița has a bucket filled with ashes and walks from house to house asking: “How many, how many tows you spun? If you haven’t spun the tow, I’ll chop off your hands” the unspun hems answers from all the corners of the house, thus betraying the weaver. That is when Joimărița burns the hands of the lazy ones and burns down the tow.

Joimărița gifted red eggs and brioches to the diligent ones.

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

The horses of Sântoader (Saint Theodore of Amasea)

During Spring, nine days, starting with the day of saint Theodore's day, villages are visited by his *horses*.

There are seven or twelve, depending on the area, looking like beautiful vigorous young men.

For fear of them, weavers would entangle their works. Women avoided spinning, warping, weaving or sewing during those days.

- "There once was a beautiful girl called Crucită. On the Eve of Saint Theodore's day she thought: *I'll go, down the valley to my neighbor to spin some hemp for the warp needed for the shirt*. On the road she found some beautiful boys that convinced her party with them. She never reached her neighbor's house. They found her the next day, in the field wounded and she lost her mind. The boys were in fact the horses of Sântoader". (Ocoliș, Alba county)

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

The Moirai

They come on the third night after the birth of a child and decide his/hers destiny. It is believed that they are three sisters – destiny/ the Spinner, Fate/ the Allotter and Death/ the Unturnable. The oldest holds in her hands the fork on which she spins the threads of life, the middle one holds a spindle from which she unfolds the thread of life and the younger one holds a scissor and decides the moment of death.

In order to cheer them up, parents wait for them with a prepared meal - 3 breads, 3 glasses with wine, honey, salt, oil, basil, gold or silver coins, wool yarns, a new cloth.

WEAVING AND TRADITIONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Romania)

The Plague

Is imagined as a terrible being that roams the villages and tries to enter households.

In order to stop her from entering the village, women must create a shirt by midnight. They would gather in a house where they would spin, weave, cut and sew the shirt which was gifted to the Plague at dawn hanging from a bar at the edge of the village. When they left it there they said: “As we took care to dress you, so should you take care not to set foot in our village!”

WEAVING AND SONGS (Romania)

Due to that fact the loom was used mainly by women, there are many songs that glorify this craft and especially songs that mock women less skilled at weaving.

Chiuituri/ sayings called at boys' games

„Pusei pânză / Când da frunza / Și-o tăiei de Sân Vasâi! / Vai de mine ce făcui, / Că prea iute mă pripii! / Pe sulul de dinapoi, / O suță de lăturoi; / Pe sulul de dinainte, / Dracu le mai ține minte; / Printre ite, printre spată / Paste-o iapă 'mpiedicată; / Printre ite și fuscei, / Paste-o scroafă cu purcei.” (“I placed the cloth/ When the leaf appeared/ And I cut it on saint Basil's Day/ Oh my God what have I done/ I was too eager/ On the back roll/ One hundred gaps/ On the back roll/ Who keeps count anymore?/ Through the heddles, through the reed/ Damn you clumsy treadle/ Through the heddles and small yarns/ Damn her sow and piglets”)

„Pân' ce țese-un cot de pânză, / Mânc' o vadră de brânză; / Și-o berbincioară de lapte, / Cât or duce opt în spate. / Țese-un lat / Și fuga-n pat; / Țese-un cot' / Și fuga-n pod. / Tare-i bună gospodină, La covată cu făină / Și la podul cu slănină.” Until she weaves a piece of cloth/ Eats a bucket of cheese/ and drinks a jug of milk/ As many as eight people can drink/ She weaves a row/ And runs in bed/ Weaves few inches/ Runs in the attic/ She's a good housewife/ For the flour bowl/ And in the attic full of ham”

TALES ABOUT WEAVING: THE FLAX AND THE SHIRT by Ion Creanga

The flax: – Do you know, dear shirt, what you once were?

– What could I be? I was what you see today: a white shirt that people wear.

– That is not right! You were a seed, and then a weed, caressed by the wind as all weeds are: tall, thin, just like me; you were blue flowered flax, my girl. When you have grown and were ripe, like I am now, people plucked you from the ground, tied you up, placed you upright and let you dry in the sun. After that they lay you down and beat you up with sticks to extract your seed; then beaten and bruised as you were they took you to the pond and placed you in the melting pot where you stood for about 10 days for retting, meaning your cover had to rot. Next, they took you out and let you dry in the sun again on the fence you sit now. Being dry they put you in the scutcher and your cover became dust and your middle line fibre. The women combed you and made you smooth as silk; from fibre you became yarn, place you on the fork and spun you in a ball or thread. The ball was unravelled into reels, boiled you in lye to bleach it and place you on the winding frame in order to create yarns. From the yarns the warped you on the warping frame, then they took you and wrapped the back roll and place rods in order to prevent you from getting tangled and rods between the shed to avoid the weft from getting tangled. After that they warped you, inserting you through heddles and reed, and with the help of different tools the tightened you by tying you to the front roll where the weaving begins. The threads for the weft were unravelled onto shuttles and they started weaving, meaning the weft passed between the warp with the help of rods, pulleys and heddles. In order for the weft to be secure, it is beaten with a frame that guards the reed. And like that you became cloth. When it was warm and nice outside the women took you to the river and washed you, then boiled you in lye and washed you again until you became white. When you became white enough they dried you, rolled you, cut you and created what you are today.

THE FLAX AND THE SHIRT

- Small weed, I do not know where you get your information about me. Well, dear, you should know that people make cloth from our sister hemp, our brother cotton, and even from the stinging nettle they do a certain kind of fabric. But in factories they weave all sorts of fabrics, easier and in a shorter amount of time.
- Boy! You hear so many things!
- Wait! I haven't finished yet. From the shirt and linen, after some time you'll become bandage for the sick in the hospital or for the soldiers wounded in war. Then they search for you to make you paper at the factory.
- Great wonder you told me, dear weed, said the shirt. If it is so, than all things are not what they are now, but what they were once, they are something now and will become something different later.
- Indeed so, sister! The fence you now sit on, was once a forest. What will it become? The silk is the mulberry leaf inside a bug's stomach. The chalk what was before? And ropes? etc.



THE FLAX AND THE SHIRT

The lazy women from the country side sing this song:

I placed the cloth when the first leafs appeared

And finished it on Saint Basil's Day

And it seemed I was hasted

And long is like a bag

And wide ... all is broken!

On the back roll

One hundred holes

On the front roll

The Devil only knows

Between the heddles and the reed

An ugly mare grazes

Between the heddles and the rods

A sow and her piglets graze.

THE NEEDLE AND THE SLEDGEHAMMER by Ion Creanga

The needle: Old man, why are you so loud? You keep bickering with your sister, the anvil; you scream and make a fuss that my ears hurt. I work all day but nobody hears my voice.

– Just because! Where did you come from? I

– Where didn't I come from?! I can tell you that what you do is not alright.

– Well! As the saying goes: the egg outsmarted the chicken. You silly boy should know that you come from our bickering; and you keep accusing us?

– Please forgive me, but if it weren't for the fire, forge and man that gave you names you would have remained for good at the bottom of the Earth, rusting and rotting.

– Mark your words, boy! Sister anvil do you hear how the needle laugh at us?

– I hear it but I lack the mouth to answer this, and I see everything but have to endure this.

– As the saying does: Don't throw stones if you live in a glass house. Child, do tell us what you did more than us?

THE NEEDLE AND THE SLEDGEHAMMER

- What I did and still do, I'll tell you in a second. To cut the story short, men and women cloths, from top to bottom, and many other beautiful and expensive things cannot be done without me. You will find me at the doctor, in huts and in palaces. Girls place me in golden boxes, stuff me in small silk pillows and take great care of me.
- And you do not want to be placed in the hay stack, small one?
- Not in the hay stack, but not in the dark corners of the forge like you. Do tell me, does somebody else, beside the blacksmith, pick you up?
- Listen here, you are overdoing it kid. If you are so precious and everyone takes care pf you, why do you sting their fingers?
- Yes I sting, but only the sleepy ones because I want him to create extraordinary and beautiful things with my help. Why do you bash the iron sitting on the anvil as rusted as you are? Not to create better and more beautiful things?

THE NEEDLE AND THE SLEDGEHAMMER

- Well... I do know four ways around words!
- Words and work as well.
- Well you told me many things; I'll tell you some as well: the axe, the crowbar, the hammer, the pliers, the spade and countless tools and iron machines, big and small tools, like you, could have been produced without me and the anvil? The home, churches, the ship, guns, cannons and many others could have been done without me? You tell me about beautiful clothes; I'll tell you about the house, the hoe, mower, scythe and plough. You tell me about beauty and I tell you about useful things.
- You make me start again, old man! The man needed clothes first, because he was not supposed to walk naked and barefoot as the geese.
- You have everything mixed up, boy! The man needed first food and a home and later he made beautiful clothes as you say; with clothes like yours you could starve.

THE NEEDLE AND THE SLEDGEHAMMER

- How rusted you are!
- Rusted as I am, I have created you and you have to listen to me.
- It is true, but you are too proud. You better left others acknowledge you. You do useful things, as well, only that you make rough things, while I do the delicate ones; you always sit alongside the grease blacksmith, while I work with the tailor and many other people.
- You started again? Your tailor must pierce a hundred times, while my blacksmith picks me up only once; your tailor can break ten needles a day, the blacksmith uses me his entire life; he can even leave me as a legacy for his children to use. And one more: which of these two masters is weaker, my blacksmith or your tailor?
- Old man you are old and know many things, I'll accept your truth.
- Well done small friend! You would better say that the industry and crafts were brought to life by us; all the richness is due to us. You called me rusted and called you blunt. I feel good to know that may grandchildren are blunt because in time everything becomes blunt... Only avoid being boasting and do not forget your legacy, do not become too blunt to lose your ears, teeth, mouth and imperfections because like that you become unimportant. If you do so, you will end up again under me and I'll beat you up again until you remember who you are.

Weaving and songs in Albania

Albanian folk music is one of the most precious assets of the country. Musical folklore leads an active life even today. Albanian musical folklore is extremely rich, which is expressed in the existence of vocal music from the unanimous form to the polyphonic; in music with folk instruments; vocal music and instruments; music for accompanying folk dances, etc. Albanian musical folklore makes its life in a specific division, which is related to the forms of musical expression and the main types of instruments used.

The Shkumbin River, which flows through Albania, apart from dividing the two main dialects of the country in Gegë in the North of Shkumbin and in Toska in the South of Shkumbin, also serves as a natural boundary for the classification of the typology of musical folklore. To the north of the Shkumbin River is located the monodic area of musical expression, accompanied by modal scales (diatonic or chromatic) together with specific musical instruments for this area, such as lahuta and çiftelia.

Meanwhile, for the areas lying south of the Shkumbin River, the phenomenon of musical expression in isopolyphony is characteristic (Poliphonie with burdon) with the use of pentatonic scales as well as specific instruments such as bagpipe and bicula (double flute).

Weaving and songs in Albania

Traditional music with characteristic instruments and weaving.



Weaving and songs in Albania

There are several folk songs referring to weaving and to the endeavor of the girls who weaved, the dresses that are weaved. However there are folk music only for folk dances that are dedicated to spinning.

“**Spinning dance**” is the title of a folk dance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfxCe6-ZrtE>

“**Shepherds who go gravel**” is a song that is dedicated to women who worked as shepherds, their works for sheep shearing, spinning and weaving. The song is illustrated even with pictures of these women
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hXnFgaj_kM

“**What are you embroidering Marigo**”, this song is dedicated to a girl who is embroidering Albanian flag
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2Q_e0k8DNU

At literature review part there are other links of traditional Albanian folk music that are dedicated to girls that weave.

Riddles and Proverbs about weaving in Albania

Proverbs:

- The man with the bag and the woman with the needle go out on a path (Gjirokastra)
- Whoever grazes the rams, he shears and wool (Përmet)

Riddles:

- It is not the needle that sews, but the hands. (tailor)
- Steel horse, linen tail (needles and thread)
- Knitting fabrics in the loom ... (weavers)
- A thin-legged wool dancer is dancing in the clearing, A knit crawls from the bottom of the steel shoe (sewing machine).

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