



**Theme 9: Pastoral Life in Art**  
**Report of Greece**

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## **The sheep in Greek art through the centuries**

The depiction of the sheep, the ram, the lamb and the mutton is frequently encountered in all the facets of Greek art from antiquity to our days.

The characteristic appearance of the animal appears either in bucolic scenes in environmentalist depictions, or in mythological narratives, as an allegorical holy entity, or even as a reference to multiple symbolisms which are given to the animal.

We shall occupy ourselves, in this study below, with the presence of the sheep throughout the history of the Greek art and in all the visual arts in the wider area of Hellas and reference to this shall be in chronological order.

### **Sheep faced four legged domestic animals at the dawn of Greek art**

The first depictions of wild goats appear in Minoan times in Crete, as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC and throughout the life of that civilisation (3400 - 1200 BC), on stone seals, on stone relief vases, on idols made of faience, in metal craft, on items crafted in silver and gold, in depictions on vases, on sargophagi and on frescoes. The sheep and the ram frequently appear in dog led hunting scenes (with the appearance of identifiable animals such as the Cretan wild goat – kri-kri or aegagrus – and the Cretan tracer dog), in depictions of sacrificial rituals, in the every day life of the shepherds, but also as solitary figures. Here, a special mention must be made of the sacred goat Amalthea, which is said to have nursed king Minos as a baby and which is depicted on Minoan stone seals.

Furthermore, one of the oldest and best known examples of depiction of the ritual of the sacrifice of animals in Minoan times, is the painted chest of 1400 BC found in Aghia Triada in Crete. The narrative mood of the creator gives us details of the ritual, such as the musical accompaniment, the collection of the blood, the moment of the sacrifice of a bull, but also the lambs which await their turn to be sacrificed in honour of the great goddess.



Painting on a sarcophagus, 1400 BC, Aghia Triada, Crete

Four legged domesticated sheep faced animals also appear in the pre-historic frescoes at Akrotiri in Thera, which are dated in the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Texts which were formulated in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC (1250 – 1200) on clay slates found at the Mycenaean Palace in Pylos, make the earliest reference to sheep flocks in ideograms, where the schematic depiction of the ram or the billy goat, or the goat or the female sheep is noticeable. The method of rearing sheep and rams, the names of the shepherds and other information connected with pastoral life, are also given.

A range of Mycenaean vase pottery appeared at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC in Cyprus, with a rich décor in bucolic themes, which the cognoscenti named “bucolic style”, due to the rich bucolic scenes which are depicted, with scenes of grazing oxen, goats, sheep etc.

Depictions of caprine animals also appear on burial chests as is the case with a burial chest in Tanagra, Boeotia, which shows a hunter in between two big goats and evidently countless caprine animals, brandishing his sword in the process of the hunt (dated circa 1350 – 1180 BC).

## **The sheep in Greek Mythology**

### **The golden fleece**

In addition to the depiction of the sheep in the naturalist representations of Minoan and Mycenaean art, their depiction also appears systematically on vessels of the classical and roman periods.

There is a plethora of representations of the pastoral life in various scenes which yield detailed evidence about all the activities involved and ranging from grazing and milking to the shepherd playing music with his flute etc. and also many references to mythological scenes. For example, the god Dionysus appears in Greek pottery dressed in sheepskin.

An important part of the Greek Mythology is concerned with the voyage of the Argonauts, which has as its main incentive the discovery and conquest of new territories and, crucially, the search for and discovery of gold. However, behind the incentives, the mythology narrates Jason’s voyage in the Black Sea, so that he may bring back home to Greece the golden fleece, with the human speech, the very same one which transported Frixos and Elli to the far away land of Kolchis.

The picture of the golden fleece in the holy vestige where it was kept, as well as in all the other mythological depictions was particularly popular in ancient Greek and roman pottery.

To this end we mention selectively the following:

A. The red figure vessel creation of the potter Douris in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (480 – 470 BC), which was uncovered at Cerveteri in Etruria and is being exhibited in the Vatican at the Gregoriano Trusco Museum (Jason being regurgitated by the snake

which guards the Golden Fleece - centre, hanging on the tree-, Athena stands to the right).



The red figure vessel creation of the potter Douris in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (480 – 470 BC), pr. Cerveteri in Etruria, Gregoriano Trusco Museum, Vatican

B. The exquisite red figure crater, which is kept in the Louvre and dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century (340 - 330 BC) (Jason bringing the Golden Fleece to Pelias; a winged victory prepares to crown him with a wreath. Side A from an Apulian red - figure calyx crater, 340 BC–330 BC.



Apulian red - figure calyx crater, 340 BC–330 BC, Louvre.

C. The red figure lykithos, which is kept at the University of Bochum in Germany and which depicts Jason holding the golden fleece with the dragon in the middle facing Medea.

D. Another vessel depicts Frixos holding the ram still alive, with Aeetes and his daughter, Frixos' wife.

The same much loved pictorial mythical theme is often seen in sculpted stone form. The mythical golden fleeced ram decorated a metope in the Doric frieze, (from the cycle of the Argonaut Campaign), on the monopteral Treasury of the Sicyonians. This frieze is dated back to 560 BC and it is considered an outstanding example of the renown in antiquity archaic art school of Sicyon, where the painting character with the precisely defined outline and the detail of the facial features achieves prominence over plasticity. The mural metopes with their long and narrow shape and their once striking colours gave the impression of paintings on canvass.

The creations in silver and gold which are kept at the Tbilisi Museum, are also noteworthy. They are inspired by the myth. They are articles and ornaments found in holy buildings and tombs of ancient Kolchis, present day Georgia. These jewels or statuettes are dated in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and they are noted for the influence

and counter influence between the ancient Greek world and the wider area of ancient Kolchis. Here, it is worth mentioning a golden head jewel of pierced and granulated technique, which was found at Vani and depicts a ram surrounded by newborn rams.

### **An episode from the Odyssey: Odysseus and the Cyclops Polyphemus**

Another mythological scene, which is encountered in murals as well as in ancient pottery, is the escape from Polyphemus, of Odysseus' men, clasped under the sheep of the Cyclops. A characteristic example is the attic black figure columned crater made of clay, with a depiction of Odysseus escaping from Polyphemus' cave, at the Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe, which is dated circa 510 BC.

The same depiction, of Odysseus or someone of his comrades coming out of Polyphemus' cave strapped on the sheep's belly, is immortalised in cast copper suffix (suffixes were nailed onto the surface of some utensil or piece of furniture). This particular item comes from a Peloponnesian workshop and it is exhibited in the Archaeological Museum in Athens. It is dated in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Just like all the mythological moments, the story of the Cyclops - shepherd has been immortalised by modern artists as well, an example being the self-taught Theophilos, one of many artists dealing with this theme through the centuries.

The subject of the sacrifice of the lamb appears again in the classical era in narrative paintings by iconographers of vases, as we have seen in Minoan art and so many Greek vases depict scenes of sacrifice of sheep, even by deities or half-gods as offerings to the gods in celebration of a victory. We mention the characteristic depiction of a Panathenian amphora which shows the scene of the goddess Athena victorious over the god Poseidon on the matter of who would be protector of the city of Athens, with Kekrops preparing to sacrifice a little lamb.

### **Pan: the goat god and protector of the shepherds**

One more mythological depiction in which a combined sheep and human being figure is shown is the one of Pan the protector of shepherds in antiquity. His figure was particularly widely used in art, in particular during the roman era, with the frescoes and sculptures of Pompey, now kept at the Naples Archaeological Museum, this being well known the world over. Pan's figure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, which is exhibited in the roman section of the National Museum, Rome - Palazzo alle Terme is characteristic. Pavement mosaic with the head of Pan. Roman artwork, Antonine period, 138–192 AD. From a villa in Genazzano wick may have belonged to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.

Pan was the god of the shepherds and protector of the reproduction of caprine animals in ancient Greece. His figure was half human half animal - like. He had hoofs and on occasion a goat's face with horns. This is how he appears on vases and in mosaics in later periods.

Naturally, the use of Pan's face and figure as a model lover was particularly widespread in ancient sculpture. One of the most characteristic relevant works of art is the sculpture which is dated circa 100 BC, which comes from the House of the Poseidoniasts in Delos and which depicts Pan, Aphroditi (Venus) and Eros (Cupid) in Parian white marble which today is exhibited in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. (n°3335).

**Carnos** who was an ithyphallic fertilising pastoral goat -faced god of the Peloponnesians, protector of fertility, and who gave his name to the carnival from the fertilising rituals which he organised, preoccupied the ancient visual artists. He appears in classical and roman vase painting alone or in a crowd in procession which leads to a ceremony of disguised people who are wearing or holding goat like masks. The very same masks appear even today in ceremonial happenings during the dodecameron or the carnival in various parts from the Peloponnese right up to Thrace.

### **Worship ceremonies – Animal sacrifices**

During the Roman period we have visual representations of sacrifices in mosaics. One such scene of the sacrifice of three animals (bull, boar and ram), is depicted in the mosaics of a roman villa in the village of Scala in Cefallonia. It is dated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

At the same time, the depictions of solitary lambs are frequently encountered in the mosaics as well as the floors of Christian homes, a particular example being that of the floor of a house of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century AD which is exhibited in the Museum of Amfissa. Here, within the elaborate geometric décor, we find a hare, one lamb and other animals.

## **Byzantine Era**

### **Pastoral Life**

Byzantine art has also bequeathed many narrative scenes from pastoral life through decorated texts as well as miniatures in manuscripts. The earliest depictions of the early christian years were definitely faithful copies of iconographic depictions of antiquity.

A characteristic example is the exquisite work of art which is the silver tray depicting a shepherd, dated in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, which is kept in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

More generally, as far as the representation of pastoral life in Byzantine art is concerned, Anagnostakis and Papamastorakis note that “a realistic interpretation of the flock and the livestock raising activities is frequently ascertained. For example, at Aghios Nikolaos Kakopetrias in Cyprus, goats with diverse hair are depicted, while at Platanistasa in Cyprus, sheep with black heads and thick tails are depicted, which are known in international bibliography as *tete noire* or black face. The presence of

milk bearing caprine animals indirectly points to the milk producing livestock breeding”.

Sheep usually appear in byzantine manuscripts, grazing free on plains or on the brows of low hills and the shepherd in a seated position and playing the flute or holding his stick, as in miniatures of the 11<sup>th</sup> century at the Agia Ekaterini Monastery at Mt. Sinai and as kept at the Paris Library, code 533, p.34 and in the 12<sup>th</sup> century at the Esfigmenos Monastery and also in the Agios Panteleimon Monastery at Mt. Athos. Conversely, in the Oppianus “hunting matters”, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the sheep appear in an enclosure (corral), while on frescoes of the 12<sup>th</sup> century depicting the Nativity scene at Kurbinovo depict the sheep in a circular enclosure (corral).

Scenes of milking the sheep are a widespread topic ever since antiquity and right up to the byzantine era, since they are often seen on vases, mosaic floors, Coptic textiles, murals, in catacombs, on frescoes, mainly referring to bucolic life but also allegorically alluding to the shepherd – protector Christ.

### **Sheepskin (shepherds' attire)**

The attire of the ancient shepherds as shown in vase pottery has continued being depicted on byzantine frescoes and depictions of bucolic life in manuscript miniatures.

A particular mention must be made, as far as byzantine iconography is concerned, of the depiction of St John the Baptist, who, most of the time is seen wearing a sheepskin in order to stress his ascetic life.

Furthermore, the shepherds in depictions of the Nativity Scene, are also wearing sheepskin, as will be mentioned hereunder.

### **The Nativity**

Scenes such as the Nativity in byzantine and post-byzantine iconography, within the framework of the austere and strict iconographic schedule, leave very few options to the painter to add various minute details, deriving from his own imagination. Thus, sheep are occasionally included in such depictions, which are grazing sometimes while at other times they are being milked.

Most of the creations which do not follow this austere schedule are dated in the post byzantine period and in this respect we quote the icon of the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi (The Three Wise Men) of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Emmanuel Gianfurnaris (Benaki Museum), in which the sheep are painted next to the manger as well as next to the pensive Joseph.

### **Allegories – zodiac signs**

One of the notionally most important subjects of early byzantine iconography is the depiction of the good shepherd, which we see both in sculpture, as well as in miniature, but also in the monumental décor of churches. A whole range of sculptures with this subject is kept at the Byzantine Museum of Athens and in one of the depictions the flute player – shepherd Christ sits among the animals, like the ancient iconographic prototypes as Orpheus used to.



Christ (the flute player – shepherd) as Orpheus, Byzantine Museum of Athens, 6 century

In byzantine art, the depiction of the ram appeared in connection with the allegories of the seasons and the months. “The spring months, March and April as the zodiac signs of the Capricorn and Taurus are depicted respectively as shepherds holding caprine animals or buckets containing milk, while Spring itself is depicted with a pastoral rod and two small buckets containing milk and cheese”, as mentioned indicatively by Elias Anagnostakis and Titos Papamastorakis, in their article under the title “Flute players in fields and milking men” («Αγραυλούντες και αμέλγοντες»). They characteristically refer to a floor mosaic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD found at Zilten in Libya (hopefully, it will still be in existence after the Armageddon in that country), which depicts the personification of spring. Furthermore, they refer to a mosaic floor at Argos in Greece, which depicts the personification of the months of March and April.

Relating to the zodiac sign of the Capricorn, the iconography of modern times or the contemporary iconography, is particularly rich and it progresses by transfiguring itself, while, at the same time retaining the basic characteristics of the animal as well as its vigour and strength, plus its arrogant style.

Additionally, again as far as the signs of the zodiac are concerned, the figure of the sheep appears in Chinese astrology and it is accompanied by the relevant picture.



This is something which has attracted contemporary creators and it has featured in many modern creations.

### **Ecclesiastical art after the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

In contemporary ecclesiastical art, as expressed in icons as well as frescoes, the depictions of domestic animals such as the sheep, continue to appear relating to past iconographic themes as well.

The depiction of the sheep is quite common in the iconography of the Nativity and this, of course, points to bucolic life.

As far as this iconographic tradition goes, Fotis Kontoglou describes the byzantine Nativity as follows: «The byzantine Nativity type is this: In the middle there is a cave, as if totally covered with crystal rocks. In front of it stands an old shepherd dressed in sheepskin, leaning on his shepherd's rod, which is talking to him as if it is trying to console him... Around them and on the brows, sheep are grazing, two or three mastiffs. A shepherd is milking...»

Additionally, the figure of a goat appears in icons, as a depiction of the personification of the devil and it is presented next to Aghios Antonios (St. Anthony) or Aghia Marina (St. Marina). As far as the characterisation as protector of the shepherds goes, there are some saints such as Aghios Mamas (St. Mamas) who is thus depicted holding a little lamb in his arms and a shepherds rod.

### **Greek folk art**

Scenes from pastoral life with sheep grazing have been the favourite theme of folk artists in modern Greece.

The name of the naïve artist Theofilos has already been mentioned in connection with the special topics above. Theofilos has immortalised many pastoral themes and themes relating to country life. He has created many works depicting bucolic scenes.



Theofilos, pastoral life, Lesvos, 1870;-1934

It is impossible to avoid mention of the particular and characteristic works of the shepherd – folk artist Gryllios (Alkiviadis Skoulas) from Anogeia in Crete, which are kept in the local museum, which bears the name of the town. Having spent his entire

life amongst sheep on the mountains and the winter quarters for the sheep of Crete, he discovered, in his old age his artistic talent and he has yielded majestically descriptive paintings depicting every day scenes from bucolic life in Crete.

Contemporary folk artists are very creative. One such is Christos Tsintzos, who gives us great samples of his talent, by depicting masterfully scenes from everyday life in the countryside. Here, one should also add the names of Christos Kangaras, Sophia Vlachou and Charalampos Kaptzis.



Christos Tsintzos, Greek island, 2009

Scenes from the Greek Mythology are very commonly found in Greek folk art throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One such scene, which has been immortalised by Theofilos with his distinguishing naïve style of painting, is the dramatic moment of the myth which describes the fall of Elli off the ram in the Hellespont (thus named from her fall) with the desolate Frixos remaining alone to continue his long journey.



Theofilos, Frixos and Elli, Lesvos, 1870;-1934

### **Modern and Contemporary art**

All the above themes are encountered in the iconography of modern times. The difference lies in the fact that the modern appreciation of art with the passing

from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century has naturally influenced the generally established forms of iconography or pottery painting and has instilled a new life in this field.

A lovely example is a superb sculpted statue of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century by Georgios Fytalis, which graces the Greek National Gallery (No. P 141). This depicts a shepherd with a small goat. The artist's intense naturalist mood is discerned by this creation, as it combines with unbelievable dexterity the classical tradition with the intense elements of the modern.

An important factor in the change of the artists' perspective was the release and liberation of painting from the workshops, giving rise instead to the ability to work al fresco, that is in contact with nature.

One of the points worth mentioning, in connection with Greece, is the fact that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> many Greek artists, within a wider edifying style have immortalised a multitude of bucolic scenes. We are in a time when both realistic, and idealism coexist in a climate of spiritual reflection that leads to our roots and nature. «Genre painting in Greece coincided with the consolidation of the bourgeois class, which nostalgically returned to its rural roots. Indeed, Greek genre painting was inspired by the manners and customs of the Greek people, in the same way the literature of that period was».

A typical example is the work “milking the goat” by Nikolas Vokos (1859 – 1902), which is kept at the Greek National Gallery (oil on canvass – part of the Koutlidis Foundation Collection, No K591). One could further mention the works of Periclis Pantazis and later on those of Ektor Doukas as well as those of Epaminondas Thomopoulos. The latter, in particular, has left behind a great series of works with bucolic life as their theme, such as the “peasant with the goat”, oil on board 1903, 34.5 x 24.3 cm., (Koutlidis Foundation Collection No. K 1317).



Epaminondas Thomopoulos, “The shepherd” (1878-1976)

Later on, in 1935, one of the important Greek representatives of the generation of the thirties, the surrealist painter Nikos Engonopoulos, deeply affected by the respective byzantine iconography, in one of his super realist creations depicts the sacrifice of a lamb in tempera on hard board, under the title: “The sacrifice of the poet Iason Kleandros in Commagene”.



Nikos Engonopoulos, "The sacrifice of the poet Iason Kleandros in Commagene", 1935

The figures of caprine animals, anyway, particularly occupied the pioneering artists of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the surrealist Salvador Dali as well as Pablo Picasso, in painting and sculpture, with the latter leaving behind a great series of works revolving around the theme "man and sheep".

In our times, just like throughout the centuries, the goat figured but erotic looks of the god Pan have never ceased to inspire the artists. We quote characteristically some depictions such as the oil painting of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1637) "Syrinx and Pan" by Nicolas Poussin which is kept in Dresden, the sculpture by Rodin and, finally, one of the best known paintings by Picasso, the "Pan and the danceuse", which is kept at the Picasso Museum in Paris.

Relating to sculpture in Greece, one should emphasize the work of Natalia Mela, with the outstanding metal compositions of grazing sheep and goats, some of which have found a permanent outdoor exhibition space on the island of Spetses and in the presidential palace in Athens.





Natalia Mela, family, sculpture 2009

We have singled out from the younger generation of artists, the work of Eleni Pavlopouliou which belongs to the unit known as “Arch” and which leads to related symbolisms.



Eleni Pavlopoulou, “Arch”, 1010

Giorgos Tserionis moves in a totally different notional content with his work “sheep”. Here, everything vanishes and only the head is shown and even that has changed features. This is a post modern approach to the theme, which points to a dynamic although modified self existing presence of the day after, of the universe, of the future.



Giorgos Tserionis, sheep, 2009

One could not fail to mention the work of Apostolos Chantzaras, because the figure of the lamb, in way of votive offering, returns, in his work in the “festivities” (panygiria) entity. The animals are at times carried on the back of the subject – person of the offering, and at other times have their figure amalgamated with the human figure. This points to ancient Greek prototypes, while the inspiration is definitely in line with the ancient and more modern customs of the Greek countryside.

The visual artist Lydia Venieri, in her creation named “The machinations of the Dolphins”, presents the coming together of the animals around a festive dining table, which points to the Last Supper, while one of the animals is the sheep.

The deterring artist Marios Spyropoulos had the panache to present, in 2004, a provocative piece of work under the title “Domestic Sex: My heart belongs to daddy”, which contains a delinquent scene depicting a man having intercourse with a sheep and he invents the term “hardcore art” in order to place the work in that group.

In this climate which oscillates between symbolism and figurine pursuit, the sheep’s figure plays in the mind of contemporary visual artists.

Additionally, the sheep’s wool, constitutes the cause of inspiration, as evidenced by the works- installations by Konstantina Katrakazou, under the titles “the little dress of her doll” and “a commencement to the continuation I, II”.

The ancient myths still cause particular interest, in the pictorial creations included in children’s literature, as well as in the visual expression. A characteristic example is the sculpture – installation “golden fleece”, created by Pyotr Crysanov and Yakov Matousovsky, which will be exhibited at Volos and Sochi, in Russia, as a token of the co-operation between the two countries. As far the pictorial aspect is concerned, the series of paintings by Yannis Stefanidis is very characteristic.



Yannis Stefanidis, "golden fleece", 1976

Pastoral scenes of everyday life, with animals grazing or moving, the shepherds and the manufacture of products have been immortalised by many professional and amateur photographers Greeks.

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In this respect we shall cite indicative examples of photographers each one of whom, through his or her visual angle, has left rich material, which greatly contributes to our knowledge of the everyday life of the shepherds.

Here, particular mention should be made to Nelly, (Elli Sougioutzoglou – Seraidari, 1899 – 1998), the professional photographer who, with her personal style, put on film scenes from the Greek countryside, who also from 1927 onwards "tours the Greek countryside evidencing the panorama of Greece during the years between the two world wars". She is a Greek of the diaspora and she composes an "idyllic" Greece.

The foundations – visual symbols of the Greek "tourist philosophy" were laid and formulated based on the official tourist documents with her photos, which were published abroad.

We, also have to mention the work of the amateur photographer Pericles Papahatzidakis (1905 – 1990), who toured nearly all of Greece, putting everyday life in the countryside on film.

Special mention should be made of Costas Balafas, who has left behind an amazing and extensive record which "projects the substance of the matter with a simple and austere script, without any beautification and aesthetic tendencies" and "whose total work constitutes a unique testimony of the society and the history of the country"

He was a veritable poet of photographic art. He had his ear to the ground in respect of the soul of the simple folk and he depicted scenes of their everyday life. The inhabitants of remote villages in Epirus who struggle daily in difficult conditions in their quest for survival, are the leading characters of his work".

A contemporary photographer, who has particularly occupied himself and has published photos, not only of high aesthetic value, but also of great importance as a record of his systematic in situ research, is Alexis Vallianos. There are many other

examples in contemporary photography which put on film even the very figure of the sheep, such as the characteristic piece of work by Litsa Misiari, which has been presented at the photographic Club of Kalamata.

## Cartoons

At the same time the depiction of the sheep is widely used in cartoons. An allegoric reference to the sheep in satire is very opportune. On the one hand is the black sheep, everyone's victim, while on the other hand the sheep which in reality is the wolf in disguise, or the flock of sheep, with one following the other with eyes shut, the white sheep, signifying the good man etc. It is a fact that the need for a subtractive but comprehensible and easily received narrative in cartoons, gives rise to the frequent pictorial reference to the sheep's figure, with the various symbolisms assigned to it, as mentioned previously plus some more, such as the pink sheep for the pink scandals, the lost sheep, for the politicians who return to their previous flock etc.



Arkas, comic, 2010

## Advertising

The sheep's figure in advertising appears in accordance with the inferences which are relevant in each case. For example, a night gown company puts forward its own products because one can more easily "count sheep" in order to go to sleep. Naturally enough, the depiction of the pure newborn lamb is very widely used in advertising dairy products.

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## Conclusions

The presence of the sheep and, more generally, of the caprine animals is systematic and extensive over the centuries. From the ancient to the modern rendering in pictorial form, the depictions are varied because the figure of the mythical ram alive



or in the form of the fleece, have never ceased to constitute a source of inspiration of the artists. In various depictions of elements from nature, the flora and fauna, we encounter the presence of caprine animals.

As already mentioned anyway, this is common in Minoan art in various techniques such as that of the monumental frescoes, the miniature art, the art of creation of silver ware or golden artefacts, and in pottery and sculpture of classical Greece, in the symbolic representations of Christian art, in folk art and words of recent times to our days.

Fundamentally, the sheep's figure appears from the very first expressions of artistic creation or handicraft from the dawn of human civilisation right up to our day which is an era of polymedia.

However, further than the notions dissipated by the young lamb, which are purity, tenderness, softness, the multitude of its symbolisms starting from its figure which has replaced pictorially even Christ himself, or his disciples, the mythological scenes, the allegories, the sanctimonious part of pastoral life, there is an aesthetic quest associated with the figure of the sheep which has occupied so many generations of artists and which has never ceased to appear right up to our time, which is dominated by a plethora of information and pictures, which have completely changed our aesthetic and visual values. In the long run the sheep and its products remain vital and particularly loved and useful in our routine and everyday life and they form an integral part of our domesticity as well as a visual representation of facets of our culture and civilisation.

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