



HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

50 Goddard Avenue • Brookline, MA 02445 • (617)731-3500 • fax (617)850-1460 • www.hchc.edu

New Translation of 90-year Monograph Examines Customs and Traditions of a Greek Mountain Village

Brookline—October 15, 2015. The Holy Cross Orthodox Press of Hellenic College and the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology published a ninety-year-old ethnographic monograph that depicts the unexplored popular culture of a Greek mountain village in English translation for the first time.

The long forgotten but fascinating study of everyday life in a Greek Mountain Village was researched and written by Nikolaos Nitsos, a scholar from the village of Tsamantas in northwest Greece. His book, *Tales, Rituals, and Songs: the Unexplored Popular Culture of a Greek Mountain Village* was first published in 1926. It was lost for almost 70 years where it was found in a flea market in Athens and republished in 1992. His personal life mirrored the turbulent times of the early 20th century.

Nitsos' greatest contribution to ethnography, the scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures, is in the final six chapters of his monograph, and its various appendices. These chapters and appendices contain a substantial collection of folklore material from Tsamantas and the surrounding communities. He documented material that was in danger of being lost forever. The local way of life, with its customs and traditions, and the idioms used in everyday speech, are all described in meticulous detail, and explained with commendable clarity. Various folk songs from the locality appeared in print for the first time: love songs, ballads, religious pieces, satirical verses, songs to accompany dances, and songs sung at weddings or funerals.

"Holy Cross Press was pleased to publish *Tales and Rituals* because it can promote a deeper study of the Hellenic heritage of today's Greek-American community", said Anton Vrame, director of the Holy Cross Orthodox Press. "Knowing something about where we came from, even if it's a village that few of us may ever visit, can spur interest in the places of our origins, even if it's right here in the United States", he added.

Dimitrios Konstadakopulos, a British academic and author of a recent book on the village of Tsmanatas, called the Nitsos publication "a momentous event, bringing back to life a work of enormous interest and fine literary qualities". He complemented the translator of the Nitsos book, Panayotis League, an instructor of Greek at Hellenic College. "The complexity of the original Greek text and its antiquated form was a challenging undertaking," he said.

Soterios Zoulas, the executive editor of the 15-year project, expressed gratitude to the St. George Hellenic Benefit Society of Tsamantas whose grant made the translation and publication of this book possible. "The purpose of this translation and publication is to honor those original pioneers who traveled to America and began a new life. They always remembered where they come from. As we, their decedents, must," he said.

Mr. Zoulas also praised the efforts of Holy Cross Orthodox Press for their support and assistance in this arduous but worthwhile project.

The book is available from Holy Cross Bookstore, 1-800-245-0599 or [www.
http://holycrossbookstore.com/](http://holycrossbookstore.com/)

#