

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS OF A "SUNKEN CITY" KATO KALENTINI

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Summary

My study is based on the personal experiences of those people who were born and have grown up in the village Kato Kalentini Artas of the Municipal District of Athamanion. In this work, I intend to give prominence as much information as I can from those who agreed to participate in my research (Cohen & Manion, 1992; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). My essay is a qualitative research and in order to collect my data I used the personal semi-structured interview whilst it is well known that one of the basic tools in a qualitative research is the interview as it is a main way for people to communicate, share ideas and aspects. The objective purpose of my work is through interviews to relive the customs and traditions that were implemented during Christmas, New Year's Eve, Halloween and the time of the peeling, which the last 35 years have been hidden inside the memories of the elderly people of the village. For instance the "Masks" which was a custom which were implemented the Sunday of Tyrinis and the Carols of Holy Saturday which are referring to Christ's Suffering: "Down to Jerusalem and Jesus Christ's Tomb, Tree not conjured and tree manifested. The tree was Jesus Christ... "

Keywords: *traditions, customs, Kato Kalentini, Lazaroudia, carols.*

Introduction- Methodology

My essay is a qualitative investigation and my intention is to introduce you the customs and the traditions of the village, Kato Kalentini Atras, of the Municipal District Athamanion, which were implemented on the Christmas season, on New Year Eve's, Halloween and the time of the peeling, which over the years and especially the last thirty-five (35) years have being "hidden" within the memories of the elder people of the village. The mode of collecting the data were particularly through the personal semi-structured interview, because this village does not have any archive such as photographs or even other kind of sources which could present the customs and the traditions of the place. It is well known that the interview is one of the essential tools in a qualitative research, and is a way for people to communicate and to share ideas and opinions. In this work, I intend to derive as many details as I can by those persons, who agreed to participate in my research (Cohen & Manion, 1992; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Bearing as a tool in my work the semi-structured interview, the participants can express and simultaneously to depict with their own "colors" their views which are consistent with the implementation of research (Kvale, 1996; Kvale, 2007).

Someone rightfully may ask me, what are the conditions that guided to select this village. Thus I have two reasons for choosing it. Primarily as a child I have spent most of my summers holidays there and latter my mother's originates is from this village. For my work I had the

participation of three individuals, two women and one man and as argued by Kvale (1996; 2007) the selection of respondents hides a positive influence both on the person performing the interview and for the participants. The two of ladies and the gentleman before beginning the interview signed a form (Appendix 1) indicating their consent in the investigation. The three persons involved were born and have grown up in this village. One of the two ladies and the gentleman are resident of the village, while the second lady after her marriage moved and now is a permanent resident in Athens. The place of implementation for the interviews was their personal space and the duration of each interview was about one and a half hour.

Before I begin narrative the customs of the village's inhabitants Kato Kalentini Artas, I would like to make a short explanation of the two terms customs and the traditions. Customs, therefore according to the encyclopedia Domi, is the way in which people live and act in their social life (Encyclopedia Domi, 2007, t.13); while for the free encyclopedia (Wikipedia) morals are people's ideas.

Traditions according to the free encyclopedia (Wikipedia), is everything many people do or have done for a long time. On the other hand, the encyclopedia Domi (Encyclopedia Domi, 2007, t.10) states as a tradition either a perception or a belief of a group, manifested actively and repeatedly, so as to constitute a folkway.

By explaining these two notions we realize that the combination both concepts establish the folkway of people of a region. Thereby accordance with Green (1997) and Langlois (2001) folkway is the belief or attitude that passed through a group of people or a society with symbolic character or a special significance to the origin of the past.

Kato Kalentini

At this point, I will make a brief reference to the location of Kato Kalentini as two of my interviews were carried out at the village where it is their personal place. Formerly the village was known as "Kalentini". The village is located on the green hillside of Athamanion Mount and it is surrounded by the Pournariou Lake. By following the National Road Artas-Trikalon heading towards the village Vourgareli we encounter, Kato Kalentini, at the forty-three kilometers (43 km) North West (NW) of Arta.

During the administrative division of Greece with the plan "Capodistrias" and until 2010, the Kato Kalentini belonged to the Local Apartment Kato Kalentini, the former municipality of Athamanion of Arta's prefecture. 2011 Kato Kalentini under the project "Callicrates"¹ become a village which belongs to the Epirus region and more specifically in the municipality of Central Tzoumerka of the Regional Unity Arta. Head office of the municipality is Vourgareli and belongs to the geographical region of Epirus. Kato Kalentini has altitude one hundred eleven meters (111 m.) above sea level². The permanent residents of the village according to the latest counting of 2011 were forty (40)³ especially seniors and as a consequence this number gradually decreases by virtue of fatalities.

Due to the needs that were presented in the city of Arta and its villages as well, for instance in order to solve the irrigation and the hydroelectric needs of all the residents, the state decided to

¹ FEK A87 of 07/06/2010: Callicrates Program

² <http://buk.gr/el/poli-perioxi/kato-kalentini>

³ Greek Statistics Services

http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%94%CE%AE%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82_%CE%9A%CE%B5%CE%BD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8E%CE%BD_%CE%A4%CE%B6%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%AD%CF%81%CE%BA%CF%89%CE%BD

create a Lake which will contribute to the solutions of these difficulties. Therefore in 1981 an artificial lake Pournariou or Arachthos, whose creation was due to Pournariou dam and which is in active since then. The specific lake covers a part of Kalentini especially those one stationed on the valley between the mountains where Arachthos River was crossing by. Therefore, in order to implement this project a part of the village was asked to be abandoned and subsequently clobbered by the waters of the following three rivers Arachthos, Paleo-Kalentini and Sarantopotamou, creating the "sunken city" of Kalentini (Appendix 2) and changing the morphology of the village. On the first geophysical map (map 1) of Greece you can view the currently place of the village and The Pournariou Lake.

Map 1 Kato Kalentini- Lake Pournariou



At the second geophysical map (map 2) that I quote are obvious the rivers and the valley which I have already mentioned that Kalentini had before the creation of the technical Lake Pournariou. Furthermore with the help of the persons who volunteered to participate in my research, I present you one handwritten map presenting the "machalades"¹ of the village which now are at the bottom of the lake.

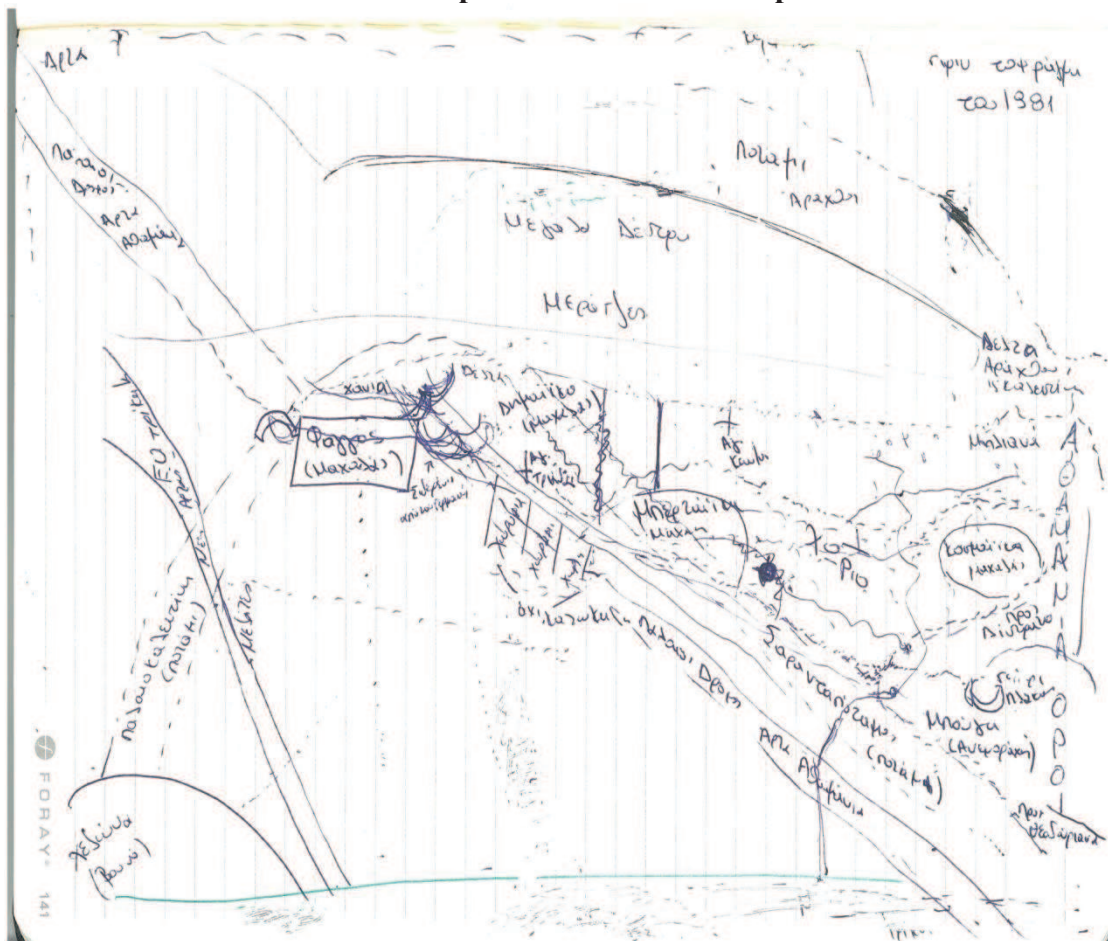
Map 2 Geophysical map of Greece



¹ Machalal the [maxalás]: (laikotr.) neighborhood or district: The up / down ~ a village. The evraikiok / Greek / Turkish ~ of the old Thessaloniki. (Portal for the Greek language version Dictionary of Modern Greek)

Discussing with the ladies I was trying to figure out the structure of the village and its area. Out of the sudden Mrs. Lamprini, lifted from her position, entered in her house and returned holding a paper and a pen. "Now I will design you the village Kalentini with its "machalades". In principle the village "Frangos" that you can view on the map is incorrect because it was called "Fangos" which was one of the most famous "machala" of Kalentini and nodal meeting point of all the Vlachous and pramantadous who were coming from Trikala so as to go to Arta their consumer goods. As you see in the plan Kalentini had two stone bridges and an iron which was structured by the Germans." Below is the handwritten map of the village, Kalentini.

Mrs. Lamprini's handwritten map



Customs and Traditions

As my subject is engaged to the traditions of "Kalentinioton" I prefer not to continue analyzing the topography of the village. Kalentini was a large village where its inhabitants were mostly occupied with the agriculture and the stockbreeding. That is why it is expected to be shown in their customs some elements from their daily occupations. One of their customs was the peeling which is directly related to the agriculture and followed by the customs of Christmas, New Year's Eve and Easter.

Taking as the 1st of September the chronological beginning of the year we encounter the custom of Harvesters known as "Peeling". But what was it peeling off? Peeling (Appendix 3) is the purification of corn. Why did it distinguish and keep it as their custom? Their life was bound up with the agriculture and the forages and for this reason it could not be missing a custom which is linked with agriculture.

Every household in Kalentini had many grounds near the banks of the River Arachthos which sowed either with wheat or corn. The planting season was in spring and was reaping in autumn. At September each family was picking their corn, which was their new crop and afterwards they were getting ready for peeling with the help of their fellow villagers as mentioned by Mr Stavros.

How they carried out the peeling? According to the survey respondents, as soon as one of the machala's family gathered their crop, at the same evening they were preparing a big celebration on the threshing floor of their house. All the villagers were invited to the fiesta peeling. The celebration began at eight (8 p.m.) in the evening and ended at one (1 a.m.) in the morning. All the neighbors remained in the celebration until late in the night with singing and having a cheerful mood. The housekeepers who made the feast ought to place in the middle of the threshing floor the corn and all the neighbors were sitting making a circle around the seed and in order to watch each other they had beside them a "thexo" as we usually named the light bulb referred Mrs Helen (appendix 3).

Therefore when all of them were in their position, the song begun. The songs were attended by men and women alternatively and afterwards the "deer" began his dance. A man was dressed as a "deer" who was wearing a bedspread or a sheet of which only his eyes could be seen. He had two wooden spoons one on the right side of his face and the other on the left, which symbolized the "deer" ears' and furthermore he was holding a wooden stick in his hand for beating the corn. His position was to stand near the pile of the corn. At that evening what sounded vigorously throughout except of the songs was the sound that was coming out of the "deer" ears' the trak-trak- trak.

Questioning Mrs. Helen if she could remember any of the songs that they were saying she answered me positively and started telling me in the rhythm of Syrtos in two (2/4) the following songs. It is important to mention that Mrs Helen while her singing she used their local idiom which is not easy to be translated. However I am giving my best so as to convey them with the best possible manner. Now the former song is:

*"For you my Drosoula,
They put me in the Castle,
For two words we said,
And you said them to your brother,
Like you said it what did you understood,
What you say you will do to me,
Time will come Drosoula,
For me to get out of the castle. "*

And secondly:

*"Up there my black eyes,
Up there, high up on the balcony,
Up there, high up on the balcony,
Two black eyes seated,
And gazing the boats,
That come the lads,
Coming from the island,*

*And bring me the cosmetics,
And all the ornaments."*

Mrs. Helen pointed out that the celebration that every family made in Kalentini for the peeling sounded until the opposite machala named as Megkla. For Kalentiniotes it was a celebration that lasted one month since that was the time for all the families to finish their crop.

In this way the villagers separated the fall and continuing their everyday routine until they reach the Christmas and the New Years Eve. Always, relying on my interviews, those days Kalentiniotes had specific customs. Shortly before Christmas had the custom of slaughtering a pig. From the animal held his fat in order to prepare the butter of the year and afterwards they were taking the bowel and the best part of it so as to prepare food for the Christmas table. Apart from the meat of that pig, they used its skin to make a carpet which they laid it at the festive days of Christmas. Then on Christmas Eve kneaded and baked the Chris-bread and the pies.

On Christmas Day and before going to the church, one member from each family ought to get up very early in the morning to go to the fountain and bring the silent water in the house, which it was transferred within a crock. Arriving on the fountain they had to leave one (1) piece of pie, which was either cheese or spinach. He or she should carry the silent water without talking to anyone. It was important not to speak to anyone that they might encounter in his/ her path towards the fountain and on their return. Whilst he/she carried the silent water ought to cut one (1) branch of holly and one (1) of folic. Entering the house with the silent water he/she had the competence to light the fire in the fireplace and when it the fire was strong enough should throw over it the two branches, the holly and the folic and mentioned:

*"Lambs, goats, brides and grooms
And many happy returns! "*

Subsequently with the speechless water he/ she was preparing tiganita¹, which in those days was the official treat on Christmas Day and also prominently on the holiday table. My query was whether he/ she would stay silent for the rest of the day and I was told that once he/ she would cook all the tiganita he/ she would be able to talk again. The first word he/she said was "Good morning" and it was mainly addressed to the first person who entered the kitchen.

Shortly before leaving for the church, women had to prepare the meals for the festive table, which consisted of pies, selinato and bobaris. The pies, which was mainly cheese pies where made by handmade pie sheet. The dough was placed on the table top as shown in the following photograph and with the help of the rod opened as many pie sheets as they wanted.

Table top that open pie sheet



¹ Tiganita: sweet porridge throwing spoonful in a frying pan.

<http://www.lexigram.gr/lex/enni/%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%B3%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B9%CF%84%CF%8E%CE%BD>

Then were preparing the selinato and the bobaris. Main ingredient of the two dishes it was the pig who had slaughtered the previous days. According to the persons who I spoke the bobaris was the official traditional Christmas food for the inhabitants of Kato Kalentini. The persons who had the preparation for bobaris, had the housewives which in the bowel of the pig put rice, various pieces of meat and some herbs like pepper, oregano and thyme. As soon as they prepare it they put it in the baking pan or in a pot and let it cook in the oven. While selinato boiled in the pot with the following materials, piece of pig, celery, herbs and egg lemon sauce.

As soon as the dishes were prepared they were getting dressed to go to the church. To the church they were taking with them the Christ-bread and additionally two dishes the first had a piece of cheese and the second one with olives in order the priest to bless them. Finishing the Christian function each family of Kalentinioton distributes to their fellow villagers and they held a small piece of all the products in order to bring blessing to their home.

The same day during their eating and when they had visitors, they served tsipouro, tiganita, sweets, danced traditional Epirus dances and sang cheerful songs such as the "Zacharoula", "Menusis" and "How they rub the pepper". Relying on the personal experiences of the two ladies (Mrs Eleni- Mrs Lamprini) one of the Christmas song was the following with rhythm 2/4 which unfortunately could not remember whole of it:

*"Down in the deep river,
Washes Rinoula by herself,
Right side Reinoula,
Right hand is your laundress,
And left the parting of her hair...."*

Reaching New Years' Eve they made a cheese pie so as to cut it at midnight (12 p.m.). When I asked them what they put in the pie the answer I received it was "*Nothing*" (Mrs Lamprini, Mr Stavros) "*We did not put anything*" (Mrs Helen) something that make me a formidable impression as nowadays we make Vasilopita and we put a coin or a cross accordingly to our places of origins. My query it was what they had for good luck charm for the New Year? Mrs Lamprini indicated to me: "*That their lamps that day always gave birth. So if a female lamp was born for them it would mean that they would have a good harvest in contrast if a male was born it presaged a bad year for the crop*" and that was the good luck charm for their home.

At New Year's Day the residents of Miliana's machala of the village Kalentini, were going to the church and after that they were visiting the celebrants of machala. In each house they were singing and dancing traditional Epiroticous rythmous (Mr Stavros). Each landlord was treating their visitors with tsipouro, tiganita, walnuts, apples, sweets and anything else they had (Mrs Lamprini, Mrs Helen). Till here I observe that the main treat for the Kalentiniotes are the tiganita and the tsipouro.

Following the festive days of Christmas the inhabitants returned to their daily occupations and progressively were preparing for Easter. As we know every place of origins when the Triodion begun they have their own mores and customs. How could Kato Kalentini not have its own?

More specifically Mrs Heleni, Mrs Lamprini and mr Stavros reported that on the Sunday of Tirinis they were celebrating the Halloween having the custom of "Prosopides", where groups of children disguised themselves and they were going out in the streets of the village and secondly the custom of "almiokoulouras" on Clean Monday which solely the unmarried girls of the village should participate.

As mentioned above, "Prosopides" was a custom which were implemented on Sunday of Tirinis. The name of the custom is based on the masks that they should be worn by the participants

so as not to be identified by their fellow villagers. In this custom it was allowed only to the boys and to the men of the village to take part.

In more details a week before Sunday of Tirinis the boys of the village regardless of their age were divided into groups of six (6) or seven (7) and even of ten (10) persons. Each member of the group had the entitled to choose what outfit to make. The most important for all of course was to cover as best they could his head for not being betrayed in the homes that they would visit. Based on the own personal experiences of my research respondents, men were mostly dressed as elders or horses, some of them choose to dress up as women since those days it was strange enough for men to wear women's clothes and thereby provoke a lot of questions about who was under the dress as stated by Mrs Helen. An important accessory for those who participated to "Prosopides" was the bell which was tied up either in their neck or in their waist.

The materials for the construction of the masks were predominantly a paper in which they made holes for their eyes, then placed on the middle of the mask fake mustaches by using hair from horses tails or sheep tails and finally placed a big nose over the mustache which was very long, twisted, thick and sufficiently distorted so as to cause laugh. In order for the mask and the objects that they put upon it, it was sewed by a sakorafa¹. Equally important in this appearance was the sock who detained by all the disguised men and they had filled it with ash.

Therefore the day of Tyrinis the groups started early in the morning in order to visit as many houses as they could before the sunset. In every house that they went masquerader whistled, did various teasing, they were singing, they dance freely in the center of the threshing floor of the house, filling the courtyard with sounds of joy. The hostess greeted them by holding a tray with a variety of goodies like walnuts, apples, sweets, pies, tiganita and glasses filled with tsipouro and she constantly filled the glasses with tsipouro as her aim was to drunk them so as to reveal their identities. Being scared of being recognized the men who participated in that groups tampered with their voices, while singing and during their conversations with the family members, in order to be heard as elders.

The two ladies remembered how the masquerades made their teasing for instance *"they were asking the girls who will marry or with whom they are in love and when they were not receiving any response the men were chasing the girls with the socks either hit or fill them in ashes so as to get an answer."* Mrs Helen recounts her personal experience *"two came in our house, a bride and a groom, one was my brother Michael immediately I understood him and the other I thought him coarse legs whom this legs belong to? I wanted to see who the bride is and I make to lift her dress and she cuts a strong "kaltsia" with the sock still remember."* In contrast, Mrs Lamprini recalls *"I was afraid of them and I always avoided going out when I saw them... no not afraid but did not want to see me. One time I heard them say: Where you hide the fairy that you got in your house?... And as they were leaving I heard them shouting: Inside you have her."*

The masquerades through their songs did a lot of teasing like this one:

"Do you hear me mavriдерoula what they say about me?

They say to kill me and to someone else to give you." (Mrs Lamprini)

The reason of this song was through the teasing to make the girl to speak and reveal the truth about the love she had with the lad (Mrs Lamprini).

¹ Sakorafa is a kind of needle with curve and pointed nose ideal for upholstery, mats or scrims. Also Sakorafa: Sakorafa + s <medieval Greek sakkorafion: Hellenistic common sakkorafos (meant: needle): bag + sew. Wiktionary <http://el.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CF%83%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%AC%CF%86%CE%B1>

Through this custom the men of the village had the opportunity to become acquainted with the unmarried girls of the village and simultaneously tease those by saying different jests and if they were fond with one of them, then he was sending a matchmaking to her parents in order to ask her to marry him.

The Sunday of Tirinis slipped by like that. Remaining within Triodion and reaching the Clean Monday which is the day that the unmarried girls of the village knead their almyrokouloura in order to see the lad that they will marry.

On the morning of Clean Monday the single women of Kalentini, were doing their daily occupations without eating and drinking anything until sundown. While it was the sunset behind the Korfovouni mount the girls kneaded their almyrokouloura using three ingredients: water, flour and a lot of salt. Having ready the dough put it in a pan, cross it three times and say sight-read "*My Holy Mary reveal to me the one who I will marry.*" and then it is ready for the oven. Before going to bed the unmarried girls ate as many almyrokouloura they could and then without drinking a single drop of water were going to sleep. It should be noted that during the night should not get up to drink water. Thus during their dream a person offers her some water to quench their thirst and that symbolized the man she would marry.

Mrs Lamprini emphasizes her personal experience "*when I did the custom of almyrokoulouras and in my dreams I saw one my uncle who gave me water from a fountain and after a long time he proved to be my matchmaking for the man that I married.*"

Ending the Triodion and approaching the Holy Week Kalentiniotes had two prevailing customs. Primary was the "*Lazaroudia*" and secondly the "*Carols of Holy Saturday.*"

"*Lazaroudia*" were formed by groups of three (3) or five (5) children from the Machala of Kato Kalentini. Each party, one day before the Saturday of Lazarus, ought to prepare and decorate the "*Lazaroudi*" basket with the following manner. Children used laurel leaves and flowering koutsoubia¹ and a black scarf around the basket. Laurel symbolizes the entrance of Christ at Jerusalem and the purple with the black the mourning of the entire world for the crucifixion of Christ.

Since the "*Lazaroudi*'s" basket was ready on Saturday of Lazarus children started early in the morning for all machala houses' in order to say the carols whilst after the sun set it was not allowed to sing the carols. In every house that they reached the hostess welcomes them and all the kids together sang:

*"Came Lazarus and the Vaya came,
Came a great feast and Holy as well.
Martha, Mary Magdalene and Lazarus mother
And Iakovos' sister the four together.
Three days of mourning and lament,
On the fourth day Christ come.
Today Christ came from Bethany.
Lazarus, come forth, my dear friend.
Tell me what you have seen Lazarus,
In the Hades that you've gone.
I saw fear, I saw terrors,*

¹ Koutsoubia, latin. Cercis siliquastrum, called Kotsikas. It is particularly common tree of the Mediterranean and the Greek countryside that separates each spring in fields with dense purple blossoms. or Judas tree (Cercis siliquastrum) is one of the most resistant ornamental. English referred to as 'Tree of Judas' from paraphrases arbre de Judée (tree of Judea) <http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%9A%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%84%CF%83%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%80%CE%B9%CE%AC>

I saw suffering and pain.

Give me some water to wash away the poison." (Mrs Lamprini)

At the end of the carols the hostess offered them eggs, apples, nuts, pies and tiganita which were put into the basket of "Lazarus". Finishing the carols at the sunset the children were shearing all the treats and the eggs were kept to be painted red on Holy Thursday in order to have blessing and good fortune at their home (Mrs Helen).

On the Holy Week Kalentiniotes in the morning were doing their daily occupations like feeding their animals, scour their fields and every evening were going to the church. Furthermore the villagers had one more custom as Mrs Helen mentioned "*The Holy Saturday*".

On Holy Saturday children's of Miliana machala sang the carols for the passion of Christ to all the fellow villagers. Mrs Lamprini and Mrs. Helen tried much in order to recall since the two of them had not told them since they were young. The Carols for Holy Saturday are:

"The Passion of Christ"

*"Down at Jerusalem and Christ's Tomb,
Tree was not appeared and the tree was manifested.*

The tree was Christ

The root was the Virgin Mary

And the twigs were the Testimony.

The Testimony was telling the Passion of our Christ.

Today is a black sky,

Today is a black day

Today we all grieve and heavens lament,

Today the enemy, the wicked Jews,

To crucify Christ,

Our only King.

The Lord wished to get into the orchard,

To take a Secret Dinner,

To be arrested by everyone.

The Holly Mary as she heard, faint herself.

Three cruses of water threw on her, and

Three chris-cruses to come of her calculus

And to her mind.

And as the thought came and her mind as well,

Prompts knife to slaughter, cliff to go to fall.

Martha, Mary Magdalene and Lazarus mother

And of Iakovos' sister four together.

As they took the street,

Street, path,

They found themselves to the Thief door.

Watch right watch left, anyone not acquainted,

Watch righter and see St. John.

St. John the Baptist and Baptist of my son,

Have you seen my son to my only son?

I have no tongue to tell you, tongue to speak you,

Hand to saw him

Do you see him naked, unsatisfied?

Who wears a shirt in blood?

On his head wears a crown of thorns.

This is your son and my teacher." (Mrs Lamprini, Mrs Helen)

After the end of carols for "The Passion of Christ", the children along with their parents and grandparents were preparing with great devoutness and love so as to go to night mode of the Resurrection with the first purpose of communion the Holy Communion and secondary to get Holy Light.

Conclusion

Completing my research I come to the following conclusions. Primarily on materiality that the participation of these entities to collect the data for my investigation, thereafter respondents displayed to me the good relationship, respect and mutual aid where presented amongst all members of family and as an extension it channeled to all the inhabitants of the village, then through the interviews I discovered the nostalgia of those persons to revive their traditions, the recollection of their daily lives and finally the unlimited love to participate in the customs of their village.

My wish is this work to become a pebble for supporting the lost Greek traditions and the possibility of reviving them due to the globalization whilst the increased immigration make them lost over the years and reflected as images when mentioned to younger.

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Photos

The photos are from the personal archive that belongs to Mrs Lamprini Tzinieri.

Part of the "sunken city"



Picture how were made Peeling 1



Picture how were made Peeling 2

