



Ano Lehonia – Milies  
“the little train of Pelion”



It is morning  
at the Ano Lehonion Railway Station.  
The little train's whistle  
signals the beginning  
of an unforgettable trip.  
The ascent on the beautiful slopes  
of Mt. Pelion has started!  
This 60cm gauge line,  
one of the narrowest  
in the world, hosts the engine and  
the 4 cars of "Moutzouris" ,  
a nickname which is used in Greek  
for someone who turns things black  
- an obvious choice in the days of steam.





The terrain between  
Ano Lehonia and Milies  
is mountainous, filled with  
dense vegetation,  
mainly made up of plane trees,  
olives and pine trees.  
The train's only intermediate stop is  
at the Ano Gatzea station  
for 15 minutes;  
from there it toils  
on to Milies and towards  
the completion of this 15km run.  
The total journey duration  
is about 90 minutes.





Up until Milies, the route is awash with natural beauty and features numerous architectural landmarks, constructions from carved stone and grey limestone that form arched bridges, tunnel entries and retaining walls. An exquisite ample of this is the five-arched stone bridge of Kalorema, in the area of Malaki.





On the final approach towards Milies,  
the scenery becomes more extreme,  
with the crossing  
of the steel bridge of Taxiarchis,  
also known as “De Chirico's Bridge,”  
being the highlight of this last section.  
Here, some pretty  
unique engineering is at work.  
This is a rare occasion  
where a train  
crosses a bridge that is straight,  
but the tracks that lie on it  
are actually curved!





The historical “little train of Pelion”  
used to run between Volos & Milies,  
on the tracks designed  
by the railway engineer  
Evaristo de Chirico.

A young admirer at the work site,  
Giorgio de Chirico, son of the engineer,  
drew inspiration  
in these childhood memories  
and recorded that in his works,  
usually in the form  
of a miniature train silhouette,  
half-hidden behind walls or arches,  
much like a child's “spying” gaze  
into the adult world.







# *g.de Chirico*

*Giorgio de Chirico was born in Volos, the eldest son of Evaristo and Gemma de Chirico.*

*His ancestors were Italian having lived in Eastern Mediterranean for several generations.*

*His father was a rail engineer employed in the supervision and construction of the Thessaly railway.*

*His mother was an opera singer.*





J. de Chirico



# *g.de Chirico*

*Evaristo de Chirico wished for his son to follow in his steps, but eventually encouraged the artistic interests of both Giorgio's and his brother Alberto Andrea, assigning their education to private tutors.*

*De Chirico's first teacher*

*was a young Greek painter from Trieste, Mavroudis.*

*Later, from 1903 to 1905, he studied at the School of Fine Arts, where he was taught by*

*George Roilos, Constantine Volonakis and George Iacovidis.*





G. de Chirico



# *g.de Chirico*

*The Greek environment and the Greek culture, in which de Chirico was raised was a source of inspiration for him.*

*In one autobiographical note, he described his childhood with reference to Greek mythology and especially the myth of the Argonauts, the Trojan war hero, Achilles and his teacher, the Centaur.*



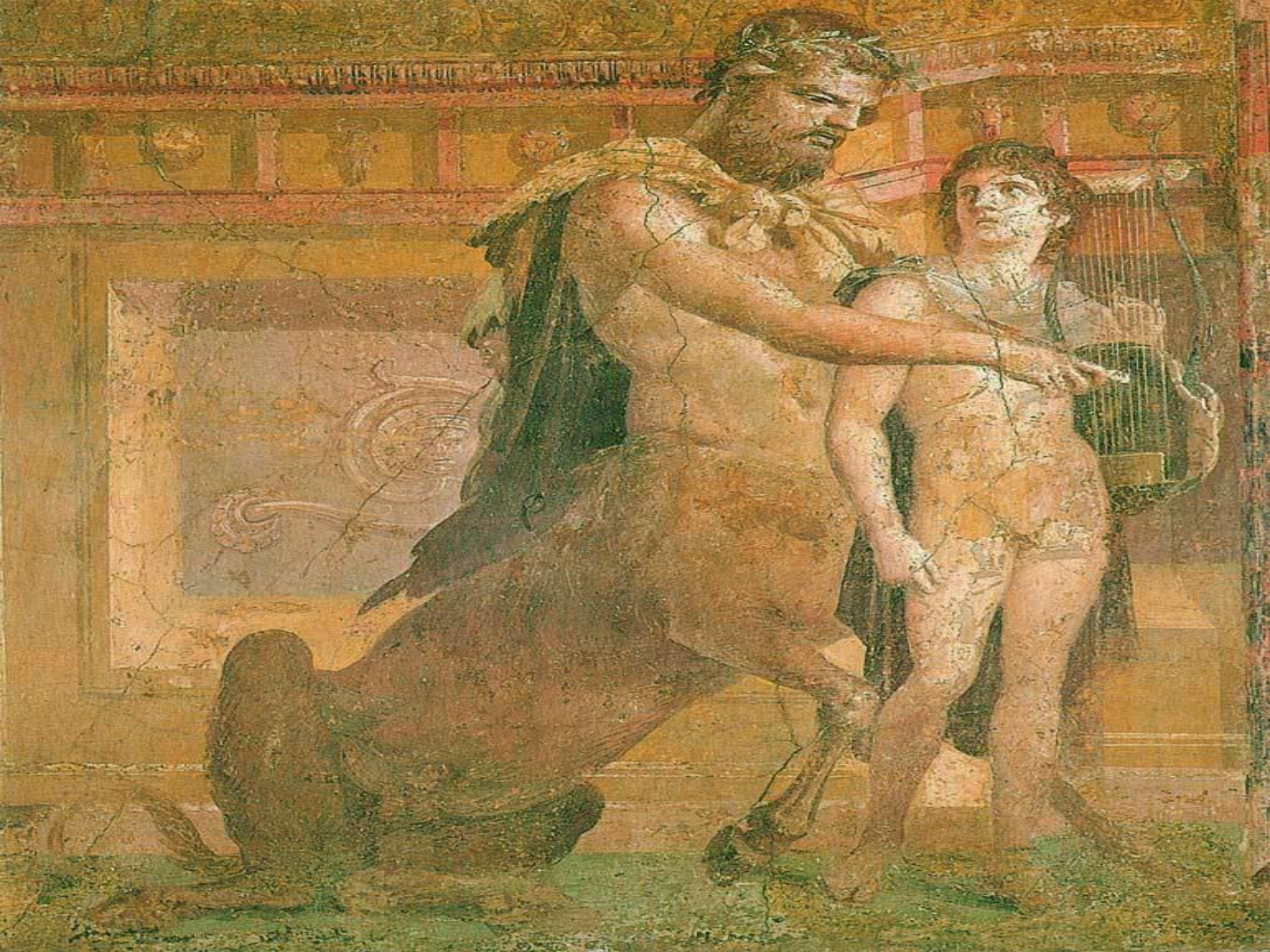


# The mythical route

The little train of Pelion crosses the mythical routes of the Centaurs and the Dodecatheon as, according to the Ancient Greek Mythology, Pelion was the summer habitat of the twelve gods of Olympus. Somewhere in the dense forest covering the slopes of Mt. Pelion, and in particular, where the R.R. Station of Milies lies today, researchers place the site of the wedding between Pileas and Thetis (the parents of Ahcilles).

The mythical battle involving the Centaurs and the Lapiths for the sake of beautiful Ippodameia is also thought to have taken place at this very site.







# The mythical route

Deep in the gorge of Taxiarchis, on the last turn towards Milies, lies the cave of wise Centaur Heiron who is an important figure in many ancient greek myths, usually appearing as the tutor of Achilles. Heiron, who was a healer, had bestowed upon Achilles's parents the spear which he later used in the Trojan War.





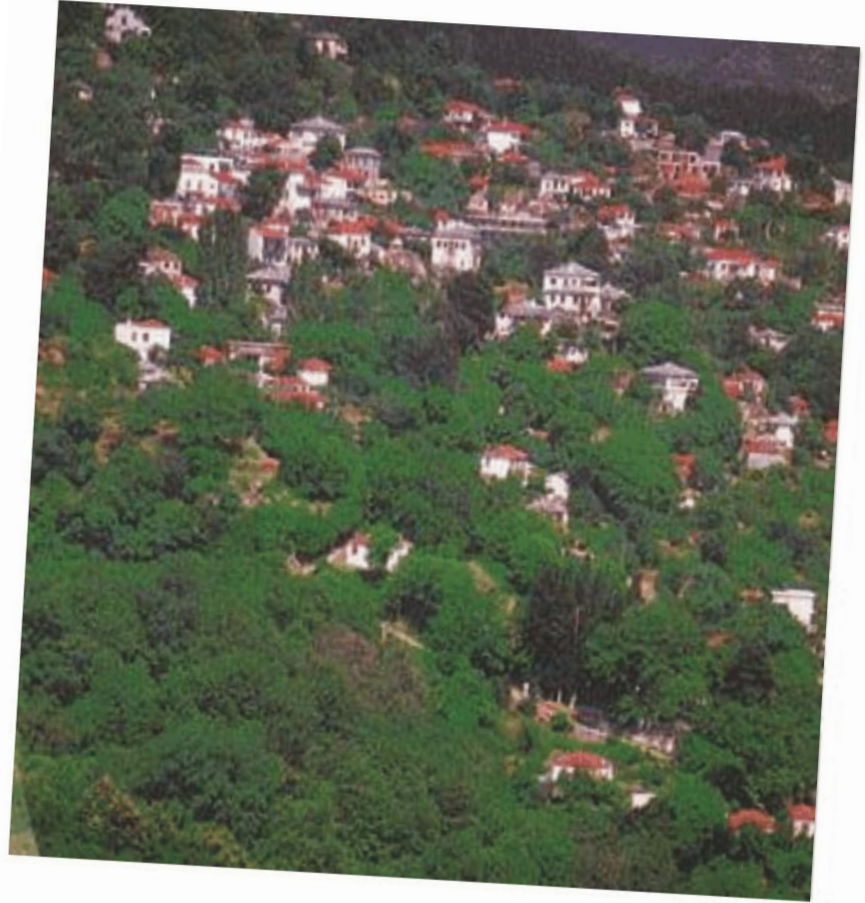


# The mythical route

The cave of Heiron, is exactly at the foot of the rock one which the chapel of Taxiarchis can be found today. It is said that inside that cave is the beginning of a path that connects to a similar cave in the area of Malaki or even further, to the hill of Goritsa on the east side of the city of Volos.

At the end of the route,  
lies Milies station.

Traditional guesthouse and taverns  
await the visitors, while  
a cobbled stone footpath  
takes you up the village's  
main square (about 15m).  
Here one can marvel  
at the church of Taxiarches,  
built before 1741,  
the library which is one  
of the oldest in Greece and  
visit the museum of folk art.



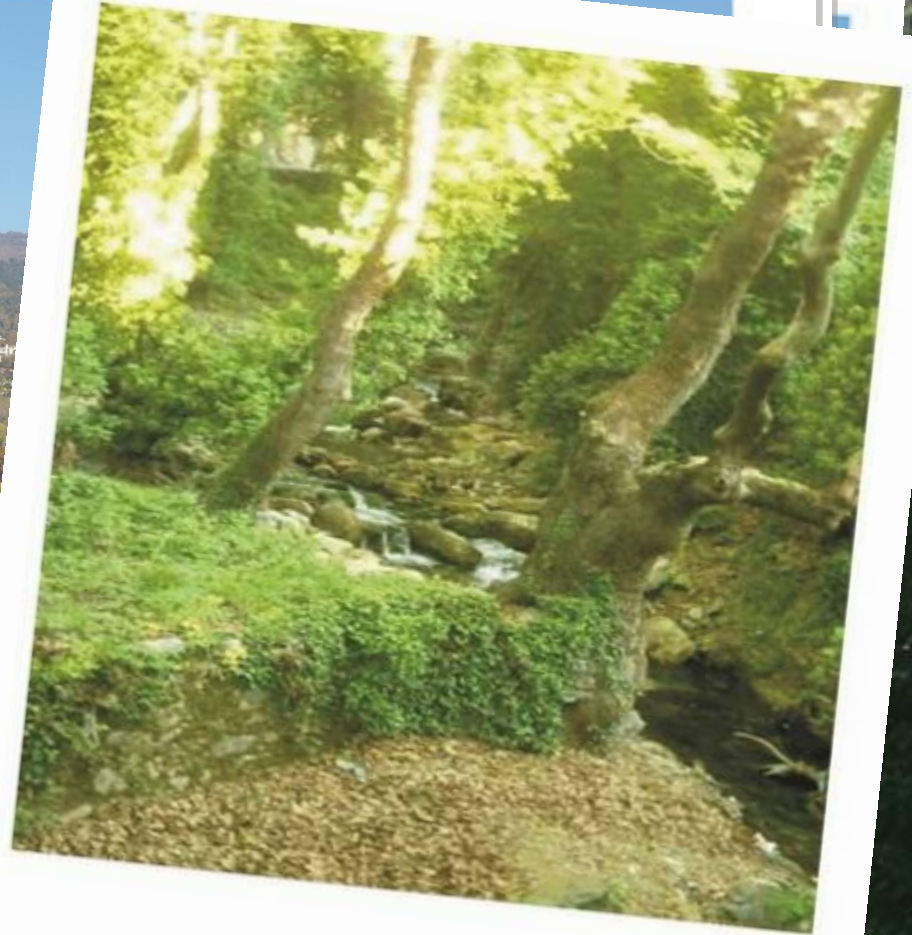


The visitor will come upon numerous fountains with running water, picturesque churches and chapels, apple, olive and chestnut trees and many beautiful gardens. The mythological and historical past of the area is reflected in the many monuments that greet the modern visitor as he makes his acquaintance with the place.





Nature lovers and hikers alike  
will find here paths  
of various levels of difficulty.  
One often-travelled path  
follows the rail line  
from Upper Lehonia to Milies.  
Other trails, appropriately marked,  
are from Milies to Koropi and  
Milies to Kala Nera.





Pelion is  
a popular tourist destination and  
the Pelion train is a unique offering  
which attracts many Greek and  
international visitors, every year.  
This is perhaps  
the most famous train journey  
filmed by friends of the railway  
and camera enthusiasts.  
Here's a selection of an amateur  
making the journey.

