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Demetrius Loukopoulos

Thermos and Apokouro



History-Arcaeology-Folklore

Introduction: Demetrius Stamelos



HISTORICAL EDITIONS ST. D. VASILOPOULOS

Koniska (altitude 825 m)

Out of the villages we visited so far none is so large as Koniska. In order to go there from *Ampelia*, you will have to make your confession beforehand, because you will run out of breath, so steep the road is. And if you happen to be an old man you might get a cardiac arrest. Form *Ampelia* you will descend to *Mahaliotis* and then you will follow a path that goes through steep rocks and thorny bushes. It takes patience and above all persistence to go through this uphill road and what an uphill road! Anyway, eventually you will find yourself in Anargiroi a small church, half an hour give or take away from Koniska. There you will meet the road that is coming from the plains of Thermon, you follow it and you are nearing the village .To the left and above you, you can see Aninos⁹⁶, a mountain peek of the highest.



Koniska. Partial view.

96. In "Sacred Narration of Prosiotissa", pub. 1927, in a footnote, it is also called Malaos(?). The word "Aninos" is byzantine. It can be found in lead seal document of XI-XII century (see "Byzantine Lead Seals" Nat. Mus. K Konstantopouloum pub. Athens, 1917).



Koniska. The Church of St. Nicholas



Koniska. Elementary school

Only a few fir trees are growing at its foot, but you can find them all the way down to Koniska and even lower to Fidaris river, who waters them al day and night with its waters. In the same mountain range, that descends down to Fidaris river, the following locations are found: first Plakolithis and secondly Malovouni. The Aninos peek is like a beardless person who has no hairs either in his moustache or his beard. Utterly bare and awsome with rocks up to the top which cannot be seen from up here. Aninos it like a cone and from far away stands out from the other mountain tops. The pride of Koniska, for whose sake its the expatriated children – and it has many – come back every summer to drink cool water and roast a fat lamb near its most famous spring.

On mountainside are built the more that 200 houses of Koniska , which can all be viewed best from the other side of Fidaris, if you happen to be on Ai-Lias peek of Perista. The population of Koniska is 440 persons, who are distributed in four



Koniska. View



Koniska. The family of father Nikos Maroukas



Koniska. St. Jonh's church

neighborhoods: Ainikolas, Alpochori, Kato chorio, Apano chorio ang Rouga. Its main church is St. Nicholas, but despite this, the main festival is in the 15th of August. And this is by no means a small festival, but a big one with lots of people from the village as well as from nearby villages. Festival in Roumeli, means roasted meat, eat and drink, 3 days of entertainment, visits to friends, songs and matchmaking. A whole book could be dedicated to the festival of the gallant breeding land, Roumeli.

The church is old and nice with a woodcut icon screen, where the following is written:

“Be consecrated, be consecrated the new Jerusalem, your light has come, and the glory of the Lord sprang out on you. This temple was built by Father, was founded by the Son : this temple was consecrated by the Holy Spirit that lights up, supports and blesses our souls. The church emerged as a many-lighted sky that throws light on all the faithful, where we stand shouting: Please Lord, secure

this temple .With the support of Reverend Papatriantaffylou Giannaka and common contribution. Finished 1738”

Also in a Menaion (printed in venice 1689) I read the following handwritten note: *“1748, October 25. This book is from the episcopacy of St.Lidorikio, bishop Theoklitos and belongs to St. Nicholas of Koniska village”*⁹⁷

Also, in silver chalice, I read the following around the base:
“Supplication by the God's slave Athanasios Papaioannou, 1819, Sept. 7th”



Koniska. The belfry.

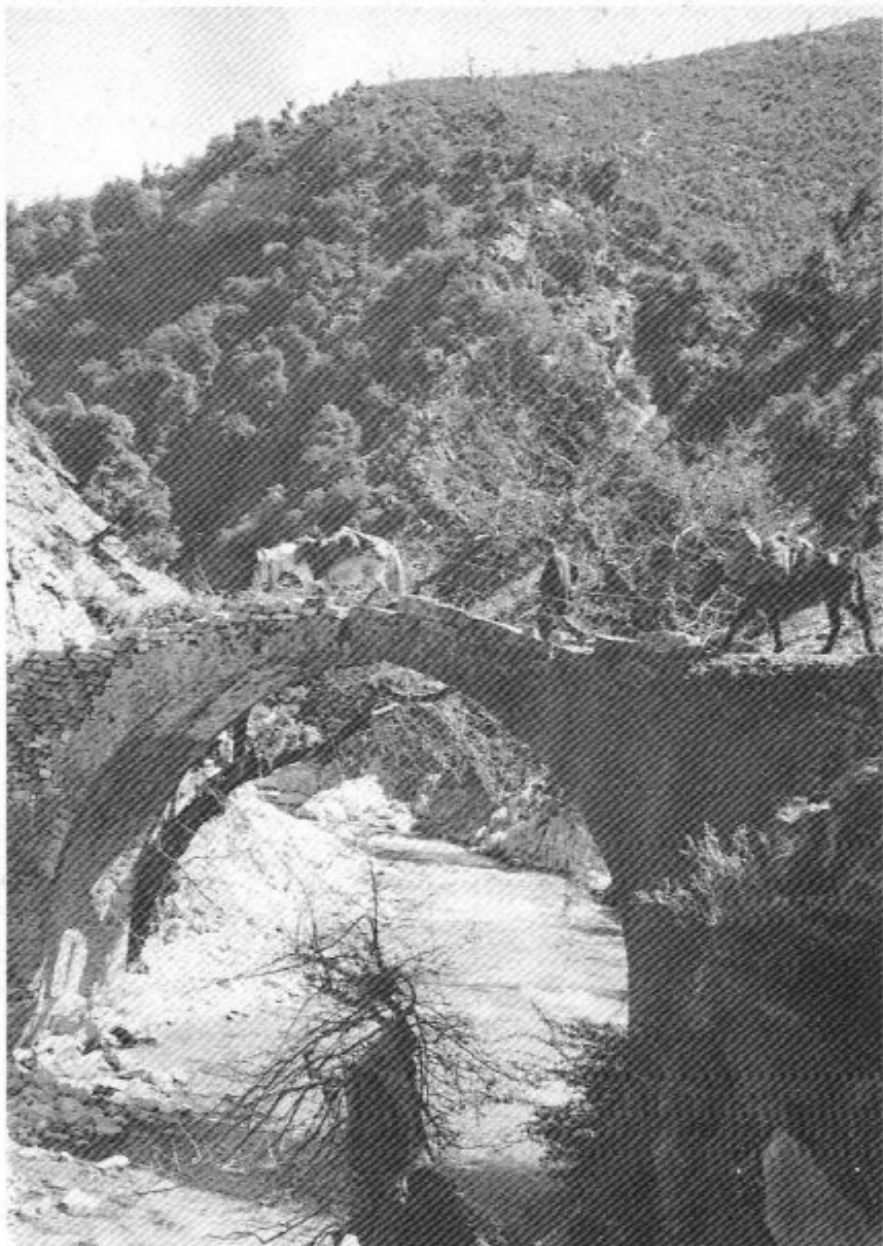
97. I presume that this book was given as a gift to St. Nicholas of koniska by some bishop from Chomori. He was from there but he was a bishop in Lidoriki. The family of this bishop is cllid today “Despotaioi”



Koniska. Im from of the coffee house (cafeneio)



Koniska. Steel bridge



Koniska. Old stone bridge

Also, the icon screen of the other church of the village, St. Demetrius, is wonderful and, as one can read, was made in 1831.

Koniska has a school with two teachers even from the older times, because in in these mountainous place people do not like only to work and have a nice time but also the like education. Love of music is an old tradition. This is not only attributed to inherent intelligence but also to the needs that poor land creates.

Koniska community owns an immense land, but if you take away potato growing, has no other resources. Neither wheat nor corn can grow in this land, no matter how hard its inhabitants try. The people that grow potatoes, bring them to the lower lands and the barter them for wheat and corn which they carry back to the village for the yearly consumption. But the people that they do not grow potatoes, what can they do? That's why, emigration is a tradition amongst Koniskians. Many have gone to Thermon, to Panaetolion, to Agrinion, to Makrinea where they stay permanently. The young generation followed the road of education and they chasing positions in public services. Let's not do injustice to people, everybody looks for an improvement of his life.

Down towards Fidaros there are two settlements of Koniska, Poulinos 1 hour away NE with 104 inhabitants and Agiannis 1.5 hours SW with 159 inhabitants, The latter has declared independence from the metropolis and has its own school. Its name is derived from its main church, St. John. Nobody can blame the people when education is involved: how can they send their children 1.5 hours away to go to Koniska? But for the full independence I have objections: only greek individualism gives rise to such motions. Instead the unification should be sought for the common good.

