

# Competing Ideologies in Greek Culture, Ancient and Modern



*Evy Johanne Håland*

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This book is dedicated to the memory of my Besta ("Granny"), who through her practical faith demonstrated that it is possible to believe in Huldra (a supernatural female creature or kind of Nymph) and Christ at one and the same time.



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**Table 1: Schematic Overview of Attic Months:**

Hekatombaion	July-August
Metageitnion	August-September
Boedromion	September-October
Pyanepsion	October-November
Maimakterion	November-December
Poseideon	December-January
Gamelion	January-February
Anthesterion	February-March
Elaphebolion	March-April
Mounichion	April-May
Thargelion	May-June
Skirophorion	June-July

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## A NOTE ON transliteration

The present book deals with ancient and modern Greek culture, and therefore many Greek names and terms. It should therefore be mentioned that there is no unified universally accepted system for transliteration of written and spoken Greek. I have therefore devised my own which, with a few exceptions, is identical to the system used by the Nordic Library, Athens. However, variations may occur when quoting from a published Greek text, since there are several possible ways of transliterating those.

A	α	a
B	β	b
Γ	γ	g
Δ	δ	d
E	ε	e
Z	ζ	z
H	η	ē
●	θ	th
I	ι	i
K	κ	k
Λ	λ	l
M	μ	m
N	ν	n
Ξ	ξ	x
●	ο	o
Π	π	p
P	ρ	r
Σ	σ ς	s
T	τ	t
Y	υ	y
Φ	φ	ph
X	χ	ch
Ψ	ψ	ps
Ω	ω	ō



Αυ αυ au

Ευ ευ eu

Ου ου ou

γ before γ n

γ before κ n

ϝ h (in Ancient Greek)

Where an author's name can be spelled in more than one way, I have followed the author's own spelling; if they do not consistently use the same spelling, I have transcribed it according to the aforementioned system. Exceptions to this include personal and place names or terms which have a well-established or standard Anglicised form, such as Tinos, not Tēnos; Serres, not Serrōn; Anastenaris, not Anastenarēs. In general, though, Greek names are not Latinised with the letter c, which does not exist in the Greek alphabet. Sometimes I use C, as in Corfu and Cyprus, since those are the standard Anglicised forms. When a term or name can be rendered in several ways, I have employed my own system, such as Agia, not Hagia, Ayia or Aghia. This mainly concerns Modern Greek, since Ancient Greek names and terms are more widely known in "European versions", such as Arrephoria. This is also the reason that I have marked the *spiritus asper* (´) with h on transcriptions from the Ancient Greek, since, for example, *hiera* and *hieros gamos* are well-established spellings within ancient scholarship. Thus, with one exception, I have used the same system for Ancient Greek (A.G.) and Modern Greek (M.G.), although anthropologists may be critical of this usage, claiming I am attempting to demonstrate that Modern Greek derives from Ancient Greek. My intention is purely pragmatic, however, given how closely related the two systems of orthography are. I have not used the Greek alphabet in the text, but only in transliteration, hoping that this rule will be more appropriate for readers less accustomed to the Greek language. When a Greek term is first used, it is shown in italics.

## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When completing my PhD dissertation in history, *Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values* from 2004, I was left with much material which I could not include in the final version, because the dissertation would then be much too long. This was in fact a raw manuscript for a new book. I was, of course, interested in turning it into a book. In 2006, I received a project grant from the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (NFF) to write the book, *Competing Ideologies in Greek Religion, Ancient and Modern*, and I would like to offer my thanks to NFF for this.

Many people have commented on earlier drafts of the present book or have provided invaluable help in other ways, and many therefore deserve my warm thanks. Only a few of these can be mentioned here. I would like to direct a special word of thanks to the historian of religion Professor Dag Øistein Endsjø, University of Bergen/Oslo, who also encouraged me to submit a proposal for a project grant from NFF so I could continue working on my manuscript and turn it into a new book. I would also like to mention the Greek folklorist Elenē Psychogiou, who has always been available for discussions around our common research interests, the relationship between ancient and modern popular cults in general, and particularly gender relations and power in Greece, both past and present.

The present book was published in Norwegian in 2011 by Licentia Publishers (Bodø). When the book manuscript was completed, however, the Scandinavian publishers who were most interested in publishing a topic dealing with both ancient and modern Greek culture, encouraged me to translate the manuscript into English, since the topic deserves an international readership. Professor Svein Mønnesland (University of Oslo), who along with Professor Sverre Bagge (University of Bergen) gave my manuscript a generous reading, especially encouraged me to translate it into English due to its value within comparative Balkan studies. Over the years since finishing the Norwegian version I have myself felt the need to translate the present book and make it available to a wider international readership than the original Norwegian version. This is especially due to the many young scholars today who across disciplinary

borders feel the need to draw on modern as well as cross-period material in their studies of both ancient and modern Greek and Mediterranean cultures. In connection with the present translation, I particularly want to thank my colleague from the SIEF (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore) Working Group on The Ritual Year, Dr/PhD Molly Carter (Santa Rosa, California, USA/University of Sheffield, UK), for having proofread the manuscript.

Ancient culture is a popular topic, as illustrated by both contemporary films and books. One may also mention the interest resulting from northern European tourism in Greece and immigrant groups in northern Europe, who by reading the book find parallels with their own cultural heritage. These people often come from the Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Balkan and other eastern European regions. The topic of the book is also important in other geographic contexts around the world. This study provides new perspectives on the process around cultural changes and transitions in Europe and the rest of the world. The book has great importance in the present age of globalisation, because it discusses the relationship between the official and popular forms of the cult, seen from the grassroots of society; that is, women and the general populace, with whom I have talked during my fieldwork.

The material in this book comes from the southeastern corner of Europe; that is, a region where through the ages there has been a constant interaction and discourse between a variety of people, often with different ethnic backgrounds. The study also demonstrates how many parallels there are between the various societies and religious groupings in the Mediterranean region in spite of many differences, both in time and space.

This book has important ramifications for current research surrounding the shaping of a "European identity", "heritage studies", including the marketing of regional and national heritages, and associated activities. In connection with the present-day aim of connecting the various and quite different European heritages, and developing a vision of Europe and its constituent elements that is at once global and rooted, the work has great relevance. One may also mention the new international initiative on intangible heritage, in addition to the material one, spearheaded by UNESCO.

Religious ideologies are flowering in modern Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Balkan and Russian societies, and comparative cultural studies will become more and more important. The results are also exciting reading for a non-academic readership interested in other countries and cultures.

Modern and ancient Greek culture may not be studied together at Norwegian universities, where one may study only ancient language and culture. Only recently has it become possible to study Modern Greek at a Norwegian university. Nonetheless, elsewhere in Europe it has become apparent that the comparative perspective is in fact of great relevance to understanding the European Union with its continuing eastern expansion as well as the modern global situation. Accordingly, around the time of publishing the Norwegian version of this book, I received a two-year Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship, hosted by the Department of Archaeology and History of Art at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens via the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7-PEOPLE) in 2010, to continue my comparative studies of modern and ancient Greek culture. My studies of modern Greece illustrate a society that has its own types of logic, a topic which is also relevant to the contemporary "crisis", as people say in an economically impoverished Greece. That a society has its own logic is of great immediate interest to contemporary research and the process of communication in general, in which globalisation and internationalisation are two significant themes. This internal logic has relevance for northwestern European ethnocentrism contra extensive parts of the remaining world as well. In addition, this becomes highly significant when studying ancient Greece, a world very different from the modern northern European one.

# INTRODUCTION: COMPETING IDEOLOGIES IN GREEK CULTURE, ANCIENT AND MODERN

This study's untraditional methodological approach to researching ritual activities in modern Greece, in connection with religious festivals and life-cycle passages and their relationship to ancient Greek ritual behaviour, aims to reinterpret our ancient sources in order to arrive at a more comprehensive view of both ancient and modern Greek culture and religion. This particular method is unusual since researchers who work on ancient sources generally do not carry out fieldwork themselves, but rely on results from other researchers, mostly from ethnographers.

Nonetheless, very few have really used the enormous wealth of comparative material available in the region where ancient cultures flourished. In general, the coupling of modern and ancient for many researchers means the increasingly popular area of reception studies; that is, the reception of antiquity *in the West*, or in other words, a northwestern European perspective and research. This is a serious drawback, and after having experienced the “cultural, affective, and material turns” within the humanities and social sciences, I would eagerly argue that the time is overripe to take a serious step towards the *comparative turn*, a topic I have myself researched for several decades. I know it is not an easy task to ask scholars of antiquity, who like to sit in their library with their Homer—to paraphrase one of the leading Norwegian scholars of antiquity—to start doing fieldwork. By comparing all the findings in northern European museums with the living traditions—the lived religions—in the Mediterranean region where the actual archaeological artefacts were originally found, I am convinced scholars will obtain new and interesting knowledge of these objects, more so than if they continue to study them in a northern European context in which they are foreign and have therefore been so misunderstood over the years.<sup>1</sup> This also pertains to the rituals in which the very artefacts were used.

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<sup>1</sup> Here I am especially thinking of the work of Payne Knight 1794 (or 1786); see also articles in Draycott/Graham eds. 2017. The first director of the Norwegian Institute at Athens, made this comment when he was unable to understand the

The research on which this study is built has also taken on board a vast subject of major importance for understanding the culture of Europe as a whole. The lack of attention to the oral culture of Europe is indeed a major barrier to inter-cultural understanding. There has been a strong tendency to set Europe apart from the rest of the world and equate it with the literate stream, but if we bring into consciousness the latent part of the European heritage, international communication with people from those parts of the world that have a stronger oral base will be much improved, and this is of the greatest social importance. Part of the neglected latent European heritage is the female component, which this study is concerned with bringing into fuller awareness.

Since this study explores how the study of oral culture can help flesh out our knowledge and redress an imbalance in our view of the past, it can shed new light on both modern and ancient Greece, and enable us to see them from a fresh perspective. Multidisciplinary research is what is needed when we are dealing with such complex subjects as ritual behaviour, and this work is a contribution to the studies of Greek history, religion and ethnography.

This work tries to rethink the history of Europe, also encompassing its Mediterranean and eastern peripheries, and incorporates innovative historiographical and methodological practices. By examining both ancient and modern material, the research demonstrates a transnational, comparative and Braudelian *longue durée* approach to Europe's history. It has relevance for several areas along the European peripheries. Since many of the values in Greece have parallels with those found in the eastern part of Europe, there is no doubt that this comparative approach will be greatly useful in future research, in particular concerning the contemporary situation of the expansion of the European Union. One may also mention immigration to Europe from non-European countries, since people from these areas share many cultural traits with Greece and the eastern European regions, such as in connection with popular religious festivals, often encompassing both death, fertility and healing rituals, which might be foreign to people from the northern/western parts of Europe and the USA and therefore difficult to understand. This research, then, has relevance for comparisons on a broader civilisational level.

In short, it is important to look seriously to the rest of the world and see what those people think about many of the rituals taking place amongst themselves—such as those in the Mediterranean region—that are similar

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point of doing fieldwork in Greece in order to do research on antiquity, comparative approaches evidently being something unknown.



to the ancient ones and compare them in the present era of globalisation to gain new perspectives on the ancient context, thus becoming more open-minded to obtaining a greater understanding of the rest of the non-western world, where one can often find communities that have more in common with both the Mediterranean and ancient worlds.<sup>2</sup>

The present book thus follows up the comparative approach employed in my earlier monographs on *Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values* (2007/2017) and *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece: Writing History from a Female Perspective* (2014). By drawing on the same methodology—that is, using modern sources in conjunction with ancient ones—the book further explores the relationship between official religion and popular belief, as illustrated by the relations between competing ideologies or the relationship between ideology and mentality.

This book is the cross-period, multidisciplinary or post-disciplinary product of studies in ancient history combined with extensive periods of fieldwork conducted primarily on religious festivals in modern Greece from 1990 to 2018 and anthropological analysis of present-day Mediterranean societies. Central themes encountered in all the festivals are the relationships between official versus popular cults, ideologies versus mentalities, and religion contra magic. These key topics are discussed in depth in the present study.

Modern and ancient religious festivals comprise different spheres. These spheres are linked with gender, but they are also connected partly with the official religion and partly with the popular cult. From a traditional male perspective, the former (that is, the official religion) is associated with men, while the latter, the popular cult, is associated with women. Furthermore, the relationship between official religion and popular religion also reflects the relationship between the great and little society. The concepts associated with “*honour and shame*”; that is, cultural concepts of gender and sexuality, which one encounters among men in the Mediterranean region, bear witness to an ambivalent relationship both to women’s cults and to women in general. While women’s cults are important to the official society, features of these cults have also been condemned as “barbarian” both by the ancient male writers and their later counterparts, the official spokesmen. Simultaneously, we encounter

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<sup>2</sup> The importance of seeing Europe from the south to complement the northern perspective is also emphasised, *inter alia*, by conferences and cooperation among Mediterranean countries. One may mention the Fifth International Congress on Language, Culture & Media in the Mediterranean: *Genres, Taste, Scents and Colours*, which took place in Fez, Morocco, in October 2018.

something else among women themselves, for whom a “*chthonic*” (subterranean) perspective, or the perspective of “*a poetics of womanhood*”, is an important counterweight to the male perspective of “honour and shame”, because the perspective reveals what it means to be “*good at being a woman*” in Greece.

Seen from the women’s perspective, one gains a different view of the relationship between the official cult and the popular cult, because their performance of public rituals to ensure the fertility of society bears witness to what it means to be good at being a woman. In this way, male ideologies are deconstructed. The performance of fertility rituals is important, and the fertility cult which permeates the agricultural festivals also underlies and permeates the official ideology. The fertility cult is the foundation on which the ideology is built, and most of the festivals are particularly important to the official ideology. Belief and practice are experienced differently by the performers, but even so, it is not a matter of completely separated spheres, although they compete with one another. Nothing indicates that the popular cult is dependent on a particular “oriental” influence, in contrast to a more “Western” official cult, as some scholars have assumed. Important parts of the popular cult are integrated and overlapping with the official religion. The two cults depend on and complement one another, because they belong to the same religious and cosmological whole. We are dealing with a mutual contract between the two religious layers, in which phenomena such as fertility, healing and death cults from the popular religion are included in the ideological festivals of the greater society, which has adapted to the conception or worldview of the local society.

Problems such as the fact that one encounters several groupings of people within the same village that might be in conflict with each other are central to religious festivals in Greece. One learns how and why cultural collisions take place, because many different groups arrive in the village, not only those who have moved out; that is, the emigrants who “return home” during the most important village festivals. The celebration of a feast is most often connected with peace and contentment, and has also been a common way of settling conflicts between two opposing parties, both in Homer and in modern Mediterranean societies, often manifested through a bull sacrifice, common meal and/or a wedding where the couple comes from each of the two antagonistic groups. Still, one also sees how the festivals are generally good examples of how conflicts arise, are exaggerated, and come to the surface. One also encounters antagonisms at the local level between different ethnic groups, but also within the group of Anastenarides and Anastenarisses in northern Greece, and between



official religion and popular religion. Similar examples can be found in the ancient context, during the celebration of the most important festival of the Athenian city-state, the Panathenaia festival, for instance, but also in connection with the women's Thesmophoria festival in the same city-state. In both contexts it was the woman's chastity that was at stake.

Much of what one encounters between the different village population groups are important themes that are generally linked with a term such as ethnicity. The modern festivals take place within, and thus are part of, the modern Greek nation-state. In this context, the relationship between the festivals and the emigrants who return home is, of course, an important factor. The various groups who celebrate the festival within a particular village might be descendants of Greeks who have immigrated to modern Greece through various migrations, but also the great population exchanges that have taken place between the new nation-states in the region. The "newcomers" might also be opposed to other groups who lived in the region before those migrations and especially the exchange of populations in the 1920s. The relationship between female and male value systems reflects the relationship between official and popular value systems, and cannot be isolated from the respective population groups of which an individual village is usually composed. Much in the festivals might change from one year to the next, but the central factor is constituted by the overlapping value systems, and they do not depend on whether the festivals take place within the context of a nation-state with emigrants who return home. Although the political systems were different in the ancient Greek world, the different spheres one encounters in the festivals are crucial. Irrespective of which political system is prevalent in the actual society, we encounter the overlapping measures of value linked with the different spheres, illustrated through the relationship between popular cult and official ideology.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION: GREEK FESTIVALS, MODERN AND ANCIENT

### Modern Festivals:

#### **15 August, the Dormition of the *Panagia* (the “All-Holy One”), the Virgin Mary, on the Aegean Island of Tinos**

The religious festival dedicated to the “Dormition of the *Panagia*” (*Ē Koimēsis tēs Theotokou*, the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God), is celebrated on 15 August on Tinos, the holy island of the Greeks, in the island group of the Cyclades in the Aegean Sea (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

There are many aspects of the great 15 August celebration on Tinos which are significant for a comparative analysis with relevant ancient festivals. This Orthodox festival dedicated to the *Panagia* is important for several reasons. The festival is dedicated to the Dormition of the nurturing and healing Mother Goddess, the *Panagia*. In calendrical terms, the festival marks a turning point toward autumn, and thereby announces the transition from summer to autumn and winter. When considering the additional rituals and symbols attached to the same festival, it becomes clear that this is in several ways the Greeks’ most important fertility and healing festival.

It was in fact the fertility and healing aspects of the festival on Tinos that first brought me to the island in 1990. This approach to the Tinos festival, however, has not been particularly common. How important is the popular aspect of the festival to the manifestation of the national ideology, and who depends upon whom?

The year after the Greek War of Liberation against the Turks broke out in 1821, the nun Pelagia dreamt repeatedly that the Virgin showed her the

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<sup>1</sup> The present chapter is a summary of parts of my fieldwork on modern Greek festivals and equivalent ancient festivals. These are given a comprehensive examination in Håland 2017: Ch. 4-5, while Ch. 6 discusses the fertility aspect of the festivals. With the exception of the first festival, which was attended seventeen times in the period 1990-2013, the other modern festivals were attended in 1992.

place on Tinos where her holy *icon* (image) of the Annunciation (*Euangelismos*) was buried (Figure 2). They dug for it and found it in a field on 30 January 1823. Since then the icon has worked numerous miracles. The crowd of pilgrims therefore increases dramatically and reaches its pinnacle during the celebration of the “Dormition of the Panagia” on 15 August. During the ritual chaos, which is particularly apparent in the procession with the miraculous and healing icon, the culmination of the festival, we encounter a female world contrasted with a male, official world represented by the Church and the police (Figure 3).



Figure 1. During the festival dedicated to the Dormition (that is, “falling asleep”) of the Panagia (Virgin Mary) on the island of Tinos, her icon (image) is carried in procession, while the waiting pilgrims squeeze themselves underneath to be healed, 15 August 1993 (photograph by Hartmut Müller-Stauffenberg).

Not only is the festival dedicated to a Mother Goddess, but it is the individual family’s mother who is the central performer of the ritual actions intended to secure the family’s life and health:

Women are also the most frequent pilgrims arriving at the island, and it is predominantly women who crawl the kilometre-long way from the harbour to the Church of the Annunciation where the icon is housed (Figure 4).



Figure 2. The holy icon on Tinos: A worshipper wipes off the “sweat” from the icon with a wad of cotton wool, which becomes an amulet, August 1993.

It is also women who mainly fetch holy, healing and fertility-ensuring water (Figure 5), earth, oil, bread and other amulets before and during the festival, and who squeeze themselves underneath the icon during the procession in order to touch it, often with their sick children in their arms, despite the fact that the police create a circle, thus forming a tight guard to protect the icon from the crowds. Accordingly, on Tinos we encounter a tension between the official priesthood and the representative of the individual family. The same tension is found between the official Greek society and a marginal group of people that is numerically large in Greek society, the gypsies, who also invade the island during the festival, despite

the fact that the management of the church tries to prevent it.<sup>2</sup> The festival on Tinos is also an important ideological celebration of the “New Greek nation-state of 1821”. This is illustrated *inter alia* by the purifying and healing procession, and in all the other rituals attached to the same festival. Hence there follows the requirement to display ancient and Byzantine symbols:



Figure 3. Kneeling, crawling female pilgrims and marching male soldiers: The relationship between female and male worlds, 15 August 1993.

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<sup>2</sup> Concerning the gypsies, this is not meant to be pejorative, but a translation of the word used by ordinary Greeks. However, the gypsies themselves never use the word but call themselves “Romani”.





Figure 4. A mother crawling on her knees the kilometre-long way from the harbour to the Church of the Annunciation, in which the icon of the Annunciation is found, with a sick child on her back in the hope of healing, 14 August 2005.

The sanctuary dedicated to the Panagia of Tinos is a great complex. It is both a religious pilgrimage centre and an important national symbol, comparable to the Greek nation itself, which in the eyes of many was also resurrected after “2,000 years of sleep” (the ancient) or “850 years of burial” (Byzantine period). This is particularly demonstrated by the importance of showing ancient and Byzantine symbols, illustrated by a lion from the neighbouring ancient sacred pilgrimage island of Delos, which presides by one of the staircases of the main church, and the healing shrine at Kionia, two kilometres outside Tinos town, which was dedicated to the former protector of the island, the sea God Poseidon and his wife Amphitrite, to which the ancient pilgrims travelled. The stones that had to be removed in order to find the miraculous icon in 1823 are supposed to have belonged to an ancient temple of Dionysos, which was later turned into a Byzantine church dedicated to John the Baptist and the Panagia. The remains of this Byzantine church, which once housed the icon, are of great importance. The church rested on the foundations of an ancient Pan-Hellenic temple of Dionysos and, according to the church pamphlets distributed to pilgrims, marbles and columns from the ancient temples of

Delos and Poseidon were used in its construction. The combination of ancient and Byzantine symbols also bears witness to the dual Greek identities: the ancient and the Byzantine.



Figure 5. Women fetch holy, healing and fertility-ensuring water from the “Life-Giving Spring” (*Zōodochos Pēgē*), Tinos, August 2009.

The Dormition of the Panagia demonstrates mother worship, which is an important focus in connection with the fertility aspect as well as the “poetics of womanhood perspective” of the festival. The festival also shows the importance of emphasising how the Greeks view their own history, because they do not necessarily possess the same categories of thought as northwestern Europeans.

Regarding the significance attached to narratives of miracle cures from Tinos, both the importance that the Panagia’s help has for the Greek nation and the way it makes use of the finding of the icon are relevant. The finding of buried icons and supernatural assistance are elements also encountered in other of the festivals to be discussed.

### **The Babo Day in Monokklēsia, Greek Macedonia, 8 January**

The women’s festival dedicated to the midwife, Babo, is celebrated on 8 January in the village of Monokklēsia, which is situated approximately twenty kilometres west of Serres, the biggest township in the area. The custom takes place in a region in the northernmost and most fertile part of Greece, populated by refugees from the former village of Petra in Eastern Roumelia or eastern Thrace, an area that since the war in 1922 has belonged to Bulgaria and Turkey.

● On this day, the village’s women demand that their menfolk take over their usual domestic work, while the celebrating drunken women reel around in the streets, and occupy the *taberna*. ● Only women who are still of childbearing age are permitted to participate at the feast, “so they may get pregnant”, as people say. The village women go to visit the one who is selected to be “the midwife of the year”. They bring her gifts that will be useful to her profession, such as soap, towels, and so on, but they also bring food and wine. In this way, all the women gather in the house of the midwife. Adorned with gilded flowers, onion and garlic tresses, necklaces of dried figs, grapes, pimientos (peppers), currants and carob beans, and one large onion worn on her wrist in place of a watch, she sits proudly upon a makeshift throne, watching the scene with satisfaction. The village women surround her with great veneration, as if she were a reincarnation of *Genetyllis*, the ancient Greek Goddess of childbirth.

Later, the women lead the midwife in procession to a decorated straw hut, inside of which they begin the religious ritual: each woman pours out some water for the midwife to wash her hands, thus anticipating the day when the midwife will assist her in childbirth. She is sprinkled with water, and receives a wooden sceptre in one hand and a phallus in the form of a



leek in the other. Next, she must kiss the leek. The midwife is surrounded by other women, who sing and dance. Some of them are in fancy dress, most wear national costume, and many are quite wild. Their songs and jokes are often extremely coarse, and they keep going until midnight in their own building, named *Ē Lysistratē, Monokklēsia, Serrōn* (the Lysistrata association of Monokklēsia, Serres), celebrating with great gusto and a banquet with plenty of food, wine, singing and dancing (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Dancing women at the Babo feast in the village of Monokklēsia, Greek Macedonia, 3 January 1992.

Although the Babo feast most likely is not a genuine survival of the ancient women's festivals, as some scholars have claimed, the modern festival probably displays many patterns in common with the ancient women's celebrations, and in any case, the modern ritual constitutes an important and valuable comparative resource regarding both the particular time within the agricultural year when it is celebrated and the gender relations in the area. There may therefore be many reasons for comparing the Babo feast with the festivals dedicated to the ancient grain Goddess, Demeter, such as the particular stage in the grain's growth; that is, the time within the agricultural year when it is celebrated. The way the ancient male-produced sources considered the "women's rule" (*gynaiokratia*)<sup>3</sup> is

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ar. *Eccl.*; i.e., the women's 24 hour rule when Praxagora was elected leader.

also important to take into account when comparing the gender relations in both ancient and modern Greek contexts.

The Babo festival includes many symbols and rituals associated with the death cult, the fertility cult, and healing. This includes the time of the year when it is celebrated, when the farmer must reawaken the earth from death's embrace; the various phallic symbols that are employed, such as in the procession; the ritual with holy and healing water; the women's alcohol consumption; and the obscene songs and jokes that are performed. It is practical to have leeks and cabbages as phallic symbols, during the festival, since it is the period of harvesting these crops in the area. The phallic symbols, then, signify the fertility that is starting to reawaken. The festival gives an interesting presentation of the two genders' respective spheres in Greece. Moreover it is celebrated mainly by women descended from Orthodox and Greek-speaking Thracian refugees, who brought the custom to Greece with them during the population exchange of 1923. The immigrant women came to Greece from an area that has been isolated from the outside world until recently, due to its inaccessibility. The Babo festival can therefore be regarded as a supplementary source for the ancient women's festivals which were celebrated in this area. The reason is that we have few contemporary sources for the ancient female festivals, and the evidence that we do have was written and passed down by men, even though they were excluded from participation in the festivals.

The ancient Thesmophoria festival and the Haloa were celebrated around important periods of the agricultural year. It is therefore natural to take the modern Babo feast into account when attempting to illuminate ancient women's festivals. Relevant aspects, which will be discussed in the following analysis, are the time of year of the celebration, the exclusion of men, and concrete symbols and obscenities. It is also important to note that the men's "chorus" outside of the "*kapheneio*" ("coffeehouse") while the women sing in their association's house is an example of a common ritual where the two sexes are separated. The midwinter festival dedicated to Babo, when the official church celebrates the holy—but for the women of Monokklēsia virtually unknown—*Θσία* (venerable, blessed, saint) or *Agia* (f.; that is, Saint) Donmikhēs, Domnēs or Domenika, the midwife who, according to tradition, helped the Panagia at the birth of Christ and until his baptism, may therefore be a relevant illustration of how the new Christian ideology has added Orthodox festivals to older ones.

## Carnival (*Apokreos*) in Greek Macedonia: Kalogeros, The Rain Magician, *Deutera tēs* *Tyrinēs*—Cheese Monday in Melikē

Two carnival festivals from Greek Macedonia, which in 1992 took place at the beginning of March, are described.<sup>4</sup> This first custom is called the *Kalogeros* (monk), and is celebrated on “Cheese Monday” in the third week of carnival in the village of Melikē, in the neighbourhood of Vergina and Pella in Western Greek Macedonia.

During a circuit which lasts the entire day, the *Kalogeros* and his followers visit and bless all the houses in the village to ensure the rain and a plentiful harvest. As thanks for the blessing, the household must give a gift in return, and the group is treated to wine, ouzo or *metaxa* (Greek brandy) and food. Next a ritual ploughing and sowing takes place, the *Kalgeros* is killed and resurrected, and the evening terminates with a common meal and dancing. The *Kalogeros* ritual is a prime example that invites to be visited when examining parallels between the modern and ancient popular cults in general and fertility cults in particular. Here all elements are encountered within a single day in the custom known as “*Kalogeros*”. Through *sympathetic magic*,<sup>5</sup> the farmer assists nature to pass through the worst of the winter, and one encounters rain magic, death, resurrection, and marriage. The protagonist of the festival is the rain magician, the rainmaker, who symbolises the forces of vegetation and the fertility of the earth. The festival also includes unrestrained alcohol consumption, obscene songs, phallic symbols and processions, all related to the fertility cult and healing. Another important element is a symbolic ploughing of the earth as they simultaneously sow a symbolic mixture of grains, *polysporia* (*poly*: many, varied; *spori*: seed) (Figure 7).

The connection between fertility, healing and death in the ritual is significant, as is the time of year when it is celebrated, since this is a decisive period of the year’s passage throughout the entire Mediterranean region. Despite changes in the way in which the ritual is carried out, the death and resurrection of the *Kalogeros* around the spring equinox has remained the central theme. The vegetation God, who is killed annually and comes back to life every spring, has many parallels in ancient cults and forms a central theme in connection with the logic of fertility. Although the ritual I witnessed does not include all the elements

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<sup>4</sup> Parts of the following section on carnival have been published previously, see Håland 1993b: 55–61, see also 2005 (2001) and 2012a.

<sup>5</sup> See Ch. 2 *infra* for the law of similarity and the law of contamination.

encountered in earlier performances, such as the cradled infant, it is mentioned in the analysis because it constitutes the aim of marital union between man and woman.



Figure 7. The symbolic ploughing of the earth as they simultaneously sow a symbolic mixture of grains, “*polysporia*”, during the *Kalogeros* (monk) ritual in the village of Melikē, Greek Macedonia, Cheese Monday, 2 March 1992.

The significance of comparing the *Kalogeros* and other regional variants with ancient circumstances in order for example to shed light on agrarian rituals in connection with the Dionysos cult cannot be underestimated. Comparison with modern circumstances will shed new light on the relationship between official ideology—as evidenced through descriptions by the social elite—and popular cult in the ancient context.

This very ancient ritual is maintained by the “Thracians” or *Kōstilides* (that is, from “*Kōstī*”), as they are called by the “*Melikēotes*”, the Greeks who “have always lived here”. The *Melikēotes* consider themselves to be “indigenous inhabitants” and live “downtown” or “on the other side of town”, according to the *Kōstilides*. The latter are descendants of immigrants who fled to Greece from the village of *Kōstī* in eastern Thrace after the Balkan Wars of 1914, when the area they lived in came under Bulgarian rule, and it is they who organise the *Kalogeros* ritual both here and in *Agia Elenē*, where another group of immigrant *Kōstilides* had settled by 1924. The *Kalogeros* celebration must be performed as the

ancestors did “back home in Kōsti”. It is said that Melikē “has always been Greek”. But there is still a large group of descendants of Thracian immigrants here, and the “indigenous people” do not always regard them as Greeks, although this is why their ancestors came here.

Among the organisers are male *Anastenarides*, a group best known for its celebration of the Anastenaria festival (see *infra* for this latter festival), and other people. I attended the Kalogeros festival because it relates in many ways to the Anastenaria festival, primarily because the group of Anastenarides partake in organising it, and, quite naturally, they bring one of their most central symbols into the performance of the carnival festival. This symbol is the *sēmadi* (plural *sēmadia*, large red kerchiefs), or, as in this case, a handkerchief, which is a holy symbol of the Anastenarides and the *Anastenarisses* (the female members of the group) and is usually draped over their icons. During the “touring of the houses”, or procession, carried out through the Thracian part of town during the Kalogeros festival, all the houses are blessed with the *sēmadi*. Moreover, the shrine of the Anastenarides, the *konaki*, a term of Turkish origin meaning house, is central during the festival. Seen together, the Kalogeros and Anastenaria festivals provide the most concrete example of the problem of *Orthodoxy/survivalism* in practice, concerning the relationship between church and organisers as well as scholars’ treatment of the rituals.<sup>6</sup> The antagonisms encountered between the various groups in the northern villages, which are also evident within the groups of organisers, is a recurrent theme in all the village festivals I attended.

## Mock Wedding, Clean Monday in Koimēsē

The Greek Macedonian village of *Koimēsē*, which is named after the patron saint, or rather her attribute, namely, the Death or “Falling Asleep” of the Panagia, lies approximately half an hour’s bus trip north of Serres. Many of the villagers are supposedly descendants of immigrants from the northern part of Epirus, Southern Albania, and are thus not refugees from the east, as in Monokklēsia and Melikē. But for the population of Koimēsē, who have not migrated to such places as Germany, the USA, Thessaloniki or Athens for work, it is very important to emphasise that they are from here, and that they are not Albanians. In Koimēsē in 1992, people performed the usual mock wedding, but the celebration also

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<sup>6</sup> The problem of *Orthodoxy/survivalism* in general is discussed in Håland 2017: Ch. 2-3, while Ch. 4 discusses the problem in connection with the Kalogeros and Anastenaria festivals. See also Ch. 3 *infra*.



included pointed references to the highly topical “Macedonian problem”, as this was brought to the fore at the beginning of the 1990s.

The mock wedding represents an ancient tradition and symbolises fertility. The ceremony begins early in the morning, when the participants walk in procession visiting all the houses in the village, a common custom during carnival. Among the participants are musicians and a policeman, who collects money; that is, “taxes”. A Bear and a Bear-leader, in addition to a man dressed up as an Orthodox Priest, the “midwife”, and “medical doctor” of the village also participate. In 1992, the novelty for this year is a carriage that is constructed by the organiser of the carnival celebration. The carriage indicates the most topical theme in the 1990s Greek discussion with her northern neighbour: where does Macedonia belong, in Greece or within the newly-declared Republic of Macedonia to the north. After eating and drinking, then dancing in the main square, everyone walks in procession to fetch the “bride”; that is, a man dressed up as a woman. This procession includes the best man, priest, and a woman who proudly carries the obligatory “pillow” symbolising the marriage bed. The bride is led to the village square and, after dancing and repeated attempts to abduct “her”, followed by the requisite blows with the stick and ransom payment, the mock wedding is performed. The features of this include a Priest, Bible, wine, rice, and sweets thrown over the couple to symbolise fertility. People continue to try to abduct the bride and have to pay ransom for it. After more dances, the bride is about to give birth. “She” is laid in a wheelbarrow with “her” legs up in the air. The medical doctor and the midwife pull out a doll, an act symbolising fertility. Dancing carries on in the square until sunset. Then people enter the “kapheneio”.

The carnival ritual in Koimēsē has not been documented by other scholars, although many have described the various mock weddings that take place in several places in Greece on Clean Monday, the first day of Lent, which lasts until the Resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday.

The mock wedding is central to the fertility cult (Figure 8). The elements of the fertility cult bear considerable significance for the official ideology. A key point of this relationship is the abduction of the bride. The custom of terminating the carnival season with the performance of a mock wedding on Clean Monday is also encountered elsewhere in Greece, and this, too is connected with a common mechanism of purification as well as being a common way to settle conflicts between two opposing parties, as is clearly illustrated by the wedding in Melikē between the two groups in the village, the “Thracians” or Kōstilides and the “Melikēotes.



Figure 8. Participants in the mock wedding during the carnival in the village of Koimēsē, Greek Macedonia, 9 March 1992.

The carnival celebration in Koimēsē was, however, also a good occasion to make a political ideological point about the highly topical “Macedonian problem” in 1992, since this was actually one year after the new Republic of Macedonia (in Greece called FYROM or FYR Macedonia) had declared its independence from Yugoslavia and was struggling to gain international recognition from the United Nations (henceforth UN) and the European Union (henceforth EU). In Koimēsē, this issue received a typically Greek commentary through the political symbolism included in the carnival carriage, which is equipped with an Islamic “priest” who “sings in the tower”. On either side there should be a Greek soldier, but one of them “is wounded” and is led on foot in the procession. Behind the soldier in the carriage the following is written: “Macedonia was—is—and will always be Greek”. In front of the soldier the sentence is completed: “and we will fight for this to the death”. Another issue is that the carnival organiser who has constructed the carnival carriage bearing this “commentary”, along with his wife and his old mother, speaks a language which is said to be presently “dying out” in Greece—namely, Macedonian. None of the children know it, they assure me, and officially they speak only Greek! That, at least, is what they say themselves. But the language they speak at home, in their own house, does sound rather Slavic to my ears. Here is a paradox: they are Greek,

referring proudly to antiquity, and the main attraction in their carnival procession clearly points towards the tense situation in contemporary Macedonia, with its denouncement of “Skopje, Slavs, Turks and Gypsies”. According to the village mayor, the carriage symbolises only one thing: “Turks—and Slavs—must stay away”. It is important to point out that Koimēsē has always been Greek. He emphasises his statement by showing me the new 100 drachmae coin depicting Alexander the Great. One may add that when the Greeks introduced the Euro in 2000, the symbolism was inherited by the Greek version of the coin.

## The Easter Celebration in Olympos, Karpathos

For many, the Orthodox Easter is the most important healing festival, and it reveals key rituals connected with death and fertility cults. The island of Karpathos lies between Rhodes and Crete in southern Greece. On this mountainous island is the isolated and traditional village of Olympos, where we also encounter a rain-making ritual during the Easter celebrations. The Easter celebrations in Olympos include two particularly striking phenomena.

The first of these is the lamentation that takes place in the church on Holy Friday, in front of the *Epitaphios*; that is, Christ’s deathbed (funeral) or wooden representation of Christ’s tomb. This canopy is decorated with flowers, and people also attach pictures of their recently deceased family members to the coffin along with written papers or letters, *moirologia*; that is, laments written in memory of the dead. In Olympos, one encounters two different rituals on Holy Friday, the official formal liturgy when, led by the priest, people mourn the dead Christ, followed by the women’s own ritual, during which no adult man is present: In front of their pictures, the women cry and lament their own dead family members (Figure 9) while tearing their loosened hair and beating their breast. In the evening, the Epitaphios is carried in burial procession around the village, as is generally done in the Orthodox Church.

The second phenomenon is the procession that takes place on the Tuesday after Easter, *Lamprē Tritē*, “White Tuesday” or “New Tuesday” of the “White Week”. To honour the dead and celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, the people of Olympos carry decorated icons of saints and banners from the church to the cemetery, where the Resurrection of Christ is proclaimed. Here, the priest says prayers for rain and also a prayer over each grave, on which the housewives have placed various dishes of food as offerings to the dead. After the priest’s blessing, the food is passed round and eaten (Figure 10). In this way, the participants share a meal with the dead.





Figure 9. Lamenting women in front of the *Epitaphios*; that is, Christ's deathbed (funeral) or wooden representation of Christ's tomb. Holy Friday in the church of the village of Olympos, Karpathos, 1992.

Then, they take the banners and icons, which are wrapped in bright cloths, in procession into the fields to pray at the small private chapels in the neighbourhood in order to ensure a plentiful harvest (Figure 11). The farmers believe that the icons can ward off drought. Afterwards, an auction is held outside the church, and those who make the highest bids carry the icons back into the church. The wealthy emigrants are especially eager to bid higher than the traditional leading families. In this way they display their wealth. In the evening there is a great dance that lasts all night in front of the church (Figure 12). This Tuesday is the most important feast day during the Easter celebrations in Olympos.



Figure 10. White Tuesday or “New Tuesday” in the White Week after Easter. A housewife in front of her family tomb, on which she has placed different food offerings to be eaten after the blessing of the priest, Olympus cemetery, Karpathos, April 1992.

Many have emigrated from Olympus to Rhodes, Piraeus, or Baltimore in the USA. But in these places they continue to maintain the traditions, so although in 1992 there were no more than approximately 500 people living in the village itself, and the other villages within the Olympus municipality,<sup>7</sup> many include those who have emigrated when they speak of the inhabitants of the village. This makes for a total of about 3,500 Olympians

<sup>7</sup> In 1992 I was told that fifteen children are born annually in Olympus, and that the population is stable. In ten years (1982-1992) there had been a reduction of ten people.

altogether. Many emigrants do return after some years. The attachment to one's village of origin is illustrated by the fact that those who have emigrated to Piraeus live in a particular district (Kalipoli/Amphialis) and next to one another in the same way as back home, where everyone still has one or more relatives and preferably a house. Those who have moved out live and celebrate in the same way as back home in Olympos, which is also the case in Baltimore. In Olympos, women still wear the colourful, traditional folk costumes that are very particular to this island, where they are often worn in everyday life.

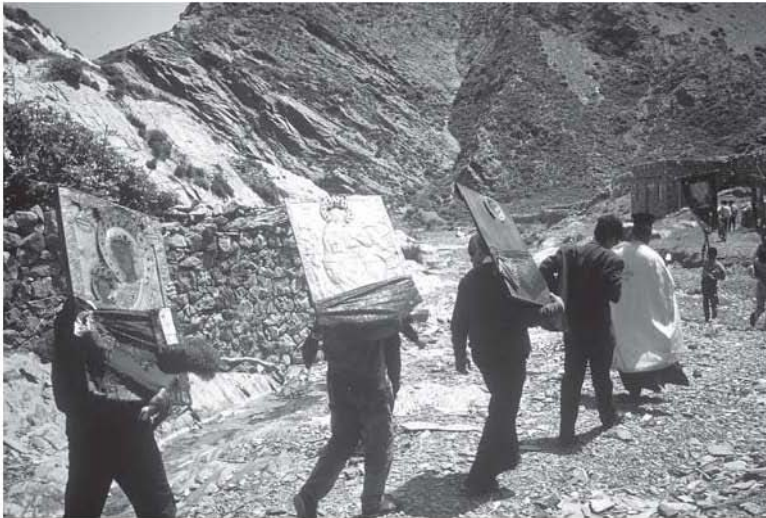


Figure 11. On White Tuesday, the icons are carried in procession over the fields surrounding the village, and they have a special service at the small private chapels to ensure good crops, Olympos, April 1992.

In 1992, Olympos was a village in the process of “opening up to the outside world”, a consequence of improved communications and a focus on tourism, spearheaded particularly by emigrants who have returned home. What we therefore encounter here is a society undergoing profound changes, which may tell us much, not only about the relations between various social groups and traditional gender roles in daily life, but also about how and why cultural collisions take place. In Olympos, the latter phenomenon was particularly encountered during the Easter celebrations in 1992, when a French-Greek TV crew created problems.



Figure 12. White Tuesday terminates with a great dance which lasts all night in front of the church, Olympos, April 1992.

As with the other festivals, this village feast is charged with a special atmosphere, in which many things which are otherwise hidden are brought to the surface or in other ways highlighted, due to the major influx of visitors to the village, among other things. Thus, an analysis of this society during the festival period of the celebration can provide new perspectives, indicating how similar relations may have taken place in ancient societies, for instance with regards to the transition from the archaic to the classical period, or the transitions that took place during late antiquity, when the historiography has traditionally highlighted changes in power relations between men and women, generally based on assumptions of competitive relations between the sexes. It can also reveal much about continuity and change in general, because it is during festivals that the relationship between traditional customs and value systems and a “new” reality is highlighted, and therefore is most easily observed.

### The Anastenaria Festival of Agia Elenē, Greek Macedonia, 21-23 May

The Anastenaria festival (*to Anastenari/ta Anastenaria*) or the festival of the *Anastenarides* (m.) and the *Anastenarisses* (f.; that is, those who celebrate the Anastenaria festival), is celebrated at the end of May in several villages in Greek Macedonia, such as in Agia Elenē. The festival



has preliminary rituals that take place both in January and at the beginning of May. Several other ceremonies take place during the annual ritual cycle of the Anastenaria festival, which is closely tied to the ecclesiastical calendar of the official Orthodox Church and begins on 26 October with the festival of *Agios (m.) Dēmētrios*, when the animals are brought in from the pastures. In Agia Elenē, the festival of the “Dormition” of the Panagia on 15 August is reckoned as the final event of the ritual year.

Several elements can be discussed in an analysis of this festival, the most prominent being that of mother worship. The dyadic perspective, the significance of the dance and the healing aspect, are also important.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 13. The decorated lamb which is to be sacrificed during the Anastenaria festival in the village of Agia Elenē, Greek Macedonia, 21 May 1992.

During the Anastenaria festival one encounters much fertility symbolism, important components of this are holy water, animal sacrifice and a communal meal cooked from the sacrificed animal for the benefit of the villagers' health, luck and good fortune. One or more predetermined persons sacrifice a black non-castrated lamb, or a bull that has lived for an odd number of years. The animal must always have led its life in freedom

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<sup>8</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7.

and never been yoked, and must walk to the place of sacrifice voluntarily (Figure 13).

The sacrifice may be a thanksgiving offering to the saint for a particular favour. The Anastenaria festival includes ecstatic and healing dance over red-hot coals, performed by initiated persons who are in a state of trance. The dancers are barefoot and do not feel any pain or get burnt. They are “possessed” by their saint. The festival is celebrated by the Anastenarides. Even if the participants include more people, they are collectively referred to as the “group of twelve” (*dōdekada*). This consists of about twelve women and some men. In practice, the group of the Anastenarides is administered by this “twelve-member” committee, the “*dōdekada*” and the Archianastenaris. The Archianastenaris is the leader of the group of Anastenarides and the Anastenarisses. Many of them, particularly the male members of the group, are younger, often highly educated people, often coming from Thessaloniki or other big cities, such as Athens. The members gather in the *konaki*, which is also where the large red holy kerchiefs are kept, alongside the icons representing the two saints, Kōnstantinos the Great, Agios Kōnstantinos, who introduced Christianity prior to his death in 337 CE and his mother, Agia Elenē, who died in 327 or 328 CE. This healing festival is officially in their honour (Figure 14).

In the *konaki*, the Anastenarides and the Anastenarisses dance in a state of trance, under the influence of the saint or when the saint commands them to dance, as people say, and dance is the fundamental element of the cult. Various participants carry the icons, the large red kerchiefs or a red rose during the trance, and utter cries and shouts such as *ech—ich—ouch*, which sound like sighs or groans (Figure 14). The term Anastenaris is most likely derived from *asthenēs* (*astenēs*, *astenarēs*); that is, a sick person, preceded by the pleonastic privative *an-*. The name *Asthenaria* is documented from the thirteenth century as a derogatory reference to the sickly appearance of a group of Vlachs and Bulgarians who were “possessed by demons”.



Figure 14. In the konaki, the Anastenarídes and Anastenarisses dance in a state of trance. Some of them carry the icons representing the two saints, Kōnstantinos the Great, Agios Kōnstantinos and his mother, Agia Elenē, Agia Elenē, May 1992.

Outside of the konaki, a great fire is lit for two nights during the festival. The Anastenarides in trance, who have been dancing barefoot for hours inside the konaki, come out in procession and dance barefoot over the glowing embers of the dying fire (Figure 15). They feel no pain and do not get burnt. Thus the festival also includes a ritual which is in many ways in opposition to the official Orthodox religion, and has at times been subjected to persecution by the official ideology. Although nowadays the festival is celebrated unopposed, the official Church still states that the Anastenaria festival presents a combination of paganism and Christianity, and does not subscribe to the holistic view of the Anastenarides themselves.





Figure 15. Outside the *konaki*, the *Anastenarides* and *Anastenarisses* dance barefoot over the glowing embers of the dying fire, *Agia Elenē*, 21 May 1992.

This healing festival dedicated to the two deceased saints is also a festival of renewal celebrated in spring, before the summer solstice and around the grain harvest. Therefore the ceremony ensures the passage from spring to summer by means of a purifying dance over the fire. Hence, the *Anastenaria* festival is dedicated to the extra-human realm of nature, but also has neurological/psychiatric explanations, because the *Anastenarides* become purified or healed through the dance while battling their own personal problems. During the festival, conflicts and problems within the group of *Anastenarides* also come to the surface, reflecting the problems the individual participant attempts to resolve through the dance. The festival presents many antagonisms, such as between the state and local society, rich and poor, men and women, and those with and without an (often university) education. Since the festival is celebrated by a circle mainly comprised of the descendants of refugees, who arrived from the village of *Kōsti* in eastern Thrace, we also find a ritual that in many ways highlights the relations between an earlier “indigenous” people and the “immigrants”, the latter constituting the richest and most influential political group in the village.

## Summer Bull Sacrifice and Saint's Feast in Agia Paraskeuē, Lesbos

The liturgical festival dedicated to Agios Charalampos, the protector of the farmers, is celebrated annually during the equine mating season so that the saint may stimulate the animals' fecundity. Since he is expected to ensure a plentiful harvest for the farmers as well, he is also celebrated with a popular festival later in the year, around the end of spring. In the village of Agia Paraskeuē on the island of Lesbos, he is celebrated even later, for four days in June-July, so that most of the emigrants have the possibility of returning home for their summer holidays. The bull sacrifice on the summit of *Tavros*, the mountain of the Bull, constitutes the climax of the festival.



Figure 16. The sacrificial bull is paraded through the streets of the village of Agia Paraskeuē on the first day of the festival of Agios Charalampos, Lesbos, 26 June 1992.

The poster advertising the festival by the farmers' union, or ploughmen's guild in Agia Paraskeuē welcomes everybody to the great festival of the bull, "which has been handed down by our ancestors". The well-established festival, which starts on Friday and lasts until Monday, is celebrated in commemoration of the miracle Agios Charalampos performed for the village when, according to the legend, he rescued a

Greek farmer from being killed by a “Turkish bandit” during the Turkish occupation. The festival is held at Tauros, the magical place where the miracle occurred, just as it has throughout the nearly two centuries that have passed since it was established at the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to the legend. Later, other villages took up the custom, and today similar festivals take place throughout the summer in several other villages, which compete intensely to hold the greatest festival.

The festival is divided into two parts: the first part is celebrated at the Saint’s church on the mountain, and the second part is celebrated in the village. As in the other festivals, the purifying procession around the village is an important element. In Agia Paraskeuē, the sacrificial bull is led along (Figure 16), but the following procession indicates a symbolic transfer from culture, the village, into nature, the mountain of the Bull.



Figure 17. The fertility-promoting bull sacrifice is performed on the summit of *Tauros*, the mountain of the Bull, 27 June 1992.

Here, on the summit of Tauros, the fertility-ensuring sacrifice is performed (Figure 17), after the blessing of the animal by the local priest, while standing on the step of the church (Figure 96). Accordingly, and as with the Anastenaria festival, this festival dedicated to Agios Charalampos also includes a ritual that is still considered pagan by many within the official Greek Orthodox Church. On the other hand, the festivals are situated within the religious and cosmological context of the Orthodox Church, and make extensive use of Orthodox symbolism, faith, and ritual practice. In keeping with this, at noon the next day the priest blesses the local, traditional dish *kesketsi*, in which the main ingredient is the sacrificed bull.



Figure 18. The sacrificed bull is consumed as a great communal meal, *kesketsi*, 28 June 1992.

The priest reads the prayers for sacrificing a bull which are found in Byzantine writings from the eighth century CE. The sacrificial bull, which is consumed in the vast communal meal, the *kesketsi* (Figure 18), is dedicated by an emigrant. He represents a group of people which always returns home to the village during the saint's annual festival, paralleling the circumstances in many of the other festivals which have been described. In Agia Paraskeuē, this is why there is not a fixed date for the celebration of the festival, only that it is always celebrated around the grain harvest. In 1992 the festival was, for example, postponed until the school holidays in South Africa, where a great contingent from the village has settled. In this festival, which is dedicated to a deceased Christian saint, horses and the horse races are important elements, and it concludes with a great communal meal, *Charlamelia*, in which all the inhabitants of the village participate.

All the scholars who have examined the festival have been concerned with the blood sacrifice, but other elements also demonstrate the fertility aspect, the animal sacrifice as a votive offering, the libation and the meal.

In the festival of Agios Charalampus we also witness the coupling of "Greekness" and Orthodoxy<sup>9</sup> through the notion that the Greek War of Liberation was divinely sanctioned. This is symbolised by the saint's appearances on the Tauros mountaintop, which in this respect parallels the significance of the finding of the icon in the Tinos festival. According to legend, the festival of Agios Charalampus has been celebrated since the Turkish period, as described in the pamphlet which describes the festival and its origin and is distributed to interested visitors from the office of the organising committee. Both the date and legend of the Turkish bandit might, both here and in general, be seen as a statement in the struggle against the Turks.

As concerning the other modern festivals which have been described, the following analysis will examine the relationship between official and popular belief in the festival, and discuss how the sacrifice dedicated to the modern saint on Tauros may help shed fresh light on the intention behind similar ancient rituals.

All the modern festivals belong in a sense to one national festival calendar, except that they are celebrated somewhat differently in each locality. On the basis of their common themes, the modern festivals are therefore comparable to various ancient festivals from the Athenian festival calendar.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 2 f., see also Ch. 6 for elements related to the fertility aspect of the festival, such as the libation.



## Ancient Festivals

### The Panathenaia

The most important official festival of the ancient Athenian city-state was the Panathenaia festival (*Panathenaia*), or “the Festival of all the Athenians”, which celebrated the birth of the Athenian *polis* (city-state). It was held in honour of the Goddess Athena under her attribute as Athena *Polias* (that is, “of the city”), and therefore celebrated through the Goddess in her temple on the Akropolis. The festival lasted for eight days in *Hekatombaion* (July-August), which was the first month of the official political Athenian year, and the most important festival day was the 28 Hekatombaion, around the middle of August. According to legend, this was the Goddess’ birthday, and from what was originally a simple beginning on 28 Hekatombaion, this became a most elaborate institution, which lasted more than a week.

During the festival, the central ritual was the procession through the city up to the Akropolis with the new dress, a *peplos*, for the Goddess Athena (Figure 19), followed by the sacrifice of many animals. The festival was also an important fertility and healing festival, and included elements of death cult.

The Panathenaia celebrates the fertility of the year through the various offerings carried in the procession. This is concretised by the presentation of a new peplos to the city’s tutelary Goddess, the weaving of which began around the olive harvest, in *Pyanepsion* (October-November). One sees the agricultural aspect in the significance of the olive branches, which become a kind of “preliminary offering” to the Goddess connected with this important crop, while being awarded with a portion of the holy oil surely was of great significance to those who competed in the various athletic disciplines, horse races, music and dance, during the festival dedicated to her. The months following *Skrophorion* (June-July) were crucial for the olive crop. Therefore, the preliminary ritual to the Panathenaia, the *Arrephoria*, which took place on 3 Skrophorion, around 18 June, was aimed at securing the dew that was necessary during the months from then until harvest time if the fruit was to grow to an adequate size. It was certainly no coincidence that Athena’s sacred olive tree, enclosed on the Akropolis, grew in front of the Erekhtheion in the Pandrosion, the open-air sanctuary of the Dew Goddess Pandrosos, who was named for dew (Figures 82 a and b). Although it has been claimed that the Panathenaia has no specific relationship with agriculture, nor seems to have been a definite agricultural festival, it was nevertheless

celebrated at a time of year which was crucial for the ensuing olive harvest.



Figures 19 a and b. Copies of the peplos ceremony from the Parthenon frieze (the originals, ca. 432 BCE are in the British Museum, London), central group showing the receiving of the peplos. From the building of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephorate, Akropolis area.



The Panathenaia touched the lives of every Athenian, female and male; it demonstrates the community of the polis, and the roles of men and women within this society. The festival represented several identity-creating elements: for instance, both sexes underwent rites of passage in connection with the festival, namely, the *Arrēphoroi* (from *ērrēphoreō*, serve as Arrēphoros, the “bearer of mystic/secret box”) and the young men’s ritual in the sanctuary of the deceased heroine, Aglauros. In addition to the core element, the dedication of the peplos, different rulers enlarged and elaborated upon the original popular festival, exploiting it for political purposes. By building the *●deion* (concert hall) and encouraging musical contests during the Panathenaia, Perikles could, for instance, satisfy great parts of the voting populace with rich gifts. The representation of the Battle of the Gods and Giants, depicted on the peplos, where the *●lympian* Gods conquered the Giants, also becomes a victory over “wild” nature, as illustrated by the union of the polis and its victory over the Persians.

If, however, we look beyond and deconstruct these political manifestations, as well as the “ideological entirety” that officially constitutes a festival and which therefore the festival is often perceived as—and especially in this instance, have heavily shaped subsequent perceptions of the festival—and see what they really consists of, more nuanced perspectives, such as the relationship between the male polis and the importance of women’s tasks and participation in the festival, become apparent. Although knights, charioteers, or other heroes are depicted on the Parthenon frieze (the frieze of the Parthenon temple), one of the sources for the festival, the aim of the procession was the dedication of the peplos to the virgin Goddess. Moreover, the procession was led by the young female weavers of the peplos, and the dedication was the climax of the festival (Figures 19 a and b). In other words, we see the importance of a female-dominated activity, through the weaving of the peplos, and the fact that the completed cloth, which is also a wedding dress, is dedicated to a female divinity.<sup>10</sup>

The festival was celebrated in honour of the protective city Goddess on the Akropolis, who also may be regarded as a virginal mother, since she was the foster mother of Erichthonios/Erekhtheus, son of divine nature. Rituals performed by women were of great importance to the festival, and the significance of women and their relationship to fertility is illustrated in several ways: they are basket-bearers and grind the grain for the offering-cakes. In the preliminary ritual of the little Arrēphoroi and the symbolism in connection with the central ritual when the peplos is dedicated, we

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Håland 2006b.

encounter the importance of marriage and wedding within the festival. The divine child, and the ritual in which the *Arrephoroi* descend into an underground cavern dedicated to a Goddess and ascend with sacred symbols as parts of the initial stage of the festival, are all key rituals central to several festivals dedicated to Demeter as well, and therefore lead us on to discuss the most famous of these.

## Demeter Festivals: The Mysteries at Eleusis

The origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries has been considered to be a local agricultural cult which, during the Athenian expansion in the sixth century BCE became mixed with Athenian cult. The celebration of the mysteries took place over a week or more from the fifteenth of the month known as *Boedromion* (September-October), around 1 October in the modern calendar. Seven months before the main initiation at Eleusis, in the middle of the spring month *Arcthemestion* (February-March), a preliminary initiation of the *mystēs* (which means “one initiated”, cf. Figure 20) was carried out in Agrai by the river Ilissos during the *Lesser Mysteries*.



Figure 20. Relief of Persephone purifying a young initiate, fourth century BCE, Archaeological Museum of Eleusis.

The Eleusinian Mysteries was a fertility festival, designed to ensure the growth of the grain and renew the vitality of the earth, animals and people. The procession between Athens and Eleusis with holy fertility symbols was central, as was the relationship between the two sexes and that between life and death, symbolised by the marriage between *Korē* (“the girl or daughter”) and Hades or Pluto, the ruler of the underworld. This sacred legend is preserved in the so-called *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (HHD.), which is considered to be the earliest complete version of the myth of Demeter and *Korē*.

The Eleusinian Mysteries is the most recorded of all Greek cults, but has also been the most debated of all the ancient festivals since antiquity. The reason for this is that what occurred during the final initiation ceremony in Eleusis, and what was revealed, was never disclosed by initiates. The word “*mystērion*” means in fact “mystery” or “secret rite”. Scholarly interpretations of the mysteries, which took place for more than one thousand years from the archaic period until the cult site was destroyed by the Goths in 395 CE, just after Theodosius I had closed the sanctuaries by decree, have always been influenced by the church fathers’ polemical writings about this competing ritual.

The relationship of the mysteries to the agricultural year, in which the main ritual was celebrated before ploughing and sowing commenced, and the link between sexuality, agriculture and nature cult as well as the mother-daughter-relationship in the cult dedicated to Demeter and Persephone or *Korē*, will be discussed in the analysis, which focuses on the fertility aspect of the cult. Accordingly, it will be emphasised how both the *hieros gamos* (sacred marriage) and the celebration of the divine “child from the hearth” were key aspects of the mysteries, with variants upon these themes being widely found within agricultural societies concerned with ensuring the food supply.

*Korē*’s cyclical descent to the underworld and subsequent ascent is analogous with the life cycle of the grain. The child is important in the Eleusinian Mysteries, both as *Korē* and as Demophoon, the son of the Eleusinian king who the Goddess placed in the fire in order to make him immortal. Accordingly, the importance of the *hieros gamos* in the mysteries must be emphasised, since the divine child symbolises the anticipated result, both of the marriage and the sowing of the cornfield. *Korē*’s descent and ascent, an eventual descent into an underground room during the festival, and the “child from the hearth” demonstrate “heavy rituals” that are also central to other festivals dedicated to Goddesses.

The procession between Athens and Eleusis with sacred symbols was also important as a means of purifying the ground before ploughing and

sowing time and marking it as under Athenian control. Other purificatory aspects include the fast before the sacramental meal at Eleusis and its ingredients, the meaning of the fire, the procession with torches, and the offering of pilgrim clothes. The initiates' offerings of agricultural products and other gifts related to agricultural activities, and not least the importance of the first fruit offerings (*aparchai*) which were related to many sacrifices and festivals, are also important.

The concluding rain magic ritual, *Plemochoi* (cf. the shape of the vessel used in the ritual), indicates the aim of the ceremonies dedicated to the grain Goddess. The early rains in autumn are of great importance as a preliminary to the sowing.

Based on the origin of the festival in what was primarily a peasant society, as has also been the case in Greece until quite recently, its position within the agricultural cycle is significant. In keeping with this, the fertility cult, but also women and the female have played a significant role in connection with the festival. Based on the sources which describe the course of the festival, this aspect is not quite so clear-cut as in the Demeter festivals that were specifically women's festivals, for, in contrast to the other agricultural mysteries that were reserved for women, the Eleusinian Mysteries were also open to men. Women nonetheless played an essential role, whether through the *pamyxis* ("all-night festival") ritual which comprised dancing and singing, including "*aischrologia*" ("obscene language"), as the priestesses of Demeter and other important women, and not least the very cult of the grain Goddess and her daughter. This indicates mother worship, leading naturally on to the next two festivals to be discussed, and that were also dedicated to Demeter.

## Ancient Women's Festivals

The women's festivals, the Thesmophoria and Haloa, are not particularly well-documented in the written sources since these are authored by men, and men were not permitted to participate in those festivals. Therefore the source material for the women's festivals is more uncertain than that concerning the other ancient festivals. The women's festivals were characterised by obscene language and symbolic baked goods made of dough in the shapes of female and male genitalia.

The Thesmophoria festival was celebrated at the end of October, around the time of sowing. The uninhibited Haloa festival was a fertility festival, which, in contrast to the Thesmophoria, encouraged extramarital activity so that the normal prohibitions might then be renewed with greater force. The festival was celebrated in the middle of winter.

## The Thesmophoria

The Thesmophoria festival (*Thesmophoria*) was the oldest and most widespread Greek festival, and the most important form of the Demeter cult. The festival is called Thesmophoria since Demeter established laws, or “*thesmoi*”.

In Attica, the Thesmophoria was celebrated in Pyanepsion; that is, the month when the sowing began. In Athens, the festival proper lasted for three days, from 11 to 13 Pyanepsion, but since the two days prior to the festival were also reserved for women’s festivals, it is reasonable to assume that in practice the Thesmophoria lasted for five days. The ritual is connected to the renewal of agriculture, and expresses a wish that was strongly felt in society at this decisive period of the year’s passage.

Before the Thesmophoria, a period of fasting and sexual abstinence was required. The celebrating women did not wear floral crowns during the festival because Persephone was gathering flowers when she was abducted by Hades, and they abstained from sexual intercourse during the festival as well.

The three days of the Thesmophoria each had their own name. The first day was called *Anodos*, the “Way Up”, and the second was named *Nēsteia*, “Fasting” or *Mesē*, the “Middle Day”. The third, *Kalligeneia*, refers to “Fair Birth”.

On the first day, the women went in procession up to the Thesmophorion (the Thesmophoria sanctuary). With them in the procession they carried the cultic objects, food, and equipment for the stay, offering-cakes, and the piglets that were to be sacrificed. The second day the women imitated Demeter’s grieving for her daughter, who had been abducted by the ruler of the underworld. On this day the women made their beds out of various purifying and fertility-bestowing plants, directly on the hard ground. Thus they sat or laid on the ground on their bed of plants while they fasted, and held young pine branches for their fertile powers. Furthermore, they performed the ritual called *morotton* (a basket made of bark), in which they flogged one another with a scourge of woven bark.

The male produced sources emphasise what has been seen as dual and ambiguous in the rituals: women are both modest and fertile. These characteristics have been juxtaposed against one another by emphasising the combination of chastity and sex.

The main source for the Thesmophoria is the scholion on Lucian’s *Dialogues of Courtesans*,<sup>11</sup> which gives a short introduction to the myth

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<sup>11</sup> Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 2.1, see Rabe 1906: 275.23-276.28.



connected with the festival. In this introduction we learn, *inter alia*, that the women throw various fertility symbols consisting of figures made from bread dough, pine shoots, and piglets (cf. Figure 21), down into “rooms” or chasms (*megara*) dedicated to Demeter and Korē during the rituals preliminary to the festival. During the festival proper, the remains are retrieved by selected women. This thanksgiving offering is dedicated to Demeter, who civilised the human race with the gift of grain, as indicated in the Demeter hymn. The hymn, which is relevant to every festival of Demeter, tells about the grief and fury of the Mother Goddess, Demeter, when Zeus married off her daughter to Hades without her consent. Therefore she threatens to destroy humanity by hiding the corn so the earth cannot send it back up. Accordingly, she has to be “softened up” by having her daughter return to the earth for two thirds of the year. The result of the agreement between Demeter and Zeus is that she allows the grain to sprout so that the polis may survive.



Figure 21. Votive piglet, Roman period, Archaeological Museum of Eleusis.

The point of the fertility-ensuring ritual which takes place during the Thesmophoria is that the remains of the piglets and cakes that have been down in the subterranean realm, in the “womb of the earth”, should be deposited on the altars dedicated to Demeter. Next, they were mixed with

the seed corn in order to ensure an abundant crop. The central purpose of this ritual was to renew the forces of fertility by the time of sowing. The subsequent retrieval of the rotted remains during the Thesmophoria, which were then mixed with the seed corn, might therefore also be seen as a “New Year ritual” for the renewal of the agricultural year.

The rich symbolism of the festival includes elements typical of seasonal fertility rites: discomfort resulting from fasting, mourning, and sexual abstinence. This is also a kind of purification, like the fortifying effect of the flogging with the morotton. The rite with the piglets, which were usual offering gifts to the grain Goddess (cf. Figure 21) and symbolise the female sex organ, embodies a very ancient tradition. Along with the cakes or figures made from bread dough in the shape of male genitalia that are mixed down in the “womb of the earth”, they are crucial symbols. Connected to this is the significance of the obscenities, the “aischrologia”, performed by the fasting women. The final banquet celebrated on the same day as Kalligeneia is invoked, demonstrates the purpose of the ritual. The scholion is also explicit in stating that the rituals promote the reproduction of humans and animals and connect the two. Another aspect of the festival is that when Demeter is called *Thesmophoros* (“Lawgiver” or “Bringer of Law”), it also refers to the fact that she established laws of marriage. This is encountered within the Demeter hymn in the marriage between Korē and Hades, which also took place in the “womb of the earth”.

## The Haloa Festival

The Athenian Haloa festival (*Halōa*) represents one of the very oldest agricultural mysteries, and women were the only participants. Although the sources for the festival do not specify which women participated, and whether some may have been excluded, it may indeed have been the case, as with the Thesmophoria, that it was modest women who performed or led the rituals, at least if the male-authored sources are to be believed. The festival was celebrated throughout the night in the temple at Eleusis in midwinter, in the month of *Poseideon* (December-January), around 5 January, just after the winter solstice.

Haloa can be translated as the “threshing floor festival”, since *halōs* means threshing floor. The name of the festival, however, has been debated, especially since no threshing takes place in midwinter. Still, the festival may indeed have been celebrated on the threshing floors, since it is not, nor was, uncommon for peasants to dance on the threshing floors when they were not being used for threshing. Among modern farmers who



celebrate the Anastenaria festival, the circular dancing place is often called *alōni*; that is, the threshing floor.



Figure 22: Ancient Attic red-figure classical vase (*pelike*) painting illustrating a woman planting phalluses, or rather the sprinkling of seeds or watering of already-planted phalluses (see Winkler 1990. Original: British Museum, E819).

The main source for the Haloa is again the scholion on Lucian's work, who tells us that the feast takes place in an "area situated within",<sup>12</sup> which may refer to the fact that it takes place inside a temple with a specially constructed threshing floor dedicated to the grain Goddess, "Demeter of the Threshing Floor", based on a comparison of modern and ancient rituals.

The festival was celebrated when the sown fields appeared lifeless or "dead", at a time of year when the growth of new shoots is at a temporary standstill, their growth halted due to the cold weather. This is, however an important stage in the grain's growth. Sex organs and obscenities were an important component of this ritual as well. The obscene language and symbols employed in the ritual are generally associated with fertility cults. The purpose of the festival was therefore to promote the fertility (cf. Figure 22) of agriculture, but also that of the people, as evidenced by the fact that the celebration also was a women's initiation festival.

The Lucian scholion presents the festival as an initiation ritual for the women of Attica. This aspect has been discussed by several scholars, where the central element on the human level is the girls' initiation ritual in connection with their marriage. This has been linked to secret rituals which took place during the festival. The Lucian scholion recounts that the priestesses whisper something *aporrēton* (secret) about *klepsigamia* ("illicit love", rape) into the ears of the female participants. This is said to have involved a holy secret about stealing or abduction; that is to say, it may allude to the myth of Pluto's abduction of Korē, a marriage consummated through "stealing the bride". The holy account of the "abduction of Korē" opens the Demeter hymn and is an important theme throughout. Beyond revealing the origins of agriculture and the establishment of the mysteries, the hymn describes an important rite of passage, the virgin Korē's wedding, in its recounting of Korē's departure from her mother, Demeter, and her marriage to Hades.

Several of the details brought up by the Lucian scholion are known from other Demeter cults, such as prohibited foods, "aischrologia", symbolic cakes, and the exclusion of men. During the Haloa festival, the women speak obscenities and display sexual symbols. They also hold a great banquet with much wine, but some kinds of food, *inter alia*, pomegranates are forbidden. Connected with the passage from girl to bride is the prohibition of certain foods, which is important for the purpose of purification in the same way as the obscenities, that hence do not only belong to the celebration of this central stage in the human life cycle, but

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<sup>12</sup> Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 7.4, see Rabe 1906: 279.24-281.3.

also to the aforementioned crucial stage in the growth of the grain. This is also illustrated by the fact that the women are said to have sacrificed a pregnant cow to the “earth in the fields” with the expectation of much life in return.

As we have seen, the Haloa was a festival in which women were the only participants, but the men also had a task, since the *archons* (sing. *archōn*/magistrate) laid the tables inside of the sanctuary before the women started their festival. The archons themselves went outside and preached that the cultivated foods, Demeter’s gift, were discovered among them (that is, the Eleusinians), and thereafter they made this discovery the common property of all the world.

As with the other Demetrian festivals, the Haloa was initially a fertility festival connected with the Eleusinian claim to be the originator of the grain for all humankind, and the purpose of the festival was to stimulate the growth of the grain. This can be deduced from both the women’s obscenities, which were aimed at promoting fertility, and the celebration of the festival at a critical time of year for the growth of the grain.

## Dionysos Festivals

### The Anthesteria Festival

The Anthesteria festival (*Anthesteria*) was celebrated for three days around the middle of the month of Anthesterion. Its name derives from the Greek word for shoot or flowerbud, *anthos*. The Anthesteria festival celebrated the new wine, but was also the festival of the ancestors. An important ritual in the Anthesteria was the performance of a *hieros gamos* between the wine God Dionysos, symbolised by the priest, and the priestess of Dionysos.

The names of all three days were associated with the word for pot or jar: *Pithoigia* (wine or storage jars) for the first, *Choes* (jugs or cups) for the second, and *Chytroi* (pots) for the third.

This wine growers’ festival was held amid the spring blossoms with reference back (or forward) to the grape harvest. The first day was dedicated to the God of wine, Dionysos. On this day the casks containing the new wine were opened for the first time. This happened at the sanctuary dedicated to “Dionysos in the Marshes, *en Limnais*”.

The second day of the festival was dedicated to a *hieros gamos*, a wedding of the Gods. In the sanctuary dedicated to Dionysos in the Marshes, there took place secret rituals (cf. Figure 23) in which the priestesses, called *gerarai* (“the Venerable Ones”), were central participants,

in addition to their leader, the *Basilinna* or queen, who was the wife of the *Archōn Basileus* (king archōn/magistrate), the priest of Dionysos. Here, the God is thought to have manifested in the form of the priest. The rituals in the “Marshes” were finished through the wedding between the two. A drinking contest to celebrate the return of the God was also held on this day. During an official banquet, it was important to drain one’s wine jug, Chous, as fast as possible.

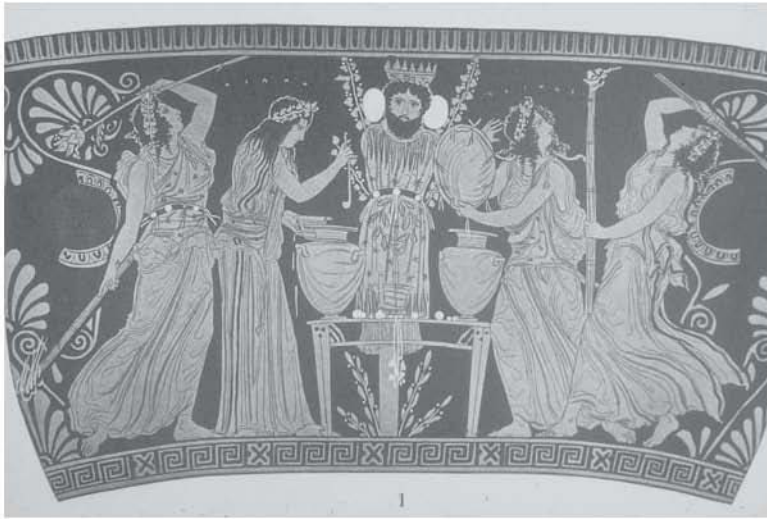


Figure 23: *Stamnos* (mixing jar) by the Dionysos Painter. Women who are drawing wine, drinking and dancing in front of a bearded mask of Dionysos hanging on a column. A piece of clothing is arranged around the column to indicate the body (=ARV 1151,2, see ARVcl. 177).

The dead were central to the entire festival, because it was supposed that the spirits of the dead were temporarily freed and returned to earth when the wine jars were opened. It was from the temple in the Marshes that these *Kēres* (spirits) came, so the temple was opened to facilitate their arrival. This was the only day the sanctuary in the Marshes opened during the year. The *Kēres* remained among the living during the festival. Therefore *apotropaic* (cf. *apotrepein*, to ward off) rites (rites to ward off evil) or actions must be performed to preclude the dead from dragging the living with them back down to the underworld. The dead were *inter alia* honoured through a communal ritual offering on the second day, while the third day was dedicated to the spirits of the dead. Next, a meal of grain and

seeds, a *panspermia* ("all seeds" or all kinds of grains), was solemnly offered in the pots, Chytroi. At the end of the festival, the dead were directed back to the underworld by people shouting: "[g]et out Kēres, the Anthesteria is over!"

The different scholars who have discussed the Anthesteria festival have generally emphasised various aspects, but most discuss "the spring flower festival", "the wine growers festival", or the "recalling of the spirits of the underworld". Some have given it various explanatory names, such as "the ritual of ghosts and spirits". Depending on what or which aspects are focused upon, one might emphasise the importance of the hieros gamos, by stressing that the God comes up from the Marshes, the entrance to the underworld, once a year in order to marry "the queen of Athens". However it might conversely also be claimed that this was not of any particular significance to the festival. Nonetheless, all the aspects were important, and no one aspect necessarily excludes the others.

During the three days of the festival people honoured the coming of spring and associated renewal of life. This was the festival of the new wine, although the death cult also played an important role. Then panspermia ("all seeds"), which was an important part of the offerings at most agricultural festivals dedicated to Demeter and Dionysos, was offered.

As was the case with the Panathenaia and Demeter festivals, nocturnal rituals formed part of the Anthesteria, which began at sunset, with the feasting carrying on throughout the night.

The festival also includes rituals for children; one's first Choes was regarded as a significant life milestone. The children participated as soon as they turned three years old, and were garlanded with flowers on this day. In addition, the young girls performed a ritual in which they swung on swings suspended from tree branches while they sang a traditional song in honour of the heroine, Erigonē. The secret rituals in the Marshes were performed on behalf of the polis and headed by the Basilinna, while other rituals were male-dominated. Everyone, including the slaves, participated in the drinking. The women-dominated rituals are connected to the fertility cult, and exhibit parallels with the rituals carried out during the festivals dedicated to Goddesses as already described in this chapter.

The Anthesteria festival is the most complex of all the Dionysos festivals. It evinces multiple layers of meaning as illustrated, for example, by the main ritual, which took place in the Marshes, and the following ritual, which represented Dionysos' venerable symbolic marriage to all Athenian women and thereby to Athens. Thukydides recounts that the sanctuary in the Marshes, located at the base of the Akropolis to the south,



is the oldest site for the worship of Dionysos, in contrast to the sanctuary dedicated to Dionysos *Eleutheros* ("Deliverer").<sup>13</sup> It is the festival dedicated to this version of Dionysos which will now be described.

### The City Dionysia

The Dionysos Festival in the City (*Dionysia ta en Astei*), the City Dionysia, or the Great Dionysia lasted for several days, starting around the tenth *Elaphebolion* (March-April). A local cult from Eleutherai was supposed to have been the origin of the Athenian polis' great spring festival, when tragedies and comedies were performed in the deity's theatre. His statue was carried to the theatre in a procession in which the licentious Dionysian *thiasos*, "followers" or retinue of animated dancers participated. It is assumed that the more solemn, moderate celebration of the Athenian festival originated in the sensuous, cheerful, wild drunkenness which characterised the rural Dionysos cult. The procession and the phallus were important, as well as the *kōmos* (revelling procession) and contests. The dramatised enactments and fertility-inducing gestures were addressed to life beneath the earth in a prayer for growth.

Many have tried to understand the role and significance of the Great Dionysia in Athens. The festival has been considered to be decisive for the understanding of various important characteristics of Greek culture, as well as in the history of the drama and literature. This has been particularly true since the publication of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (1872), in which he advances the idea of two main types of cultural patterns: the Apollonian and the Dionysian.<sup>14</sup> These two cultural patterns have been applied by anthropologists to other cultures, for instance the Native American, but they are also applicable to the relationship between modern and ancient Greek festivals. Many have also treated the social context of Athenian drama and the relationship between history, tragedy and theory, or discussed the relationship between individual plays and the polis ideology, women in tragedy in general, or woman-related themes in individual tragedies, including, for example, marriage, sacrifice, or other elements generally associated with women, such as laments, and how they were employed in the Athenian drama.

The spring festival dedicated to Dionysos opened the sailing season. The festival was not only for Athenians, but visitors, *inter alia*, from the allied cities or colonies participated as well. The festival had not a single

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<sup>13</sup> Thuc. 2.15.4.

<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche 1977 (or. 1869-1872).



aim, but several, which are perfectly illustrated by the offerings carried in the magnificent main procession, which was led by the archōn and constituted the central rite of the festival. While people were busy digging and ploughing in the vineyards, the wine God was supplicated to ensure a good crop by dedicating offerings from the previous years, both of preserved grapes (raisins) and wine in leather wineskins. High-born maidens were selected to be *Kanēphoroi* (sing.: *Kanēphoros*, basket bearers) and carry baskets with first fruits of everything. Moreover, a great number of bulls were sacrificed to the deity, who often is represented as a bull. Thus the celebrants were provided with a good-sized meal of meat.

Some days before the festival proper began, the entrance of the God from Eleutherai was celebrated with a recreation of his original arrival. Every year the old wooden image of Dionysos Eleutheros was first moved from the temple in the city to a small shrine in the Akademy, along the road to the previously independent Eleutherai. Some days later, the statue was returned to the temple next to the theatre of Dionysos (Figure 24) in a procession known as the “escorting from the sacrificial hearth”.

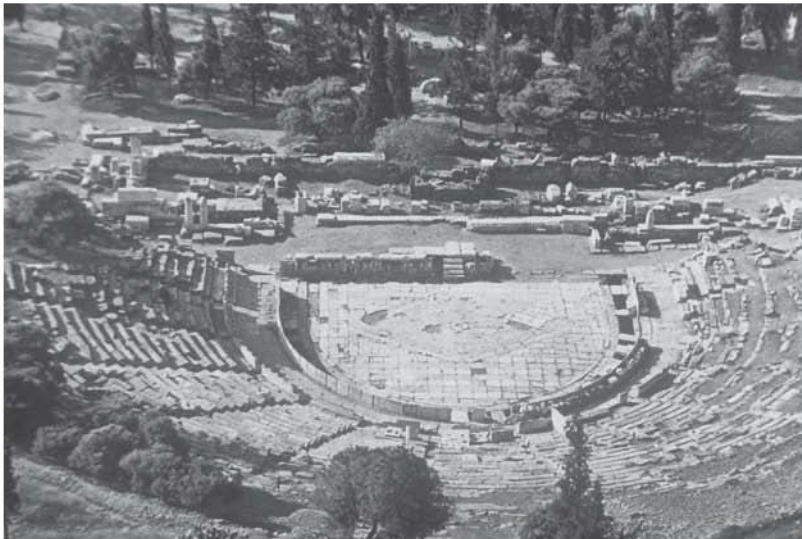


Figure 24. Present-day theatre of Dionysos Eleutheros, Athens.

This procession is a way of marking an area that came under Athenian control during its expansion into Attica. It is thus a parallel to the procession during the Eleusinian Mysteries, and in both cases it is the

*ephēboi*, the young men, who fetch and bring the *hiera* (that is, *hagia*, “the holy objects”) and the Dionysos statue, respectively. The main procession is also a glorification of the Athenian polis. The God is also worshipped with the *dithyrambs* (hymns in praise of the God of wine), which included liturgical songs and dances and the tragedies and comedies performed in his honour, and during the performances people were treated to wine and sweets. The role of women and their connection to the fertility cult is also demonstrated by this festival of the polis. It was a great honour to be basket carriers in the procession. Furthermore, the *maenads* (the possessed female worshippers of Dionysos, cf. also Figure 36) formed part of the Dionysian retinue. Women are also central to the cult hymns because the tragedies demonstrate the significance of women in the performance of life-cycle rituals related to weddings and funerals. These two passage rites demonstrate both death cult and fertility cult. This is illustrated by all the symbolism, whether the wreath, the food, or the hair offering, aspects which were central to the two rituals and are connected with women-dominated cults.

In this way, the festival dedicated to the reborn wine God presents a rich symbolism through both fertility and purification aspects and the ideological and political glorification of the polis. According to tradition, the City Dionysia and the Panathenaia festival were earlier popular festivals which were used in the service of the official cult. It is especially the rich man and tyrant Peisistratos who was known for having established and developed new cults in the city, because he wanted to weaken the old local aristocratic cults and strengthen the unity of the Athenian polis. Nonetheless, this does not exclude the possibility that he may have attached new meanings to already existing festivals, a topic that belongs to the relationship between the popular cult and official ideologies.

### The Adonis Festival: *Adōnia*

Throughout antiquity ritual lamentations were performed for the personified vegetation God, Adonis. The Adonis festival, the *Adōnia*, was mainly a popular festival held in summer.

Both in mythology and literature, Adonis is associated with the ripening and reaping of the fruits of the earth. The myth of Adonis is seen to have its origin in an ancient vegetation cult from the Middle East, where the reaping and cutting of the grain was celebrated annually with laments in several places. In Babylonian mythology, the young man was known as Tammuz. For the Greeks, the Semitic title *Adon*, which means “Lord” or “My Lord”, became the name Adonis during the assimilation with their

own mythology, and we encounter a story in which Adonis is depicted as a young man who died a violent death and later returned to earth. He is still connected with Anatolia and the cult of the oriental Aphrodite. Their relationship can be compared with the couples Ishtar/Astarte and Tammuz or Inanna and Dumuzi as well as Kybele and Attis; that is, the usual representation of a Mother Goddess and her youthful male consort, the incarnation of the principle of fertility.

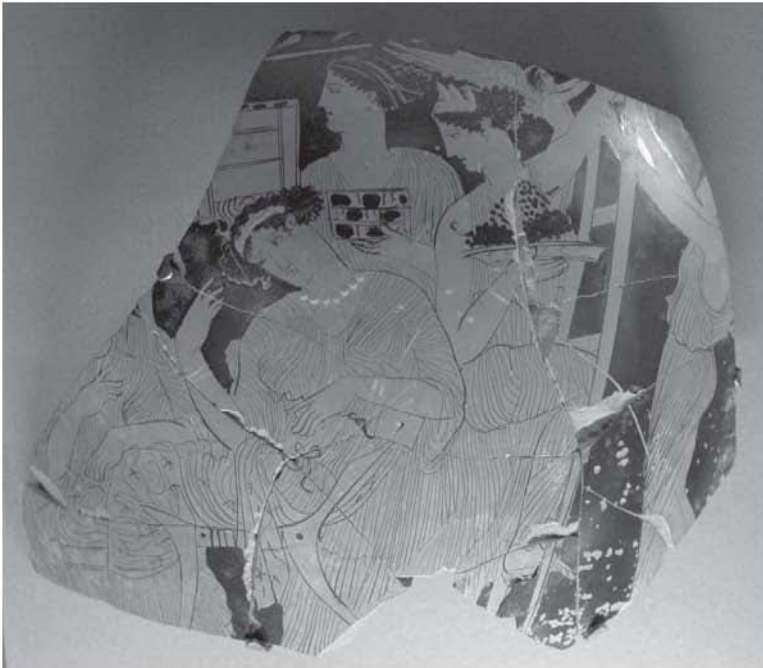


Figure 25: A fragment of an Attic red-figure *lebes gamikos* (bowl to mix wine and water in connection with marriage, *gamein*, "to marry"), ca. 430-420 BCE, shows two seated women, one of whom seems to be beside herself with suffering, tearing her hair, while a third is busy carrying a dish of grapes up a ladder, which is propped up by a fourth woman. A fifth brings two chests, and two Erotes hover around (=ARV 1179,3. Downloaded 23.03.2018 from: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Women\\_Adonia\\_Louvre\\_CA1679.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Women_Adonia_Louvre_CA1679.jpg))

In the Greek cultural area, the cult dedicated to Adonis became popular among the Greeks on Cyprus in the 500s BCE. The Adōnia was connected with the rise of the burning star Scirios during the dog days; several

sources state that it was celebrated after the grain harvest and after the passing of midsummer, during the hottest period of the year. This connection between the cults of Adonis and Demeter is moreover indicated by the fact that Aphrodite's Cypriot thiasos in Piraeus, which organised the Adōnia procession, also dedicated offerings to Demeter. In other words, the Adonis festival was celebrated at the beginning of the Athenian political year (that is, at the end of the grain's annual life cycle), but the festival was never incorporated into the official religious calendar of the Athenian polis.

The festival was reserved for the women. In Athens, it is likely that the women organised everything themselves, and the essential ritual of the festival was to make a wooden image of the oriental vegetation God, Adonis, which was laid on a flower-decorated bier on the rooftops, after which they sang laments and danced while beating and scarifying their breasts (Figure 25). Finally, they buried the dead God. A central feature of the ritual was to tend rapid-growing plants, the *Adōnidos kēpoi*, or "Adonis gardens", on the rooftops, which they then let wither. In Alexandria in Egypt, they performed an official mock burial which imitated Adonis', since the gardens and the image of Adonis were thrown into the sea while the mourning-clad women lamented.

It has been proposed that Adonis was celebrated twice a year, since he may also have been celebrated during a vernal festival together with Aphrodite. This harmonises with other ancient festivals, especially those dedicated to vegetation deities and their modern counterparts.

Although the Adonis festival was not a part of the official festival calendar, one nevertheless encounters the anxiety and distress resulting from the fact that the Athenian fleet's disastrous departure for Sicily in 415 BCE coincided with the Adonis festival and its laments. In the Athenian environment, especially in the classical period, we encounter a ritual that in many ways stands in opposition to the official cult, as is shown in several of the ancient sources which tell us about the cult of Adonis, in the same way as the popular form of the Dionysos cult, which was often regarded as an "Eastern cult" by the spokesmen of the official elite. This ideological and disparaging viewpoint—for example, when Plutarch brings up "a strange God introduced by foreign superstition, as some Attis or Adonis"<sup>15</sup>—has been taken at face value by several modern scholars. The predominantly critical written source material from the classical period, however, differs from both the contemporary visual and other written sources. The perspective of the classical male producers of

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<sup>15</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 756c.



the source material seems to have been perpetuated as well as intensified by those who reproduced them over subsequent generations, including contemporary scholars. The descriptions given of the festival have therefore varied from calling it a fertility festival to the exact opposite; that is, a festival which, on the contrary, heralds seduction and sterility. The latter perspective, however, differs clearly from the practical cult, which seems to have been quite widespread and enduring. The fact is that the cult was still popular in the Roman era, and the most interesting feature of the cult, the “Adonis gardens”, enjoyed a long life in the ancient Mediterranean world, and is still a popular Easter custom in the Greek Orthodox Church.

The purpose of the Adonis festival was therefore to ensure fertility, and the festival evidences central rituals connected with birth, death and healing, in the same way as in the other ancient festivals. The festival presents a rich symbolism, especially as regards women’s versus men’s domains and value systems, just as we see in the relationship between the official and popular cults.

## Summary of the Festivals

There are several “layers” within both the modern and the ancient festivals which have been described, and in several of the ancient festivals what initially was only a procession, a sacrifice, competitions and a meal between the festival participants when the deity had received her or his share, could develop into the large-scale festivals of the classical period, such as the Panathenaia and the City Dionysia. This topic also has parallels in the modern context, such as one, for example, encounters the circumstances on Tinos. It also demonstrates how a new ideological/religious centralising consists of old elements.

The significance of “key rituals” has been mentioned several times, especially in connection with the ancient women’s festivals. One of the aims of the analysis comparing the popular cult and the official ideologies is to reveal the importance of these “heavy” or especially crucial “core rituals” which occur so often in the festivals.

The analysis will therefore question “established truths or assumptions”, also in relation to the importance of, for example, the “ideological” Dionysos festival. Was it important because an ideology promoting the power elite desired it to be so, as has usually been claimed, or because there were fundamental features in the cult that were important for people, and had deep roots in the traditional popular cult? Did the power elite eventually use these elements in order to manipulate the people? This is the description one has traditionally encountered in scholarship about

antiquity, where it is claimed that the populace is dominated by the rulers, and that women are dominated by men. One may however ask whether it might have been that the rulers needed to include the possible essential elements because of the demand of the people. When one deconstructs the festivals through a comparative analysis, one may obtain another perspective, *inter alia*, on the relationship between the “great” and “little” society, popular and official cults, official ideologies and fundamental, underlying, and enduring mentalities.



## CHAPTER TWO

### FESTIVAL AND COMMUNICATION

How can modern Greek society try to shed light on ancient festivals and, by extension, ancient society, based on religious festivals? A comparison between the modern and ancient religious festivals reveals that the official festivals reflect critical phases within the agricultural cycle. They also reflect the most important life-cycle rituals within human life: birth, baptism or initiation, marriage and death. Through an analytical examination of the connection between modern and ancient ideologies and mentalities based on the relationship between official religion and popular religion, one realises that traditional values associated with the fertility cult, death cult and healing are important elements in the festivals.<sup>1</sup> But what exactly do the concepts of ideology and mentality signify?

The history of mentalities (*mentalités*) originates in the French “Annales tradition”, and in the wake of the traditional historians of mentality belonging to that tradition (for example, Jacques Le Goff, Georges Duby, Philippe Ariès, and Michel Vovelle), many have discussed ideologies, some have discussed mentalities, but only a small number of scholars have discussed the relationship between ideology and mentality.<sup>2</sup> A problem in connection with research into antiquity in particular, and with periodisation generally, is that within the general history of mentality, individuals are regarded as acting within a specific historical framework; for example, one speaks of the mentality of the medieval human being. But the traditional history of mentality, which focuses on the value system of a people, creates even more problems. Based on her studies among

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<sup>1</sup> The term “cult” is derived from Latin *cultus*, i.e., the “care” owed to deities and their shrines. It is a common term for all the activities and ceremonies in which religion appears, which are due to and determined by religious experience. It is the practical expression of the religion. “Cultus [is] the act or acts of the *homo religiosus*: worship”, Wach 1971: 25, cf. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 3 discusses the general definition of the concept of mentality, e.g., Mucchielli 1985: 5, where the “structures of consciousness”, the “mental or psychological equipment”, “the world of beliefs” are chief factors, cf. Stewart 1991: xvi, see also the following.

Bedouins in the Western Desert of Egypt, Lila Abu-Lughod is critical of anthropologists who assume that describing the ideology or culture is the same as describing the behaviour or experiences of the members of the society.<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, who is the best known and most sophisticated representative of the ample research carried out on the value system linked to honour and shame in the Mediterranean region, often takes precisely that position, which assigns a totalitarian role to official ideology when it comes to the structuring of experience.<sup>4</sup> This becomes problematic, because the emphasis placed on a totalitarian ideology does not leave space for the fact that men in an honour and shame society may have a conflicting value system expressing emotions and weaknesses, thus contradicting the official paradigm of honour and shame, which devalues emotions and feelings by relating these affectations to women. This is revealed by focusing on the relationship between official ideology and human experience.

Concerning the relationship between ideology and mentality, these are regarded as parallel expressions of the values and views of a people, and one may encounter conflicting value systems. The fact is that a value system can go against the grain of a particular historical framework, and it is impossible to attach unequivocal labels to reality as though it were black or white. Based on the general description given by the Annales scholars, mentality is unspoken and unconscious, while ideology is deliberately expressed, conscious, and represents clear ideas about reality. A person's mentality, illustrated through fundamental values such as honour and dignity, can, however, also be analysed from an ideological perspective. This brings us to one of the cultural patterns which exist in the Mediterranean region today as well as in antiquity; the concept of "honour and shame". These are conventional male values, usually linked to an officially male value system, and they permeate the ancient sources written by men, such as Aristotle and Plutarch. Today, the honour and shame paradigm likewise represents an officially male value system which is accepted by women when it suits them, in spite of the fact that they also have their own values which often run contrary to the male model. There are situations when men may also act directly against this male ideology without this causing any upsets. It is difficult to proclaim a totalitarian ideology in a society. It is also difficult to speak of a totalitarian expressed ideology which runs parallel to a totalitarian unexpressed mentality, because what one would classify as a mentality—for instance, a

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<sup>3</sup> Abu-Lughod 1988: 255 f.

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu 1980, 1998.

Christian's honour codex, which in fact contradicts his Christian ideology—can also be articulated. The following example from Le Goff illustrates such a conflict between a person's official ideology and his internal mentality: Pope Gregory the Great refused to bury a monk who on his deathbed admitted a theft. After his death, the monk was thrown onto the garbage heap.<sup>5</sup> Here we see a confrontation between the official Christian ideology, according to which a repentant sinner should be forgiven, and a mentality which refuses burial to a person who has broken the rules of a society wherein honour and dignity are fundamental values. These two value systems, however, are both expressed and conscious. Likewise, a papyrus text from late antiquity may represent a mixture of earlier ideologies through the invocation of traditional deities as well as a more recent ideology through its use of a Christian belief system. It can therefore be more fruitful to analyse a phenomenon such as ideology or mentality in a short-term perspective or long-term perspective, respectively.

The demand for honour and dignity can therefore also be used as an example illustrating how a cultural pattern, such as the death cult in the Mediterranean, may be analysed from the perspective of both ideology and mentality. It is difficult to classify phenomena as either one thing or another. In practice, it is an issue of describing how phenomena may manifest themselves. What is in one situation classified as a mentality, often in a long-term perspective of how it guides people's actions, can in a different situation be analysed as ideology because of the manner in which it is consciously expressed. The two concepts thus become analytically complementary.

A prerequisite to understanding the phenomenon of the festival is the concept of religious communication; that is, people's communication with the supernatural powers.<sup>6</sup> People must influence the deities and supernatural powers in order to obtain a share in their power, and in the same way as one switches on the cooker to control the heat, one may influence the supernatural powers so that they act in a desired way. Influence, control and manipulation are performed by physical actions, words, signs, or unspoken requests.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Le Goff 1974: 81.

<sup>6</sup> See Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 386 for a definition of the supernatural. Cf. 252 and, e.g., Thuc. 1.123, 1.128, 1.134 for ancient Greece. Despite this, Martin 2004 argues that the concept of the supernatural did not exist in antiquity, but is of a more recent (18<sup>th</sup> cent.) date. See, however, Stewart 1991: e.g., 128; Psychogiou 2008, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Blum/Blum 1970: 250. See also Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 259.

In antiquity, the daily life of human beings was inhabited by a host of holy mediators who stood between the individual person and the more powerful deities in Heaven or Hades. The mediating powers were classified from demi-Gods and divine heroes to divine powers, signs and portents for the good and the evil. Every household had its own personal cult in which one sought to influence both the living and the spirits of the dead through rituals and offerings or sacrifices.

Earlier scholarship established typological schemes for classifying religions, claiming, for instance, that ancestor worship and monotheistic religion could not be combined. In Greek cults we see that several so-called types of religion can be combined, although they may seem contradictory.<sup>8</sup> It is possible to simultaneously believe both that one has free will to choose the right or wrong way, and that a predetermined fate rules over all, as Job and Oedipus thought.<sup>9</sup>

The supernatural powers we encounter among the ancient and modern Greeks are found in animistic religion; that is, the belief in spirits inherent in natural objects and phenomena such as revenants, tree spirits, and other spiritual beings.<sup>10</sup> This may also be classified as a *biocentric* religion; that is, a nature-centric view of nature.<sup>11</sup> Simultaneously we encounter ancestor

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pina-Cabral 1992: 45.

<sup>9</sup> See Vernant/Vidal-Naquet 1982: Ch. 3 for the term “free will”, and cf. Campbell 1966: 159-167. Accordingly, it is argued that from Homer’s deities to the contemporary saints, these entities determine peoples’ actions, see e.g., *Il.* 13.730 f.

<sup>10</sup> Ancient tree spirits: Pl. *Phdr.* 230, 238. Personal guardian spirit: *Phd.* 107c-108e, 112d-114a. See also *Symp.* 202a-203b. Modern tree spirit: Oikonomides 1964. Personal spirit: Meraklēs 1986: 32; Blum Blum 1970: 77. House demon: Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980: 167. Ancient revenants: *Il.* 10, cf. Gernet 1981: Ch. 6, see also Eur. *I4.* 1612-1613; Petron. *Sat.* 62; Verg. *Aen.* 6.324-43; Graves 1985: 67. Modern: du Boulay 1982: 219-238; Blum Blum 1970: 53 f., 70-76. Cf. Goody 1961: 143 ff., for referring to Tyler (or. 1871). I agree with Goody’s criticism, but refer to Keesing 1981, because he, in contrast to the evolutionist Tyler, sees that all these religious categories can be found in one and the same culture. Tyler, however, being a man of his times, saw this as a development from something “primitive” (inferior) and therefore devalued in comparison to something higher or “civilised”, a paradigm in which Christianity presided over all. This is a view I challenge, because all are of equal worth. For a recent version of a Christian-centric perspective on antiquity, see, Eidinow/Kindt/Osborne, eds. 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Scholarship today is concerned with re-evaluating the concept of animism, as I experienced at the *ISCSC* (the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations) conference in Paris July 2006. Introduced here was the term *biocentric*; i.e., a biocentric/nature-centric view of nature (cf. Inukai 2007: 7) in general and (in the context of this specific conference) water in particular. Cf.



worship, which is the reverence or propitiation of ancestors.<sup>12</sup> Both Olympian and Christian pantheons are built up as hierarchies in which spirits, ancestors, saints and lesser deities take care of common people's daily lives because Zeus or the Christian God are too remote and "conceited". Therefore it is the Panagia or the personal patron saint who is most often invoked with prayers by contemporary Greeks, because God is seen as a remote abstraction. In antiquity it was the household deities in the form of a snake, Demeter, who gave birth to Plutos, local deities of the sea, rivers and forests, the Sun (Helios) and the Moon (Selene), or the older chthonic Goddesses and Gods, that were mostly invoked by the common people.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, we encounter a mixture of several cultural layers, because the supernatural consists of a heavenly religion, nature worship, and so-called chthonic deities.<sup>14</sup> These supernatural powers are both personified and impersonal. The first influences and controls human fates, while the impersonal power, or "mana" as it is called within social anthropology, is a supernatural power inherent in nature and individuals.<sup>15</sup> There are personified powers that are associated with supernatural beings. In antiquity, for instance, the power of the Goddess Artemis was personified because it was associated with her identity, and the *aegis* (shield), lightning flash and thunder were Zeus' weapons or attributes. This is also the case with the modern Panagia and the Prophet (Agios) Ēlias.<sup>16</sup> The methods one has available to influence these personified and impersonal powers are prayer, offering or sacrifice, and magic. Therefore I

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ancient Greek water Goddesses whose function today has been taken over by the Panagia, see Håland 2007 (2005), 2009b. See furthermore Burkert 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Keesing 1981: 507, cf. 330 f. Ancient ancestor cult: Pl. *Leg.* 740; Aesch. *Cho.* 479 ff. Modern: Meraklēs 1986: 32, 64 ff.; Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980: 114 ff., 273 ff.; Blum/Blum 1970: 88; Håland 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Vernant 1982a Vol. 2: 87 Zeus and 89-92 hero. Modern: Sanders 1962: 177, cf. Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980; Blum/Blum 1970: 105, see also Finrud *Di Tota* 1981a: 104-120. In other words, we encounter the confidence the believer feels in knowing that a Goddess or God is with her or him, in contrast to the modern (Western) individual, who is often without human deities, and therefore feels totally abandoned.

<sup>14</sup> See Will 1960: 95-111, especially 103, 111 re syncretism in antiquity, cf. Stewart 1991 for modern society.

<sup>15</sup> Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 383.

<sup>16</sup> Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980; Megas 1982: 142-144; Tsetakou-Karbelē 1991. Cf. Papamanoli-Guest 1991: 29 ff.; Blum/Blum 1970: 82-88: the Panagia, cf. Karita n.d.: 140. See also Blum/Blum 1965: Ch. 2 and 130, 136, 187. Zeus: Hes. *Th.* 707-710. Cf. *Il.* 1.43 ff., Apollo is like Artemis. See Jenssen 1988: 31-54 for an Indian parallel.

find unfruitful those ethnocentric theories which draw a sharp distinction between religion and “superstition”, arguing, for instance, that magic represents “superstition”, whereas belief and religion are synonymous.<sup>17</sup>

A prayer is found in a positive or negative meaning, as a blessing or a curse, combined with symbols such as amulets and various other inscribed material on which the prayer or curse is written. A prayer is a request for help which is directed towards the deities and emphasises the supplicant’s deficiencies and weaknesses. It may also be a declaration of belief; a testimony of the supplicant’s obedience to the stronger power. The offering or sacrifice is an act in which the individual relinquishes something of value in order to influence supernatural powers. It is a gift or bribe in order to bind the deities to use their power in a desired manner.<sup>18</sup> Human beings, alone or with the help of religious specialists, manipulate the powers further up in the religious hierarchy by means of magic consisting of offering and purification.

An example of magic, or strategies human beings use to control supernatural power, is to bury a cock, a common sacrifice to the chthonic powers, by one of the cornerstones of a house under construction. Examples of magic include the carrying of amulets in order to be protected against witchcraft (see Figure 26),<sup>19</sup> which is a malicious power channelled unintentionally by or through human beings. It can also be a malicious magic which is consciously used among people.<sup>20</sup> In antiquity, Hekate might be invoked if one wanted to harm someone else, and Apollo could shoot arrows which caused illness.<sup>21</sup> One encounters similar concepts in modern Greece, such as on Tinos.

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<sup>17</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 3 for discussion, cf. Stewart 1991. See also Flowers 2017: esp. ix (but, cf. 127 f.) for a more comprehensive view of the relationship between magic and religion than the binary view still found within scholarship about the ancient world, despite claims that the distinction has been broken down. For the division between magic and religion, see e.g., Blythin 1970: 52 f.; Thomas 1988; Graf 1994. Béchéec 2013: 10 also presents an outdated view of the relationship between magic and religion.

<sup>18</sup> Leach 1986: 83.

<sup>19</sup> Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 383. Cf. Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980; Stewart 1991; Keesing 1981: 333. Blood sacrifice: Aikaterinidēs 1979: 147 ff., pl. 11.1-2. The Kabyles bury a sheep in the foundation wall of a house under construction, Bourdieu 1963: 68. Cf. Paus. 9.22.2, for this way of thinking. See also Bhun Bhun 1970: 122 f., 250 f., 330, 334.

<sup>20</sup> Keesing 1981: 518 *sorcery* (consciously), vs. 520 *witchcraft*. Cf. Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976: 44, 51.

<sup>21</sup> *Il.* 1.35 ff. Hekate: Theophr. *Char.* 16.6 ff.



There are two fundamental laws for the operation of magic: the law of similarity and the law of contamination.<sup>22</sup> The first law involves the manipulation of something corresponding to that which one wishes to invoke. This may be done by presenting large fertility symbols as part of a carnival procession. The second law implies that two items which have been in contact with one another retain some influence over each other after being separated. These two laws are known by the common term of *sympathetic magic* and are a persistent characteristic of ancient as well as contemporary festivals. The same way of thinking is found in the concepts of metonym, wherein a part is representative of the whole, and metaphor, which is based on the striving for likeness.<sup>23</sup>

Theoretically magical rituals can be divided into two types of rituals. The first type has been characterised as “operative” rituals, where the human beings serve the deities based upon the law of “gift and counter-gift” (“*do ut des*”). This is the sacrifice. The other type consists of “redemptive” and apotropaic rites. These are performed out of fear based on the rule, “do and avoid” (“*do ut abeas*”; that is, “I give that you may keep away”), and presuppose a threat of fears, malevolence or infection which must be removed or warded off. This is the purification or cleansing.<sup>24</sup> I shall, however, not pass over the problem of theoretically separating sacrifice and purification. The reason for this is that what is identified as a purification in practical terms often takes the form of a sacrifice, while the effect of divine wrath can often be washed away when it emerges in the form of an illness.<sup>25</sup> A sacrifice or other operating ritual, such as a festival, cannot take place before the site or participating individuals have been purified, by means of fasting, sexual abstinence, cleaning, and so on. The two systems involve two kinds of powers, the good and the evil.

For the individual person, good and evil magic exist, and it is employed according to the occasion. In the simplest form, a curse is the hope to do harm, while a blessing has the opposite aim. Direct magic implies that the magic found in the apotropaic function of symbols—such as amulets (Figure 26) is at work. In contrast to this, we have indirect magic, according to which deities, spirits, and the like must be invoked in

<sup>22</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 3 discusses Frazer 1987: 11-48, cf. Finrud Di Tota 1981a: 91-93; Keesing 1981: 519.

<sup>23</sup> Leach 1986: Ch. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Blum/Blum 1965: 33 f. and Harrison 1977: 134 ff. (“*do ut abeas*”), 275 ff.

<sup>25</sup> See Parker 1985: 10 and Ch. 7. Cf. Hdt. 6.91; Soph. OC. 466-492; Eur. HF. 922 ff. for antiquity and Aikaterinidēs 1979; Papamichael-Koutoubas 1980; Blum Blum 1970: 137; Finrud Di Tota 1981a: 111: modern circumstances.

order to do their work. Since present-day Greeks, like their ancient counterparts, often find themselves unable to carry out something without the help of the deities, magic is important both in daily life and on special occasions, such as in critical situations.<sup>26</sup>

As regards healing and purification, I shall examine a phenomenon which involves both apotropaic rites and symbols. This concept is fundamental, not only with regard to the worldview in the Mediterranean region, but also to providing a better understanding of the ancient and modern festivals, namely the *Evil* (envious) *Eye*.

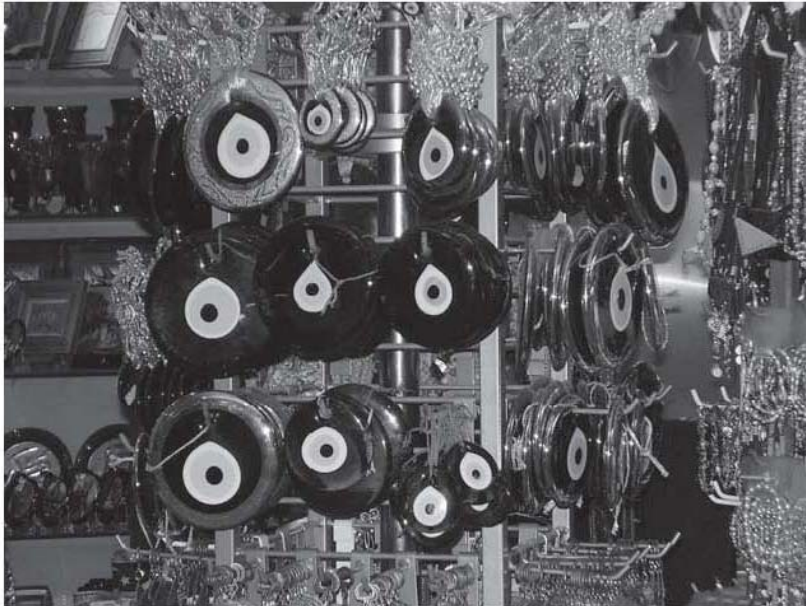


Figure 26. Amulets depicting the Eye (to *Mati*) sold as protection against the Evil Eye (Downloaded 18.04.2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evil\\_eye#/media/File:Blue\\_eyes.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evil_eye#/media/File:Blue_eyes.JPG))

The Evil Eye represents the belief that the power of an eye can cause sudden harm to another person or to this person's possessions. The guilty

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. n.9 *supra*.

person, who is often an ecclesiastic or a witch, is not always conscious of her or his power.<sup>27</sup>

Although what may be called traditional dogmatic beliefs and “superstition” or popular beliefs are situated within the same religion, many of today’s Greek scholars who belong to the Orthodox Church—and also representatives of the same Church—will, in various situations, or officially, mark a divide between the two categories, although they will not always do so in practice. We encounter the same attitude in the ancient worldview, illustrated by the Hippocratic medical doctor’s condemnation of charlatans, and the like, and many aspects that Plato or Cicero denounce or renounce in one situation, but which they nonetheless accept in a different situation. By observing how a belief system can guide people’s actions, one may clarify how it can, from a long-term perspective, be considered to be both an anchored or embedded mentality, and thus reflect the ambivalent attitudes of the official views.

I have already discussed the meaning of the term *superstitio* in connection with belief and “superstition”.<sup>28</sup> The term is related to the Latin expression *superstare* (*supersto*) with the meaning of standing still in front of something. From this follows consternation or surprise, especially facing the divine/supernatural. The term is also related to *superstitiosus*; that is, prophecy, prophetic. The term is also linked to someone who is “placed upward” or initiated, or who simply has seen too much, namely a female or male soothsayer or seer.<sup>29</sup> A female or male seer does not only see things that other people cannot see, but he or she also sees things that only the deities should see. Therefore, he or she must go through an apprenticeship, conversion or punishment, such as, for instance, Epimenides’ forty years of sleep during his life as a hermit in a cave, the conversion of Saul to Christianity, thus becoming Paul, or the punishment of Teiresias. The latter saw the Goddess Athena naked, so she blinded him, but afterwards granted him the ability of a seer as compensation.<sup>30</sup>

From this follows the term the “Evil Eye”, or the jealousy of the deities, cast upon someone who has shown *hybris* or pride by challenging them. But at the same time, he or she is singled out by them, because this

<sup>27</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 3 for discussion. Cf., e.g., Maloney 1976b: vi. The eye kills: Ap. Rhod. 4.1669 ff; *HHd*. 227: the threatening gaze of witchcraft. Cf. Esler 1994: Ch. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Håland 1990: Ch. 4, 2017: Ch. 3.

<sup>29</sup> See generally Lewis/Short 1951: 1809 f. Calderone 1972: 378, 382, 384, 386, 396 gives a thorough treatment of the term.

<sup>30</sup> Callim. *Hymn*. 5.75–84. Paul: Acts. 9.8 f. Epimenides: Paus. 1.14.4.

select person is worthy of the knowledge.<sup>31</sup> The positive sense of the Ancient Greek term *deisidaimonia* (cf. M.G. *deisidaimonia*, translated as “superstition”) may be translated as “reverence or fear of the Gods” or “religion”.<sup>32</sup> The negative sense of “*deisidaimonia*” has been translated as “superstition” or “excessive respect for the Gods”. It was connected with *hybris*, which was ideologically despicable, according to Plutarch. He uses the term derogatorily about cults which differ from the official ideology, which is represented by his own religion.<sup>33</sup> According to Plutarch, the superstitious person practices an oriental cult and is far too moved emotionally; that is, he shows too much belief or makes too much of the cult or worship.

The thinking behind the concept of the “Evil Eye” is the desire to keep potential powers of change in check, a kind of social control.<sup>34</sup> In the Mediterranean world’s patriarchal family ideology, women, gossip, and foreign magicians have potential subversive powers; therefore they are feared and must be kept in their place, if possible, through capture. The sexual division in the society is represented by the terms “shame and honour”.

In modern Greece, this is expressed by the notions of *philotimos* (proud, cf. M.G./A.G. *philotimia*; that is, M.G. [proper] pride, dignity, self-esteem, A.G. love of honour) and *dropi* (shame). The first, “jealous of one’s honour, with a keen sense of honour” or “love of honour”, is among men regarded as loving (that is, caring of or for) or respecting manhood. A man must have *timē* (honour) and love (care of or for) and respect masculinity, while *dropi* or shame represents the woman or female image: she must be chaste, modest, and faithful to her husband, as was the case in the ancient divine realm as well.<sup>35</sup> The ancient version of the female genitals was described as “what is covered with shame” (A.G. *aidōion/aidōia*, private parts, pudenda; M.G. *aidōio*; that is, pudenda, vulva), having the same meaning as the modern *dropi*, and thereby a label for woman. This is understandable given the background of the many cases of which we have testimony regarding the female sex’s connection with important processes to keep society going, such as through “shameful

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Maloney 1976b: ix; Foster 1972: 171 f.; Finrud Di Tota 1981a: 100 and Blum Bhun 1965: 169 (the jealousy of the deities) with the logic in Sahlins 1963: 285-303. See also Martin 2004, cf. n.6 supra.

<sup>32</sup> Arist.*Pol.* 5.1315a1.

<sup>33</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 166a-b vs. 165b-c (derogatory).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Maloney 1976b: vi; Esler 1994: Ch. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Od.* 8.324. For modern Greece: Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976: 57 f.; Blum Bhun 1965: 227. Cf. Bourdieu 1966: 224, the Kabyles.



actions". Several tales, for instance, tell us about brave women exposing their private parts to ward off their enemies.<sup>36</sup> Their genitals serve the same purpose as the gilt head of Medusa the Gorgon with its fringe of snakes (Figure 27); that is, its apotropaic function along with other genitalised amulets.



Figure 27: Medusa with her hair of snakes and a snake under each cheek, Akropolis museum, Athens.

A corresponding custom is found in modern Swaziland, where the women show their contempt for the king by turning their naked buttocks towards the monarchy. This special form of protest is considered to be a curse towards the one who is the target of the protest, and thus becomes a parallel to the ancient custom.<sup>37</sup> It has therefore been claimed that the women do not feel any shame in the women's festivals, because it is expected that the men will stay away from these occasions.<sup>38</sup> On the other

<sup>36</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 246a, 248b.

<sup>37</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7 re amulets, "shameful actions", etc. See reportage in the Norwegian journal *Bergens Tidende*, 27.01.2004 re Swaziland.

<sup>38</sup> Brunfield 1981: 123 f.

hand, the mentioned explanation of *philotimo* and *dropi* is the ideal of a patriarchal ideology. It is the “male-presented” Mediterranean culture of honour and shame that is expressed through *dropi* versus *philotimia*, and the ideological female and male spheres are similar in both periods. In the modern context, this is illustrated by the fact that the icon of the Panagia on Tinos has rarely been outside of “her house”; that is, outside of Tinos—only twice when one does not include her holy space, which is the entire island. We have many parallel statements from the authors of our ancient sources, for instance concerning the ancient *Plynteria* festival, when Athena’s statue of olive wood left Athens to be bathed in Phaleron. Because she left “her house”, the day was regarded as an unlucky one.<sup>39</sup> In practice, however, *philotimo* and *dropi* are not always gender-specific, since in everyday speech a woman may have *philotimo* in the same way as a man may have shame. In modern Imer Mani on the southern part of the Mani peninsula in the Peloponnese, traditional modesty may be suspended in the service of family honour, and if a woman acts like a man, it is not necessarily shameful.<sup>40</sup> It was likewise in antiquity as well, for although the writings of Plutarch, for instance, confirm the male ideology of honour and shame in detail, he also recounts stories about the brave women, in which women act like men and have male honour.<sup>41</sup>

The desire to keep potential powers of change in check, however, is not restricted to the relationship between men and women. If someone tried to surpass a deity, they were forced back in their place by the deities using their knowledge of magic, because they were eager to retain their precedence. An example of this is when the Goddess and principal weaver Athena, with the help of her Evil Eye, took revenge on the weaver Arakhne by transforming the unfortunate girl into the first spider, doomed to spin and weave forever.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, the “Evil Eye” can be a deity’s avenging force, a continuous evil strength like a virus or a plague, which must be broken with the help of amulets. Today the Evil Eye is often considered to be the incarnation of evil in the form of the Devil, because one who has the Evil Eye is said to have an eye infected by the Devil.<sup>43</sup>

As regards witchcraft and the Evil Eye, one has to remember that in the same way that actions related to witchcraft attack the moral and social order in practical terms, the idea of the witch challenges the same,

<sup>39</sup> Håland 2012b: 259. See Plut. *Mor.* 142d32 for another example.

<sup>40</sup> Holst-Warhaft 1992: 88.

<sup>41</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 242e-263c.

<sup>42</sup> ●v. *Met.* 6.1-145.

<sup>43</sup> Campbell 1966: 164-167. Cf. Bruwaene 1969: 613-621, Figs. 1-5. Shapiro 1985: 115-120.



symbolically and in a far-reaching way. It is therefore important not merely to focus on the witch or witchcraft but to place them into a broader context of moral understanding. Dangerous demons are mainly associated with misfortunes at birth, entering into marriage, or death; that is, the most important life-cycle rituals of a human being. The idea of the “Fight with Charon” at the deathbed bears witness to thoughts and perceptions in face of what generally may be seen as a “senseless moment, the contemplation of” a person’s “death agonies”.<sup>44</sup>

While it does not lead to the kind of psychological or sociological “replies to fear” or “stress explanations” found in many witchcraft studies, an examination of the idea of witchcraft, the Evil Eye, and the like reveals much about the tensions in Greek society, not least because these demons cling around problematical areas of experience, according to Charles Stewart.<sup>45</sup> He also refers to Dan Sperber concerning the cognitive dimension of symbolism, which is one of its most important and distinctive characteristics.<sup>46</sup> Symbolism comprises things that we do not quite understand. A representation is symbolic precisely because it cannot be explained properly, which is to say that it cannot be expressed by way of semantic means. Symbols fill the gaps in a society’s encyclopedia; that is, the society’s collective knowledge about the world. Therefore it is important to examine life-cycle rituals within the life of human beings and society as well as the times of crisis in the agricultural cycle to learn more about Greek culture.<sup>47</sup>

Offerings or sacrifice as well as prayer, are means of obtaining something material or purifying oneself for something immaterial. Since all beings are living and self-determined, and have energy and power in varying quantities, an intelligent person can ally oneself with friendly powers, and with their help manipulate and control less benevolent powers. The reason for this is that we produce effects on one another through physical actions or by means of symbols and signs. Upwards in the hierarchy, the communication takes place with the help of intermediaries or mediators, who may be minor deities or deceased or living persons.

The deceased mediators are ancestors, demi-Goddesses or demi-Gods, heroes and heroines. In Christian terminology the latter are called saints (cf. Figure 28).

<sup>44</sup> Stewart 1991: 16; Alexiou 1974: 37. Crick 1976: 116.

<sup>45</sup> Stewart 1991: 15.

<sup>46</sup> See Stewart 1991: 261n.8 for reference to Sperber 1974: 113.

<sup>47</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4-7. For life-cycle rituals, see also Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980, 1981; Meraklēs 1984, 1986.



Figure 28. The ritual blessing of the offerings of bread on the eve of the festival dedicated to Agios Nikolaos in the courtyard of the Byzantine Church dedicated to him in the Plaka district of Athens, 5 December 2011.

These belong to the death cult, which both in Greece and generally in the Mediterranean region may be considered from the perspective of mentality, as this cult is marked by continuity. This is expressed through the ancient ideological cult of heroes and the practice of sainthood within the Christian ideology, as well as the *marabouts* (holy men) in North Africa.<sup>48</sup> The principle behind the sacrifice is, as already mentioned, the law of “gifts and counter-gifts”, and in connection with the death cult one sees how sacrifice brings the living into contact with the world of the deceased, as Odysseus experienced when he needed help from the dead.<sup>49</sup> But how do people actually obtain answers from the supernatural?

<sup>48</sup> For the death cult in Greece, see especially Håland 2014. The topic is also discussed in Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* 11.

## Communication with the Divinity

Since there are supernatural powers, humans have to be able to communicate with them, and communication from deities to human beings occurs through divine epiphany or revelation, spirit possession, and prophecies with the help of religious specialists such as magicians and priests.

The myths constitute a kind of communication because they reveal religious knowledge. Spirit possession is a common and direct form of ritual communication wherein the deity enters into and controls a person's behaviour, as we find in connection with Agios Kōnstantinos and the Anastenarides or the ancient cult of Dionysos. A possessing spirit can speak to people, communicate messages, or reveal its presence in other ways. The meaning of the messages generally needs to be interpreted by a priesthood, religious specialists who act as prophets. So the deities foretell the fate of human beings, and this commonly takes place through other living beings, as specified in the following paragraph.<sup>50</sup>

A portent reveals the unknown in the present or future. In the Greek cultural region, the portent is manifested through human beings, snakes, birds, animal cries, reading the intestines of sacrificed animals, dreams, oracles spoken by people in contact with the supernatural, natural phenomena, and so on. Among the symbolic actions performed by animals, one may mention the ancient sacrificial ox which decided its own destiny by going to the altar and eating of the grain.<sup>51</sup> We encounter a modern parallel in the sheep of Agia Elenē, although the 1992 version of the sacrificial animal did not go as willingly to its death as one might have wished.<sup>52</sup> In the world of Homer, the divine epiphany is often in the guise of individual persons, such as when the Goddess Athena approaches Telemakhos in the likeness of Mentēs.<sup>53</sup> The remote Zeus usually portended his decisions through natural phenomena, such as lightning flashes and thunder, birds, the rainbow, or the wind's whistling in the holy oak trees by his oracle in Dodona.<sup>54</sup> The meanings of the different portents from the top of the religious hierarchy are interpreted by the institutionalised

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<sup>50</sup> Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 265-271.

<sup>51</sup> Paus. 1.24.4. For the ancient material, see also Gernet 1981: 328-331; Detienne 1979c: 22; Detienne/Svenbro 1979: 234-238; van Straten 1987: 159-170; 1995.

<sup>52</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4, esp. 235 and Fig. 73, cf., e.g., Aikaterinidēs 1979: 82 ff., pl. 5,1.

<sup>53</sup> *Od.* 1.102-112, cf. 17.483-488.

<sup>54</sup> *Il.* 16.233-239. Rainbow: 17.547-552. Birds: *Od.* 2.146-156. Lightning and thunder: *Il.* 17.593-596.

priesthood, such as the *hierēus* (priest/holy, term for the magistrates of Delphi) of Delphi. They interpreted the meaning of the messages from the earth<sup>55</sup> and Apollo to the priestess Pythia. There were also itinerant diviners, who played an important role in establishing cultural contact, and a society might also have a famous seer in its midst, like Teiresias in Thebes.<sup>56</sup> Paul Veyne has demonstrated how integrated dreams, prophecies and oracles were in ancient society, as is also the case today.<sup>57</sup> Other forms of divine epiphany include dreams or visions, as in the modern account of Agia Pelagia's dream which led to the finding of the icon on Tinos,<sup>58</sup> or through dance, as in the modern Anastenaria or the ancient mystery cults. It does not necessarily need to be the specialist who has the dream, but the specialist has the required knowledge of the symbols, and is usually the one who is most competent to interpret them.

Among religious specialists are found the magician and the medicine man or woman who controls supernatural power on behalf of the people, often in order to cure them or influence the course of nature. Another specialist is the priest or priestess, who is a male or female mediator between the supernatural and human worlds because he or she has knowledge of the official symbolic system.<sup>59</sup> In connection with this, one may also mention the Archianastenis. Indeed, in daily life, one purifies oneself and makes offerings to the deities when consuming a meal, and this is done without any help from a priest or priestess.<sup>60</sup> The priests and priestesses are treated with reverence. In the roles of female and male mediators they preserve the tradition because, in an institutionalised way, they invoke good and ward off evil. In antiquity—as opposed to modern society—there was not an ideological division between the secular and religious life of society. Therefore a magistrate had the dignity of a priest as a part of his official functions. Another difference from the modern reality is that ancient society also included many priestesses. They have,

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<sup>55</sup> *Diod.* 16.26.

<sup>56</sup> *Soph. OT.* 297-463. Burkert 1983a: 116, Assyrian magician. See also *Flowers* 2017: Ch. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Blum/Blum* 1970: 64-66; Papamichael-Koutroumbas 1980. Cf. Veyne 1983: 84.

<sup>58</sup> One of my informants on Tinos, an Athenian woman in her fifties, tells me (in 2007) that she was healed in her left leg on 7 August 2000, after a dream in which the Panagia had demanded that she go to Tinos and light a candle. Since then, she has gone to Tinos annually during the Dormition.

<sup>59</sup> *Blum/Blum* 1970: 287; Stewart 1991. Cf. *Spradley/McCurdy* 1980: 268, 385; *Blum/Blum* 1965: 187.

<sup>60</sup> *Od.* 14.446-453; *Il.* 2.398-432, cf. *Hes. Op.* 724-727.

however their equivalents among the many nuns and abbesses of modern days.<sup>61</sup>

After having presented the way in which people invoke the powers and the latter's replies to the people, I will now proceed to consider the festival more in detail. Since the festival is a unique means of communication at both the inter-human level and between humans and the stronger powers, it is important to discuss the communication aspect of festivals *per se*.

## What is a Festival, and Why and How do People Celebrate Festivals?

According to Strabo, people came together to sacrifice and drink as a community, and in this way the polis was created. In other words, the polis was a product of festivals.<sup>62</sup> Plato, Aristotle and Theophrastus all emphasise the importance of citizens' participation in feasts.<sup>63</sup> In this context, the (festal) meal or *dais* (banquet) was also important. Ancient festivals can be considered as religious drinking sessions.<sup>64</sup> We see the significance of festivals both in the ancient religious festival cycle and in the modern cycle where the church's calendar has been assimilated with seasonal festivals within the agricultural calendar, just as the ancient official ideological Athenian calendar was. The festivals were previously connected to a Goddess, such as Demeter or Athena, a God, such as Dionysos, or a deceased hero or heroine. Today they are connected with a deceased saint; in particular, we encounter the life cycles of the Panagia, Christ and John the Baptist.

In classical Athens, 120 days, or one third of the calendar year, were dedicated to one festival or another. This is also the case today, since a substantial portion of the calendar year is dedicated to some festival or other, whether one follows the official Orthodox calendar, in which most of the days are dedicated to some saint, or the popular calendar which corresponds with it, and is structured around key points in the agricultural

<sup>61</sup> Cf., e.g., Karita n.d.: 34; Håland 2014: Ch. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Strab. 9.419.

<sup>63</sup> Pl. *Leg.* The first book highlights the importance of social gatherings in which drinking is included, e.g., 640-641b. See also 771d, *Symp.* 174a ff. Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 8.1338a24-31, see *Eth. Nic.* 8.1160a19-30 *i.a.* for "religious guilds and dining-clubs, which are unions for sacrifice and social intercourse". We encounter their importance in general terms in several of Theophr. *Char.*

<sup>64</sup> Cf. n.63 *supra*. On the importance of wine, see also Joh. 15.1 f. The importance of the banquet is also seen, e.g., in Paus. 1.2,5. On the feast/meal, Gernet 1981: Ch. 2; Harrison 1977: 140 ff. See also Detienne 1979b: 10 ff.



year, that is, the order of nature. The rituals of the Orthodox Church have been adapted to the seasonal rituals of the earlier agricultural calendar. In that way the Orthodox religion has inherited the old religion's close connection with nature and/or the economic year, when it tried to replace the pagan cult. Furthermore in antiquity there were numerous informal gatherings that are undocumented in the main. The beginning of the comedy *Lysistrata*, for instance, implies feasts dedicated to Bakchos, Pan, Aphrodite and Genetyllis, the Goddess or protectress of childbirth, as well as Hekate.<sup>65</sup> All of these were evidently informally organised and therefore stood outside of the state's official calendar and supervision. These are parallels to the large number of contemporary festivals in Greece that are not found on the official list of the Church, such as the summer festival dedicated to Agios Charalampos. One encounters similar examples among the many local saints who are celebrated at times other than their liturgical feast days and are therefore afforded additional festivals.<sup>66</sup>

According to Herodotus, to being a Greek is characterised by a common language and religion.<sup>67</sup> This is also the case today. The ancient religion was not a holy text, but action: rituals, festivals, processions, athletic competitions, oracles, gifts and animal sacrifices. Here are many elements also found in the modern cult, where the importance of the everyday symbols of the popular cult recurs in the official religion as well. For both Aristotle and the modern Greeks, the festivals also provide pleasant recreation from the monotony of daily life.<sup>68</sup>

The festival therefore functions as a way to establish the connection between the individual and the supernatural on the one hand and between the individual and the greater society on the other. The festival for the individual is important within the family as well as a focal means of connection between the individual family and the greater society. This is of importance in many communities, since it is often the united individual family that is the connecting link to the greater society. In the European cultural tradition, this often pertains to the Greek cultural area, where it is the individual family that is the unit in outward relations towards the

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<sup>65</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 1 ff, 700.

<sup>66</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 4-7 and Appendix 1, cf. Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986; Hart 1992.

<sup>67</sup> Hdt. 8.144,2.

<sup>68</sup> Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 8.1160a19-30, cf. Hes. *Op.* See also Håland 2017: Ch. 4-6.



greater society and not the individual person.<sup>69</sup> The festivals are important in creating identity, reinforcing individuals' existing emotions and motivations, and making them identify with the rest of society. Accordingly, the relationship between an individual and society is renewed through the festival. There are, of course, other ways to reinforce this relationship, but festivals are crucial. As with the modern festival dedicated to the Panagia on Tinos, the ancient Panathenaia festival served to renew and strengthen the individual member's solidarity with the greater society.

In general, festivals should be considered to be rituals performed at periodic recurring critical periods or passages in the relationship between nature and human beings and that between people; that is, on the inter-human level. On the level of the macro-society, the rituals are also often performed in order to end crises which arise between the members of society. Moreover, ritual ceremonies are performed during passages in the human life cycle. Accordingly, the festival celebrates passages pertaining to everything that exists in nature, both for the human being, society, and the cosmos in general.

In modern Greece, dangerous magic is particularly active during the twelve days of Christmas, from 25 December to 6 January (Epiphany), which is a transitional period.<sup>70</sup> The same regards the ancient and modern transitional periods of the life cycle: puberty, marriage, birth and death; in short, the dangerous periods within the life cycle. The same regards nature, which is born, dies and is born again; since seasonal passages are transitional periods.<sup>71</sup> What, then, is a transitional period, and what can be done to secure it?

The crossing of frontiers and thresholds or going through an entrance is always hedged about with ritual, so the transition from one social stage to another is as well. In all human societies, the great majority of ceremonial occasions are "rites of transition" which mark the crossing of boundaries between one social category to another, *rites de passage*.<sup>72</sup>

A *rite of passage* or *passage rite* is the symbolic transition from one position or social stage to another, acting as a public announcement that someone is not what he/she was before the ritual. The rite itself dramatises

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<sup>69</sup> There are, however, several competing levels within the value system of the Greeks, because the individualism also belongs to the Greek context. See Ch. 5 *infra* for discussion.

<sup>70</sup> Kyriakidou-Nestores 1986; Sanders 1962: 183. Cf. Moss/Cappannari 1960: 99.

<sup>71</sup> Blum Bhun 1970: 141, cf. 11; Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976: 44; Harrison 1977: 20, 184. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

<sup>72</sup> Leach 1986: 35.

the passage, because the person acquires new obligations and privileges. A marriage or a baptism is an initiation, for example.<sup>73</sup>

Rites of passage are significant for linking religious beliefs to practical social life, and many rituals, in festivals as well as everyday life, follow the conceptual pattern of initiation. Initiates are ritually separated from everyday life into an excluded, separate realm. After this separation, they are ritually reincorporated into everyday life in an altered state. Symbolically, they are now reborn. Such rites of passage occur at the transitional phases in the cycle of the human lifespan, such as puberty, through puberty ceremonies or other initiations into adult status. Later these will be followed by weddings, funerals, and other initiation rites.<sup>74</sup>

Mediators possess both good and evil powers. One of their responsibilities is to use their good strengths in order to combat the evil forces. In modern society the priest accomplishes this by consecrating baptism, marriage and death while he supervises the passage rites which ensure that the customs of social life function without any hindrance.<sup>75</sup> A rite of passage occurs when people take a deliberate step towards a critical and irreversible act, such as having sexual intercourse, giving birth to a child, baptising a child, starting a new year, planting/sowing, getting married, or dying. At the passage from childhood to adult status the youths in pre-industrial societies go through the warrior rite and a rite which prepares the girls to give birth to children. These rituals symbolise death and birth.<sup>76</sup>

The passage rite conducted at the time of burial merely indicates a question about ideological dogma, because death is an entry into a new status or a possible future life. On the other hand, circumcision rites, the shaving of the head and other bodily mutilations which commonly mark the initiated person's first entry into adult society are not only metaphors for purification, but also for death. The child must die before the adult person can be born.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the winter must die before the spring can be born, just as Christ must die so that humans can be free from sin.

The passage rite can be divided into three phases: separation, beginning or threshold, and finally reincorporation.<sup>78</sup> The first phase, the separation, comprises a symbolic action which indicates an individual's or

<sup>73</sup> Keesing 1981: 517. Spradley/McCurdy 1980: 385.

<sup>74</sup> Keesing 1981: 334. Cf. Turner 1984b: 26; Wuthnow 1986: 131.

<sup>75</sup> Blum/Blum 1970: 24 ff., see 11, 141, 216, for the following, cf. Stewart 1991.

<sup>76</sup> Vidal-Naquet 1983: 187 f., 191. See also Dowden 1989.

<sup>77</sup> Leach 1986: 79.

<sup>78</sup> Turner/Turner 1984: 202 also for the following. Cf. Leach 1986: Ch. 17; Vidal-Naquet 1983: 188 ff.

group's separation from a previous fixed point in the social structure, from a definite set of cultural relations, or from both of these. An example of this is the boys' warrior initiation rituals. They are then separated from their mothers and the maternal sphere of influence and transferred into a place in which there are only men. In the third phase, the reincorporation, the boy has been transformed into a man and is brought back into everyday life, where he obtains an adult man's responsibilities and obligations.

The intermediary phase or "threshold" also includes three aspects: "communication with the sacred", "amusing new combination" and "*communitas*" or "(spirit of) community".<sup>79</sup> The first aspect comprises symbolic objects and actions which represent religious mysteries. They often refer to myths about how the world and society became as they are; that is, how they came into being. This aspect may be further divided into three parts which are in evidence in initiation rites and seasonal rituals: "what is shown", "what is done", and "what is said", also specified as "things said", "things enacted", and "things shown". What is shown or the "things revealed" are, for example, represented by the hiera, "the holy objects", which were shown to the *mystēs* during the initiation ceremony of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Within religions such as the Christian Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, images and things are more important than the sermon, which is the most important within Protestant Christianity. Accordingly, the sacred objects and their symbolic meanings play an important role, and the symbolic objects can also be seen as so-called key symbols.<sup>80</sup> It must be emphasised that much of what takes place in the Church in modern Greece is certainly not very foreign to what occurred in the ancient cult; one might only mention the key symbols. They naturally enough play a prevalent role in Greek society in which the vernacular language (Demotic) and the written liturgical language have been quite different until recently. Consequently, it has been the richness of the symbolic language of rituals and practices that has been central to the understanding of the liturgical structure, since for the rest it has only been shorter and frequently repeated phrases and prayers that have been important to people. Well into the 1970s, the priests still often had a very insufficient education as well.<sup>81</sup> What is done or the "things enacted" is for instance represented by the actions and dances of the Greek tragedies, and

<sup>79</sup> Turner/Turner 1984: 202-206, also for the following. See also Dubisch 1991, 1995: re the pilgrimage centre on Tinos.

<sup>80</sup> Turner 1984b: 13-23; Turner/Turner 1984: 215-218.

<sup>81</sup> Meraklēs 1986: Ch. 5. In the Roman Catholic Church the liturgy was made more intelligible to people in the 1960s when the liturgical language was modernised.

“things said” may be the mythical accounts passed down from generation to generation.

The “amusing new combination” consists of contests, plays or games which are performed during carnivals, where everyday society is turned upside down. “The (spirit of) community” or “*communitas*” (cf. the ancient guild or specialists/experts and the ploughmen’s guild or farmers’ union on Lesbos today) is a direct, spontaneous and egalitarian (cf. anti-structure) form of social relations. *Communitas* is opposed to hierarchical relations between the bearers of structural status roles. The communities (*communitas*) thus represent a bond which unites people above other formal social ties.<sup>82</sup>

Dangerous periods relate not only to humans, but also to divisions of time, the most critical periods being midnight and noon and the passages between day and night, morning and afternoon as well as the passage from one season to the next, winter and spring, summer and autumn, depending on how many seasons the society might divide the year into, two, three or four. In modern Greece, for instance, the shepherds’ two seasons, summer and winter, are divided by the festivals of Agios Geōrgios and Agios Dēmētrios, when the animals go to and from pasture.<sup>83</sup> We therefore see in both the modern and ancient festivals the connection with the farmer’s cyclical perception of time. This is because the economic basis of the society is dependent on birth and death in nature, which consequently determines human life.<sup>84</sup> The dangerous spirits and demons are present during the night, their period starting at sunset and ending at cockcrow. Midnight is the most dangerous period, and therefore the most sacred, whereas the critical transitional period during daytime is at noon. Therefore day and night are encompassed by the same rules as the life of a person. For the peasants, who are concerned with the supernatural and of healing, it is not the calendar month which is the most important division of time, but the month, which is based upon or structured around the phases of the moon, which specify that planting shall take place when the moon is full, and healing should, if possible, take place when it is waning.<sup>85</sup> The human beings live in the village, which represents the civilised world, while wild and dangerous nature is the dwelling place of spirits and demons. The supernatural beings are to be found in springs,

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<sup>82</sup> Turner/Turner 1984: 204-206.

<sup>83</sup> Blum/Blum 1970: 141 f. Cf. Hes. *Op.* 615-617 sowing; 567-570 spring; 576-577 harvest; 765 ff. organising the days.

<sup>84</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 6. For the cycle of nature, see also n.83 supra, and e.g., Hes. *Op.* 383-618, cf. Bourdieu 1963: 57, 1980: 340 f. Ariès 1978: 413 f.: presents mentality governed by the cycle of nature.

<sup>85</sup> Blum/Blum 1970: 141 f.; Pilitsis 1985: 145-166. Cf. Hes. *Op.* 765 ff.

brooks and rivers, the ocean, grottoes, caves, and on mountaintops. However, an interaction takes place when people work out in nature and the spirits come into the village. Crossroads and cemeteries are man-made places surrounded with special wisdom and emotions. The dangerous powers and demons like to appear in these places, at the borders of civilised human life. At the graveyard are ghosts or revenants, and crossroads have an ominous meaning. Accordingly, ancient people used to bring pacifying sacrifices to the three-headed moon Goddess Hekate at these places (Figure 29).<sup>86</sup>



Figure 29. Red-figure *lekythos* (high, narrow perfume/oil flask), showing a woman about to throw a dog in a pit which might illustrate a dog sacrifice to Hekate (see Deubner 1932: pl. 2, who in line with most scholars interprets the painting as illustrating a piglet being thrown into a chasm in the ground during the Skira. Original: National Archaeological Museum Athens, fifth century BCE).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *Ar. Lys.* 700; *Theophr. Char.* 16.7 f., 14; *Soph. Ant.* 1199 f.; *Ar. Ran.* 366, *Vesp.* 804; *Hes. Th.* 411 f., 418 f., 441 f.



In modern society the local world is officially divided into two spheres: the ideological supernaturals of Christianity reside in the city or village, in the church and in daylight, whereas the demons rule over the countryside, nature and night. In antiquity these regions were divided likewise between the Olympian and Chthonian deities, according to the prevailing ideology. In Homer, for instance, Mount Olympus represents sunlight and life, while Hades is equivalent to shadow and death.<sup>87</sup> In reality, however, there is an interaction between them.

It has been claimed that there is a difference between the ritual ceremonies performed at the periods of crisis in human life, the “rites de passage” at birth, marriage and death, and the annual festivals as they often are celebrated in modern societies.<sup>88</sup> The difference has great implications for the ways in which celebration is launched, since in the first of these rituals the power of the celebration has already been activated, but in the annual festivals one must often initiate one’s own energies, even when organising the ceremonies for mutual amusement and profit. This especially concerns festivals celebrated in societies which no longer depend unilaterally on agriculture for their economic base, such as present-day Greece, where a great part of the income is derived from work migration and a constantly growing tourist industry. It also concerns festivals celebrated at some point during the year when nothing especially important occurs in the agricultural cycle; to be precise, in a quiet period within the production and reproduction cycle of the resources upon which the ongoing condition and continuity characteristics of the society are built; when the festival literally must be activated with a “bang”.

One cannot say that this statement relates to the modern festivals I have described, since all of them are seasonal festivals symbolising important passages in the agricultural year in the same way that all the ancient festivals are. Among the modern festivals we encounter midwinter, late winter, spring, and early and late summer festivals. Indeed, most of these are late winter or spring festivals that symbolise the passage from winter to the fertile part of the agricultural year, when the food will ripen and be harvested. People celebrate festivals before the passing of especially important periods within the agricultural year, and the two most important points in the agrarian cycle are sowing and spring, for both the modern and ancient farmer. Although modern people do not depend

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<sup>87</sup> *Od.* 11.93 f. See also 11.12, cf. *Il.* 12.239 f.; Hes. *Th.* 118 f., 664 ff., 715 ff., 775-805. Cf. Bhun/Blum 1970: 226, see also 212, for the two spheres as they are expressed today. Cf. Stewart 1991, also for the following, see also Hastrup 1992c: 115.

<sup>88</sup> Abrahams 1984: 167, but cf. 169 for contradiction.

unilaterally on agriculture as the economic basis for their sustenance, human beings still make their living from the harvest of the soil, and nature can still be difficult to deal with. If the rains are not sufficient before the time of sowing in autumn, the farmer knows that it is unlikely that the crop will be a good one. Consequently, many festivals were dedicated to the grain mother, Demeter at this crucial time of the year in ancient Greece, just as people today celebrate the Panagia, the protectress of sowing, in Eleusis, for example, where she also has a church inside of the archaeological site where the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated in antiquity (Figure 30).



Figure 30. Women are busy organising their offerings of bread, wine, olive oil and cakes before the start of the liturgy on the eve of the festival dedicated to the Panagia *Mesosporitissa* (*mesos*: middle, half; *sporos, spora*: seed, sowing, “Panagia Half-Way-Through-the-Sowing”); that is, the “Presentation of the Panagia in the Temple”, Eleusis, 20 November 2011.

If the sprouting of the grain has not reached a certain stage by the time of the first frost in early January, the farmer may lose the entire crop. Thus follows the importance of the Babo festival and the carnivals, like the Hala festival in antiquity. The “White Week” after Easter is also crucial since the whole crop may be lost if it starts to hail, which is why one encounters all the rituals after Easter and around the first of May. This is not only due to the “Resurrection” and the subsequent week known as the “White Week” after Easter; that is, after the “Resurrection” on Easter Sunday. This week is indeed “white”, but hail is also white, and in June the grain is about to be reaped.<sup>89</sup> Even if the agricultural population who perform the rituals today have modern technology and new ways to improve the agricultural productivity of their fields (machinery and chemical fertilisers), these improvements have not given them control over the vicissitudes of nature. The survival of the community still depends on natural events beyond the farmer’s control. Whether the reason is that the ritual is a compensation for technology or that the people do not really trust the technology, the “homemade” sympathetic magic so important to the fertility cult is still performed. In this way, they attempt to influence fertility directly. Accordingly, the rituals of the festivals represent a worldview belonging to a traditional agricultural society. This is not contradicted by the fact that the summer festivals of August are celebrated in a month of holidays and leisure. The ancients did the same, since the end of July and the first part of August, which followed the harvest and the threshing of the grain, was a period of leisure as well.<sup>90</sup> We are dealing with cyclical festivals in which the belief of transformation is immanent as long as both humans and the natural world of which they are a part change,<sup>91</sup> therefore; the aforementioned rigid division between annual festivals and passage rites needs to be nuanced. The reason for this is that all of the festivals I have discussed essentially celebrate or praise the earth’s capacities to grow.

The festivals are celebrated to maintain the cycle of fertility, by acknowledging the respective places of humankind and the powers of nature. The festival accomplishes this by seizing the process and reinforcing it based on the logic of sympathetic magic. In that way the community honours nature while giving humanity its place in the larger scheme of things. Fertility, in such a world, is understood as the capacities of nature enhanced by humans, acting together in serious play. Therefore the most powerful holiday symbols are expressed in a language that

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<sup>89</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4-6.

<sup>90</sup> Hes. *Op.* 607 f.

<sup>91</sup> See Håland 2005, 2017, cf. Kyriakidou-Nestorou 1986; Hart 1992: 90 ff., 225 ff.

reflects the processes of life, marriage, death and regeneration, ripening, harvesting, and lying fallow.

In the festivals we often find multiple meanings which appears in symbols, costumes and masks in an extravagance of size and colour. A playful distortion of nature, the world, or society as well as overeating and a great consumption of alcohol are characteristic, especially for the carnival festivals.<sup>92</sup> These motifs underscore the wish for growth and are therefore an example of sympathetic magic. This is clearly expressed by the symbols carried in procession through the streets of the town during the carnival season.

At this level, the festival is a ceremony performed between—and involving—people and the divine to renew their mutual contract. In all societies it is essential for life to maintain the food supply. To secure the crop in the peasant society, the supernatural forces which govern weather and wind, the deities, must, with the help of sacrifices, be influenced to be kindly disposed. To this end, a festival is held in their honour.<sup>93</sup>

Both the modern and ancient Greeks live in the same geographical area and under the same climatic conditions. Now as then, Greek society is mainly agricultural, and the mentality of the farmers is still reflected in the festival cycle. The modern farmer performs the same ceremonies at the same time of year as his ancient equivalent: before the sowing he prays to ensure a good crop, and at the harvest he makes a thanksgiving offering by celebrating a festival. In that way the ancient farmer secured his future relations with the divinities, as the modern farmer does with the saints and other deceased.

The following account gives a good explanation of what a festival might also be, and why and how it takes place: in a bloody and prolonged dispute between two families, the village's representatives try to put matters right. A bull is slaughtered in front of the entire village. Next, people consume a traditional dish collectively; that is, as a communal meal. Another way to end a vendetta might be to organise a wedding in which bride and groom symbolise the reconciliation between the two parties involved.<sup>94</sup>

But the community does not need to wait for something or someone to challenge its rules. The same moral renewal ceremony might be performed by treating people as if they had transgressed the moral order. But by finding scapegoats or carrying out a witch hunt, imagined enemies or

<sup>92</sup> See also Abrahams 1984: 163 ff., cf. Loukatos 1967-68: 177 ff.

<sup>93</sup> See, e.g., Harrison 1977: 138 ff., 275-294, cf. Wolf 1966: 97 ff.; Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986; Hart 1992.

<sup>94</sup> Bourdieu 1966: 236 f., cf. Hastrup/Ovesen 1985: 169-172. See also Ch. 5 *infra*.

deviants may be created and ritually punished for violations of the law that they never committed.<sup>95</sup> In this way the community can be kept in check.

A festival is therefore a ceremony performed between people in order to renew the rules of society or the social contract in potential periods of crisis. In this way the social order is maintained by purifying the community of disorder, and integrity is restored. The special function of the ceremony is to sanction the social units and the relationship between them.

Festivals are generally connected with eagerly-anticipated participatory cultural events. The critical transitional periods in the human experience are, as mentioned, marked by birth, puberty, marriage and death. As regards work, the planting, sowing and harvesting or gathering of crops are celebrated. The annual seasons and the deceased mediators, or intermediaries between humans and deities, are, for instance, marked by the Christmas celebrations and processions during saints' festivals. Improved social status might be obtained by celebrating *Potlatch* festivals. A potlatch is a feast celebrated with gift-giving and the destruction of articles of value, which demonstrates wealth and status. In this way people can move upwards or downwards within the social hierarchy. Thanksgiving festivals are generally also common within a society. Some of these events are linked to the life cycle of a person. Other events are celebrated within the family, the neighbourhood, village or a greater community, such as an ancient polis, the modern nation-state, or the Orthodox Church. The different rituals, ceremonies or festivals are connected with special kinds of finery, decoration, music, dance, food and drink, types of performance or presentations, and physical and cultural surroundings. Sometimes masks are included, and the celebrations are usually carried out in connection with a specific altar, saint shrine or sanctuary.<sup>96</sup>

The religious ceremony is an official and formal performance of a ritual. Sometimes the participants only comprise the members of an individual family. Through the rituals people celebrate both themselves and the supernatural powers that are the source and origin of all phenomena.<sup>97</sup>

It has been argued that the social organisation of a meal is also a ritual ceremony.<sup>98</sup> The united family is equivalent to any society which comes together periodically in order to confirm group affiliation, and the organising of the meal or daily dining customs have their ritual aspects in

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<sup>95</sup> Wuthnow 1986: 89.

<sup>96</sup> Turner 1984b: 12.

<sup>97</sup> Turner/Turner 1984: 201, cf. Turner 1984b: 16.

<sup>98</sup> Wuthnow 1986: 112.



memorised and restricted codes, such as the organisation of a speech. The communal meal and particular foods have a special function in all celebrations. Today one encounters the Anastenarides' communal meal of the sacrificial lamb, and in Agia Paraskeuē people boil *kesketsi*, while the festival terminates with a vast communal meal, the *Charlamelia*. The festival participants "offer" the food to themselves and the saints by providing for the banquets. The meal is important both in the modern and ancient festivals, and thus the core of the festival is a communal meal which the community members offer to themselves and the deities. Prior to the feast, a fixed period is often marked with sexual abstinence and fasting. Concerning the organisation of the festival, the community may establish a special surplus stock in order to procure the provisions for it. In modern society the villagers most often take charge of the economic organisation of the festival for the local patron saint. The official ideology, represented by the Orthodox Church, often opposes these popular festivals or has an ambivalent relationship to them. This is because many within the Church, such as the local priest in Agia Elenē, think they represent "pagan traditions", despite the fact that they are officially accepted."

In the organising of ancient festivals, the wealthy gained prestige by giving rich gifts; that is, by fulfilling various *leitourgiai* (liturgies) or "services for the people", for example as a *chorēgos* ("sponsor", the leader of a dramatic chorus), the person appointed to train and equip one of the choruses in the Dionysos festivals' tragedies. To be appointed a *chorēgos* was considered a burden for those appointed to this duty, but at the same time it was a source of political and social credit, as when for the purpose of propaganda the orator Demosthenes directs his audience's attention towards his patriotism in serving as *chorēgos* for the boys' dithyrambic chorus around 351/350 BCE, even ordering golden crowns for the entire chorus while he himself wore a gold-embroidered robe.<sup>100</sup> This organising is a parallel to the arranging of contemporary festivals, such as regards the sacrificial bull in Agia Paraskeuē, which is dedicated by a wealthy emigrant, the money collected during today's festivals in Koimēsē, Agia Elenē and Agia Paraskeuē, and the auctions in Olympos and Agia Paraskeuē. The same regards the dishes of food offered at the graves during the ritual on "White Tuesday" in Olympos, the food collected as well as the surplus given "to the bags" in Agia Elenē and Melikē; that is,

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<sup>99</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 4. Cf. Di Tota 1981b: 318 ff. for the circumstances in southern Italy, where many local priests participate in the organising of the festivals, and in so doing earn money unlawfully. The communists also participate. Consequently, the trading mentality wins against the Catholic ideology.

<sup>100</sup> Dem. 21.16 ff.

what is collected during “the circuit of the houses” (Figure 31) carried out by the “Thracians” or *Kōsūlides*, in a context in which it carries prestige to give as much as possible. Therefore people pay close attention to what different people give, and it is greatly lamented if any household fails to put offerings into the bags of the three women who bring up the rear of the procession of the *Anastenarides* in *Agia Elenē*. In former times it was always a poor villager who was chosen to be the *Kalogeros*, thus providing him with food.



Figure 31. The touring of the houses of the village during the second and third days of the *Anastenaria* festival, *Agia Elenē*, 22-23 May 1992.

Therefore the touring of the houses functioned as a kind of social security in which they collected grain, eggs and money. The various parts of the church buildings and furnishings very often consist of gifts such as doors and benches, and the names of the donors, often emigrants, are always written on nameplates affixed to the dedications. In this way people are remembered.

So the communication between humans and deities has two aspects; a material and an immaterial one. The immaterial aspect is the prayer, and a festival held in honour of the supernatural might generally be seen as a rite accompanying a prayer for collaboration or help. I will nevertheless argue that it is the material part of the festival, the sacrifice or offering, which is

the most important aspect. In the Mediterranean region this is usually labelled as a votive offering.<sup>101</sup> The central act in the ancient festivals is the blood sacrifice or a bloodless offering, such as corn cakes. Sacrifices and offerings are also common in the modern festivals.



Figure 32. Copy of the Great Eleusinian votive relief, fifth century BCE, representing the Eleusinian deities blessing and offering ears of wheat to Triptolemos in order for him to bestow it in turn on humankind. Archaeological Museum of Eleusis (Original: National Archaeological Museum Athens).

The Ancient Greek terminology for the festival consists of *panēgyris* (public festival) and *panēgyrisō* (to hold or be present at a festival). In Modern Greek, *panēgyri* signifies a festival on the day of the patron saint,

<sup>101</sup> See van Straten 1981: 65-104 (151) and 1995. Moreover, see Leach 1986: Ch. 18, for sacrifice.

but it also signifies something more; namely, a fair. The fair was important in antiquity as well, typically the main attraction. In ancient Athens, a fair took place on the first day of the month, which was the holiest.<sup>102</sup> Scholarship has also drawn attention to how the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (HHD) describes the initiates' wish for purchasing or acquiring an afterlife through the Eleusinian Mysteries. A relevant illustration might be an Eleusinian classical relief dedicated by a wealthy mystēs which depicts Demeter and Korē with Triptolemos standing between them when he receives his mission (Figure 32).<sup>103</sup> The fair is also important in relation to the modern festivals, where one encounters numerous booths, both permanent and movable.<sup>104</sup> Concerning the function of the transaction in the context of religion, one may mention the original Greek significance of the Latin term *basilica* (that is, A.G. *basilikē stoa*, a hall divided into aisles by columns); literally a "royal stoa", serving as the tribunal chamber of a king. Later, it came to signify a Roman public building where courts were held or town halls usually adjacent to the main *forum*, or marketplace. We are in other words dealing with a commercial building. In contemporary Greek Orthodox and Catholic villages the marketplace is also commonly located next to the church. The commercial connection is also indicated in the cleansing of the temple narrative, which tells of Jesus expelling the merchants and money changers from the temple.<sup>105</sup> Here we see how a new ideology takes issue with the usual activity taking place in a basilica. But through the religious communication in this as well as in other examples we also see that the economy is religious, and that the offering is the means of communication. This is clearly illustrated by the rituals which commonly take place in the Church of the Annunciation on Tinos, where, for instance, a female pilgrim arrives bringing oil, bread, flowers and 5,000 drachmae (ca. 35 Euros); her name is written into the liturgy book for the performance of a healing liturgy at 7 am the next morning (Figure 33). The same is experienced in the rituals taking place at the

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Ar. *Eq.* 43 f., *Vesp.* 169-172; Plut. *Mor.* 828a2; Mikalson 1975: 14; Nilsson 1961: 100. One may also mention the "*Panegyrico*" (profuse speech of praise) of the outdoor Mass, which is performed during the contemporary saint's feast in southern Italy.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. HHD. 473-479; Apollod. 1.5,2; Callim. *Hymn.* 6.19-21. See also Rehm 1994 on HHD. 401-403.

<sup>104</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4, cf. Hart 1992: 228.

<sup>105</sup> Matt. 21:12-14, cf. Wolf 1966: 100, church and marketplace vs. Brown 1982: re the late antique basilica. See also Sahlin 1987: 89 for an interesting comment re the system in Fiji, which in Europe has been split into religion and business.

cemetery, which also indicates the important function of the gift exchange in communication with the supernatural.



Figure 33. A pilgrim has just arrived at the Church of the Annunciation on Tinos, bringing oil, bread, flowers and money, and her name is written into the liturgy book for the performance of a healing liturgy.

Concerning the relationship between humans and the stronger powers, the community gives a communal offering in order to obtain something in return. This might be a common sin from which people need to be cleansed. It is therefore an enduring custom in the spring to lead a scapegoat incorporating everybody's sins outside of the town (that is, culture), where it is sacrificed to nature. The sins are from the year which must now die in order for spring or life to begin again.<sup>106</sup> The purifying procession is therefore an important element in the festivals as well, which are all passage rites.

A rite can be interpreted on several levels. In connection with Greek Orthodox Easter season celebrations, the narrative of Jesus, who by his death on the cross outside the town absorbed into himself all of the sins of humankind, is crucial. He can also be seen as a scapegoat, thus cleansing or purifying the town from pollution or *miasma*.

<sup>106</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 733 ff.; Parke 1986: 146 f.; Parker 1985: 24-26, 258-260; Dionisopoulos-Mass 1976: 51.



As mentioned above, by means of prayers and sacrifices the human being acquires a share in the benefits of nature administered by the deities. These are gifts which are implemented by mediators. In the *clientela* system found in the Mediterranean world, people employ strategies based upon gifts and favours in order to obtain services or gifts in return. The gift makes the recipient morally obliged to reciprocate: receiving evokes obligations for return giving, a favour for a gift. This principle lies behind both the relationships between people and those between them and the saints. The religion therefore reflects a culture in which reciprocity or return gifts and festivals are important factors. It is crucial to understand these key cultural conceptions in order to comprehend the worldview in the region.<sup>107</sup> The logic behind the sacrifice demonstrates how a religious ritual serves to express a connection between the human and divine worlds. By making an offering or giving a gift to the deities, they are, due to the idea of reciprocity, obliged to give the people benefits in return, according to the anthropologist Edmund Leach.<sup>108</sup> Leach provides an interesting interpretation of the Judeo-Christian sacrifice, in which he indicates that “the principle of reciprocity pervades all social behaviour”.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, from an ideological perspective, God gave Jesus to humankind and Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac. In Christianity the sacrifice only emerges as a symbolic substitution “as a reference to mythology”, according to which the “God-man”, Christ, was killed by evil people. But with the help of a complicated transformation, this has become a sacrifice for posterity because it was wanted by God. The sacrifice is now an incessant channel through which the grace of God flows to the believers. Seen ideologically, the donor of the sacrifice is Christ himself, and the priest who offers bread and wine to the believers as the body and blood of Christ repeats the sacrifice by order of the divine donor. The Christian Mass is a transformation of the Jewish exodus from Egypt, and the crucified Christ is the Easter Lamb. The bread and the wine are associated with the sacrificial meat, not only metaphorically, but also metonymically.<sup>110</sup>

In modern Greece, many people, especially men, only go to church at the most important festivals, and for many Easter is the most important of

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<sup>107</sup> Finrud 1981a: 111.

<sup>108</sup> Leach 1986: Ch. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Leach 1986: 6.

<sup>110</sup> Leach 1986: 92 f., cf. 14-16 and the *Son of man* (my emphasis). In the Greek Orthodox Church people still consume the body of Christ through the bread and wine, as opposed to the Catholic Church, in which people only receive the body, Economides 1986: 13.

these. Eucharist is the central ceremony and it is understood as the sacrifice of Christ's blood. This sacrifice traverses the barrier between God and humankind which was created by the Sin of the ancestor, Adam. At Christ's death his blood became a symbol of the connection between God and humanity, traversing the barrier between them, and every Easter when the priest proclaims that "Christ is Risen" (resurrected), people know that his redemptive blood saves them from being handed over to the Devil.<sup>111</sup>

One is reminded of a people's ability to transform a new ideology so that it becomes adjusted to their deeper rules, or mentality, and the various levels of meaning within their worldview. It has been argued that the Greeks took over Jewish sacrificial customs, but this is not necessarily entirely correct.<sup>112</sup> The reason for this is that their pre-existing customs with regard to the mentioned logic behind the sacrifice are the same as they were in Homeric times. The animal or object that is sacrificed can be seen as a symbol for the donor of the sacrifice. When a mediator, the priest, performs the sacrifice, it takes place in a liminal zone (by the altar) which is a taboo area for the common people, but with this act the donor of the sacrifice provides a bridge between the world of the deities and the human world, across which strength flows from the deities to the self-same donor. During initiation the person is divided into two, a pure and an impure part, and the latter part is left behind while the pure becomes the new status. During sacrifices, the sacrificial animal plays the part of the initiated. Likewise, the donor of the sacrifice is purified.<sup>113</sup>

Intercessors or mediators can be good or evil. Among the good are heroes, heroines, saints, soothsayers, prophets, priestesses and priests. These are living or dead ideals and models for humankind, and accordingly act as mediators in the communication between deities and humans. The cult of deceased mediators is central in relation to the modern festivals, because broadly speaking, most of them can be classified into the category of saints' festivals. Since most of the ancient festivals are dedicated to deities who per definition are immortal, the death cult emerges in other ways, mainly through the passage rite proper. The death cult, however, is often clearly reflected in the worship of dead heroes or heroines who through the festival receive offerings in one way or another, such as during the Panathenaia.

<sup>111</sup> Campbell 1966: 152 f., 158 f., cf. Megaw 1992.

<sup>112</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 3 for discussion of Georgoudi 1979: 271-307 vs. Moss/Cappannari 1976: 5 f. See also Aikaterinides 1979 and Papamanoli-Guest 1991. See also Ch. 3 *infra* for an elaboration of the following argument.

<sup>113</sup> Leach 1986: 84.

The festival symbolises the connection between this world and the supernatural. It is a votive gift, because it represents an offering and consequently functions as a gift exchange between the two parties. I will consider the festival as a ceremony or ritual, an offering or a gift which the community—and the individual person—gives her and himself and the deities in order to renew the contract between them. Through ceremonies and festivals the social structure is continually renewed. This is partly accomplished by presenting the “objective” truths on the conscious level and partly through rituals, carnivals, processions, public or communal meals, and music in order to influence the emotions and motivations of the participants.

That the festival matters to everybody is demonstrated by the enormous crowds of pilgrims who arrive on Tinos today, among whom are a great number of youths and young couples who “crawl up to the Panagia”, and everyone kisses the icon piously before dedicating their votive gift and fetching holy earth and water. The festival is also an occasion to meet people, and the emigrants and the students also return home to attend the most important festival of the village, just as many likely “came home”, for instance, to the Panathenaia in ancient Athens.

The section dealing with festivals and communication can be summarised by emphasising that in modern society magic is employed by people who are well-educated and financially affluent as well as by people who are marginal within society. The point is that the magic works, and an important magical means of communication is in fact the festival and all the factors of which it consists.

## Summary and Perspectives

Festivals were as important in ancient Greece as they are today, and now as in antiquity, Greek society is mainly agricultural. Those ideological festivals which are perhaps not usually considered to be agricultural are very often connected with rites of passage marking important phases in individual women's lives or the life cycle of a deceased mediator. Moreover they have been adapted or in some other way added to the meanings associated with the cycle of the agricultural year. This is apparent throughout the festivals as regards the season in which they are celebrated, the festival's divine addressee, and the symbols and participants involved. The modern festivals therefore constitute suitable material with which to compare the ancient ones, and so try to shed new light on the ancient society.

Employing such an approach to the material does not imply that the purpose of this research is to demonstrate a clear connection or direct relationship between any specific modern and ancient festivals. They are to be seen as parallels from similar societies in the same geographical and climatic area. No modern festival is a direct copy of any particular ancient festival, but several features make it possible to compare them, such as the point at which they are celebrated within the agricultural year. My aim is to demonstrate that there is a shared repertoire; that is to say, there are similarities in rituals, symbols, values, and so on. We encounter a very similar sphere of imagination, conceptions, and underlying ideas between the various societies found within the same geographical region, where the agricultural cycle is the same today as it was in the past. Therefore all of the festivals follow the agricultural calendar, and they comprise in themselves two elements that are noticeable in that respect: the unity of the place and the theme; and in this context the communicative aspect of the festivals is crucial.

The festival is first and foremost essentially a means of communication, an offering or a gift which is generally dedicated to an ancient hero or heroine, alone or together with a Goddess or God, often a vegetation deity, or, in the case of the modern festivals, to a saint. All of these mediators, ancient and modern alike, are in practice the deceased guardians of the society. The fertility cult, death cult, and healing run like a thread through all of the festivals, following from the cyclical thinking we encounter in Greek society both today and in antiquity, which is characteristic of a peasant society and expressed in various ways.

The fertility cult demonstrates how fertility is closely connected to the deceased and the powers in the subterranean world where life is considered to begin, according to the cyclical symbolism which pervades Greek culture and is likewise indicated in the festival cycle. The deceased mediator receives an offering in the form of the festival itself, or in a more concrete sense through a bull or lamb sacrifice, consumed afterwards as a communal meal by the festival participants, which means that the communication or gift exchange is presented on several levels. The dead receive the offering in order to provide for the fertility of the society through communication with stronger powers, Mother Earth first and foremost. Her importance parallels that of the woman, who is the central performer of the three cults, which are fundamental to the festivals precisely because they are connected to the female sphere. One sees this significance in the fact that the Greeks not only conceive of the Earth as a woman's body and the agricultural year as a woman's life, but see the Earth as genitalia, the female sex organs. However, the Earth Mother



represents only one of the two facets of nature that have to be invoked to ensure the harvest. Accordingly, rain magic dedicated to a heavenly God in some form or other is a general theme in the festivals, particularly around the most important periods of the agricultural year: sowing (autumn) and sprouting (spring). From this fact proceeds the significance of the sacred marriage or *hieros gamos*, because opposites must be united.

The fertility cult is connected to characteristic passages within the life cycle of both humans and nature, which reflect each other, since the festivals are celebrated at important passages of the agricultural cycle, and the agricultural year itself is represented in terms of the life of a Mother Goddess.<sup>114</sup> The human being is a part of nature, and the transitional rituals of both humans and nature, among others, are considered rites of passage, because all the religious festivals are connected with both an important passage in the cycle of nature and a passage in the life cycle of a divine person. Furthermore, in time, the festivals accrue another, political layer of meaning, such as the political manifestations of the Panathenaia festival or the start of the revolt against the Turks during the Annunciation festival on 25 March 1821, as well as the sinking of the Greek destroyer, *Ellis* by the Italians on 15 August 1940. This means that Greek festivals are first and foremost a celebration or praising of the earth's ability to grow, associated with important phases in the life of divine persons. Today, the Panagia is especially important, while in ancient Greece its importance was particularly manifested through the *Homeric Hymn* dedicated to the Com Mother, *Demeter*.

Healing or the purification aspect is essential to ensuring fertility through apotropaic rituals and symbols. Since the festivals take place at important transitional periods within the agricultural year, they are both passage rites and offerings for the purpose of securing these passages. This is explicitly demonstrated by the processions that purify and draw up the territorial boundaries of the city. The deceased mediator's presence in the procession in the form of an icon or ancient statue of a Goddess or God also has its place in securing the undertaking, at the same time as the actual divinity is honoured by the procession itself. Specific phenomena in the festivals, such as descending into and ascending from a cave, also express a transitional phase and the relationship between death and birth, between two stages or statuses. It relates to the human level, as when the transition from child to adult status takes place. Likewise, it concerns the cyclical phase within the agricultural year in connection with sowing and

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. Håland 2006a.



harvest and the passage between the “female” and “male” periods.<sup>115</sup> Therefore we see again the various phases of human life and nature in the ritual passages of the agricultural year. This traditional association between the human being and the rest of nature is especially demonstrated in the fertility cult, through both the importance of the human body itself and the cults of various natural phenomena. Caves or water, for instance, are connected with the human body in various ways, and linked to the union of the female and male aspects, implicitly or explicitly.

The cyclical perception of time is paramount in relation to the festivals of the agricultural year. After harvest and the threshing of the grain, the modern festival dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia marks a turning point toward autumn at the end of the dog days, roughly by the end of August, when the period transitioning towards the “productive part” of the agricultural year is about to begin.



Figure 34. “The Olive Tree Pediment,” ca. 550 BCE. Athena Polias in her temple. The old Akropolis Museum, Athens (cat. no. 52).

<sup>115</sup> Bourdieu 1980, 1998.

The ancient Panathenaia festival dedicated to the birthday of the olive Goddess, Athena (Figure 34) was also celebrated in August; that is, by the end of the first month of the official Athenian year, while the modern official ecclesiastical year starts again at the beginning of September, when the birth of the Panagia is also celebrated. The other festivals deal with other crucial passages, such as the sowing, when the Presentation of the Panagia in the temple, also called her “Entry [into the Temple]”, is celebrated, and which marks the beginning of the winter period, as the Thesmophoria did in ancient Greece. Now the “female”, wet and fertile period in the agricultural year’s cycle replaces the “male” period, because the woman represents the productive part of the human couple in the Mediterranean region. The midwinter festivals are celebrated around the solstice and the first sprouting of the grains. The end—or death—of winter and the birth of spring is celebrated around the spring equinox. Following are the celebrations of the first fruits, summer solstice, and so on, and it is apparent that the official ideological rituals are adapted to the agricultural calendar.

The agricultural cycle, and thereby the agricultural calendars, are similar today to those of antiquity because the events of the agricultural year take place at the same time, with the period of sowing and spring being of particular importance. People sow and reap the same products at the same time and have festivals with the same aim, although the religious persons to whom the festivals are dedicated have changed names as a result of ideological changes. The actual deities are however of the same sex as earlier.

In every single society the production of meaning takes place, consciously or unconsciously, through the continuous augmentation of additional new meanings, mentalities, ideologies, or values. On the basis of the modern and ancient festivals, one can therefore establish several layers or levels, which may testify to the endurance of symbols linked to the ancient fertility cult, death cult, and healing. These layers or levels do not stand in any hierarchical relationship to one another, but are really different aspects of the same matter, or different sides of the same thing. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conduct a comparative examination of these symbols in order to see whether they can represent enduring concepts, related to fundamental rules or mentality and consequently helping us infer more about the worldview of antiquity. For both ancient and modern Greeks, the symbols, such as the phallus, do not have an unequivocal meaning. In connection with magic, this also relates to the (evil) eye. The ritual symbols have several meanings, and this is how and why they work.

When studying the relationship between peoples' ideologies and mentalities, the transitional periods—or crises—of the life cycle as experienced both in the human life cycle and that of nature constitute a fruitful area of analysis. The three cults encountered in the festivals reflect these transitional periods, and they are central to the relationship between the official and popular cults, or competing values both in antiquity and today.

## CHAPTER THREE

### POPULAR CULT AND OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY

The official male view on the relationship between men and women, according to which women are associated with the negative parts of various symbolic oppositions, such as their connection with magic as opposed to the “male” religion, reappears in the official view on normative or doctrinal religion contra popular religion, both in antiquity and today. Bourdieu has presented this dichotomy from an ideological, male perspective through the annual calendar/“cyclical model” (Figure 71), at which he has arrived through his studies of the Kabyle society of North Africa, a society which seems very similar to the Greek. In Bourdieu’s description, the lower, female part of the model is virtually the abdomen of the male upper world. Down here the laws of nature are turned upside down, and aspects connected with women and monsters rule: this is the “underworld”, basically a kind of chthonic opposite to an Olympian “upper world”. One encounters the same aspects in ancient and modern Greek parallels, such as those described by Froma Zeitlin, John K. Campbell, Juliet du Boulay and Noras Skouterē-Didaskalou, respectively, which have been given a general presentation elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the relationship between ideology and mentality, one might also look into power relations other than those which exist between men and women. The reason is that the power relations between the sexes in many ways also reflect the situation of official religion versus popular religion, and the relationship of the great versus little society. Seen from an alternative or chthonic perspective, one gains a different view of the popular cult. One sees that, although Greek belief and practice are experienced differently, they still form complementary parts of the same cosmological entirety, as Charles Stewart has pointed out from the modern

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<sup>1</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7. Cf. Skouterē-Didaskalou 1988; du Boulay 1974, 2009; Campbell 1964, 1966; Zeitlin 1984 and Bourdieu 1980, 1998. See also O’Brien 2006 for the same aspects in another geographical context.

context, and which from a gender perspective parallels both Jill Dubisch' and Lila Abu-Lughod's studies from Greece and North Africa, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

By applying the same perspective to the ancient context, one might gain a better understanding of how, for example, the male authors, such as Plato and Plutarch or other spokesmen of the official male elite, such as Perikles, can condemn various religious customs as belonging to women, common people, and barbarians in one context, and support the same rituals themselves in another. Much of what one encounters in the popular cult paradoxically enough seems to be important in the official religion as well, and one sees that the various spheres overlap one another; they coexist and compete with one another.

In the next two chapters I will examine the relationship between these spheres as expressed in the relationship between popular cults and official ideologies, both today and in antiquity, through a comparative analysis on the basis of the content of the festivals described in Chapter 1. Through the analysis, other festivals within the modern and ancient festival calendars will be touched on as well where relevant. The actual festivals are found in the two tables presented in the Appendix.

## Dionysian Ceremonies and Paradoxes in Greek Culture

The Greek scholar N. N. Dracoulidès has classified the ancient Dionysian ceremonies into those reserved for women, such as the maenads who raved (*mainas/mainomai*, raving/rave) in honour of Dionysos on the mountain Kithairōn and the Thesmophoria and Haloa festivals, versus those in which both sexes participated on equal terms.<sup>3</sup> Based on this classification, the Babo Day should then belong to the first category, while the ceremony of the Anastenarides belongs to the second category. It is evident that many so-called Dionysian elements are also found in the contemporary cult. The Babo festival and the two rituals performed by the Anastenarides present Dionysian components to a greater or lesser degree, as does the ritual dedicated to Agios Charalampos. It is illustrated through many factors; for instance, the rhythmic dance accompanied by musical instruments such as flutes and drums, the solemn procession, animal sacrifice, fire dance, libations of wine, nocturnal ceremony, inarticulate shouts, the worship of sexual organs, obscenities, sensuality, and so on.

Due to the aforementioned classification, the Anastenaria festival includes a ritual which in many ways is in opposition to the official

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<sup>2</sup> Abu-Lughod 1988, 1993a; Dubisch 1995; Stewart 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Dracoulidès 1962: 117 f.



Orthodox religion, and has at times been persecuted by the official ideology. Thus it parallels the circumstances found in the ancient world, where, for instance, the Adonis cult in many ways stood in opposition to the official cult, in the same way as the popular form of the Dionysos cult, which was often regarded as an “Eastern cult” by the spokesmen of the official male elite, who maintained that it appealed to women and barbarians.

Traditionally, the Adonis festival has generally been referred to as an oriental festival, because scholars have been influenced by a small number of ancient authors’ interpretations, Plutarch and Plato, for example, who nevertheless were spokesmen for the official polis’ ideology.<sup>4</sup> It is precisely in this festival that we encounter many important elements within Greek culture, both in Homer and later in antiquity. Similar elements are likewise an important part of the modern Easter celebrations in connection with the death cult, the fertility cult, and healing. Here, too belongs the ideologists’ opinion of the gender relations’ “ideal” relationships, but also their real relationships in the cults, and by extension the society. Therefore these rituals should be compared.

The same regards the Dionysos cult. The reason for this is that according to the sources written by men, the original and popular version of the Dionysos cult appealed to women. However, the official ideology’s view of elements of the cult as belonging to women and barbaric “femaleness” stands in sharp contrast to the “male” and “temperate” nature of official Greek society. The result has been that the cult in general has not been assigned as much importance in the literary sources as vase paintings seem to indicate that it had. This is the case even though the tragedies and comedies were Dionysian cult texts, used in the polis’ official version of the cult; to be precise, the male ideology’s tentatively and unfulfilled “conquest of the Dionysian cult”.<sup>5</sup> In the following we shall, *inter alia*, see what paradoxes this never-fulfilled conquest could bring about.

Certain elements in the ancient Dionysian rituals that characterised the festivals, such as the symbolism behind the *thyrsos* wand (cf. Figure 36), the bull, the delirium, ecstasy, orgies, and madness, the obvious cult of the phallus and more concealed cult of the vulva, the sacred wedding, and so on, also have parallels with the Thracian Orpheus festivals dedicated to the Phrygian Kybele. Therefore Dionysos was the deity who, according to the

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<sup>4</sup> Pl. *Phdr.* 276b; Plut. *Mor.* 756c.

<sup>5</sup> See Ch. 2 *supra* re other festivals which stood outside of the state’s official calendar and supervision, and were therefore organised informally. Cf. Winkler 1990; Keuls 1984.

official ideology, initially did not belong to the Olympian unit; he was the stranger. He favoured woman and her fertility, and inspired a lack of restraint and sensuality, as well as intoxication and fury; or ecstasy and maenadism, as illustrated in Euripides' tragedy, *Bakchai*.

During the modern carnival festivals, one often encounters direct copulatory simulation, such as during the Kalogeros festival when the *damalakia*, the young men or king's "oxen", fall to the ground and into the mud on their knees, thus having symbolic ritual sexual intercourse with the earth. A more explicit variant is the custom that takes place on Clean Monday, when a hole is opened out in the field and semen ejected into it. In other places the sexual intercourse, simulated by gypsies, has generally taken place in haycocks.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively the gypsy women might be visibly pregnant, and consequently remind one of the figurines from the Stone Age, the bellies of which are literally the entire body. Nowadays people plough and beat the ground, as they did in ancient rituals when the earth needed to be reawakened. Alternatively, the genitalia of the mock wedding's bride and groom are rolled in the mud, which, of course, is also a fertility symbol.<sup>7</sup> The modern custom known as the "Arabs" is a variant of the Kalogeros ritual, and, like the earlier ritual involving the gypsies in the haycocks, among other examples, testifies to the fact that, like the ancient satyrs or other figures who were "wild" representatives for the uncivilised, impure, and chaotic or who in one way or another do not belong to the "respectable" or "good society", it is in fact this uncultured or uncivilised element which possesses fertility, even today. This is found not only in Greece, but also in various African and South American contexts, for example.<sup>8</sup> Hence there follows the need to also tame these "wild sources of fertility", a parallel to the relationship between the tamed Demeter and her opposite, the untamed Gaia. Since one could never be sure whether the taming was achieved, it was safest not only to sacrifice the testicles of a ram (associated with Zeus) to Demeter, but also to provide her with goat testicles (associated with Dionysos). From the perspective of the ideology of honour and shame, the latter may be

<sup>6</sup> Dawkins 1906: 204, cf. Kakouri 1965: 89, cf. 100. Clean Monday: Michaël-Dede 1991: 30 f. Re "damalakia": Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and 6, cf. Megas 1992: 101 ff. pl. E.2 and Athanassakis 1976: 100.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 24 ff.; Triomphe 1992: 22 ff.; Thrakiōtēs 1991: 150 f. and Michaël-Dede 1991: 77.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 27 ff. (modern Africa) with Wace 1912-1913: 249; Thrakiōtēs 1991: 105 ff. (modern Greece), and the descriptions from ancient Greece in Frontisi-Ducroux/Lissarrague 1990: 230-232; Lissarrague 1990: 53-81.

considered a “female” deity, and according to Clement of Alexandria, the father God, Zeus, throws goat testicles into Demeter’s lap in order to do penance for his shameful behaviour.<sup>9</sup> One encounters similar conditions in the later cult, wherein bull horns are male and positive, while the horn of the chthonic goat is negative, associated with evil, women, and the Devil, according to the official ideology of honour and shame. The chthonic power’s negativity for men is, for example, illustrated by the fact that a cuckolded husband is considered to be a “he-goat”.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, both parts promote fertility, because they ward off the Evil Eye.<sup>11</sup> They protect, for example, the vineyards all over southern Europe. In connection with this, we also see the position of the phallic fertility God, Priapos, Aphrodite’s monstrous son with Adonis, under the new Christian ideology.<sup>12</sup> He is associated with goat horns and “wild nature”, and can be seen as a parallel to the fertility God, Pan. In official sources, horns go from having a positive sense to acquiring a negative one. Earlier cults are suppressed by Christian councils, thus becoming negative; on the other hand, horns might serve a positive function, such as when the blowing of horns announces fertility festivals, among others.<sup>13</sup> This situation between Christianity and the earlier cult is nothing new, since one encounters corresponding conditions in the pre-Christian world.

In antiquity, the fertility cult is especially apparent in the cultural pattern which has been referred to as *Dionysian* and oversteps or bursts the limits set by the *Apollonian* ideology of moderation. It is the anthropologist Ruth Benedict who in the wake of Friedrich Nietzsche has advanced the idea of two main types of cultural patterns: the Apollonian and the Dionysian.<sup>14</sup> Based on the view of these two cultural patterns, the ancient official ideology has been called Apollonian. This cultural pattern demands moderation in life and behaviour; and is conservative and

<sup>9</sup> Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.13Pf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7, also for Demeter/Gaia, and men’s uncertainty towards women. See also Devereux 1991: 38 f.

<sup>10</sup> Pitt-Rivers 1966: 46 f. Cf. Campbell 1966: 159 f.

<sup>11</sup> Finrud 2018: 90, 100 f. bull horn. Moss/Cappannari 1976: 9, goathorn.

<sup>12</sup> Payne Knight 1974. See also Draycott/Graham eds. 2017 for discussion of the production of Payne Knight. Motte 1973: 143, cf. 126 where he is the son of Dionysos and Aphrodite. For his origin, cf. Plut. *Thes.* 18.2. For the God’s connection with the Dionysian cultural pattern, cf. the following.

<sup>13</sup> Payne Knight 1974: 161 vs. 107 ff. the earlier cult is suppressed. See also 21 f., cf. 216 (how the horn goes from a positive to a negative sense) cf. pl. 4.4 (positive, cf. Paus. 9.16,1) vs. pl. 37.2 (cf. Vanggaard 1969: Fig. 21), pl. 40 (witches’ sabbath in 1613, where they ride on broomsticks and a goat with horns). See infra for other examples, and Loukatos 1972b: 465-469 for the goat in Greek culture.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Nietzsche 1977: 289 ff. (or. 1872) and Benedict 1971: 56 f., 88 ff., 126, 131.

oriented towards the group. On the other hand, one encounters the Dionysian cultural pattern, which presents entirely opposite qualities and bursts the limits set by the “moderation ideologists”. Nonetheless, it is difficult to understand Greek culture if one does not examine the Dionysian aspects, which it also institutionalised.<sup>15</sup> The contrasts form a whole, and the religion of the elite likewise had its origin in the cycle of the agricultural year. Still, the value of this division is a good reference point when working with a people’s different value systems, because it is reflected in the relationship between Olympian and Chthonian powers in antiquity. Both powers were central in the festivals under discussion, although they often received a somewhat ambivalent assessment by the ancient official ideological spokesmen. This is, for instance, illustrated in Aeschylus’ ambivalent description of the Furies in *Eumenides*.<sup>16</sup> It can also be seen in how Plato ranks cults in relation to one another, while Plutarch can be critical of rituals contrary to Olympian ideals and gives an elitist criticism of the common people’s cult dedicated to chthonic forces.<sup>17</sup> Similar conditions are found in contemporary Greek religion, for example, with regard to various rituals in which women have the main role, and which often stand in contrast to the official Church, as well as in the relationship between the Kalogeros and the Anastenaria festivals within the cycle of the Anastenarides. This is also an illustration of the problem of survivalism and Orthodoxy. The problematic is also concretely reflected in other ways, despite all statements about a religious cosmological whole.<sup>18</sup>

Both within contemporary and ancient society we encounter representatives of the official ideology, who often oppose the popular cult. This is especially demonstrated in the last of the modern festivals, which has been discussed, and in the two rituals of the Anastenarides presented above, the first of which, the Kalogeros ritual, is not officially seen as a ceremony within their official annual cycle because it is considered pagan. Concerning the two different starting positions among the scholars, that of so-called *survivalism* versus *anti-survivalism*, survivalism, in its purest form, presupposes continuity on key issues, for example, in connection with cults from antiquity to the present in the Greek and Mediterranean

<sup>15</sup> Benedict 1971: 172. Cf. Hannerz 1982: 21. See Otto 1992: 211-217 for the connection between them. The same topic is discussed in Eide/Hägg 1989.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g., Aesch. *Eum.* 782-784, 812-814 with 903-912, 928-931.

<sup>17</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 377b-c65, cf. 378d-f69. See 361a-b for rituals that are contrary to Olympian ones. Pl. *Leg.* 717a ranks the cults.

<sup>18</sup> As argued by Stewart 1991, see also *supra* this chapter. The mentioned Plutarch references are discussed in Håland 1999a (2011).



region. Anti-survivalism, on the other hand, argues that modern phenomena, however archaic they may seem, must be understood in a modern context, and as a function of it. As an extension of this, one encounters the problems created by the combination of survivalism and Orthodoxy for most Greek folklorists, who consider themselves to be Christian and therefore do not want to be regarded as pagan. The academic distinction between their discipline and theology has also meant that they have rarely compared standard Christian worship with non-standard belief and practice, which belongs to popular belief. The problem concerning Orthodoxy and survivalism has, for example, resulted in the fact that Maria Michaël-Dede has denied any connection between the other rituals of the Anastenarides and the Kalogeros ritual because the former, as opposed to the Kalogeros ritual, are Christian, while the anti-survivalist Loring M. Danforth passes the entire question over in silence. On the other hand, the Kalogeros ritual itself testifies to the opposite of Michaël-Dede's claim that they do not belong together and makes Danforth's exclusion of the Kalogeros ritual from the annual cycle of the Anastenarides problematical. The "solemn" or more formal and "Christian" part of the Kalogeros procession is very similar to the circuits which take place during the Anastenaria festival, which is emphasised from the time of the ceremony in the *konaki*, before they dress up the carnival participants, to the final meal, which is consumed there. A few of the Anastenarides lead their part of the procession, carrying a *sēmadi*, and bless the house in line with the blessing of the Kalogeros. During the circuit of the village, they also dance in front of the holy icon shelves in some of the houses where the members of the group of Anastenarides and Anastenarisses live. Furthermore, the circuits during both festivals may be an occasion for members of the group to visit someone who is sick or to perform a healing, be that with a *sēmadi* or an icon. In that way it is obvious that the two festivals are connected in many ways. The formal part of the procession during the Kalogeros festival therefore corresponds to the touring of the village houses that takes place during the second and third days of the Anastenaria festival (Figure 31). The difference is that in Melikē only one *sēmadi* was brought along, and it was carried by the leader of the day. Another difference is the thoroughly burlesque part of the procession during the Kalogeros festival. Furthermore, the retinue marked or purified houses and icon shelves in the same way as during the Anastenaria festival, and received payment for the purification with the same kinds of food and money that were collected by the "treasurer". The Kalogeros is fed with the same kinds of food as the retinue, which are also the basic kinds of food common to the villagers, and their most important,



because they are the produce of the land and their labour in the field. Accordingly, it is important to get plenty of the same food the next year. In Melikē it is stated that the Archianasténaris is an important participant in the Kalogeros ritual, because he “represents the power from above, from the saint”. One encounters similar problems regarding the Agios Athanasios festival, since Michaél-Dede denies the connection between the festival dedicated to Agios Athanasios and the Anastenaria festival. Nonetheless, both the rituals on 18 January (the feast day of Agios Athanasios) and 2 May (the deposition of the relics of Agios Athanasios) are important within the annual cycle of the Anastenarides.<sup>19</sup>

As opposed to Michaél-Dede, who considers the Anastenaria festival to be an essentially Christian phenomenon, all the survivalists who have discussed the festival during the last hundred years have classified it as a Dionysian ceremony or pointed out its Dionysian origins. Therefore Agios Kōnstantinos can be compared with both Dionysos and his opposite, Apollo, and united with a modern parallel to the Great Mother, Agia Elenē, in a hieros gamos, as C. A. Romaios and France Schott-Billmann have maintained in their analyses of the “holy dyad”.<sup>20</sup> My purpose here is neither to deny nor confirm any possible “survivals” in the cult of the Anastenarides; the point is that the ritual has Dionysian features. Regarding the paradoxes one encounters in connection with the cult, the ideologists think that much of what takes place in the popular cult in the way of customs and rituals is pagan, while people in general alternately deny and boast of the connection with antiquity. The ideologists do that as well when it suits them. The paradoxes in Greek culture also belong to the relationship between “Us” and “the Others”, or *Orientalism*, both earlier and today.

*Orientalism*, the book of the late Palestinian exile, Edward W. Said, has greatly influenced the occidental cultural critique found in various scholars working on material related to modern Greek culture, especially Danforth.<sup>21</sup> The book is therefore important in connection with the debate between the so-called survivalists and anti-survivalists, as the first position in particular is found among Greek folklorists and some Western scholars, such as the English classical philologist John Cuthbert Lawson, while the latter position is especially evident in Danforth’s production. Said

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 4, see also Ch. 2 f. See Melikē 1984: 29 for the Archianasténaris in Melikē.

<sup>20</sup> Romaios 1949: 43-47; Schott-Billmann 1987: Ch. 3 f. vs. Michaél-Dede 1973. See, moreover, Chourmouziadēs 1961; Kakouri 1965.

<sup>21</sup> Said 1979, cf. Danforth 1984 and Herzfeld 1992a. See Håland 2017: Ch. 2 for discussion for the following as well.

discusses how Western European and American research on the Muslim Orient cannot be separated from the political, economic and military aspects of the colonialism and imperialism that have characterised the West's interest in the East. Since to claim knowledge of something is to establish oneself as an authority over it, Orientalism is, according to Said, a power discourse that reflects European political dominance over the Orient. Danforth criticises traditional Greek and non-Greek researchers working on cultural continuity, considering them as parallels to Said's Orientalists, but an important point of Said's that Danforth does not mention is that, for Said, all texts in the West about "the Others" are part of Orientalism, including Homer's view of the Trojans and Aeschylus' view of the Persians.

In keeping with the usual custom of projecting everything reminiscent of erotic scenes onto "strangers", Aphrodite, Adonis, Andromeda, Dionysos and Medea are cast as "foreign" deities who come to Greece. The witch Medea is but one of many barbarian women who were "carried off" by a Greek. According to Said, the divide between the Orient and the West was already distinct by the time of Homer's *Iliad*, but he does not elaborate on this, and it is difficult to see any great difference between the treatment of, for instance, Hektor and Achilleus.<sup>22</sup>

Achilleus does indeed kill Hektor, but the subsequent treatment he gives the corpse when he drags it after the chariot does not seem especially heroic.<sup>23</sup> King Priamos' grieving over his son is intense, but he is an old man, and even the Greeks cannot do anything other than respect him when he throws himself on the ground into the dust, soiling himself.<sup>24</sup> Generally Homer does not make any distinction between those who live in proper poleis, such as the Greeks and Trojans, and those who did not live in a polis. On the other hand, Homer thinks that Paris makes a poor hero and is a better ladies' man than a warrior, while the female and emotional Aphrodite is contrary to the "manly" Athena.<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that Said's discussion of Orientalism in antiquity must be employed with caution because ancient sources do not deal with the East or the Orient in the modern Western sense, such later notions as race being out of place here. According to the assessments of the authors of the ancient sources, however, "Others", "Strangers" (foreigners or aliens), or "Barbarians" are

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<sup>22</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 2 for Said 1979: 56, cf. 11, 20. Re "the time of the *Iliad*", see, e.g., the discussion in Walcot 1970: Ch. 1. Cf. Verneule 1981: 164 Greeks, foreigners and eroticism. See also O'Brien 2006 for the same aspect.

<sup>23</sup> *Il.* 22.395 ff., 24.16, 52 f.

<sup>24</sup> *Il.* 22.408 f., 414 ff., 24.163-165.

<sup>25</sup> *Il.* 5.844 f. Aphrodite: 5.347-362. Paris: 3.15 ff., 39 ff.

those who speak an incomprehensible language. The Greeks looked down on all non-Greeks and called them barbarians because they did not speak Greek.

At the time of Aeschylus, the Orient may have begun to represent a kind of decadence associated with female qualities. Therefore one may assert that here is a kind of "Orientalism" which surfaces in specific situations in Greek literary sources, from the Persian Wars and afterwards. This is especially apparent in Aeschylus, but also in Euripides as well as in Plutarch. The ancient Orientalism one encounters in Aeschylus concerns his negative comments on the behaviour of the barbarians, seen in light of the official ideology of his time.<sup>26</sup> Aristophanes is critical of the Adonis cult, which exists in spite of the archaic statesman Solon's laws banning such behaviour. Concerning the politics of the time, both Euripides and Aristotle, for instance, are of the opinion that Greeks must rule over barbarians; that is, according to the opinion of Greeks.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, several of Herodotus' descriptions of "the Others" have been seen as negative as well, since not everyone is as admirable as the Egyptians, who even have stronger skulls than the Persians.<sup>28</sup> We do not only encounter an understanding of the East as exotic and the West as normal, since Gauls, Scythians and Ethiopians were as strange and essentially non-Greek as Persians and Indians.

Gail Holst-Warhaft has also discussed the Orientalism in the male polis club, while I have discussed Plutarch's view elsewhere. Plutarch has a tendency to assign customs he does not want to connect with male Greeks to Lydians, Syrians, Egyptians, and other non-Greek people and regions. If the actual customs are performed in his own surroundings, they are usually performed by unmanly women or inferior men. He associated, for example, laments with emotions, women, and barbarians.<sup>29</sup>

Most studies regarding both ancient scholarship and modern anthropology have naturally enough discussed the Orientalism one encounters among Western scholars.<sup>30</sup> One may maintain that the Orientalism is a product of

<sup>26</sup> Aesch. e.g., *Pers.* 568-583, *Ag.* 1072 ff., cf. *Sept.* 182 ff. for the behaviour of the barbarians. For the ideology: Thuc. 2.34-46, cf. Plut. *Sol.* 12, 21, *Mor.* 608 f; Pl. *Leg.* 958 ff. See also Plut. *Mor.* 166, 169a, 171 for the barbarians.

<sup>27</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1.1252b1-10; Eur. *IA.* 1400. Plut. *Sol.* 21; Ar. *Lys.* 387-397.

<sup>28</sup> Hdt. 3.11, 2-3. See 4.103, 1-2 for the Scythians. See moreover, 1.130 for customs among the Persians, 6.106 the Spartans.

<sup>29</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 113a. See also Håland 1999a (2011), 2017: Ch. 5-7. See Holst-Warhaft 1992: Ch. 5 for Orientalism in the polis.

<sup>30</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 2, 5 and 7. Cf. Dubisch 1995: 184, 186. See also Alexiou 1986: 3-15; Bernal 1991; Katz 1995: 38.

Western imperialism, since it is those phenomena in Greek culture with which the white Western world has been most fascinated that have been presented as genuine Greek culture, whereas what one thought were unworthy characteristics were assessed to be “oriental”. This is, for instance, how the European philhellenists in the 1800s regarded the seclusion of women common in their day among both the Turks and the Greeks and compared it with ancient circumstances, and it is other phenomena and features that the reproducers of the ancient sources have sought to invoke as their precursors in the pursuit of these. Scholars have therefore been concerned with searching for what have been regarded as “Western” characteristics associated with such categories as “male, white, the West, and imperialism”, which are evaluated positively, while one has looked sideways at what tasted of “womanliness and barbarism”.<sup>31</sup> We recognise the relationship between the two cultural patterns, the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

A critique might still be advanced, since the similarities between the Persian Empire and Greek culture brought about that, for instance, Alkibiades or Themistokles could adapt as easily to the Persian court as to an atmosphere of Greek domesticity, according to Plutarch.<sup>32</sup> Plutarch also comments on the fact that Themistokles became so intimate with the Persian king “that he even had access to the queen-mother and became intimate with her”,<sup>33</sup> which also demonstrates that they have the same value system. Despite this description in Plutarch, he is concerned with criticising non-Greeks, and he is especially known for polemicising against other, non-Olympian religions. That both the Spartans and Persians are blackened does in no way exclude the similarities between Persian, Spartan and Athenian societies.<sup>34</sup> The mentioned examples of Orientalism were present, however, especially when one wanted to blacken the enemy for Athenian political purposes in the heyday of the polis. Aristotle tells us that when things went wrong in Sparta, women were involved.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Plutarch, however, he treats the Karthaginians as Greeks, especially the Spartans. The reason for this is that they have the same political system (polis), which he regards as positive. This also concerns Xenophon, when Sokrates says that one should imitate the Persians, using

<sup>31</sup> On the philhellenists, see Herzfeld 1986: Ch. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Plut. *Them.* 29.2 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Plut. *Them.* 29.4 f. vs. *Them.* 29.1, for when Roxanes insulted him in a way which must have been very shameful for a man.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. e.g., Plut. *Sol.* 12.4 f., 21.4 f.; ARVcl. 38, 256; II. 23 with 24.664-804 and Hdt. 6.58 f. Persian and Spartan parallels.

<sup>35</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 2.1269b20-1270a32.



them as a model.<sup>36</sup> Is it the case, then, that no distinction between “West” and “East” exists in antiquity, since they are so similar? They are similar to us, and have similar customs and belief systems. The way that Herodotus describes several other peoples and their customs has generally been considered Orientalist, prejudicial and stereotypical, classifying him as one of the first Orientalists because his sayings have been analysed using a Western ideological approach. This is a topic I have discussed elsewhere, arguing that there is nothing Orientalist in the actual descriptions when comparing with Greek customs in connection with the cult of the dead.<sup>37</sup> Akin to other non-Greek topics or people, the Persian Empire is, in an extension of the way the mythical Priamos’ Troy was perceived, both admired and feared, and this fact leads to a number of paradoxes. Hence there are several levels in the aforementioned sources. As is the case with the modern Balkans, one might perhaps say that they are similar, since they have the same customs. The question, however, is what they think themselves. In that case it belongs with the problems surrounding ethnicity, which is crucial to the self-definition and self-understanding of the people in question.<sup>38</sup> We only encounter the “Orientalism” Said associates with the ancient Greeks<sup>39</sup> in special situations, and it does not contradict all the similarities between them and their neighbours. This also concerns cults.

Orientalism is a natural result of the fear of the unknown and the foreign, the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, which in the Greek setting is called *xenophobia* (M.G.). Every *xenos* (M.G./A.G. stranger), then, is a potential thief of women. Especially prevalent is the fear of foreigners raiding one’s own women, generally because it is oneself who has raided the foreigners’ women, and the paradoxical result is continual fighting over them.

The term *xenē* (M.G./A.G. stranger) is also employed when referring to the bride, a stranger who is incorporated into the husband’s *oikos* (household) in a patrilocal marriage pattern.<sup>40</sup> The ancient myths telling us of the abductions of women are variants of this pattern, and illuminate how men procured wives earlier. Even though one did not necessarily raid

<sup>36</sup> Xen. *Oec.* 4.4; Arist. *Pol.* 2.1272b vs. Plut. *Mor.* 171b-d.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., Hålt. 3.11,2-3 and 4.26,1-2, the latter is especially discussed in Håland 2014: Ch. 6. Cf. supra also for Plutarch and Aeschylus, who often condemn people for being foreign barbarians.

<sup>38</sup> See also Ch. 5 infra.

<sup>39</sup> Said 1979: 58 f.

<sup>40</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for the patrilocal marriage pattern and references, e.g., Ar. *Thesm.* 888-891.



women from one's neighbour or the enemy, the bride was generally a stranger who came from outside in the pre-classical period, when exogamy prevailed. Concerning illustrations of how men usually procured wives in the past, it is relevant to mention the four mythical abductions of women at the beginning of the histories of Herodotus; to be precise, the abductions of Io, Medea, Europa, and Helen.<sup>41</sup> Each one of the myths rendered there involves a foreign woman who is brought in, the latter, Helen, becoming the mythical cause of the first open military conflict between Greek and "barbarian" forces.<sup>42</sup> According to Anita Jacobson-Widding and Walter van Beek,

the conquest of the wild fertility of foreign women, and of the land outside society, is given a mythical articulation by the attribution of female, wild fertility to the autochthonous inhabitants who [have been] conquered.

This observation found in their edited volume, *The Creative Communion of African Folk Models of Fertility and the Regeneration of Life*, also turns out to be applicable to the relationship between the conquering Greeks and the Pelasgians who already lived there.<sup>43</sup> One might also mention the myths of the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs, which is a parallel to the aforementioned Battle of the Gods and Giants. The wild, barbarian, lascivious and boozy Centaurs, addicted to drinking and with a strong desire for sexual activity, are mythological creatures with the upper body of a human and the lower body of a horse, and generally fight against the Lapiths, a legendary people from Thessaly.<sup>44</sup> The battle which followed, when the Centaurs attempted to carry off the bride of the king of the Lapiths on their wedding day, is, for instance, depicted on the pediments of the temple of Zeus at Olympia.<sup>45</sup>

According to Campbell, contemporary Greeks suffer from a fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners. The stranger is often considered dangerous because many misfortunes are attributed to them.<sup>46</sup> Despite the fact that ancient people were also suspicious of strangers, they could

<sup>41</sup> *Hdt.* 1.1-1.5.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Bergren 1983: 76. See Smyth's (tr. Aesch. in the Loeb edition) comment 1946, Vol. 2: 338 f.n.1 for another variant. See also Chirassi-Colombo 1974: 71 f.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Hdt.* 6.137,3 and Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 30 f.

<sup>44</sup> *Il.* 1.263, 2.741 f., *Od.* 21.295 ff.; Hes. *Sc.* 178 ff. Centaurs: *Od.* 21.303.

<sup>45</sup> Dewald 1981: 102 f. gives a relevant comment regarding the Centaurs, etc. Re Lapiths and Centaurs, cf. Edwards 1960-61. Cf. the parallel unification of the polis and the development of democracy. See also *infra* this chapter.

<sup>46</sup> Blum Blum 1970: 212. Cf. *infra* for Campbell 1966: 142, see also Herzfeld 1987: 81.

nonetheless institutionalise the deity Zeus *Xenios* (that is, the Zeus of hospitality); namely, in his role as a protector of guests.<sup>47</sup> Plutarch tells of the necessity to provide for a stranger: "He might after all be a God".<sup>48</sup> One encounters the term "stranger" in the sense of wanderer or refugee in Homer, while "stranger" in the sense of foreigner, is found in Hesiod, for example.<sup>49</sup> One encounters the opposite in Apollonius Rhodius; certainly, on the island of Lemnos and among women. The Lemnian women were actually notorious in antiquity.<sup>50</sup>

Greek men have an ambivalent relationship to the stranger, just as they have to women. Perhaps this is the reason that Odysseus sought protection from a woman, the queen and housewife, Arete, when he came to the Phaeacians as a stranger.<sup>51</sup> In ancient Greece one sees the precursor to the institutionalised *h'aram* (that is, taboo, the forbidden/sacred, and female, that must be hidden from unauthorised persons/strangers) of the Muslim world, and based on the logic behind *h'aram*, related to the fact that the woman governs what is "inside" (that is, the *oikos*), Odysseus knelt, not only for the mistress of the household, but also in fact by an altar. As the logic of the Greeks has it, it is said that if a supplicant kneeling by the altar of the deities is refused, they send punishment, more specifically, "the wrath of Zeus who guards the suppliant...compels...reverence".<sup>52</sup> Therefore Arete was obliged to protect him as a guest.

Despite the ambivalent attitude toward strangers who are enigmatic figures, Anatolian and other Balkan influence on Greek culture has

<sup>47</sup> *Od.* 14.57 f., 6.207 f., 9.270 f. See also Aesch. *Ag.* 59 ff., 361 ff. For *xenos* in the sense of guest-friend, *Od.* 1.313, cf. *xenia*; i.e., reciprocity between those who were *xeinoi*, guest-friends, *Il.* 6.119-236. Guest-friendship, *Il.* 6.119-236, cf. 13.622-630, and 24, the ransom of Hektor's corpse, is the same as ceasefire and incurs a debt of aid to be collected in the future. Cf. ARVarc. 248. See Hes. *Op.* 342: "Call your friend to a feast; but leave your enemy alone", cf. 722 f. Suspicious of strangers: *Od.* 6.199 f., cf. Thuc. 1.2 and the comment in Foley 1984: 70.

<sup>48</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 170e-f.

<sup>49</sup> Hes. *Op.* 225. *Od.* 8.546, 6.206 f., 9.270 f. Cf. LSJ s.v. *xenos*. See Herman 1987 for the institution of *xenos/xenia*. It has also been argued that the Greeks came in advance of Hobbes' problem and avoided a free-for-all through the significance of the *symposion/symposia* re reciprocity between equals. Cf., moreover, Hes. *Op.* 342-355 re the logic behind gift-giving and counter-gifts.

<sup>50</sup> Aesch. *Cho.* 631-645; Ap. Rhod. 1.636-677.

<sup>51</sup> *Od.* 7.75.

<sup>52</sup> Aesch. *Supp.* 457-490, esp. 479. Cf. Thuc. 1.128, 1.134. See Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7 for *h'aram* (*thalamos*, *mychos*, *lechos* and women's quarters), see also Bourdieu 1966, 1980.

nonetheless been unavoidable, both earlier and today. We experience this especially through folk music and laments, but also through numerous other aspects, both in the cult and generally in daily life; one might, for instance, mention the ancient Thracian wet nurses.<sup>53</sup> As a rule, this influence has been accepted and commonplace, generally because it has been so self-evident. Neither has the peasant community ever made any point of this; the exception is rather the ideological condemnations from philosophers and other moralists, which diverse later Western authors have preferred because they have suited their own views.

To give a concrete example, the musical instruments used in order to make Demeter laugh when she is broken down by grief over the abduction of her daughter, Korē, come from the “East”, and it is Aphrodite who brings them, according to Euripides. Plutarch did not take a liking to such foreign intruders and representatives for one barbarian superstition or another, such as Adonis, who is “a strange God introduced by foreign superstition”<sup>54</sup>, also connected with hemaphrodites and women. The East is a region related to barbarism, “superstition”, and “shameful” obscenities. Not only did Adonis belong there, but so did the “emotional” Aphrodite and other deities, such as Kybele and Attis, as well as the Dionysian maenads. They were related to downgraded and rejected “eastern” musical instruments such as cymbals and percussion, and obscene and ecstatic rites. Strabo illustrates the use of tambourines, drums and flutes in connection with the orgiastic cult, a link one also encounters in Euripides. In his attacks on paganism, Clement of Alexandria draws a parallel between the mysteries dedicated to Demeter and those dedicated to Attis and Kybele as well as the Korybantes in Phrygia.<sup>55</sup> We are also introduced to parallels to Euripides’ and Clement’s especially critical descriptions by others: Aristotle, for instance, states that the flute has an orgiastic and terrifying character. It was rejected by Athena because it did not improve intelligence, but it does purify, since it belongs to Bacchic trance, delirium and rituals including dances associated with possession.<sup>56</sup> Plato, for his part, criticises, *inter alia*, Lydian music lamenting, as opposed to Dorian music, which he thinks expresses courage and self-control. We have many illustrations of both “worthy/dignified Apollonian”

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. *HH* 5.113-116. See also Veyne 1983: 54. Chirassi-Colombo 1974: 71-80, discusses the paradoxes in the Greek conception of Thracian influence. Kollia 1989 attempts to approach the origins of ancient Greek religion by means of the Albanian language.

<sup>54</sup> *Plut. Mor.* 756c. *Eur. Hel.* 1341-1352.

<sup>55</sup> *Clem. Al. Protr.* 2.13Pf. and 20P. *Eur. Bacch.* 127-134. *Strab.* 10.466, 468-471.

<sup>56</sup> *Arist. Pol.* 8.1341b-1342b, cf. *Pl. Leg.* 7.790d.

and “unworthy/undignified Dionysian” instruments.<sup>57</sup> All the illustrations of the latter, as we see represented by the “unworthy” flutes, demonstrate their popularity and importance, regardless of what the philosophers might think.<sup>58</sup> From an expanded perspective, one might mention that the musical instruments in the Eleusinian cult also have a central place in the cult of the Anastenarides.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the musical instruments disappeared from the liturgy of the official ideological Christian cult in the early Byzantine period, although they have endured and still have an important function in the popular cult. One may also mention the connection between ancient Arabic and modern Greek music, and the fact that oriental music is extremely popular in contemporary Greece, although many people are ambivalent about that matter.<sup>60</sup>

Despite this ambivalent attitude, which was present in antiquity as it is today, the eastern orgiastic cult was nonetheless introduced in Athens. When the Athenian Empire was at the peak of its power in the 400s BCE, the *Metrōon*, the temple of the Mother of the Gods (*Mētēr Theōn*)—also called Kybele, and generally seen as an oriental Goddess imported from the east (Phrygia) and connected with orgiastic rites—was an important political building situated in the ancient Athenian *Agora* (marketplace).<sup>61</sup> The building included the sanctuary dedicated to the Mother of the Gods, after whom it was named, a council house, and the state archives. Moreover, regarding the relationship between Greece and its nearby neighbours, or the Mediterranean and oriental influence which have always been present in the popular cult and generally deserve greater attention when we attempt to create a clearer picture of ancient society, Diodorus Siculus, tells us where the mythical Amazons originated. According to him, those who came from Libya—where the marsh of Triton was also situated—predated those who came from Pontos.<sup>62</sup> I have discussed the significance of the *marsh* of Triton versus the official Athenian male ideology in the 400s BCE elsewhere, and will only mention that it belongs to an alternative perspective as to where and by whom the Athenian tutelary Goddess, Athena, was born; namely, that she was not

<sup>57</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 398c-399c. “Apollonian” instruments: ARVcl. 53, 189.

<sup>58</sup> See ARVcl. 187, ARVarc. 21, 27, 32.2, 311 for some illustrations.

<sup>59</sup> See moreover Athanassakis 1976: 102 f., cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 4-6. See Löbeck 1961: Vol. 1, 13 ff. for parallel cult.

<sup>60</sup> For ancient Arabic and modern Greek music, see Watts 1988: 17, see also Holst-Warhaft 1992: 150.

<sup>61</sup> Will 1960: 100 f., 104, 107, 111, cf. Munn 2006. According to Thompson 1976: 64-67, however, it was built in the 2nd cent. BCE, but had earlier predecessors.

<sup>62</sup> Diod. 3.52 f.

necessarily born from the forehead of her father Zeus as some sources maintain, but, as other sources claim, she was born of the Tritonian lake or by the banks of Triton, or perhaps from or at the meadow by Triton's banks, depending on whether she was born by a lake or a river; that is, by a lake or a marsh. The meadow, the marsh, the sea, and its shores symbolise the female sex organ, and are important parallels to the better-known cult of the phallus.<sup>63</sup> Diodorus also discusses the Egyptian influence on the Greek cult.<sup>64</sup> Like Herodotus, in the second book of his *Histories* dealing with the Egyptians, he is positive about this influence, while Plutarch, on the other hand, gives an elitist critique of Egyptian and popular, generally "superstitious" elements in cults, and, as already mentioned, he is, like his forerunner, Aeschylus, especially critical of what comes from the East.

Lamenters generally also came from the East, but this does not prevent even the "male" Athena from mourning.<sup>65</sup> For the ideologists, however, the region was related to the cult carried out by superstitious persons, unmanliness, softness, and "womenfolk".<sup>66</sup> This is also how one might assess Livy's attack on the popularity of the Dionysos cult in Rome and Demosthenes' similar critique of the advent of the parallel ritual dedicated to the cult of the "female" Thracian Sabazios in Greece.<sup>67</sup> So we see that both of these authors not only demonstrate cult practice, but also reactions against the cult and the disparagement of it by "respectable" citizens. Demosthenes is generally concerned with observing ancestral customs and the commands of the oracles in the polis' accepted worship of Dionysos. When he emphasises the degeneracy of the Sabazios rites, he alludes to some of the cult practices and illustrates the suspicion with which the "respectable" elements of society regarded these "foreign" and "women-dominated" rituals, which were, moreover, the rituals of the poor. Simultaneously he demonstrates that there are many parallels between the cult of Sabazios and the worship of Dionysos, but also with the cult of Demeter at Eleusis.

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<sup>63</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7.

<sup>64</sup> *Diod.* 1.96.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Richter 1977: Fig. 129 and Figs. 128, 333, lamenters from the East: Aesch. *Cho.* 423 f.

<sup>66</sup> Plut. *Sol.* 21, *Mor.* 113. Superstition, barbarians and women: *Mor.* 168 and 171 vs. 608 f. the correct behaviour. See also Pollux. 6.202; *Hdt.* 6.58; Pl. *Resp.* 3.387 ff., 3.398d-399a; Ar. *Lys.* 387-397; Hp. *Aër.* 16, 23 f. See Pl. *Phdr.* 239c-d for a "womanly" lifestyle.

<sup>67</sup> *Dem.* 18.258-260; Livy 39.9,4, 39.10,5-7, 39.13,8-14.





Figure 35. The Dionysos Cup, fifth-century-BCE *kylix* (wine-drinking cup), representing the arrival of Dionysos during the Anthesteria festival, with all sails set. He half-lies or sits within a ship shaped like a dolphin, vines growing out from the mast with clusters of grapes to the right and the left. (Downloaded 15.05.2018 from:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysus#/media/File:Exekias\\_Dionysos\\_Staatliche\\_Antikensammlungen\\_2044\\_n2.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dionysus#/media/File:Exekias_Dionysos_Staatliche_Antikensammlungen_2044_n2.jpg))

The general statement that Dionysos comes from the East might result from the official ideology's critical view of elements of the cult as belonging to women and barbaric "femaleness", comparable to undiluted wine. All these elements stand in sharp contrast to the "male" and "moderate" nature of official Greek society. It has, *inter alia*, been maintained that Greek women were strictly forbidden to drink wine in

post-Homeric times.<sup>68</sup> Dionysos is therefore the Stranger, the one who always comes from Outside (Figure 35). What we encounter may therefore be ideological statements made in order to disparage that which comes from the outside, but also to disparage those internal or domestic cults and customs that are not compatible with the official Athenian male polis' ideology, since nowadays we know that Dionysos was already worshipped there in the Mycenaean period.<sup>69</sup> Therefore the Dionysos cult was not a new introduction, although this may be the impression gained from Euripides.<sup>70</sup> One encounters the disapproval in the classical sources promoted by the spokesmen of an androcentric ideology, who criticised the Dionysian elements as easily as the later church fathers, as did the official Church they participated in founding in the centuries to come.<sup>71</sup> The same attitude can be seen in a number of Byzantine sources and right up to the modern era, reflected in several modern Greek festivals discussed, such as the rituals of the Anastenaria festival, as well as in connection with laments.

The early Church was critical of the Bacchanalian popular lament, which, according to John Chrysostom, was "self-centred" and "self-indulgent". John claimed that hired mourners represented a "disease of females".<sup>72</sup> A source from ca. 1186 describes demon-possessed performers in direct contact with God and saints, while an anonymous Byzantine source from ca. 1250 criticises "the frenetic possessed". These are believed to be the precursors of the modern Anastenarides. In *Tameion Orthodoxias* ("Treasury of Orthodoxy") from ca. 1780, the bishop of Macedonia, Theophilos, considers Kyrillos of Alexandria's condemnation of Greek customs from the fifth century to be analogous with those of Theophilos' own time, which included the ritual use of holy icons. By citing his predecessor thus, Theophilos intends to demonstrate that the Anastenaria festival is an ancient Greek custom, as when he preaches

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<sup>68</sup> Bremmer 1984: 270. See Frontisi-Ducroux/Lissarrague 1990: 230-232 for the "female" characteristics of the "Lydian" Dionysos, cf. Loraux 1989: 157 f. (cf. 1990: 37 f.). Payne Knight 1974: 102. See moreover Eco 1984: 2. See Moynes 1997: 273 f. for Greeks vs. barbarians, cf. Foley 1988: 1316.

<sup>69</sup> Chadwick 1976: 85, 87, 99 f.

<sup>70</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 13-22, 64-104, cf. *HH* 1.26 ff.; *Diod.* 3.65,4. Cf. Frontisi-Ducroux/Lissarrague 1990: 229n.110.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Eur. *Bacch.* e.g., 1051-1168 and Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.19P.

<sup>72</sup> *Migne Vol.* 59.346 for Hom. 62.4 in John. (cf. Schaff 1995: Vol. 14,230 [4.])

“[a]gainst those who carry the holy icons and those who become insane”, and so on. He continues, stating that:<sup>73</sup>

Only priests shall carry icons and they shall stay in the church: it is forbidden for lay people to carry icons on their shoulders and go or run around with them to bring rain and ward off sickness.

Nonetheless, one encounters parallels to this in several places in Greece today, for instance, in the icon-carriers in the fields around Olympos in 1992, who have precisely this aim (Figure 11). In the description of the Anastenaria festival from 1873, the theologian Anast. Chourmouziadēs attempts to satisfy the demands of two opposing ideologies, the Church and the survivalists, by drawing attention to the connection between the ecstatic dance and the Bacchanals, Pan, and the Agrionia festival. However, he also employed later sources, such as Theophilos. Chourmouziadēs solved the dilemma of how to unite the two ideologies of the Church and of survivalism by pointing out that it was especially women who performed the rituals; moreover, like other ancient rites, they had been Christianised by taking on a different form, even if their pagan nature remained intact. Although he thought that the Anastenaria was proof of the continuity of Greek culture, as was common at that time, he believed, as did other observers of paganism and “superstition”, that it was something which would disappear when

the Church with its enlightenment, sermons and advice managed to save and bring the unfortunate children who had wandered in the dark for so long into the light.<sup>74</sup>

One of the later official critics of the Anastenaria festival is found in N. Th. Mpougatsos, where he provides the Church’s position,<sup>75</sup> and today we encounter several critical priests, such as in Agia Elenē, although the cult is officially accepted by the Church.

Despite this official Greek Orientalism, which in the ancient context is illustrated by the fact that the *Bakchai* was never staged in Athens, *inter*

<sup>73</sup> The citations from Theophilos’ *Tameion Orthodoxias*, Ch. 55 f., and an anonymous Byzantine source (ca. 1250) are reproduced in Romaïos 1949: 32-35 and 39 f., cf. also 41 f., see also Bèès 1915: 971. For Kyrillos, see Migne Vol. 70:989-992. See Choniatae 1975: 371 for the description from ca. 1186.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Chourmouziadēs 1961: 158, cf. 144, 146. Unless otherwise indicated translations are my own.

<sup>75</sup> Mpougatsos 1963: 634-637. for the following, see however, the comment in Håland 2014: 491 f.n.26

*alia*, important religious influence is said to have come from the so-called backwards Thracian region, both earlier and in modern times. Today one experiences the relationship between different groups of Greeks, such as that between the Melikēotes and the descendants of the immigrants from Thrace. Furthermore, the healing capacities of the possessed Anastenarides as considered by Chourmouziadēs can be compared to the ancient holy Thracians, “possessors of immortality”, as they are described by Herodotus.<sup>76</sup> Several authors have drawn attention to the Orphic rites in Thrace and the connection with Eleusis. Diodorus Siculus and Demosthenes testify to a possible connection between Orphism and the local Eleusinian cult of Demeter and Korē; that is, the so-called northeastern influence in Eleusis, while Euripides and Pausanias tell of Eumolpos, a Thracian warrior and musician who came to Eleusis, probably with other Thracian immigrants.<sup>77</sup>

Later times’ persecution and ideological disparagement of the Anastenarides can, in other words, be regarded as a parallel to Euripides’ ideological description of similar circumstances in classical Athens, where Dionysos was the Stranger at the same time as he was incorporated into the polis’ cult.<sup>78</sup> That the Dionysos cult was of great importance in the polis is clearly demonstrated by all the festivals dedicated to the God throughout the year, and not least the importance of the tragedies and comedies in most of them. The maenads, “the Asian Bacchantes” (cf. Figure 36), according to Euripides, were dressed up in animal hides and had vine leaves in their hair and horns on their heads.<sup>79</sup> In their hands they carried thyrsos staves, wands of giant fennel covered with ivy vines and leaves, sometimes wound with *taeniae* (“bands”, “ribbons” or “fillets”) and always topped with a pine cone, as well as daggers, and usually snakes as well. The ambivalent status of the latter, as both a positive male and negative female symbol within the culture of honour and shame, then as now, and the symbolism of the thyrsos staff are well-known.<sup>80</sup> Equipped with these symbols, the maenads whirled around and danced to the

<sup>76</sup> Hdt. 4.93 f., cf. Chourmouziadēs 1961: 144 ff., 158 ff. For a good updated study on Thracian influence in Greece, see, e.g., Brillante 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Paus. 1.38,2 f., cf. 1.27,4; Eur. *Phoen.* 854 f. Dem. 25.11; Diod. 4.25, cf. ARVcl.189, re northeastern influence in Eleusis. Cf. Harrison 1980: 539 ff., 553-556; Chirassi-Colombo 1974: 72; Athanassakis 1976: 102 f. Cf. Burkert 1983b: 148.

<sup>78</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 13-22, 1100-1152.

<sup>79</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 1168. Cf. also Hughes 2017: 52-53 re Figs. 2.12-13.

<sup>80</sup> See n.182 infra. See Eur. *Bacch.* 100-134 (see also 75 ff.) maenads, cf. ARVarc. 218, cf. 256, 313, ARVcl. 332, 157.2; Plut. *Mor.* 389b.

accompaniment of drums and brass instruments as well as the other musical instruments which accompanied the dance, such as flutes, cymbals, lyres, and tambourines, which they beat while they sang and shouted and ran into the woods, out into the wilderness, far away from their weaving; that is, shuttle, loom and home, where they should stay, according to the male ideology of honour and shame.<sup>81</sup>



Figure 36. *Maenad* Kylix by the Chairias Painter, ca. 510-500 BCE. Agora Museum, Athens.

In their wild condition they hurled themselves onto any animals or other living beings they came across as they made their way into the woods or up into the mountains. There was no talk of distinguishing between wild beasts and domestic animals, “the raw and the cooked”, as one did at the stipulated sacrifices of the polis; on the contrary, they tore the prey to pieces with their teeth and consumed it while still alive. Sometimes they tore a sacrificial bull to pieces and swallowed the entire animal raw. In so doing they thought they were united with the bull God, Dionysos.<sup>82</sup> This

<sup>81</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 110-120.

<sup>82</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 1180 ff., see also 1169-1243 where the “union” appears between the lines.



might be compared with the modern Anastenarides, who are united with their saint through the dance and a sacred meal, although this is done under more “normal” circumstances than the ideological description we get of the maenads as untamed women who consume animals and humans. Ironically enough, they have been considered to be descendants of the nymphs of earlier times, a description which in that case was most likely a part of the attempt by the official polis ideology to “restrain them” by exiling them to the inmost part of the *mychos*, the innermost corner (interior, recess) of the house, which is associated with womanliness in the same way as the *thalamos*, the bridal chamber.<sup>83</sup>

One may compare Mark Edwards’ description of the transition from nymphs to maenads based on motifs on vase paintings (ca. 550 BCE) with legislators’ attempts at restrictions on women’s participation in public life.<sup>84</sup> This demonstrates that when the polis is consolidated simultaneously with Orientalism gaining a stronger foothold, there is a drive to eliminate a common ritual related to purification/healing and girls’ transition into adult status, because it comprises features similar to oriental practice or belongs to aspects of rituals that favour clan coalitions at the expense of the new polis community, which favoured immediate kin or family. Jan Bremmer has also discussed the term *mainas* (maenad) and the original pre-marital character of the maenadism.<sup>85</sup> However, it is not for certain that alterations in the motifs on vases necessarily indicate that the point or essence of the cult has changed, although the ideological presentation (including its visual manifestations) has changed. The pre-marital character of maenadism is illustrated elsewhere in Euripides. The Trojan queen Hekuba, for example, considers her child to be a maenad who is also connected with a wild and ecstatic Artemis, the Goddess who is related to girls’ passage rites in particular.<sup>86</sup> Accordingly the conception of problematical pubescent girls, which we also encounter in medical writings, is a variation on the concept of the “wandering womb” as well as the descriptions which discuss the wish to “keep the woman in her place”, which reflects men’s uncertainty towards women.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> See also n.52 supra.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Edwards 1960-61: 80-82 and Plut. *Sol.* 21.4 f.; *SIG* 1218.

<sup>85</sup> Bremmer 1984: 282-284. See 275 f., cf. 281 for “mainas”.

<sup>86</sup> Artemis: Plut. *Mor.* 170a-b. Hekuba’s child as a maenad: Eur. *Tro.* 306 f. Cf. also Figure 23 supra (lionē mainas), cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 5 (pp. 402 and 408) for discussion of the “Lenaia vases”.

<sup>87</sup> The “wandering womb”: Hp. *Nat. Mul.* 3 (Littré Vol. 7: 314.14-316.8); see also Ch. 4 infra. Problematical girls: Hp. *Virg.* (Littré Vol. 8: 466-471).

Thus, the description of the maenads as anti-culture reveals itself to be an androcentric description with parallels to other ideological descriptions, such as is illustrated in various sources and later interpretations and representations of both Dionysos and Adonis or Theophilos' explanation of the Anastenaria.<sup>88</sup> In relation to this, both dance and sacrifice are central elements, as is another Dionysian feature, masking.

Ecstatic dance is of central importance to the ancient Dionysos festivals and maenads as well as to the contemporary Anastenaria festival, both of which involve animal sacrifice. In contemporary Agia Elenē, the Anastenarisses dance around the sacrificial hole while the lamb is killed, although they generally sacrifice a bull there, as do the other villages in which the Anastenaria festival is celebrated.<sup>89</sup> Ecstatic dance was also related to ritual bull sacrifice in the ancient culture, where animal sacrifice was especially important. There was, however, a distinction between different types of animal sacrifices. The mentioned anti-culture in the animal sacrifice of the maenads, for example, distinguishes itself from the usual ancient animal sacrifice because it was always a domestic animal which was sacrificed, since neither people in the "civilised" society nor their deities were offered wild beasts or humans. Moreover there was not only a distinction between sacrificing wild beasts and domestic animals, since the Pythagoreans forbade bull sacrifice, while the chthonic goat was a lawful sacrifice for them.<sup>90</sup>

Since the animal sacrifice was already very central to the ancient cult in the Bronze Age, many have seen the bull sacrifice in Agia Paraskeuē and elsewhere as modern examples of the ancient bull sacrifices. One encounters the same view within the official Church, for example, in bishop Theophilos.<sup>91</sup> Thus, throughout the entire Byzantine and modern history, the official Church has, in every possible way, tried to abolish the rituals they considered unacceptable and therefore not part of the Orthodox

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<sup>88</sup> Anti-culture: Eur. *Bacch.* 36, 113 ff. The anti-culture also emerges in 1114-1136. The description of the maenads as anti-culture, cf. Vernant 1989: xli f., is parallel to that in both Detienne 1989 and Theophilos.

<sup>89</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4 (also for the Agios Charalampos festival, cf. the following) and Fig. 74 in Appendix 3, and Ch. 5-7. See also van Straten 1995: pls. 111, cf. 3 f., 52, see also 22.

<sup>90</sup> Detienne 1989: 81. For a recent contribution to the scholarship on sacrifice, see Hitch and Rutherford eds. 2017. The volume studies, *inter alia*, the link between animal sacrifice and the food system (part 1).

<sup>91</sup> Rømaios 1949: 52. Other representatives: Makistou 1970: 63 ff.; Kakouri 1965. See, e.g., Harrison 1977: 159 Fig. 30 for Cretan-Mycenaean sarcophagus, 15th cent. BCE from Agia Triada, cf. Andronikos 1980: pl. 39.

Church. The animal sacrifices headed the list of banned rituals. But the Greek villagers did not stop sacrificing animals to their deceased saints or to safeguard one passage rite or another. One might generally invent a new legend behind which to hide in order to legitimate the continuing existence of an important ritual. Since the Church failed to suppress the ritual, some priests who did not oppose the tradition tried to make it legitimate by referring to the Jewish sacrificial rituals and accordingly attaching the ritual to the Hebrew cult. For additional legitimation, we find prayers for sacrificing a bull in Byzantine writings from the eighth century CE, since prayers preserved in the Barberini Library in Rome were brought to the council in Florence as an authority manual within the Byzantine Church by Greek priests who participated in such sacrifices. We also have prayers from the following two centuries.<sup>92</sup> Bull sacrifice, and thus blood sacrifice, is a debated topic in modern Greece, since one has generally argued that the custom has Hebrew roots, or alternatively has maintained that the custom no longer exists.<sup>93</sup> Nonetheless, bull sacrifices are performed today as they were earlier.

The significance of the animal sacrifice is so central that representatives of the Church have referred to the Anastenaria festival as *kourmpani*.<sup>94</sup> This is the use of the concept within the official Church today, but Theophilos is also concerned with the ceremonial animal sacrifice, the “*kourmpania*”, of his time and the participation of priests in the critique he gives in the aforementioned pamphlet, *Tameion Orthodoxias*, from ca. 1780. Today *kourmpani* is a common custom both in northern Greece and Turkey, but it is also common among immigrant Albanians in Attica to perform bull sacrifices during saints’ festivals. Ritual bull sacrifice, combined with a nocturnal torchlit procession, is also dedicated to Agios Basilios.<sup>95</sup> The term *kourmpani* derives from the Turkish *kurban*; that is, sacrifice. On the part of the official Church, the designation may be due to a wish to emphasise the connection between animal sacrifice and the barbarians and infidels. But it may just as well refer to Jewish custom, since the concept of *kourmpani* has very old roots, both Greek and Hebrew. Stella Georgoudi claims that *kourbani* (cf. *kourmpani*, “animal

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<sup>92</sup> Conybeare 1901: 103-110, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 3-4, also for different views on bull sacrifices today, re the following.

<sup>93</sup> Pétropoulos 1956: 120. For Georgoudi 1979, see *infra*.

<sup>94</sup> Mpougatsos 1963: 636.

<sup>95</sup> For basil and the Panagia, Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and 6. See also Kakouri 1965: 137 f.n. 87. See Michaël-Dede 1986: 71 f. for bull sacrifices among the *Arbanites* (Albanians in Attica), cf. Markou 1981; Alexakēs 2001. For Theophilos, see Romaïos 1949: 52.

sacrifice”) derives from *kurban*, the Turkish word for sacrifice, according to the *kurban* of the Qur’an (Arabic *qurbān*), which is in turn derived from the Hebrew *gorban*, a general concept of gifts presented to God.<sup>96</sup> The concept of *korban* is explained in the Greek version of the Bible as *dōron*, gift; that is, a mixture of the Greek and Turkish—or original Hebrew—concept.<sup>97</sup> This shows how difficult it is to prove the ultimate origins of the animal sacrifice. That the Turkish originates from a Hebrew concept is in accordance with the origins of Islam, but this does not thereby provide evidence that the blood sacrifices of present-day Greece originate from the Jewish cult. In his comprehensive account of modern Greek blood sacrifices, Geōrg. N. Aikaterinidēs represents a more modified view of the problem of the origins of the blood sacrifice, since he claims that the modern Greek blood sacrifices preserve numerous elements from their ancient Greek counterparts. Nevertheless, they are also influenced by both Jewish and Christian customs and therefore often celebrated with the Church festivals, thus emerging as a legitimate Christian custom.<sup>98</sup> One certainly cannot pass over the problems of attempting to establish origins in such a religious melting pot as we encounter in the Mediterranean region. The Modern Greek concept of *hierēio* (cf. M.G. *ieros*, holy) was also used in the ancient religion (cf. A.G. *hieron*) to designate sacred animal sacrifices, and in today’s cult, both concepts are used. Today, the Greek concept indicates the holy sacrificial animal itself, which is led through the streets, and the Turkish one indicates the act of sacrifice. It is connected to the slaughter and the food which results from the killing. The Greek scholar Kōstas Makistou provides a comprehensive documentation of the festival on Tauros dedicated to Agios Charalampos. He discusses, *inter alia*, the sacred animal in Agia Paraskeuē, which was, and is, a personal sacrifice, the embodiment of a vow (*tama*)—a common custom during other festivals as well.<sup>99</sup> Makistou also brings up the use of the Turkish concept of *kormpani* or *koulmpani*, which, as mentioned, belongs to a general mixture of cults.

In addition, other scholars have discussed examples of customs from the former Soviet Armenia, where sheep sacrifices have taken place on the altar outside the church during every Sunday service, as they did among the Greeks of Cappadocia into the twentieth century, although such sacrifices were condemned by the Greek Orthodox Church from the

<sup>96</sup> Georgoudi 1979: 273n.3.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Mark 7:11, “*korban, ho estin dōron*”.

<sup>98</sup> Aikaterinidēs 1979: 173-176.

<sup>99</sup> See Makistou 1970: 64 f. and photograph, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and Fig. 79 in Appendix 3.

seventh century CE.<sup>100</sup> That the Armenians were condemned did not mean that the custom was absent from the Orthodox Church; on the contrary as is illustrated by the prayers mentioned above.

Although many priests still oppose bull sacrifices, the village priest of Pēgē on Lesbos is willing to bless the sacrificial animal. We encounter a people's ability to transform a new ideology so that it adapts to their own deeper-lying rules or mentality, as well as the various levels of meaning within a people's worldview. The sacrificial animal is slaughtered ceremonially by the initiated "to bring about the good" or "for the good of it" because it contains magical power which can be used for the benefit of all.

R. K. Yerkes has provided a Christian-theological interpretation of sacrifice in the relevant religions, which can profitably be supplemented by the anthropological description in Leach.<sup>101</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, Leach has made an interesting interpretation of the logic of the sacrificial ritual, upon which I draw in the following, because it can be employed to shed light on Greek animal sacrifice, both earlier and today.<sup>102</sup> According to Leach, there is a complex exchange between life and death that aims to make the dead alive again, and the living as if he were dead.<sup>103</sup> This is the logic behind the sacrifice, according to which the death of the victim is both identified with and substituted for the sacrificing person, such as Bill in *Agia Paraskeuē*, who dedicates the bull and thereby renews his life. This becomes apparent when people in *Agia Elenē* sacrifice a black, non-castrated lamb for the benefit of society, or the aforementioned bull in *Agia Paraskeuē*. It is sacrificed both for Bill himself and his dead father, and at the same time is a sacrifice to both *Agios Charalampos* and the father within the "mediator hierarchy". The animals that are sacrificed are substitutes for humans, and the pure and "non-yoked" sacrificial animal's death regenerates the individual persons' lives, the life of the society, and the resources by which the society lives, their food supply. The wish for beneficence is emphasised by all the fertility-promoting symbols with which the animal is equipped during the rhythmic and often dancing procession, which promotes the same wish. It is also important that all the members of society get a taste of the bull or the lamb in order to obtain a concrete part of the renewal.<sup>104</sup> In that way,

<sup>100</sup> Conybeare 1901: 111 ff., cf. Burkert 1983b: 8 f.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Yerkes 1953 and Leach 1986.

<sup>102</sup> Leach 1986: Ch. 18.

<sup>103</sup> Leach 1986: 81 ff.

<sup>104</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and Figs. 73, 79: the decorated animal, Ch. 6 for killing as a source of fertility. Cf. Aikateriniades 1979: pl. 4.2 for an earlier variant of the



the killing of an animal for a sacrificial meal becomes an act of creation, and the dividing up and distribution of meat to the other members of society becomes a way of recreating order and structure, thus giving life. It is not, however, just a sacrifice to the deceased mediators, but a substitute for the mediators themselves. People believe that the selected life-giving and fertility-promoting bull dedicated to Agios Charalampos is an incarnation of the saint, who is the protector of animals, especially the bull.<sup>105</sup> Accordingly, it is him—the saint—who is sacrificed and consumed by the entire gathered village.

All the lambs and goats slaughtered and eaten after the Resurrection in Olympos constitute a variant, although there is a total meat ban while Christ is down in Hades, the underworld. This, then, presents a parallel to the ox sacrifice during the ancient Dipolieia in Athens, which was called *Bouphonia* (that is, “the slaying of an ox”). The ox was an incarnation of Zeus, but also the usual representation of Dionysos, Poseidon, and the tearing to pieces of Dionysos Zagreus, transformed into a bull.<sup>106</sup> It is also relevant to compare the term *anadeixis* (“indication” in A.G., cf. *anadeixē*; that is, election or appointment in M.G), the bull in ancient Magnesia, and the contemporary sacrifice on Lesbos, which takes place on White Friday during the festival dedicated to the “Life-Giving Spring”, following the Resurrection and before Ascension Thursday. The modern cult dedicated to Agios Philippos is furthermore a parallel to the ceremony of the *Bouphonia* during the *Dipolieia*.<sup>107</sup> From such a perspective, the logic behind the sacrifice reveals itself to be the same in Homer as today: people give the deceased mediator a blood sacrifice in order to ensure a gift in return. This means that, although the mediator changes name through the dynamics of history, the goal and meaning of the sacrifice are in fact similar, and in that way the pagan sacrificial ritual has been replaced by a Christian one. Perhaps it is due to this mixture that the sacrifice in Agia Paraskeuē must be performed on the top of a mountain, to be precise, on Tauros, where the saint’s chapel is situated; which is to say that the main

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sacrifice in Agia Elenē, Cf. Kakouri 1965: Fig. 9 for Lesbos. Ancient parallels: *Il.* 6.93 f., 274, 308; *Plut. Mor.* 437b re sacrifice of non-yoked animals. Cf. van Straten 1987: 146-170, 1995: Figs. 43, 45, 56 decorated animals. See also *ARVarc.* 211, *ARVcl.* 84; *Strab.* 15.732. See *ARVcl.* 183 sacrifice.

<sup>105</sup> Aikateriniades 1979: 66. Cf. Lincoln 1991: 12.

<sup>106</sup> Makistou 1970: 198 f. For bull sacrifice to Poseidon, *Od.* 3.5-9. Incarnation of Zeus: Paus. 1.24.4.

<sup>107</sup> See Loukatos 1982: 193 for Agios Philippos, and cf. Harrison 1977: 143 f. Cf. Burkert 1983b: 143n.32 re *Bouphonia* on Tinos and Delos. See Alexopoulos 1993: 86 for the Easter lamb on Tinos.

rituals of the festival take place outside the village, outside of civilisation, like the *konaki*, which is virtually situated at the border of the village.

Although the blessing of the bull is controversial, the blessing of the horses, which takes place at Tauros, is not forbidden by the Church. There are, of course, also prayers in order to ensure that the horses will be fertile and produce many offspring. During the comparable *Palio* (horse race) in contemporary Siena (Italy), the horses are even blessed inside of the church before the race starts.<sup>108</sup> After the horse race, aggression comes to an end and violence comes down in the city, Siena being one of the least violent cities in Europe.

Until recently, the protagonist in the Kalogeros ceremony wore an animal mask on his head. Thus he belonged to the animals, “the Others”, since by wearing the mask he surrendered his own identity. Concerning the relationship between humans and animals in the Orthodox tradition, the Kalogeros did not have an animal mask in 1992, and in her 1979 examination of the Kalogeros ceremony, Maria Michaël-Dede emphasises the absence of the animal mask during the ritual in Agia Elenē in 1978, while on the other hand, K. Kakouri, who is not bothered by the problems concerning Orthodoxy and survivalism, emphasises its presence when she visited the festival in 1952.<sup>109</sup> These are elements which have been condemned by the Church since early Christianity. One might mention the ideological condemnation of hair since the Byzantine period, especially hair from wild animals, such as bear hair, which nonetheless is still seen as a fertility symbol in popular belief. In his critique of animal sacrifice, the aforementioned Bishop Theophilos (1780) strongly criticises both the dedication of the animal’s meat to the priest and its hide to the monks. The hide and meat were usually the priest’s part in antiquity, but is commonly today as well, according to Aikaterinidēs.<sup>110</sup> People also took care of the hide during the Anastenaria in 1992, putting it into the boot of a car rather than throwing it away, and in earlier times it was used to make sandals for the Anastenarides. Despite the fact that the animals still constitute a disputed topic, they are nevertheless represented by the Bear in Koimēsē (Figure 37) and other masks during the carnivals. Among several examples of rain magic, in fact, is the Bear, which is an important character in the carnival in Koimēsē. The Bear-leader cuts a few hairs off of the Bear’s coat and offers them to the mothers of small children for use

<sup>108</sup> Dundes/Falassi 1975: pl. 12. Cf. Handelman 1982: 169. See Conybeare 1901: 110 for prayer.

<sup>109</sup> Kakouri 1965: Fig. 21 vs. Michaël-Dede 1979a: 116 ff., cf. 121 (see Fig.).

<sup>110</sup> Aikaterinidēs 1979: 90, 94; Durand 1979: 156 f.; Romaos 1949: 52. Kakouri 1965: 42 (animal hair/fertility).

as an amulet. The Bear falls to the ground, sometimes becoming surly and stubborn and demanding gifts before he will get up.



Figure 37. The Bear and its leader during the carnival in Koimēsē, Greek Macedonia, 9 March 1992.

The playfulness of the Bear, with its pretend tumbles and demands for gifts before getting up again, is a well-known rain-making ritual. The animals that manifest in other masks during the carnivals particularly appear in combination with phallic symbols, such as sheep bells and tall pointed bonnets made from the hides of various animals, such as wolves or foxes, and the hats are decorated with items generally lent by the churches, such as in the village of Flamouro in Greek Macedonia, where the name of the masquerades is often Turkish (Figure 38). The masquerades in Flamouro actually have several names. In addition to *Baboutzikarios*, which is said to be Slavic, they might also be called *Bambouyeroi*, *Babuiros*, *Babousiarka* or *Kokkeri*.<sup>111</sup> According to the villagers, the Turkish term was adopted to keep the evil forces far away (cf. “evil will drive away evil”). Here we meet with a mixture of several cult layers; the popular culture exploits the Church, but also employs what is often denoted as “oriental” and “Turkish”.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6 and Fig. 98 in Appendix 3, 2012a. See also Athanassakis 1976.



Figure 38. The leather-clothed carnival figures known as “Kokkeri”, in the village of Flamouro, Greek Macedonia, Cheese Sunday, 8 March 1992.

According to Herodotus, the Thracians “wore fox-skin caps on their heads”, which also might emphasise an ambivalent attitude of the ancient Greeks towards these people, but not necessarily so:

The Thracians in the army wore fox-skin caps on their heads, and tunics on their bodies; over these they wore embroidered mantles; they had shoes of fawnskin on their feet and legs; they also had javelins and little shields and daggers.<sup>112</sup>

In ancient Greek culture, masking and animal metamorphosis were customary in connection with passage rites. The youths dressed up in animal clothing, be that as “girl cows”, girl bears” or “boy bulls” during the passage rites, are also variants of the aforementioned maenads in animal hides or Artemis, as depicted by the girl prepared for marriage in Ephesos during the procession in connection with the cult dedicated to the fertility and mother Goddess, Artemis.<sup>113</sup> Here, the animal hide which the virginal leader wears over her tunic both impersonates Artemis and indicates the transitional phase in which she is herself, thus illustrating the

<sup>112</sup> *Hdt.* 7.75,1, cf. *Xen. An.* 7.4. See also *supra* this chapter.

<sup>113</sup> *X. Eph.* 1.2,2-9.



nature-culture dichotomy. Nature is often represented through obscenity and fertility, as is the case with the violent wolf, Lykainion, who rapes the virgin Clōē.<sup>114</sup> According to the bipartition in animal symbolism, wild beasts that kill are associated with male aggressiveness and potency, whereas wild animals that are victims are associated with undomesticated female fertility. This is how the young virgin is considered before her first sexual intercourse, when the blood will flow, also in Greek context. The incarnation of manhood, the male superhero, Herakles, was naturally dressed in an animal hide, which enabled him to subjugate wild nature by donning elements taken from it, since the lion's hide (Figure 39) was his official garment.<sup>115</sup>



Figure 39: Belly *amphora* (pot/pitcher for storage of wine, oil, etc.) showing Herakles wearing the hide of the Nemean Lion while fighting Geryon with a Medusa on his shield (=ABV 136,49, see ABV. 96).

As the modern Kalogeros, Dionysos also had traits from wild nature; he was uncontrollable and rejuvenative, associated with the forests, trees, and fields. Many supposed that Dionysos spent the winter-months

<sup>114</sup> Turner 1960: 121; Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 28 f. See also Dowden 1989, also for the young dressed up in animal clothing.

<sup>115</sup> Herakles in animal hide: ARVarc. 146.1. Cf. ARVarc. 95, 104, 145, 181, 198.2.



somewhere else (cf. Figure 35). His “brotherhood” or retinue of animated dancers, *thiasos*, walked or danced in a wild, drunken and licentious procession, and by shameless actions they made comical gestures during the dances, which were an important part of the Dionysian *kōmos* that drove through Athens during the rural Dionysian festivals and the Anthesteria. The satyrs, nymphs, and Pan were also imagined as taking part in the ritual. Dancing billy goats and female maenads, obscene satyrs and young basket-carrying girls generated fertility, as did the sexually uninhibited processions.

Masks are the most ancient means of surrendering one’s own identity and assuming a new, extraordinary identity, whose power seizes (possesses) the person wearing the mask. Simultaneously, the masked person obtains a part in the fertility incarnated in the mask, according to the logic of “sympathetic magic”. This is illustrated at the great rituals dedicated to Kidarian Demeter, when the priest puts on the mask of the Goddess and beats the earth with rods to wake up the powers of the underworld, but also during the Dionysos festivals.<sup>116</sup> It seems, from comparison with the modern rituals, that this might be the reason that obscenities are often performed by masked persons. During the Kalogeros and other carnival ceremonies, we meet with unrestrained alcohol consumption, particularly by masked persons singing obscene songs and carrying phallic symbols while walking in processions.

During the ancient ritual called *gephyrismos* (signifying “gross abuse”), which took place on the bridge over the local river Kephisos, men with covered heads sat on the bridge and made obscene gestures while shouting coarse insults towards prominent persons in the procession to Eleusis.<sup>117</sup> At Dionysian festivals, wagons drove through the streets carrying masked figures who shouted abuse at everyone they passed in a proverbially coarse manner.

The masks effect a transposition into a new and unknown world, but apart from the Medusa who petrified men, this is a world of ridiculousness and obscenity. There are many variants of the procession with giant phalluses, and the wearers of these massive *membra* certainly promoted fertility, which was further indicated by smearing themselves with soot or bran or wearing masks, and they could simultaneously conceal their bourgeois identity, as people do nowadays.<sup>118</sup> The soot-smeared phallus-

<sup>116</sup> The rituals dedicated to Demeter Kidaria: Paus. 8.15,1-3. For masking in general, see Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1981.

<sup>117</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 391 f., 416 ff.

<sup>118</sup> Burkert 1985: 103 ff., cf. Ath. 14.622c-d; ARVcl. 429. See also Vernant 1985: 80 f., cf. Pl. *Leg.* 634a-c1, for causing fear vs. sensualism and pleasure.

carriers, *phallophoroi*, and those wearing phalluses, *ithyphalloi*, who marched along in the processions, were extremely drunk, thus paralleling the modern Kalogeros procession, where “even the schoolteachers” are smeared with soot and mud, to the great delight of the other participants. Another variant is the aforementioned “Arab”, also (for safety’s sake?) equipped with apotropaic bells and weapons (cf. phallus), the carrier of the obscene, who is akin to others who come from outside of civilisation, wild animals or the ancient satyrs. Again, one encounters this uncertainty in the importance of equipping the “primitive” elements with the same apotropaic symbols as those used by the “civilised” aspects. This indicates how difficult it is to establish the disparity between the two. One may also mention the comparison which has been made between the modern gypsies, gypsy tinkers taking part in variants of the Kalogeros ceremony, and fertility-bestowing spirits with physical deficiencies in antiquity. In the myths the latter are usually inventors of the blacksmith’s art, but also “wizards”.<sup>119</sup>

Masks and phalluses are also found together in the satyr’s costumes. Therefore, and ambiguously, according to ancient ideology, if a man surpassed the Apollonian ideology of moderation, he became a satyr with an eternally erect phallus, infertile.<sup>120</sup> Hence, during the rural Dionysia in midwinter, men celebrated the wine and its powers for arousal while they told the story about how surprised they initially were when they discovered that it gave them an erection. The thought that they should forever be locked or fixed in this shameful position, made them kill Ikarios and assault Dionysos himself, who had given Ikarios the wine as a tonic to promote sexual intercourse. However, some shepherds killed Ikarios because they did not fully understand how the drinking of wine would affect them, and were then driven mad because of their outrageous behaviour against Dionysos himself. They then received an oracle saying that they would recover their health when they made and dedicated clay sexual organs, representation of the very cause of their shame. As soon as this was done, they were freed from their problem.<sup>121</sup> The meaning of the phalluses carried in the local processions of the Rural Dionysia were, according to the story, an expression of their gratitude for being liberated from a permanent state of satyriasis and the complete dominance of their own lower limb. As already mentioned, Dionysos is initially considered a fertility God. This is due to the deity’s significance regarding wine

<sup>119</sup> Kakouri 1965: 37. Cf. Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1981 re the “disparity”. See also Adams 2017.

<sup>120</sup> Frontisi-Ducroux/Lissarrague 1990: 232, cf. Lissarrague 1990: 53-81.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 7.4, Rabe 1906: 279.24-280.12 and 281.1-3.

cultivation, but one also encounters the meaning of the Dionysos cult with regard to the power of wine consumption. The complementary qualities of Dionysos are also illustrated by the meaning of the phallus, which symbolises power and fertility. One may also parallelise the boundaries between the human and the bestial and excessive sexuality represented by the satyrs, Pan and Priapos the latter being the incarnation of the male member with the androgynous Hermaphrodites and Baubo of Priene (Figure 40). The latter, also seen to be a possible illustration of the Baubo of the church fathers, is known from the Demeter legend, where she performs the obscene gestures, thus making the sad and sorrowful Demeter laugh.<sup>122</sup>



Figure 40. Baubo-figurine from Priene. (Downloaded 28.04.2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baubo#/media/File:Terracotta\\_Baubo\\_figurine.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baubo#/media/File:Terracotta_Baubo_figurine.jpg))

Although all the examples are related to fertility magic, the sexuality they represent is beyond the accepted limits of everyday social interaction. According to M. Glender, the ancient contribution was to project these images onto the stage of religion and politics.<sup>123</sup> However, the two factors, politics and religion, are difficult to separate in ancient society.

<sup>122</sup> Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17P-18P. Hermaphroditos: Diod. 4.6.

<sup>123</sup> Glender 1990: 105 f.

As already indicated, the conception of the Thracian Dionysos is an interesting parallel to many people's assessment of the modern Thracians in Melikē. One might compare Euripides' description of Dionysos' arrival from Lydia and Phrygia with the ancient myth of conquest as reproduced by Herodotus; that is, from a Greek perspective.<sup>124</sup> One should notice, however, that it is generally the conquering people who rape, not the other way around as described here, when he claims that the Pelasgians mistreated or raped the women of the Greeks.<sup>125</sup> The point of the account is that such an act is so terrible that it gives moral grounds for the expulsion of the Pelasgians; that is, the actual "indigenous people" of Attica. The account is, in other words, an indication that the Greeks have never been autochthonous, other than in their own ideology. This ideology is illustrated in the myth of the first Athenian citizen, the Earth Child, the phallic snake God, Erichthonios, who was fostered by Athena. Furthermore, the mythical king of Athens and thus the true Athenian, King Kekrops, was of snake blood, being half-snake, half-man (cf. Figure 41).<sup>126</sup>



Figure 41. Personified snake, Akropolis Museum, Athens.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Hdt. 6.136 f. and Eur. *Bacch.* 13-22. Cf. Chirassi-Colombo 1974: 79 f. for the ancient, official, ambivalent view on Thrace with the modern conditions mentioned in connection with Kōsti.

<sup>125</sup> Hdt. 6.137,3.

<sup>126</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 438. Cf. *Apollod.* 3.14,6 for Erichthonios.

Accordingly, Athenian citizens could assert that they were true indigenous inhabitants of their city and have divine origin. One might ask whether this divine origin surpassed motherhood. It does not seem so, based on the role that has been assigned to the earth when she helps her children. If, in other words, Mother Earth here has replaced the other motherhoods, motherhood is still of significance. Hence the importance of Athena and the blood of Medusa, which both heals and kills.<sup>127</sup> This and other Greek myths of origin testify to how the Athenians in the 400s BCE created and preserved a collective identity, according to Nicole Loraux.<sup>128</sup>

This can be compared to the relationship between the modern immigrated Greeks and Macedonians in Agia Elenē.<sup>129</sup> Being earth-born; that is, born out of—or sprung from—the earth, thus seems to be used in ideological arguments, both now and earlier. In another context, Herodotus tells us that it was the Pelasgians, the indigenous people of Attica, who had taught the Greeks to portray the God Hermes with the erect phallus.<sup>130</sup> It demonstrates that the Greeks had not invented this by themselves, but perhaps also provides armaments for later puritans; the church fathers' assessments, for instance. The significance of the erect phallus in the fertility cult is emphasised in the citation from the Christian bishop Hippolytos when he talks about the initiation mysteries that take place on the island of Samothrake in northern Greece, although in this actual text (*Refutation of All Heresies*), he wants to disprove all untrue beliefs connected with the two statues set up in the palace.<sup>131</sup> These depict naked men holding their arms upstretched to the sky, pointing their erect phalluses in the same direction, like the statue of Hermes on Kyllene. The actual statues show the primeval human being as well as the regenerative spirit thoroughly innate to him.

The point was, and is, in what manner one could assign these obscene customs—which were regarded with ambivalence, but which were nonetheless necessary in order to increase fertility—to the Others, foreigners or women. We also see the importance of these rituals when Aristotle, in the authentic honour and shame tradition, advises the authorities in his ideal polis to banish sculpture or painting as well as literature with obscene content, while making an exception for the cults

<sup>127</sup> Eur. *Ion*. 1003 ff. Athena: 1001. Earth helps her children: 1000. Divine origin, cf. 999 ff.

<sup>128</sup> Loraux 1984, 1996.

<sup>129</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 4 on the various population groups in northern Greece and gypsies on Tinos. Cf. 1993b, for a modern case in Greek Macedonia.

<sup>130</sup> *Hdt.* 2.51.

<sup>131</sup> Hippol. *Haer.* 5.8, 9-10.



that, according to common custom, prescribe indecencies (*tōthasmos*). Similar rituals were performed in other places. Herodotus tells us, *inter alia*, of rituals on Aegina and in Epidauros.<sup>132</sup> Nonetheless, these customs have traditionally been unwelcome in the official society of honour and shame. In antiquity, the customs could therefore be connected with the Adonis cult, which was female, foreign and barbaric, and thus one could provide an ideological appearance or explanation, in the spirit of the conservative writers, that obscenities could occur.<sup>133</sup> Since the description of the Dionysian satyrs illustrated Athenian men's own sexual fantasies, it was more legitimate to let Dionysos arrive from Thrace once a year; that is, a place known for mystery religion or "sacred obscenity", elements which also flourished in other "non-Greek" regions. Likewise, by referring to the "myth" of the union of Demeter and the hero Iasion in a Cretan thrice-ploughed cornfield, for instance, one lends an appearance of legitimacy to the topic.<sup>134</sup> Today the same can occur by celebrating carnival on Clean Monday, for indeed, everyone knows that it is merely carnival; the "Arabs", the "myth", and "carnival" ideologically serve to conceal or cover up the custom, which, according to sympathetic magic and the logic of the agricultural society, must be performed in order to secure fertility. The vegetation deity Adonis also belongs in this context.

### From the Moderation Ideologists to the Adonis of the Popular Cult and Modern Parallels

Presentations of the ancient official view of the Athenian Adonis festival celebrated during the dog days put forth by the moderation ideologists, Plato, Simplicius, and Aristotle, show it to be the counterpart of the Demeter cult, or the true principle of agriculture.<sup>135</sup> Based on this ideology, the festival of Adonis is connected with sterility and infertility, which in that sense is in opposition to the fertile period, which begins at the time of ploughing and sowing when the Thesmophoria was celebrated.<sup>136</sup> The Thesmophoria festival was reserved for women. In a number of publications, especially the book, *Les Jardins d'Adonis: La mythologie des aromates en Grèce* (1989, or. 1972), Marcel Detienne has

<sup>132</sup> Hdt. 5.83; Arist. *Pol.* 7.1336b15-18.

<sup>133</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 387-398.

<sup>134</sup> *Od.* 5.125-127; Hes. *Th.* 969-971.

<sup>135</sup> Arist. *Ph.* 5.230a31-230b3; Simpl. 911.13-15, cf. 1212.18; Pl. *Phdr.* 276b61.

<sup>136</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 5-7 also for fertility and sterility, the wet and the dry and the point of the fasting, cf. Parker 1985: 83.

claimed that the Thesmophoria was an ideological agricultural festival in which chaste wives were the sole participants. Based on, *inter alia*, Aristophanes' comedy, *Thesmophoriazusae*, combined with a passage from Kallimachos' *Hymn* 2, he argues for how these women, Athenian matrons, were symbolised by bees, and thus parallels to Demeter's priestesses, the *melissai* ("bees"); that is, the pure prototype of ideal femaleness. Their purity was necessary so that their fertility-bestowing function within the family and society should not be destroyed by pollution.<sup>137</sup> Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazusae* is staged on the second day of the festival. Still, it is a superficial source for the actual festival, since a man is unlikely to have possessed first-hand knowledge of the rites. He is unable to provide many details about the festival itself, and most likely used the Demeter hymn as a source. According to the myth, the bee is the purest creature, as is also the case today. In antiquity, bees were usually connected with nymphs.<sup>138</sup> The nymphs demonstrate an earlier stage in the female life cycle than the Athenian matrons, who, according to Detienne, were the main participants in the Thesmophoria, but have parallels with the priestesses nonetheless, since the analogy between priestess, sacred land, and sacrificial animals, states that they must be pure.<sup>139</sup> The demand for chastity is also symbolised by the Mother Goddess Ino, "The white Goddess", identified as Dionysos' nanny.

The Adonis festival, on the other hand, is presented by all three ancient thinkers (or moderation ideologists) as an instigator of unrestrained extramarital contact, which, seen in contrast to the Thesmophoria, resulted in infertility. This is the background of Detienne's schematic description of the contrasts between the Adonis festival and the Thesmophoria as regards divine powers, the sociological position of the women and men, sexual behaviour, botany, smells, and food. Moreover, the contrasts constitute a variant of the already mentioned dichotomies, which we encounter in Bourdieu, for instance.<sup>140</sup> I have already discussed Detienne's systematic contrasts between the two festivals elsewhere, but will elaborate on this in the following, *inter alia*, because his description is a good example of how structuralist scholars arrive at a simplistic and erroneous picture of the complicated and paradoxical relationship between the official and popular cults by applying a one-dimensional perspective to

<sup>137</sup> Callim. *Hymn*. 2.110-112; Ar. *Thesm.* 330, cf. Detienne 1989: 154, 1979a: 197, 1974: 56-75, 1981.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. *Od.* 13.102-106. See Sanders 1962: 17, for contemporary circumstances.

<sup>139</sup> Sacred land: cf. Thuc. 3.104. Priestess: Eur. *Tro.* 41 f. See Parker 1985: 81-83, cf. 93.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Bourdieu 1980: Ch. 3 and 1990, 1998 with Detienne 1989: Fig. 157.

the sources.<sup>141</sup> The contrast Detienne draws between feasting and fasting is scarcely correct, as the sources do not emphasise any overindulgence in food in the Adōnia, and the Thesmophoria was dedicated to feasting after the fast which took place during the intermediate day. Nor was the Adōnia an unrestrained festival for courtesans. Although the licentiousness and extra-marital sex are probably strongly exaggerated, they may nonetheless indicate that the official ideology, both earlier and today, is shaped by the cycle of nature, though it may also illustrate the need for purification before the fertile period begins. Therefore the Adonis festival is a fertility festival to the very highest degree, despite the fact that the opposite has been claimed based on a literal reading of the cited moderation ideologists, who give an ancient description very similar to the modern ideology of honour and shame. Based on another reading taking into consideration the importance and logic of the agricultural calendar, in which purification is crucial to securing fertility, we obtain an interpretation different from Detienne's.

Adonis was a vegetation and fertility deity. The fertility aspect of the festival is also evident in the various symbols central to the ritual, though Detienne has claimed the opposite, since he turns the realities upside down.<sup>142</sup> Detienne's thesis that the Adonis myth and ritual have nothing to do with fertility, but on the contrary, announce seduction and sterility particularly builds on the relationship surrounding aromatic substances central to the ritual and myth associated with the deity: the anti-aprodisiac lettuce plant, myrrh, and so on. Myrrh is associated with the sun and the dry and uncorrupted, whereas the lettuce plant is associated with the humid, putrefaction and death. According to Hesychios,

the women bring out images, *eidōla*, and gardens in terracotta vessels on the Adōnia, and they prepare for Adonis gardens with all types of vegetation, plants and herbs, such as fennel and lettuce; for they say that he was laid out by Aphrodite among the lettuce.<sup>143</sup>

According to the myth as presented by Ovid, Adonis was moreover the son of Myrrha, the balsam tree, and her own father, Kinyras, the result of the daughter seducing her father.<sup>144</sup> Seduction, however, is very important in relation to fertility, as illustrated in Homer, for instance, and a sterile period within the annual cycle is, like fasting, essential to promoting

<sup>141</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 7 discusses Detienne 1989.

<sup>142</sup> Detienne 1989: 192.

<sup>143</sup> Hsch. s.v. *Adōnidos kēpoi*. See also Ath. 2.69b and c-d.

<sup>144</sup> Ovid. *Met.* 10.311-518.

fertility.<sup>145</sup> All of the factors Detienne discusses in his argument in support of the seduction and sterility thesis are actually crucial for ensuring fertility, be that as the result of their anti-aphrodisiac use with regard to purification, or because they are connected with death and fertility, two elements that belong together, according to the cyclical logic of fertility. Accordingly, Adonis spends two-thirds of every year with Aphrodite on the earth, while he spends the last third of every year in the underworld with Persephone, when the grain harvest is completed. Even if myrrh has an ambiguous status, being connected with both death and perverse persons, it is also associated with weddings, according to Sappho.<sup>146</sup> It encourages both menstruation and fertility. The anti-aphrodisiac effect of the lettuce plant is important in relation to the usual ritual purification before the fertile period begins, in the same way as the herbs on which the women lie during the fast of the Thesmophoria. Related to this is the logic behind the food prohibited during the Haloa festival and what it symbolises: the female genitalia. Consequently, Detienne's eagerness to deny the fertility aspect makes him actually deprive well-known fertility symbols of their fertility-bestowing value. This also concerns water, to give one example.<sup>147</sup> That Detienne fails to mention alternative parentage for Adonis given in other sources may be due to the fact that doing so would weaken his analysis. Nonetheless, all of Adonis' various "parents", be they Myrrha and her own father or Phoenix and Alphisiboea, provide him with much fertility symbolism.<sup>148</sup>

Thus one may question the way Detienne uses "public" opinion; that is, the "view of the Athenian citizen", according to him.<sup>149</sup> However, based on the official, ideological, male, Athenian way of thinking, his interpretation is an important contribution illustrating the desire to keep people in their place, consistent with the tragedies and diverse ideological, figurative representations on official buildings, such as the aforementioned myths of the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs.

Concerning the disparagement of the Adonis festival, it is possible that we are dealing with an ideology's (or later ideologies') disparagement of a widespread popular cult, which was also very popular in non-Greek regions among the barbarians or foreigners. It is the ideological male description that has inspired the proverb in which the gardens signify sterility, perishability, and uselessness. In *Phaedrus*, Plato focuses on the

<sup>145</sup> *Il.* 14.197-199, 214-221.

<sup>146</sup> Sappho. *Fr.* 63, 66.

<sup>147</sup> Detienne 1989: 204.

<sup>148</sup> Phoenix and Alphisiboea: Apollod. 3.14,4, cf. Hes. *KG. Fr.* 21.

<sup>149</sup> Detienne 1989: 128, cf. 188 f., see also 194, 197.



fact that the seedlings in the gardens of Adonis do not reach fruition. The proverb “You are more infertile than the ‘Gardens of Adonis’” was derived from the regulated sprouting and withering of the shoots, and according to a commentary on the Plato passage, “the ‘Gardens of Adonis’ signifies that something is out of place, short-lived and rootless”.<sup>150</sup> This description is not definitive, and should not prevent attempts to give a new perspective on the significance of the gardens. The actual religious ritual which was performed with the gardens, their ingredients, and all the other aspects, such as plants associated with Adonis, are connected with fertility and purification or healing.

The ideological, androcentric description provides a negative assessment to its own advantage, recalling modern descriptions based on a male perspective of honour and shame. In the *Laws*, Plato tells us about cults imported from Cyprus, such as that of Adonis, thus demonstrating his dislike for them, as Cyprus was famous for the cult of Aphrodite and sacred prostitution, a general oriental practice.<sup>151</sup> Both Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, who wrote the preface to Detienne’s most important publication on Adonis, emphasise that the cult of Adonis is oriental. The same regards sacred prostitution, and even if the latter aspect was found in Corinth, it was deeply foreign to the Greek mentality, according to these two French scholars.<sup>152</sup> We encounter a more recent variant in Joan Breton Connelly, who despite a comprehensive volume which deals with priestesses from Homer to the Christian era completely omits what she considers to be the myth of Greek priestesses in connection with sacred prostitution. This is due to the fact that she is concerned with describing modern independent Western women’s assumed predecessors through her description of ancient priestesses.<sup>153</sup> According to Connelly, there is no verified evidence for the existence of the opposites of her “puritan” priestesses. Although we know that there was a connection between prostitutes, courtesans and the holy in the ancient Greek world, such as regards the priestesses in the Aphrodite cult, Connelly excludes a significant segment of ancient women because it—or rather, they—do not fit into her vision. Nonetheless, it was a courtesan who civilised the wild man Enkidu, according to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Although this indeed was not in a Greek context, we encounter many instances of votive offerings from prostitutes in Greece, for instance, Polyarchis’ dedication to

<sup>150</sup> Schol. Pl. *Phdr.* 276b61.

<sup>151</sup> See Pl. *Leg.* 738c and cf., e.g., *Hdt.* 1.199, cf. also 1.105 for the cult. See furthermore Luc. *Syr.D.* 6; Lentakē 1992: 79-94; Motte 1973: 124, cf. 129, 139 f.

<sup>152</sup> Detienne 1989: 243 ff., 251 (cf. n.4) and Vernant 1989: xlv.

<sup>153</sup> Connelly 2007.



Aphrodite. Literary references demonstrate that prostitutes were represented as having a special attachment to female deities, especially Demeter, “the great Goddess”, and Korē, while one might, unsurprisingly, swear by Aphrodite.<sup>154</sup> One may also mention the liturgy on Palm Sunday dedicated to the bridegroom, *Nymphios*, and the connection between the prostitutes and the ten virgins in the modern context. On the other hand, to accept sacred prostitution would render the Greek man a cuckold, although Solon had already legalised prostitution and founded a temple of Aphrodite Pandemos, the one who embraces the whole people in the common bond and fellow-feeling necessary for the existence of any state.<sup>155</sup> The earlier official cult is also said to have contained examples of rituals in which girls sacrificed their virginity to a phallic stone statue upon entering into marriage.<sup>156</sup> A possible hieros gamos between the fasting women of the Thesmophoria and Pluto or other earthly demons also reveals the need for divine help to secure a good result. Despite the fact that sexual surroundings were common in the Greek agricultural festivals, those connected with these oriental festivals did not find favour with the Greek male ideology. This is demonstrated by the frequent allusions and explicit comments in the comic poets.<sup>157</sup> Since one encounters the same critique from the church fathers, it is apparent that these campaigners of the new ideology dovetailed into the usual Greek ideological tradition. The church fathers, however, condemned all rituals in sexual surroundings. In the eyes of the Christian ideology, earlier first fruit offerings were offerings to the Devil, or first fruit offerings by means of which one demonstrates one’s power.<sup>158</sup> In this way, the male ideology seems to constitute a counter-statement to the cult in which the women govern. These realities are made evident by the fact that the festivals of Adonis in Athens were popular festivals not blessed with support from the state, since they were not incorporated into the official religious calendar of the Athenian polis. In other places, they were celebrated in specific houses,<sup>159</sup> perhaps as a kind of parallel to the modern *konaki*. There is also a parallel in the oriental korybantism, which could not take place in an official sanctuary like the

<sup>154</sup> Alciph. 4.14.1. Demeter: 4.14.2. Goddesses: Luc. *DMeretr.*; Alciph. 4. Dedication: AP. 9.332. Gilg. 1.

<sup>155</sup> Ath. 13.569a.

<sup>156</sup> Re the rite where they may have sacrificed their virginity to Leukippos, etc., cf. Lentakē 1992: 309-314.

<sup>157</sup> E.g., Ar. *Lys.* 387 ff.

<sup>158</sup> Vanggaard 1969: 121 f., vs. 152 f. (negative), cf. Payne Knight 1974: 103 f., 141 f. vs. 211 (negative), see also 206.

<sup>159</sup> Paus. 2.20.5.

Athenian *Metērōn*, but enjoyed great success in “private” (that is, the domestic) cult.<sup>160</sup>

Here, too belongs the meaning of the male ideology of honour and shame, which is concerned with promoting its own role, and the nightmare of Athenian men, which runs like a thread throughout male Greek culture: one always knows who a child’s mother is, but not the father. By taking the male ideology literally, Detienne identifies the Thesmophoria with men, who are considered to be the ones who provide for legitimate agriculture, while Adonis is described as an infertile, oriental seducer. Seven different poets’ plays with titles like *Adonis* and *Adōniazousai* are attested, and one may wonder whether it is accidental that they have not survived intact (only the titles are known). The aforementioned infertile, oriental seducer mirrors all the vase paintings, especially those from the archaic period, which show randy satyrs chasing Greek women, or Paris’ abduction of Helen, for that matter.<sup>161</sup> Accordingly, the oriental Aphrodite could receive the arch female symbol, the apple, representation of the female genitalia, and win the beauty competition, an institution, which, like the abduction of women, has great significance in Greek culture. The judgement of Paris in the beauty contest and victory of the Goddess of love led to the oriental abduction of a Greek woman and ended with the Trojan War.<sup>162</sup> In the last instance, the satyrs with their eternally erect phalluses are perhaps rather depictions of Greek men themselves, or what might happen to them, as mentioned with regard to the Ikarios myth. Therefore the ideological statement, which bears evidence of the fear of the abduction of women, becomes paradoxical when compared with the father God, Zeus, the worst seducer, and also the father of remarkable offspring.

This is a variant of the venerable symbolic marriage of the priest of Dionysos to all the women of Athens and thereby the Athenian polis during the Anthesteria, and demonstrates the same logic which occasions Oedipus to marry the queen in order to conquer the land of Thebes. These cases, moreover, echo the male superhero, the woman-lover, Herakles. He is also known to be a woman-hater, but in accordance with the general logic of honour and shame, the two characteristics do not contradict each other. Herakles also had so-called barbarian and female characteristics; for instance, in the form of the peplos, the woman’s garment he received from Athena. It was also the garment of the barbarians, although the historians of religions’ desire to protect his manliness has resulted in their excluding

<sup>160</sup> Will 1960: 104.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. ARVarc. 308.1.

<sup>162</sup> See Graves 1985: 159 c, e, i. See also j for the Orientalism.

elements considered to belong to the themes of bondage and womanliness; that is, “oriental” characteristics, as Loraux has also pointed out.<sup>163</sup> Considering the description of the logic of fertility, as demonstrated during the modern carnival, when men dress up as women in order to obtain a share of the fertility that they possess, it may be that Herakles in a woman’s garment has other meanings.<sup>164</sup> It may be another attempt to veil the male aspect in order to activate the female fertility powers. Seen in relation to his extreme virile aspects and the need for union of the two sexes to promote fertility, one obtains another view of his disguise. He is reminiscent of Adonis. What is not veiled is that the superhero tames practically the entire known world at that time (that is, the Mediterranean region colonised by the Greeks) by subjugating it to Greek culture. During his journeys, he is continually getting married and fathering offspring before he moves on. His life is transformed into a journey across the female body, from the Lydian queen Omphale (cf. *omphalos*, “navel”, umbilical cord, and the connection to reproductive power) to Hēbē (the youth). Concerning the mentioned analogy between women and earth, the female body thereby becomes an object for conquest in the same way as the “conquest” of the Peloponnese and thereafter the entire western Mediterranean region, right to Gibraltar, the “Pillars of Herakles”. In “the Labours of Herakles”, we encounter a mythical description of Greek expansion or colonisation in the archaic period which revolves around well-known themes. Although there may, of course, be other explanations for the many marriages of his historical successor, Alexander the Great, and although Alexander did not follow in Herakles’ footsteps, since he went east, he went about it in the same way—by marrying women—and the great mythical prototype was the father God, Zeus himself. This variant of the male need to “tame” the “wild” sources of fertility, whether it be the earth or the woman, is, in accordance with Greek ideology, described differently when spoken of in the context of the Other Men’s taming; then, it is described as the escapades of an oriental seducer. The point is the need for women to survive.<sup>165</sup> The aforementioned myths and accounts in which the bridegroom settles down in the territory of the bride

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<sup>163</sup> Loraux 1990: 25 f., cf. 34 f. Garment of the barbarians: Aesch. *Pers.* 199, *Supp.* 720. Peplos received from Athena: Diod. 4.14,3. Woman-hater: Plut. *Mor.* 403f-404a20 vs. woman-lover: Paus. 9.27,6-7; Diod. 4.29. See, moreover, Motte 1973: 228. Cf. the relationship between queen (*basileia*, cf. basilinna) and kingdom (*basileia*). See furthermore Hes. *Op.* 519-525 and cf. Herzfeld 1992a: 113.

<sup>164</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7, cf. also Triomphe 1989: 226n.55.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Devereux 1991: 126 for the logic.

are examples of the so-called matrilocal marriage pattern, and indicate that the patrilocal pattern neither is nor was absolute.

Detienne's assertion that the Adonis festival was not a fertility festival and only heralds seduction is so unreasonable as to cancel itself out, and therefore only continues the Orientalism of the writers of the ancient ideological sources in their official repudiation of the cult. One may note that the fact that the incestuous union that produced Adonis takes place not only with the daughter seducing her own father, but also during the Thesmophoria, when the women are supposed to be sexually abstinent, is an argument in support of Adonis' untenable characteristics from a male Greek perspective. Furthermore, although the classical festival is generally a Greek cultural event, the whole story takes place in a mythical place in the "East", as it does in Ovid's retelling.<sup>166</sup> The description of the actual mythical case may, however, be a distorted and androcentric illustration of actual circumstances. It is stuffed with Orientalism, and consequently amounts to scaremongering, which Detienne nonetheless accepts immediately.<sup>167</sup> When one asserts that the saying about the "gardens of Adonis" conflicts with Adonis' identification with the vegetation spirit, due to his unproductive sexual union with Aphrodite, in practice, one rejects the fact that, although the gardens symbolise the manhood's rapid rise and decline at the sexual level, according to the interpretation of John Winkler, it is nonetheless important for reproduction.<sup>168</sup> The claim is, however, also an expression of the Orientalism of modern scholars, an outgrowth of their reading of select ancient sources, be they Plato, Ovid, or Plutarch, the advocates of the ancient male ideology. With regard to the Orientalism of Detienne, it shines through, since one can read it between the lines of his study in several places, although he also has an important comment regarding the Other within the Greek system.<sup>169</sup> With Detienne, the Orientalism is introduced as early as Chapter 1, where he writes about perfume in addition to many other oriental luxuries which actually belong to the past and present Greek reality as well, although Aeschylus associates incense with Syria and Aristophanes refers to Persian slippers.<sup>170</sup> The scenes on several vase paintings, however, depict the Greeks' own taste, which is strikingly similar to their more eastern neighbours. Many of the vase paintings may illustrate Sappho's positive

<sup>166</sup> Ovid, *Met.* 10.298-471.

<sup>167</sup> Detienne 1989: 148-150, 159. Re Ovid's description of the Adonis myth, *Met.* 10.298-739 (his origin and death).

<sup>168</sup> Winkler 1990: 205 f.

<sup>169</sup> Detienne 1989: 237 f. Re the Orientalism, see especially 229 f., 236 f., 243.

<sup>170</sup> Ar. *Eccles.* 319; Aesch. *Ag.* 1312.



assessment of soft cushions, myrrh, purple clothes, jewellery, incense, perfume, and so on.<sup>171</sup> Plutarch, however, is critical of such bacchanalian extravagance, of which women love to boast, and claims that they will not show themselves outdoors if it is taken from them.<sup>172</sup> The way the Greeks imagined the Persians reveals paradoxes, because there is a strong touch of envy alternating with admiration, despite the Orientalism that often shows through.<sup>173</sup> Both groups loved and still love pleasant scents, and despite a puritanical interpretation based on equally puritanical sources, the similarities are often striking, a fact that can be attributed to their common value system. Accordingly, severe restrictions possibly imposed on women in the classical period may demonstrate a greater resemblance to the “barbarians” from whom they wished to differentiate themselves. The significance of the aromatic substances in connection with Adonis has already been mentioned. One encounters the same “internally” in Greece, since the good smell associated with Olympian deities is in contrast to the stench and rot connected with the Furies in the ideologist Aeschylus.<sup>174</sup> Detienne takes this literally, however, because it fits into his dual bipartite scheme, but in so doing he also falls into his own contradictions regarding good smells.<sup>175</sup>

To emphasise the perverted use of myrrh, as Detienne does, is a form of Orientalism.<sup>176</sup> The plant’s connection with fertility has already been mentioned, where it also appears that Adonis’ infertile period is important to understanding his nature, according to the logic behind cyclical thinking. He belongs to the subterranean region during a given period, just like other vegetation deities. Therefore the power from his sexual union with Persephone down in Hades, within the womb of the earth, where life begins, is transferred to the seed corn which lies buried in the earth, and is manifested through the subsequent sprouting and growth of the vegetation. Accordingly, the relationships with both Persephone and Aphrodite are important, and not the incompatible opposites that Detienne claims.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, the Orientalism is further emphasised by the fact that their offspring was the deformed Priapos, who is nonetheless generally

<sup>171</sup> Sappho. *Fr.* 66. Myrrh: 63; soft cushions: 57. Cf., e.g., ARVcl. 235, 288, and all the *lekýthoi* (pl. of *lekýthos* high, narrow perfume/oil flask), e.g., 229.

<sup>172</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 142c30, 144c44-e45, cf. 609b.

<sup>173</sup> Detienne 1989: 120.

<sup>174</sup> Aesch. *Eum.* 53 vs. Hes. *Th.* 557.

<sup>175</sup> Detienne 1989: 94.

<sup>176</sup> Detienne 1989: Ch. 3, Fig. 157, 215.

<sup>177</sup> Detienne 1989: 226n.1, cf. 172 f. The Orientalism is found in other discussions of Aphrodite: Motte 1973: 131.



associated with fertility. To claim that the relationship is infertile because it takes place outside the monogamous frame of marriage also conflicts with common practice in classical Athens at that time, when the division between marriage and concubinage was probably not so clear-cut, despite what one might wish ideologically.<sup>178</sup> Otherwise Perikles' citizenship law from 451/0 BCE—which decreed that an individual must have both an Athenian father and mother to become a citizen—would scarcely have been instituted.<sup>179</sup> Since the central mystery in the hieros gamos of Attica was that the husband stayed at home and spent the evening with his wife, Zeus' mythical prototype is probably a clear example of the Athenian reality.<sup>180</sup> Concerning men's and women's different spheres and interests, one encounters equivalent circumstances in contemporary Greece, where men often live their own lives at the "kapheneio" and the women meet their female friends in their leisure time in their own spaces. Among middle-aged and older people it is also common that people of the same sex go out and eat together. This pertains to both men and women.

That the sexual element is emphasised in connection with oriental deities in many of the ancient sources is therefore a reflection of the politics of the time with regards to the female barbarians; that is, the Persians, and most likely resulted in the Greek male ideology disparaging the festival, although the rituals were in no way reserved for the Orient. Moreover, the ostensible licentiousness of the Adonis festival is also characteristic of the Haloa festival under the protection of Athenian archons. Despite the significance of the sexuality in ancient rituals, there was an attempt to keep it under control, as is clearly stated in Aristotle, where obscenities are tolerated because they are important, but only within certain limits.<sup>181</sup> The general intermingling of cults from the archaic period on, against which later ideologists struggle, is, for instance, illustrated in Clement of Alexandria, when he condemns the ingredients (such as sweet fennel stalks) in the mystic Eleusinian *kistē* (basket/box). The ingredients were also central to other cults, such as in connection with the "Adonis gardens" and we see them again in the thyrsos staves of the maenads in the Dionysos cult.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Detienne 1989: 238 f.

<sup>179</sup> Nonetheless, see Plut. *Arist.* 27.2.

<sup>180</sup> Husband at home with his wife: Men. *Meth.* 320K. Cf. Salviat 1964: 648 f.; Parker 1987: 142 f.

<sup>181</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 7.1336b15-18.

<sup>182</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 251: *narthēki*, cf. thyrsos. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.19P. Cf. Edwards 1960-61: 84 f.

The androcentric ideology on which Detienne and Vernant base their assessment of the Adonis cult is a mirror of the logic behind the Apolline ideology of honour and shame, which is expressed in the conception behind the “Evil Eye”. The logic behind the Ten Commandments is also an aspect of this.<sup>183</sup> If Detienne’s phallogocentric interpretation of the Adonis festival is correct, one may ask why the aforementioned elements of the festival have nonetheless been so enduring. The festival also exemplifies the death cult and laments that are so important in Homer, via Sappho, up into late antiquity. In spite of men’s critical comments about the cult, and Solon’s and subsequent leaders’ laws banning women’s laments and other rituals in connection with it, the cult nevertheless continues to exist.<sup>184</sup> When the male-authored sources are compared with the few fragments we possess from Sappho regarding the laments over Adonis, one may derive a different interpretation, because women’s laments over the deceased deity provide a different description than those of men.<sup>185</sup> Despite the fact that the cult of Aphrodite and Adonis was negatively assessed in “official” classical Athens, the “domain of the man”, the festival of Adonis was a widespread popular cult. The continuity of many of the festival elements, such as the lamentation the women perform in front of the flower-decorated grave of a deceased young man and his subsequent resurrection, might refer to this popularity. These are important rituals, which we encounter as early as the Geometric vase paintings and Homer. One might note that Herodotus believed the lamenting song of Linos to be the origin of all music.<sup>186</sup> Ironically enough, Detienne himself reveals between the lines that this is nothing new for the Greeks, although he does not draw the obvious conclusion from his observations.<sup>187</sup> We have many modern parallels, such as the ritual called *Leidinos* or *Deilino* (that is, evening meal), which is celebrated on 14 September, during the festival dedicated to the *Exaltation of the Cross*. Adonis is also associated with the

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Moss/Cappannari 1976: 2 ff. See also Detienne 1989 and Vernant 1989: i-xxi, xxiv, xxvi.

<sup>184</sup> For the laws banning “such behaviour”, see Plut. *Sol.* 21.4 f.; *SIG* 1218.

<sup>185</sup> Sappho. *Fr.* 25, 103, 136, 86a vs. Ar. *Lys.* 387-398; Plut. *Alc.* 18.3, *Nic.* 13.7.

<sup>186</sup> *Hdt.* 2.79, cf. *Il.* 18.570 f. Vase paintings: Richter 1977: Figs. 409 f.; Kurtz/Boardman 1971: pls. 4 f.; ARVarc.141, ARVcl.38, 252-256, 267, 269, 274, 361, and cf. 285, 299 for Adonis. Paus. 6.23,3 lament over Achilleus. See, e.g., *Il.* 23.12-23, 152-158 where Achilleus laments over Patroklos. Generally it is women who lament: *Il.* 24.723-776 over Hektor, *Od.* 24.58-64 Achilleus; Aesch. *Cho.* 124-151 over Agamemnon. See also Håland 2014: Ch. 4 for a comprehensive discussion.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. *Il.* 23; ABV.26 re the burial of Patroklos and, e.g., *Hdt.* 6.58 for the kings of Sparta with Detienne 1989: 244.

contemporary cult during the Orthodox Easter season celebrations.<sup>188</sup> It is also important to stress the correspondence between the cult of Adonis and the cult dedicated to Aphrodite and Eros, because similarities to earlier rituals on the Akropolis cliff made it easier to accept the Adonis cult, as is generally the case, since we have many instances where especially holy places have absorbed new cults. We encounter a modern parallel, for instance, in the area of the sanctuary on Tinos, in the shrine commemorating “the heroes of the Elli”. This was a Greek destroyer which was sunk by a submerged Italian submarine while anchored off the Tinos harbour in order to celebrate 15 August 1940. Today the torpedoed heroes are commemorated during the festival dedicated to the Dormition/Death or “Falling Asleep” of the Mother Goddess, the Panagia, in the same way as the other modern deceased heroes linked to the sanctuary.

The women’s role in processes of production and reproduction is clearly illustrated by the importance of the same central rituals in the festivals dedicated to Demeter and in connection with the ideological Panathenaia, when the Arrēphoroi perform the preliminary ritual associated with both Aphrodite and Athena. Therefore the official ideology could not exclude the Adōnia, even if it was never incorporated into the official religious calendar of the Athenian polis. We have a concrete example of the woman’s central significance in connection with life and fertility. A later parallel is the modern cult dedicated to the Panagia *Aphroditissa*, who is celebrated on Cyprus, the island of Aphrodite. The existence of this cult might indicate that the puritanical distinction between eroticism and fertility one encounters in Detienne’s description, based on his interpretation of the ideological sources, was not found in practice among the ancient people, either. This example may point to the actual meaning and power of Aphrodite, because she incarnates all female aspects to a greater extent than her equivalents, Demeter and the Panagia.<sup>189</sup> As regards other parallels between the cultic elements under discussion, both caves and water belong together with the fertility and healing aspects. One may, for instance, also mention the holy tree with offering gifts in the form of clothing fragments at the top of the steps leading down to the Agia Solomoni catacombs in Kato Paphos, Cyprus, which I observed in the early summer of 1983, as well as the holy water at the bottom of the cave itself. One encounters a similar phenomenon next to the temple of Athena

<sup>188</sup> Pilitsis 1985: 145-166. Cf. Håland 2014: Ch. 3-4, 2017: Ch. 4 and 6; Makistou 1970: 204-208. Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 111, 113-116 for *Leidinos*, cf. Håland 2000 (2012), 2014: Ch. 4.

<sup>189</sup> See Håland 2009a for discussion. See Motte 1973: 127 ff. re the particular qualities of Aphrodite.

in Pergamon, Turkey in the autumn of 1999. Akin to the custom performed during the festival dedicated to Agios Ioannē on 31 August, people leave their illness in the tree of the saint in the form of clothing fragments from themselves or other ill persons, which are hung on the tree.<sup>190</sup>



Figure 42. The remains of the oldest Byzantine church on Tinos is a most holy place for the many pilgrims who dedicate their pilgrimage clothes (penitential robes) here, August 2005.

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<sup>190</sup> Loukatos 1981: 141.

A variant is the dedication of initiation clothes to Demeter and Korē when people were initiated at Eleusis, which again echoes the ritual on Tinos, where people dedicate their black pilgrimage clothes (that is, their penitential robes) in the sanctuary (Figure 42).<sup>191</sup>

The male dream of the chaste woman is the result of fear and thereby follows the ideological desire to hide her, whether in the innermost part of the house, in mychos, or behind a veil, so that she will not be seduced by some visiting foreigner and thus repeat the narrative of the Trojan prince, Paris.<sup>192</sup> This fear also appears in the “male revolt” against the feeling of female dominance in Aeschylus’ ideological statement, in which he entirely deprives the woman of her significance in the process of reproduction, and demonstrates his claim by referring to the aforementioned myth in which Athena is born from the forehead of Zeus.<sup>193</sup> This, however, happened only after Zeus had swallowed, her mother, Metis, the Goddess of Wisdom, who was pregnant and carried the embryo of Athena. The myths about more normal deliveries by Goddesses—which one in fact also encounters in the same Aeschylus, when he calls Apollo Leto’s child, in addition to Athena’s mentioned “female” birthplace, which reappears in the same tragedy—demonstrate that these male, ideologically-“desired viewpoints” (or wishful thinking) have not been “everlasting”; neither were they necessarily entirely implemented or commonly accepted.<sup>194</sup> Accordingly, this male ideology which manages without the woman also generally needs women to give birth to men’s children, and although the women must be hidden, one must also have a reassuring and protective mother in the midst of the Agora in the form of the temple of the Mother of the Gods.

It is important to consider conditions such as the significance of the “non-ideological” Adonis festival, the time of its celebration and the various rituals during the Thesmophoria and Haloa festivals, which were so crucial within the official polis, and who performed these rituals when attempting to shed new light on the festivals and obtain a new perspective on the ancient context. Although the Adonis festival was not a part of the official festival calendar, one nevertheless encounters the anxiety resulting from the concurrence of the Athenian fleet’s disastrous departure for Sicily

<sup>191</sup> Eleusis: Ar. *Plut.* 844 f. and Schol. See also Håland 2014: 475 and Fig. 63 depicting pilgrimage clothes dedicated in the sanctuary of Agia Marina, Athens 2011.

<sup>192</sup> *Plut. Mor.* 527f. Behind a veil: *Od.* 1.334. Mychos: Hes. *Op.* 519-525.

<sup>193</sup> Aesch. *Eum.* 658-666.

<sup>194</sup> Athena’s “female” birthplace: Aesch. *Eum.* 293. Leto’s child: 323 f. See Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for discussion.



in the 400s BCE and the laments of the Adonis festival. Although Plutarch wrote for posterity and is critical of the omens that people had noted surrounding the concurrence, it seems as the priest of Apollo at Delphi, who both here and in other contexts condemns “superstition” as something with which the barbarians are especially involved, is superstitious himself, precisely because he is concerned with pointing out that people thought this pagan or barbarian female custom should have been an evil omen for the fleet, based on the rule behind sympathetic magic. Thukydides is also concerned with lamentation, but not for Adonis, and he also tells of ominous portents.<sup>195</sup> The same combination (festival/Sicily expedition) is already apparent in the conservative Aristophanes,<sup>196</sup> which means that they support the same beliefs they condemn or ridicule in other respects as belonging to the barbarians.

Greece is both Western and oriental. It belongs to both East and West, as it is geographically positioned on the border between Europe and the Orient, today as it was earlier, and like the entire Mediterranean region, has constantly been a transit area. And today, as in the past, the neighbours or barbarians are used to condemn features that one is not so enthusiastic about within oneself whenever appropriate, just as women could be used by those who produced the sources. Seen from another perspective, it might be the opposite. This also testifies to the central importance of both Dionysos and Apollo in Greek culture, who have their parallels in the relationship between the Kalogeros and Agios Kōnstantinos, and therefore can be compared with these. Thus, Orientalism is a phenomenon that not only concerns “Us” contra the “Others”, but is just as important to consider with respect to the various features within oneself. However, it comes into force whenever it is necessary to put up barriers.

Many of the mentioned Mother Goddesses, often with virginal characteristics, are worshipped in the same cave concurrently, although they most often seem to replace one another. Today, for instance, there is a connection between the cult of the Panagia and Agia Paraskeuē on Lesbos in a cave which is said to have been formerly dedicated to Artemis. One encounters a similar situation further east in the Cappadocian cave dedicated to Artemis of Perasia, which is said to have been taken over by Agia Paraskeuē and the Panagia. These examples of new deities connected with places (often caves with water) in which former cults have also held

<sup>195</sup> Thuc. 6.27,3, 6.30,2 (lamentation). Portent re the fleet: Plut. *Alc.* 18.2 f., *Nic.* 13 vs. 23 and *Mor.* 169a. “Superstition”/barbarians: 166, 171, see also 166f-167a, 168f.

<sup>196</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 387-397. See also Weill 1966: 690 f., cf. Detienne 1989: 187 f., 203, 249.

their rituals, have their parallels in the importance of the sacred wedding in Greek culture, since most of the fertility Goddesses are related to one or another young partner, such as we see in the relationship between Aphrodite and Adonis. Accordingly, Agia Paraskeuē has been seen as a parallel to Agia Elenē, and moreover bears similarities to Magna Mater in ancient Asia Minor. Her young partner is said to have been absorbed by Agios Iōannēs, who in modern times as well is the leader of a kind of maenadic brotherhood. This has been seen as an echo of the cult of the Anastenarides. One may also mention the church dedicated to Agia Paraskeuē on the island of Samothrake by the temple of the Kabiri, where the peasants perform an annual festival reminiscent of the Lesbos festivals.<sup>197</sup> Might this aforementioned cultural pattern, the cult of a Mother Goddess and her partner, perhaps also lie behind the custom according to which the Panagia and John the Baptist are often worshipped together?<sup>198</sup> The oldest Byzantine church on Tinos was dedicated to them, for instance, and the ruins of this church are in reality the most sacred place for all those who dedicate their black pilgrimage clothes there (Figure 42), although the church administration does not like the custom.

It may certainly be maintained that many deities are only superficially Hellenised, and such as Artemis of Perasia and Ma are still in reality barbarian Goddesses of local origin. Nonetheless, the cult dedicated to, for instance, the Thracian Bendis, a variant of Artemis, became very popular in Piraeus and Athens. A central ritual during her festival was a procession with torches, which might also be performed on horseback.<sup>199</sup> Here, then, one encounters rituals which also were important during other Greek festivals, both the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Panathenaia festival, such as the ceremony which lasts the entire night, the *pannychis*, which was also a parallel to the modern *olonychia* (all-night-service), likewise a procession with torches and mother worship. Similar to this are the ecstatic elements in the Dionysos cult, which also are linked to his nocturnal wife, Ariadne, and surrounded with orgiastic rites and lamentations. As a result, the licentiousness of the Anthesteria festival seems to be united with dark myths about death.<sup>200</sup> One also experiences such elements in the cult of Artemis of Perasia and the various modern parallels, the dance and animal

<sup>197</sup> Kakouri 1965: 66 f. She witnessed the festival in 1952.

<sup>198</sup> See Stewart 1991: 12 for the ideological problems a conscious formulation would create.

<sup>199</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 1.327 f.

<sup>200</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 20, cf. Jeanmaire 1991: 226, for the tomb of the heroine Ariadne on Naxos and rebirth in connection with Dionysos, cf. Plut. *Thes.* 23.3. Athanassakis 1976: 104, gives another example of superficial Hellenising, cf. Ch. 5 infra.

sacrifice of the Anastenarides, and the bull sacrifice of the Agios Charalampos festival as well as the lamentation of the Adonis cult and the contemporary ritual in front of the Epitaphios. So, in spite of many different arrangements, one encounters equivalent central rituals among these barbarian Goddesses and Gods with echoes in the Greek cult. This might, for example, be illustrated with the “tamed” or “reconciled” contrast to the former furious and unpredictable Demeter, also generally connected with orgiastic and obscene rites. After the involuntary sexual intercourse with Poseidon, the Goddess became the Furious Demeter (Erinyes). Demeter Thelpousa therefore has two aspects and two names, the “Furious” and the “Washed”; that is, once she had bathed and regained her virginity. The furious Demeter’s revenge when her daughter is married off without her consent makes her refuse the grain to sprout.<sup>201</sup> This can be compared with Euripides’ description of Demeter. He connects her with Rheia, and describes her with some of Kybele’s qualities; she is both the Goddess of the mountains and the Mother of the Gods (that is, “the mountain mother of the Gods”). She also has features in common with Artemis in Homer. Euripides, moreover, connects Demeter with the Earth Mother (Dēmētēr thea gē d’estin). Clement of Alexandria also tells us in his own way of *Dēō* (that is, *Dē-mētra*), Zeus’ mother, but the Grain Mother, Demeter, can also mean the earth, the people’s (*dēmos*) mother.<sup>202</sup>

The intermingling therefore testifies to the fact that the actual deities were perhaps not so barbarian or foreign after all, despite the assertions of Orientalism. The pure Demeter, moreover, is a parallel to the pure children who traditionally carry symbols in procession, but also the pure Virgin Mary, who in the modern context is illustrated by the healing basil, the Panagia’s own herb, which always is dedicated to her. She is, however, also seen as being unpredictable within the popular cult, as demonstrated through the accounts of the “malevolent miracles” and her aspect as the Panagia Gorgona, a variant of the former Medusa, as well as her aspect as a lamenting mother, when she condemns and curses the murderers of her son.<sup>203</sup> The bull sacrifices dedicated to the Panagia today are equivalents to the gifts that were dedicated to the virgin Goddess, Athena. Although

<sup>201</sup> *HHD*. 305 f. Demeter Thelpousa: Paus. 8.25,1-7.

<sup>202</sup> *Dēō*: Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.12Pff., cf. Eur. *Hel.* 1343. Demeter/Earth Mother: Eur. *Bacch.* 275 f. Artemis: *Il.* 21.470 f. Kybele: Eur. *Hel.* 1301 ff. Rheia: 1301-1352. Demeter: 1325 ff. See also supra this chapter. Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 337 Demeter-Persephone. Harrison 1980: 561 intermingling, cf. Pestalozza 1965: 34 f.; Devereux 1991: 29, 57. Cf. Vernant 1985: 70 f.

<sup>203</sup> Alexiou 1974. Verneule 1981: 196 Fig. 20, the ambivalence: Medusa/the Panagia Gorgona, cf. Stewart 1991: 157-159 Fig. 22.

Athena receives ewes and cows on her festival, she is dedicated a bull with gilded horns at Eleusis.<sup>204</sup> The Eleusinian shell called *kteis* (cf. the woman's comb and the feminine weft in weaving), the embodiment of the vulva or the woman's sex organ, has been related to both Aphrodite and the Virgin Mary. Finally, the different variations of the Medusa, the pregnant victim whom Perseus kills with a phallic farming tool, may likewise be grouped with the process of taming both the woman and the Goddess.<sup>205</sup>



Figure 43. Women prepare the mask of Dionysos in *alikion* (winnowing basket or fan, in which the corn was placed after threshing, and then thrown against the wind so as to winnow the grain from the chaff). *Likion* also signifies cradle (=ARV 1249,13, see ARVcl. 233).

<sup>204</sup> IG F 76.36-40=LSCG. 5.36-40, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 5 and n.175; Burkert 1983b: 155n.91 (cf. also Figure 2 front page of this book). As a parallel, the Panagia receives phalluses in the form of large candles on Tinos, for instance, or in other places where they are lifted up in front of her icon. Cf. Dundes/Falassi 1975: 194 for an Italian parallel. See Taylor 1987: 13 Fig. 1, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 372d for a parallel, see also Harrison 1977: Fig. 45 and Pestalozza 1965: Ch. 3.

<sup>205</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 6. Cf. also Barb 1953: 210-212 for the blissful aspect of the Medusa, and amulets, cf. 197-204. See 205-207, 230 fn.203 and pl. 28e for Aphrodite's seashell, which in the later Christian symbolism became an emblem for the resurrection, cf. 237n.302. See Devereux 1991: 51, cf. 60-62 re the connection between Baubō, Aphrodite and the Panagia.

Both the point of departure and the destination of the procession are of central importance, and the latter is usually a circle (cf. cycle), such as when people walk in procession towards a circle at the harbour of contemporary Tinos during the festival dedicated to the Panagia. In other circumstances, the goal might be a cave, a plain or the summit of a mountain. Also important are the participants themselves, symbols such as the *liknon* (winnowing basket or fan; cradle) of the Dionysos festival (Figure 43) and later the Kalogeros festival, images or idols of deities, baskets, the participants' conditions, and whether they dance or are possessed in a different way, generally concealed by masks. All of these are features often found both earlier and today, because these topics appeal to important human emotions, motivations, and psychological conditions. Accordingly, the "superficially" Hellenised Goddesses and Gods become the counterparts of later deities that were entirely or partly absorbed into the Christian ideology over time, and while most often this process has occurred very reluctantly, it seems nonetheless to be a prerequisite for the "ideological shift". In other words, there must be some deeper-lying elements that appeal to people. Or is the situation perhaps that in order to bring about the actual "shifts", new ideologies must adjust to the deep-seated values within the popular belief?

According to André Motte, it is in the encounter between the oriental cult dedicated to a Mother Goddess and her young consort and the Greek environment that the character of the God becomes more and more important, so that in the later legends, Aphrodite is no more than the heroine exposed to unhappy love. That Adonis gives his name to the festivals and becomes the main figure need not involve him completely taking over the cult dedicated to a great Mother Goddess. Although such an ideological takeover may have been a criterion for being accepted in the "male" Greek atmosphere, one nonetheless encounters something else in the gestures and objects used in the ritual. The cult of Adonis loses its meaning without the aim of his fertility medallions, the *peribolos* ("enclosure") of the Mother Goddess, and the female vases into which his short-lived sprouts are planted. In his evolutionist description, Motte maintains that the various poets' elaborations may demonstrate that the cult of Adonis has developed in such a way as to shift its emphasis from the woman to the man.<sup>266</sup> One might perhaps also draw this conclusion from the interpretation of a spring and summer festival in which men were in charge of the summer ritual and the spring ritual was attended to by women. Nevertheless, the core of the cult is still apparent. It is necessary

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<sup>266</sup> Motte 1973: 137 f., 143 f.



to give a more nuanced reading of Motte's thesis because it does not manage to disclose that the one does not necessarily disappear with the arrival of the other. One may recall the logic behind the endurance of rituals, which indicates that little disappears over time, though much is added to the elements that were already there.<sup>207</sup> The way Motte comments on the inferior role of the woman in ancient society reflects, for example, Loraux and Page duBois, although his comment is weakened in various ways by his own analysis, which bears evidence of his indebtedness to Uberto Pestalozza's formulation of "the eternal female [l'éternel féminin]".<sup>208</sup> Motte nevertheless has a traditional Western value system and androcentric perspective, and his evolutionist description is related to the concept of a so-called "pre-Greek (that is, non-androcentric) mentality" preceding the Greek, Olympian, or androcentric point of view, which he believes is connected with the destruction of an earlier pre-Greek belief by a patriarchal tradition. This occurrence is reflected in a passage in the *Theogony* of Hesiod and two opposing passages in Homer's *Odyssey*,<sup>209</sup> where Kalypso's regret and the murder of Iasion give evidence of the Olympian takeover, according to Motte. This parallels the theses of other gender researchers, which deal with an earlier stage in which Goddesses had more to say than they did in the male Greek atmosphere. It becomes a literal reading of the mentioned male poets' elaborations, which, however, form part of the aforementioned "male revolt", and should therefore be compared to other circumstances.<sup>210</sup> Based on the importance of the female and women in the rituals, which we can deduce from vase paintings, as well as the concrete importance of the women in the rituals by way of their practical tasks, especially in comparison with later circumstances (to be precise, the customs and practices of the popular cult), the male official ideology is contradicted, at least, one acquires different perspectives on the official male ideology. But then, one must decide to change perspective and see circumstances from the vantage point of the female sphere.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Robertson 1992; Limberis 1994: 62. Plut. *Thes.* 18 gives another indicator of the same re the importance of Aphrodite.

<sup>208</sup> Motte 1973: 121-146, based on Pestalozza 1965, vs. the comment in Motte 1973: 93, cf. Loraux 1989; duBois 1988.

<sup>209</sup> *Od.* 5.125-127 vs. 118-120 and 125-128; Hes. *Th.* 969-971, discussed in Motte 1973: 232. Cf. Atallah 1966: 258, where his comment re the most "Greek" festival nevertheless demonstrates an androcentric and "Orientalist" viewpoint.

<sup>210</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 7, discusses the "male revolt". See *i.a.*, Nixon 1995: 96n.32 re an earlier phase in Greek history when Goddesses were perhaps more powerful.

<sup>211</sup> In addition to Håland 2017: Ch. 4-7, see also Ch. 4 *infra*.

The mentioned relationship between the cults of Adonis and Aphrodite is a general feature in Greek mythology, connected with the official “patriarchal development” or growth of the Olympian ideology in Greek religion, which parallels the development of Athenian democracy. Based on this Olympian religious ideology, Zeus’ gardens in the west have officially taken over an area dedicated to a chthonic Goddess, as is also the case in Dodona, where he is worshipped together with his wife Dione, who has a temple and cult image there.<sup>212</sup> One encounters the same in Olympia, where initially Gaia was worshipped. That the apple has been regarded as a symbol of immortality and was an early prize in the Olympic and Pythian games may in this context be due to the fact that the apple is a fertility symbol showing the female sex organs.<sup>213</sup> The central and continuing importance of mother worship may therefore form the background to this. Furthermore, Dionysos’ marshes preserve the memory of his mother, Semele, also conceived of as an Earth Mother. Whether he leaps into the swamp to hide himself as illustrated by Homer or descends into the underworld through a lake in a swampy area once a year to bring back his mother, the Goddess Semele (that is, fertility), as illustrated by Pausanias, this is an allegory of the union with fertility-bestowing woman.<sup>214</sup> It was in the Garden of the Muses that Apollo came to install himself in order to become their leader, while on Delos he supplants his mother, Leto, and is worshipped as a young God who is reborn every year. In that way, he resembles the version of Dionysos from whom he differs so much, according to the Apollonian ideology of moderation.<sup>215</sup> One may also mention the relationship between Daphne and Apollo. For the erotic poets, the gardens of Eros tend to cover the gardens of Aphrodite. Further west, the Roman Priapos takes over the orchard of his mother, Venus (Aphrodite). Moreover, it may be noted that Theseus was initiated in *Mounichion* (April-May), the month of Aphrodite. Plutarch also tells us of the Goddess’ guidance in his quest, albeit at Apollo’s command.<sup>216</sup>

It seems that we are seeing the ideological manipulation of a competing popular cult in antiquity, in keeping with all the instances in

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<sup>212</sup> Cf. also Alroth 1987: 13. See Hes. *Th.* 215 f., (275), 518, the gardens of the Hesperides situated in the west.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. Motte 1973; Winkler 1981.

<sup>214</sup> Fetches up Semele: Paus. 2.37,5. leaps into the swamp: cf. *Il.* 6.135-137 and Plut. *Mor.* 241.4.

<sup>215</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 388e9-389c, cf. Otto 1992: 211-217. See furthermore Hes. *Th.* 1-35 for the importance of the Muses. Cf. 94 f. re the connection with Apollo. See also *HH* 3, cf. Motte 1973: 171-191. See also Brillante 2017 on the Muses.

<sup>216</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 18. Daphne-Apollo: Paus. 10.7,8, cf. 8.20,4.

which Zeus, Asklepios (the God of medicine and healing), or other male deities officially take over the river nymphs' domains, since both water and a number of other important symbols may exist in both female and male forms. In an interesting description, it has been argued how the cult of the nymphs came beforehand; the cult of Zeus, for instance.<sup>217</sup> The same concerns the tradition that asserts that the Nemean games were established in honour of the nymph Langia as a gift given in return in thanks for the fact that she had provided the water, while the ideological androcentric priest Aeschylus provides a male explanation when he claims that the games were established in honour of Archemorus.<sup>218</sup> Elements from the opposite, or perhaps rather parallel, popular cult associated with women, whether it is dedicated to various Goddesses or women perform the rituals, can be found reading between the lines of the description of the cult of the God that ostensibly replaced it. This means that the so-called earlier or original cult, which all the traditional evolutionist descriptions deal with, does not disappear. With what may be new introductions of a similar cult, it seems as if a possible earlier Chthonic/Chthonian or female cult still endures and remains significant because it has been absorbed into the Olympian or male cult, thus demonstrating that the male cult cannot manage without its opposite. The deciding factor is what the sources emphasise, and what motives lie behind that emphasis, and we often encounter in the aforementioned cases ancient variants of the modern male honour and shame self-assertion.

If we compare this to the cults dedicated to the Panagia Chrysoleontissa on the island of Aegina and the modern Panagia on Tinos or in the Akropolis caves, we realise that a female deity with various qualities has, on the contrary, supplanted male pre-Christian deities, who in their turn supplanted various Goddesses: In the two Akropolis caves, there have been cults dedicated to female fertility-bestowing and healing divinities in ancient (archaic) and modern times, even if the names of the female divinities have changed, since the nymphs and Artemis, were initially worshipped in each of the two Akropolis caves and the male elements in the classical period (Asklepios, nevertheless worshipped together with *Hygieia*; that is, Health) and the early Byzantine (*Agioi Anargyroi*, the doctor-saints or patron saints of healing, Agios Kosmas and Agios Damianos) were intermezzos. Today as well, icons dedicated to the Panagia Athinotissa and Agios Attikos are found in the upper cave

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<sup>217</sup> Ballentine 1904: 79 f.

<sup>218</sup> Ballentine 1904: 86 cites TGF. Cf. the description 77-119 with Motte 1973: 121-146 re Aphrodite-Adonis. Re Aeschylus as a priest, see Håland 2017: Ch. 1.

dedicated to the Panagia of the Golden Cavern (the Panagia tou Brachou; that is, the Panagia *Chrysospēliōtissa* or *Spēliōtissa*) (Figure 44).<sup>219</sup>

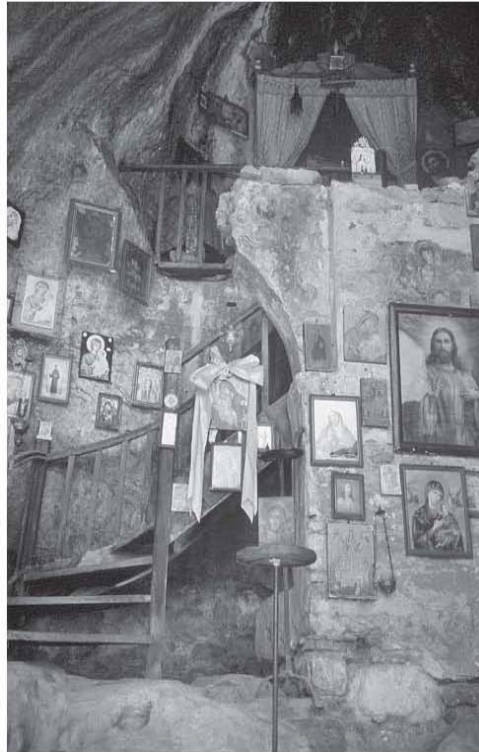


Figure 44. The cave dedicated to the Panagia *Chrysospēliōtissa* or Chapel of Our Lady of the Cavern at Athens, 1992.

So one may suggest that even if the cult dedicated to Athena on top of the Akropolis cliff was prohibited in the fifth century CE, when Athena's Parthenon was transformed into a church dedicated to the Panagia after the termination of the Panathenaia in 410 CE, it has continued in the cave-churches on the southern slope of the same rock.

The name Tinos is pre-Greek and probably connected with the first inhabitants of the island. Actually, the ancient name of the island of Tinos was *Ophiussa*, the island of snakes (cf. *Ophis*=snake, serpent; *oph*=eye.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. *Spēliōtissa*, Athens and Agamemnon's daughter with the same name, *Il.* 9.145. For the Akropolis caves, see Håland 2007 (2005), 2009b.



●mma=mati=eye. Cf. also the Phoenician word, *tannoth*, snake, cf. chthonic cult), probably because of the many snakes on the island. According to a myth, Poseidon sent a flock of storks to free Tinos from the snakes, which were associated with female divinities. In other words, we see here a symbolic explanation of a new cult's official assumption of power. ●n Tinos there is a kind of reverse condition, since today a female divinity (or rather, holy person) receives the votive gifts from pilgrims in a place where a male deity received them earlier, since the ancient pilgrims travelled to the healing shrine at Kionia, two kilometres outside Tinos town, which was dedicated to the former protector of the island, the sea God Poseidon, albeit together with his wife, Amphitrite. Moreover, he is said to have supplanted a Goddess in his tum, and the modern cult of the Panagia is a parallel to the earlier mother worship on the island; that is, the cults dedicated to Demeter, Kybele, and perhaps Aphrodite. During times of drought on modern Aegina, people go in procession to the monastery dedicated to the Panagia Chrysoleontissa at the centre of the island. They bring her holy icon to the town of Aegina and keep it in the local metropolitan church dedicated to the Panagia for one day, carry it in procession, and bring it back to the monastery in procession.<sup>220</sup> This magical ritual is performed to bring rain, and echoes the ritual in which the ancients sacrificed to Zeus to urge him to send rain during drought, as illustrated in Pausanias' account of sacrifice and prayer to Zeus to bring rain. Here it seems that the Panagia and her monastery have supplanted the cult dedicated to Zeus on his mountaintop, otherwise, the rituals are equivalent.<sup>221</sup> These examples might indicate something of the importance of cults dedicated to fertility-bestowing and healing Goddesses, such as in caves associated with water, or in relation to water sources in general, and thereby nourishment. ●n modern Tinos, the Panagia is still worshipped in her aspect as the Panagia *Gastriōtissa* next to a cave, since the church dedicated to the Panagia Gastriōtissa is actually built more or less above a cave (Figures 45 a and b). In Ancient Greek, the term *gastēr* signifies womb, furthermore the cave in general symbolises the life-giving womb. In the cult of "the Panagia who helps the women to become pregnant/conceive", one consequently encounters the fertility aspects as well. I have discussed the translation of the Panagia Gastriōtissa with

<sup>220</sup> Yannoulis 1986: 41, cf. Harland 1960: 17 f. In the wake of the discussion of ●rthodoxy and survivalism in Håland 2017: Ch. 3, it should be noted that, although one may call the Panagia a Goddess from an anthropological perspective, a Greek ●rthodox scholar may prefer to call her a holy person.

<sup>221</sup> The cult of Zeus: cf. Theophr. *Sign.* 24; Ar. *Eq.* 1253. Sacrifice and prayer to Zeus: Paus. 2.29, 7 f.



Greeks of both sexes, and learned from a man that, in contrast to women, the translation of “the Panagia Gastriō~~u~~ssa” as “the Pregnant Panagia” was preferable. In contrast, the Greek woman Kiriaki Papadopoulou Samuelsen asks:<sup>222</sup> “Why should it be interesting for people that the Panagia was pregnant? In order to give birth to the son of God?” Etymologically *-issa* is an agency ending for the feminine gender, a person who acts, who does something, to be precise; it is not a condition, such as pregnancy.



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<sup>222</sup> Personal communication, from Kiriaki Papadopoulou Samuelsen and Statos Koumpis (emails in 2008).



Figures 45 a and b. The cave (45 a former page) in the vicinity of the church (45 b) dedicated to the Panagia Gastriōtissa ("Panagia who helps the women to become pregnant/conceive") and the church itself situated on Gastria Cape on Tinos, 2010.

This line of reasoning is also confirmed by Elenē Psychogiou, who draws attention to the fact that the Panagia Gastriōtissa is the one who helps women to conceive. Furthermore, the verb *gkastrōnō* derives from the Ancient Greek verb *en-kyō*, and signifies the act of making a woman pregnant. For women, the Panagia is the Mother Goddess, someone with whom they associate themselves and to whom they pray when they have problems. In the past, it was a tragedy for women not to become pregnant, and at that time they did not have the opportunities offered by today's treatments. They prayed to a Goddess or female holy person for help conceiving children. Women still fetch some of the wick from the ever-burning lamp (that is, *to akoimēto kerī*, "the sleepless candle") hanging in front of the miraculous holy icon depicting the Annunciation of the Panagia on Tinos if they have not yet become pregnant. The significance of the aforementioned cult may therefore also have been more important in the "male Greek atmosphere" than one might realise from a literal reading of male ideological statements. An equivalent is the relationship between intimate and more distant deities, reflected in sayings such as "our saint",

as opposed to “the one who is far away”, or “my” as opposed to “your” Panagia. Since the Panagia has a number of qualities that are reflected in her icons and the churches dedicated to her, she assumes several personalities, each of which is identified with particular places and histories. Therefore, “your” and “my” Panagia may be different virgins, celebrated as if they each belong to a separate saint. A variant is the claim that: “This Agios Giōrgēs is ours; he is from here; he is not the same one as they talk about when they say Agios Giōrgēs.”<sup>223</sup> In this way, we see how a local version of a saint may signify much more to the specific local people than a Pan-Hellenic one. This may have also been the case with the ancient Goddesses and Gods. The Pan-Hellenic deities often had local variants, and whether they had to incorporate them in order to subjugate a given area or not, one might well ask what deity the locals favoured.<sup>224</sup> In this manner, the ritual of the Adonis festival, in which a male deity is supposed to be more important than his predecessor who was worshipped at the site in earlier times, demonstrates in practice the importance of the “earlier” cult dedicated to a Mother Goddess, since the aim of his shoots is still the same.

A modern equivalent can be found in the cult in Olympos, where it is one's own known and dear deceased whom the women lament in front of the Epitaphios, the close and familiar. The relationship between Adonis, who has ostensibly supplanted and displaced Aphrodite and is therefore more important than his female opponent from the standpoint of a male-centred ideology, may be compared to the modern relationship between Christ and Mary. Based on the fact that it is the festival dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Saviour that is celebrated on 6 August (the earlier day of the celebration of the Assumption of the Virgin and the only day on which the fifteen-day fast leading up to the Dormition of the Panagia is broken today, in the same way as Palm Sunday and the festival dedicated to the Annunciation), one may ask if this is another example of a male deity “taking over”. While Christ is at the centre of the Orthodox cult in accordance with the official dogma of the gospels, and the lament of the Virgin over her son is not mentioned in the ideological and androcentric gospels, her lament is nevertheless very important in the popular cult. That she is called *Ē Prōtē* (The First) in Orthodox ecclesiastical literature may indicate that, as implied by the very name Panagia, the “All-Holy One” (*Pan*: all; *Agia*: holy; that is, the one who dominates all the others, “the

<sup>223</sup> Blum Blum 1970: 46, cf. 79, see also 323 f. See Hart 1992: 220n.4; Dubisch 1995: 245 for the Panagia, cf. Herzfeld 1984.

<sup>224</sup> See, e.g., Paus. 2.17,7 for Athena Alea, cf. the circumstances re Dionysos Eleutheros.

most holy”), Christ does not procure the same attention from people in practical life (in fact, God is seen as a remote abstraction), and one may wonder if the official Orthodox ideology has borne the consequence of this relationship in its own way. This belief, in fact, is illustrated by the importance of her life and its connection with the agricultural cycle in the official ideological religion. When the modern Tiniots criticise the gypsies for only worshipping the mother, this critique might, in other words, be used likewise against themselves, not least because the Panagia’s (the mother’s) two festivals (that is, her Dormition and her Annunciation) are the most important official festivals, according to Orthodox and Greek nationalistic ideology, resulting from the important mediating position of the mother.<sup>225</sup> This is not only a modern parallel to the *Potnia* of earlier times, the Mediterranean Goddess of incessant renewal; to be precise, the Aegean Great Mother, identified with fertile nature. The most important fertility festivals were also dedicated to a chthonic Mother Goddess, Demeter and her daughter. These festivals aimed thereby to maintain the existence of the male polis club, in which, according to the ideology, only legitimate sons were wanted. Another paradoxical aspect of the aforementioned male “assumption of power” is encountered in the notion that, since women are connected with nature and stand in a closer relationship to the “powers”, a female priestess is likewise needed to interpret the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, just as a woman ought to reveal the will of Zeus at the oracle at Dodona. Therefore, despite the dominance of virile deities in the Olympian religion, which is described as a contrast to the chthonic cult, one nonetheless encounters the competing or rather complementary belief, especially in biological topics associated with the woman’s genitals. Concretely, all the archaeological findings of symbolic depictions of the female organs, such as the pot sherds within which the gardens were planted on the edge of the Akropolis cliff, reveal that, although an androcentric ideology seeks to promote its own role, the practical performance of the cult demonstrates something different. Perhaps this is why it has not been able to exaggerate the issue by mass-producing durable depictions of its own role with regard to stimulating procreation, which everybody knows only lasts an instant, therefore becoming marginal and subordinate in comparison with a mother’s role. Whether the “gardens of Adonis” have supplanted the “gardens of Aphrodite” or not, they are at least closely associated with them. The most probable explanation of the relationship is that, since Aphrodite was

<sup>225</sup> See also Dubisch 1995: Ch. 11; Styliou 1987. For the lament, Alexiou 1975 (76): 111-140, 1974: 62-78. Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 781a-b, for male society’s reluctant concessions.



worshipped with gardens in the Gardens, in this context, too, we encounter examples showing that the gardens may be linked with both the female and the male principles, the difference being that the “permanent” gardens are female, whereas those that “come and go” are male.<sup>226</sup>

The ancient Orientalism one sees in Aeschylus and Plutarch, for example, has been maintained by Western scholars, mixed with both puritanism and the “Humboldtian heritage”, the latter asserting that the classicist had to stand at a distance, in the past and far from everyday life, for only then could the ancient world become visible to him.<sup>227</sup> One reason for this is that society has traditionally been interpreted from the written sources corresponding most closely to one’s own view; that is, what seemed “male, white, Apolline, stem and majestic”, has been seen as the antiquity with which one has wished to associate oneself and invoke as one’s precursor.<sup>228</sup> An example of this is the trend which still claims that the section of the didactic poem, *Works and Days* (that is, *Opera*), which deals with the “Days” cannot be attributed to Hesiod, because the pieces of advice and instructions he gives (about not procreating children after participating in a funeral, not washing in water which has been used by a woman, and to show consideration for the omens of birds and days when one carries out one’s regular duties, for instance) are “irrational”, characterised by taboo rules and superstitious beliefs.<sup>229</sup> If one makes Plutarch’s statements the basis of one’s view, many of the actual topics are associated with the prototype of superstitious persons and barbarians, whom he also associated with sensitivity, women and laments, since to lament was ignoble, associated with barbarians and unworthy of a male Greek.<sup>230</sup> These unworthy acts are, however, elements which were present among the Greeks from the Geometric period, and were central to the cult of Adonis.

In Greek culture, there exists an enduring pattern between the oriental, laments, music and gender from Athenian tragedies in the 400s BCE to the writings of Nikos Kazantzakis. One meets with the laments, the popular oriental music, for instance, the *modem zuma* which especially is played

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<sup>226</sup> See also Devereux 1991: 126 for a relevant comment. Cf. Motte 1973, for the female/male findings.

<sup>227</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt was the leading philologist of the German neohellenist school, who exercised great influence on classical research and aesthetic theory at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> cent. See Håland 2017: Ch. 2.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Bernal 1991.

<sup>229</sup> Hes. *Op.* 724-759 and 765-828; i.e., the “Days”.

<sup>230</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 113a. The superstitious person: 164e-171f. Cf. Gernet 1983: 247-257.



by gypsies and becomes equivalent to the ancient flute, and its players and many of the other topics in contemporary Greek culture as well. Despite the fact that (especially fertility) magic is practiced by all layers of society, most people in the present day (the users included) will also refer to many such acts, like taking warnings from birds and using magical devices, as “superstition”, and relate them to women and the “common people”. Perhaps this is why this assumed precursor to Western civilisation has been considered to a greater or lesser degree to be “contaminated by the oriental”? In continuity with earlier philosophers and other authors of written sources, it has been claimed that these were features found only among the Others, the common people. The irrational Dionysian characteristics from antiquity later became what in other contexts are seen as “modern culture, which was destroyed by the period of Turkish rule”, as several scholars have recently called attention to.<sup>231</sup> According to Michael Herzfeld, the Greek philhellenists who invaded Greece around the time of the liberation found a people who had conserved what the philhellenists thought to be the most degrading features of their classical precursors, and had moreover absorbed far too much of the anti-culture of their Turkish rulers.<sup>232</sup> As Dubisch has also pointed out, Orthodoxy itself is moreover contaminated by the oriental, at least as seen through the eyes of the West, with regards to both rituals and symbols, all of which are, as we have seen, especially connected with women.<sup>233</sup> The various perceptions of time which one encounters in Greece, the male, linear, “European” or *Hellenic* versus the female, repetitive/cyclical, or *Romeic* time, are also important in this context.<sup>234</sup> Both in Plutarch and today, the “oriental” has associations with the “female”. For the traditional Western male ideology, this is also considered to be another aspect of the Church and perhaps Greece itself. This is also shown by Dubisch when she quotes Joseph Brown’s century-old claim that Greek priests had, in the eyes of a Westerner, renounced their manhood, which perhaps also made and still makes it problematic to evaluate Greek culture through the lens of a traditional Western male ideology.<sup>235</sup> Accordingly, Greek culture, like Orthodoxy, remains an oriental mystery in the same sense as the “East”, to which it partly

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<sup>231</sup> Cf. Alexiou 1986: 3-15 for descriptions of Western Orientalism with ancient conditions, see supra. See Stewart 1991 for the modern, and cf. Veyne 1986 for the ancient variant. See Barb 1953: 211 for an illustration.

<sup>232</sup> Herzfeld 1992a: 176 f.

<sup>233</sup> Dubisch 1995: 48, 180 ff.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Herzfeld 1986; Dubisch 1991, see also infra for the two perceptions of time.

<sup>235</sup> See Dubisch 1995: 185 for citation from Brown 1877: 18, cf., however, Hart 1992: 158 f.

belongs. The same concerns the ancient society, which was also on the margins of Europe, on the border between East and West. To us it seems both exotic and nearby, since we also see here a vacillation between two competing or overlapping ideologies or value systems. The modern Greek informants do not necessarily have the same historical categories or worldview as a northwestern European does, and it was also thus with the ancient people, in any case.

In addition to the aforementioned examples of ritual lament, music, dance and cults, many more of the rituals in the inner Mediterranean region are similar in spite of different religious ideologies, which moreover is reflected in a number of practical manifestations in today's Greece. Another feature which demonstrates the similarity of value systems between modern Turkish and ancient and modern Greek contexts is a contemporary ritual found in Istanbul, in which people give the religious leader earth and water and thereby express their subjugation. After the blessing, the earth and water are redistributed, in the same manner as the bread in all Greek churches, where people either "go to the Panagia" or the actual saint to whom the relevant church is dedicated, to fetch earth and water from this deceased saint to be used in the service of healing. From the first cave-shaped chapel below the main church of the sanctuary on Tinos, which is called the "Life-Giving Spring" (Zōodochos Pēgē), the pilgrims take some holy and healing earth in a little bag. This earth comes from a hole covered with a silver (or wooden) lid at the site of the former field (now a chapel within the church) in which the miraculous icon was found, and the earth represents the dirt of that field. During the Dormition festival in 2005, 2006 and 2007, the Church of the Annunciation evidently wanted to downplay this ritual, and they stopped replenishing the earth as soon as the pilgrims equipped themselves with it. The pilgrims, however, knew what to do, and fetched some of the holy sand from the votive candle stand, the round container filled with sand ("manouali") in which lighted candles are usually placed in Orthodox churches (Figures 46 and 47). Both before and after the festival proper, however, the church's staff replenished the earth, so it might seem as if the purpose was to make the ritual less attractive to the crowds of gypsies who arrive at the church during the festival. On the other hand, ordinary Greeks are as eager as the gypsies to collect earth before queuing up to obtain holy water (see Figure 5).



Figure 46. A pilgrim fetches some holy earth from the hole where the miraculous icon was found, Tinos, August 1993.



Figure 47. The 2005 version of the same ritual: A pilgrim fetches some holy sand from the votive candle stand, the round, sand-filled container (*"manouali"*) in which lighted candles are usually placed in Orthodox churches, Tinos, August 2005.

The ritual in Istanbul involving the religious leader who blows on the clothes of the sick person<sup>236</sup> is a parallel to the Greek Orthodox ritual which takes place on *Enniamera* (that is, the Ninth Day's ritual of the Panagia), when people worship a silver figure depicting the Panagia on her deathbed, or Epitaphios (Figures 48 and 49 a-c), and bring clothes, newly-bought icons, healing basil, rosaries and other amulets to absorb healing power from the silver figure for the next year, or before the winter sets in.



Figure 48. Worshipping the Panagia on her deathbed on the eve of the "Ninth Day's ritual of the Panagia", Tinos, 22 August 1993.

They obtain this holy power by kissing the figure, then touching it with the objects before passing them three times over the silver figure of the dead Panagia in the shape of the cross, thus carrying out the same procedure usually accomplished in front of the miraculous icon. In the 1990s, people usually dedicated money to the silver figure, covering it completely with money during the ceremony (Figure 48).

<sup>236</sup> Personal information from the historian Marit Stålesen.





Figures 49 a-c. Passing the clothes (inside a bundle) of a sick child over the figure and under the canopy three times, in a cyclical movement thus encircling it, Tinos, 22 August 1993.

Some also pass the clothes of sick children over the figure three times in the form of a cross, or more elaborately, the clothes (inside a bundle) are passed over the figure and under the canopy three times in a cyclical movement, thus encircling it, as I witnessed a young father do with the help of some women in 1993 (Figures 49 a-c). Other parallels are the Greeks who kiss the hand of the priest and the ritual genuflections which the believers perform in front of the holy icon or the church door: If the church, contrary to expectation, should be closed, the believer kisses the closed door and crosses herself, genuflects, then kneels and rises three times in a manner which, to an outsider, rather recalls Muslim praying. This is one of many situations and examples which emphasise the “oriental” aspects of the rituals belonging to a people in the southeastern corner of Europe. We have literary and documentary evidence of numerous parallel circumstances in antiquity, although the authors of the actual sources are critical of these customs, which are performed by women and the common people.<sup>237</sup> In other words, Plutarch’s relevance concerning traditional values does not exclude his elitist features, and it is indeed Plato and Plutarch especially who represent the ancient elitist critique of the popular cult. If one compares their statements with the modern context, one may, however, obtain another understanding of the ancient popular cult.

It seems to be this aspect—that is, the similarities of the rituals across ideological differences through the dynamics of history—that was revealed by the TV interviews recorded in Agia Elenē during the main festival in 1992, because many of the different ideas found among the participants themselves were articulated, such as in the following examples: (1) “We are descendants of the ancient Greeks and the customs have become Christianised with Kōnstantinos.” (2) “The customs have nothing to do with paganism.” (3) “They say that the Bulgarians also celebrate the custom, but that is because they have learned it from the Greeks.” (4) “We don’t know anything about this other than the fact that it is a part of the Orthodox Church.” Furthermore, and in contrast to these different opinions among four of the interviewees, we encounter the young village priest, who officiates during this “pagan ritual” almost under pressure, while another priest from a neighbouring village participates as an observer as a matter of course. A researcher who is present, and who is marked by the problematic relationship between Orthodoxy and survivalism, denies the continuity with antiquity on the one hand because this is a Christian festival, and the researcher is very religious, while on

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<sup>237</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 168-171; Men. *Phasm.* 50-60; Theophr. *Char.* 16.

the other hand, she maintains that one should not come here and say that the modern Greeks are not the descendants of the ancient Greeks. The Greek wants to have it both ways, although to claim to be a direct descendant of the ancient Greeks and simultaneously a believing member of the Orthodox Church—established when the Holy Kōnstantinos introduced Christianity as the state religion in the Empire, a religion which has “fought and defeated paganism”, weeded it out—is to contradict oneself indeed, for an outsider. For the Greeks themselves, this is not a problem at all. Perhaps we should learn to understand and accept this, which is a contradiction only to us, and so try to escape our own Orientalism. It is often reflected in, for instance, news reports covered by people lacking knowledge about the culture about which they write. Another example is demonstrated by the condescending attitude that many modern Western scholars have to the Greeks’ own survivalist interpretations of antiquity, which are regarded as unscientific. On the contrary, one may ask whether their interpretations are not as legitimate as the fact that we have traditionally invoked a “Western and European heritage from antiquity”, emphasised through the study of ancient Greek culture and neglecting the post-antique culture?<sup>238</sup> The most obvious “heritage” is naturally enough in Greece, among the Greeks, and the others who live in the region where ancient Greek culture flourished, and where the living conditions or mode of living is still similar in many ways. It is, in other words, important to examine the modern society in the actual region when trying to write social history, which is the history of the society, not only the history of the elite. Whether it is the Greeks’ nationalistic use of antiquity since 1821 which lies behind the disparagement, or that the consequence of taking the standpoint that Greece belongs to Greece would be to renounce one’s own demands on ancient culture, one should be aware of the fact that the use we make of ancient culture transforms it to fit into our own, in the same way as the Greeks do, for instance, with their version of democracy today. Modern Greek democracy was “recently reintroduced” from western Europe, but is performed “in Greek”, and the way it functions may have more in common with ancient democracy than the one found in western Europe.<sup>239</sup> Concerning ancient Greeks as precursors to modern culture, Perikles and Alexander the Great are especially popular. According to the western way of thinking, they are the father of democracy (although this may be debated, based upon

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<sup>238</sup> See also Håland 2017: Ch. 2, cf. moreover Alexiou 1986.

<sup>239</sup> See Kastoriadis 1986, for a Greek perspective.

Thukydides' description of Perikles) and the conqueror or spreader of civilisation, respectively.

On the first Friday after the Resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, the festival dedicated to the Panagia under her attribute of Zōodochos Pēgē (the Life-Giving Spring) is celebrated. On the occasion of this festival, Athenians come to one of the two caves dedicated to her on the southern slope of the Akropolis cliff in order to fetch holy life-giving water from the spring in her chapel, which is located inside a circular spring house hewn in the rock. In 1992, the "New Friday" in the "White Week" after Easter coincided with 1 May.<sup>240</sup> This is also a general holiday for the guards working at the Akropolis area, which is quite important, since the cave dedicated to the "Life-Giving Spring" is situated inside of the Akropolis area (Figures 50 and 52).



Figure 50. The water scoop is often used in the cave dedicated to the Panagia, the *Life-Giving Spring*, during the festival celebrated on "New/White" Friday after the Resurrection of Christ. Athens, 1 May 1992.

<sup>240</sup> The following is also elaborated on in Håland 2007 (2005), 2009b, see also 2003 (2009).

It seemed that the Curator of Antiquities for the Akropolis area struggled to decide whether or not the area should be kept open for the pilgrims on this feast day, but the authorities finally decided to keep it open. Consequently, this ideology of the workers became subjugated by the traditional religious custom, which is connected with deep-seated values, people's need to fetch life-giving water from the spring after the Resurrection. However, the faithful did not only have to compete with the political ideology, but also the religious one, since the parish priest refuses to officiate, claiming that the ritual is pagan, and had to be replaced by another. This is one of the practical problems that can arise from the sometimes difficult relations between the official Greek Orthodox Church and the popular religion. The old priest in the Byzantine Church of Agios Nikolaos on Plaka was always present and officiated during the festival, but at the beginning of the 1990s he was very old, and his successor resists participating in the festival, claiming that it represents a pagan custom. In 1991 he stated that he was ill, "suffering from heart disease", and therefore a priest from the University of Piraeus, who is from Olympos, officiated at the liturgy and in 1992 as well. This means firstly that the popular cult won over the official religious ideology, and also that this, the Western workers' ideological holiday as adapted to the modern Greek nation-state, had to submit to the traditional popular ritual. Although both festivals, of course, represent "the people", the former is related to a nationalist ideology that conforms to a western European ideology, or alternatively, an ideology which in many instances is shared with the West, while the latter represents the Greeks. Therefore Greek popular religiosity triumphed here as well. The Akropolis guards were on duty for three hours on this day, and at the two entrances to the Akropolis area, the local Greeks were "filtered out" and admitted into the area. To the many frustrated tourists waiting outside the gates, the message was clear: only Greeks are admitted, since it is their festival. Here it is the Romeic tradition—related to the Byzantine; that is, the Christian, Eastern Roman Empire—that gains victory over the Hellenic tradition, which is related to the pagan classical Greece.

It was necessary for me to obtain special permission from the "Akropolis authorities" (the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, 1st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, represented by the Curator of Antiquities of the Akropolis area) to conduct research in the two caves situated on the southern slope of the Akropolis and the cave in the church dedicated to Agia Marina, which is built on the eastern slope of the Hill of the Nymphs (Figure 51), right below the Observatory and close by the Pnyx, a challenging task.



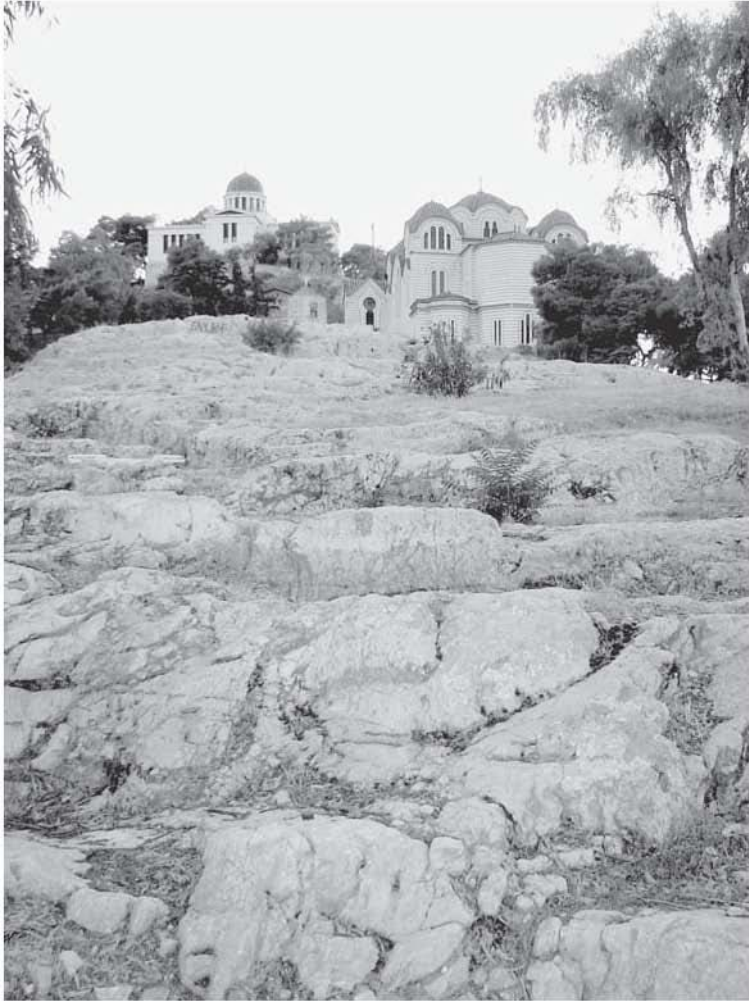


Figure 51. The sanctuary of Agia Marina on the eastern slope of the Hill of the Nymphs in Athens.

Even if the representatives of the Akropolis authorities were very helpful, it took some time before they understood my request. Several within the management found it quite incomprehensible that I was interested talking not only with the archaeologists who work at the site, but also with the rather poor woman who regularly cleans the caves and the people who

have been accustomed to collecting water there their entire lives.<sup>241</sup> The fact that I was as interested in establishing contact with living people practising their religion in the same caves where the Water Nymphs were once worshipped as I was in the surrounding archaeological ruins, which are, nevertheless, quite muted in comparison with the traditional cult practised in the cave with Life-Giving water, was difficult for them to understand. The archaeologists do unearth the Greatness of Antiquity, but it also had a fundament, people's traditional religious rituals. Here we meet with a modern example of Said's "Orientalism", which does not prioritise the examination of rituals which may not be important for the "great history", but rather connected only with the daily tasks of women. The point in mentioning my meeting with the Akropolis authorities here is to illustrate how, although folklore studies and archaeology are disciplines that enjoy particular prestige within the Greek nation-state, problems or misunderstandings can arise when a foreign female researcher seeks to compare modern popular religious rituals with the ancient ones, because it is so unusual. "Only 'survivalists' do that, and this is a research area despised by foreign researchers." On another level, one may also observe the conduct of the guards in the Akropolis area when they emphasise to frustrated tourists that "this is our culture, not the other culture that we share with you" (that is, "[t]his is only for Greeks"). In light of the background of this point of view, it may be regarded as an answer to Western Orientalism. Here we are dealing with the two Greek ideologies, the Romeic and the Hellenic. In the Akropolis caves, for instance, as on Tinos, we encounter the Romeic tradition, which is protected from Europeans and other Western visitors, also a clear illustration of the distinction between insider and outsider, *dikoi mas* (our own) and *xenoi* (strangers or foreigners). It also belongs to the western European view of

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<sup>241</sup> I conducted new research in the cave dedicated to the Life-Giving Spring in 2006 and also visited it during the festival dedicated to the Life-Giving Spring on the Friday following the Resurrection in 2012. The young priest told me that liturgies are also celebrated in this cave-church during the two festivals dedicated to Agioi Anargyroi; i.e., on 1 July and on 1 November. They also plan to celebrate the Enniamera in the upper cave dedicated to the Panagia of the Golden Cavern sometime in the future, but restoration work in this cave was still being carried out in 2013 (in 2016 the conservation works in the cave that started in 2002 had finished). According to local people, "the religious symbols from the upper cave are packed in bags and stored".

yesterday's Greece as superior to today's Greece. This notion runs like a thread through survivalist research, as pointed out by several scholars.<sup>242</sup>

Both the Anastenaria festival and the ritual in the Akropolis cave demonstrate how the same or similar rituals can take place in the same area for a long time, in spite of the fact that official authorities try to prohibit it.



Figure 52. Women fetching and tasting the water in the cave dedicated to the Panagia, the Life-Giving Spring, during the festival celebrated on "New/White" Friday after the Resurrection of Christ. Athens, 2012.

The two cults show that new deities can take over the role that earlier deities have had in various rituals. This is certainly best demonstrated in connection with the Akropolis cave, but may also have relevance for the other ritual. The two cults cast significant light on the importance of various popular rituals for the official ideology, whether in a positive or negative sense, which is either to secure fertility or to condemn rituals as paganism, respectively. Nonetheless, at the same time, both of these rituals belong within the same religious cosmology as the official ideology. It is

<sup>242</sup> Alexiou 1986; Danforth 1984. Cf. also Dubisch 1995: 182–184. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 2.

also crucial to examine who are the most important performers of the rituals: the women (cf. Figure 52).

The mentioned examples of *disemia*, the difference between official and social *embedded* discourse, or Greek cultural ambiguity and bipolarity, seem to be relevant categories for the ancient people as well.<sup>243</sup> In other words, I move back and forth between ancient and later attitudes and presentations of elite versus popular culture, because they are both separate and belong together. We are dealing with illustrations of parallel cultural patterns, such as the official paradigm of honour and shame. In the contemporary situation, one experiences the same problematic in various contexts, for example, how the condescending view of various elements within the popular cult held by the West and many of the representatives of the official Church are answered in different ways by people. To try to gain a better understanding of the paradoxes one encounters today, and conversely to try to say something about the parallel conditions of the ancient society through a comparison with its modern Greek counterpart, it is necessary to take this into account. There seem to be a number of similarities and differences in people's view of themselves and others, and conversely, in others' view of them. Orientalism is something on which one might focus in the description of Others (internal and external) by the authors of ancient sources. It belongs with our view on antiquity and modern Greece, which has traditionally been as discussed here. This, therefore, is a part of the entire Orientalism/survivalism/anti-survivalism problematic as well as competing ideologies and value systems, since it relates to how people see themselves as a result of both their past and external influences, as demonstrated by the aforementioned episode from Agia Elenē and the experience in the Akropolis cave. The paradoxes are important, as is the reason we encounter them, and while we do find them in Greek culture, we also meet with them among ourselves.

By focusing on Dionysian ceremonies and paradoxes in Greek culture and the relationship between the Adonis of the moderation ideologists and the Adonis of the popular cult and modern parallels, this chapter has discussed some relevant aspects of the popular cult and the official ideology. These competing but also coexisting and overlapping spheres, which one may analyse from the festivals are connected to the relationships between local society and authority or local communities and state power, popular belief or local belief versus official belief or the belief of the Church, and will be further elaborated upon in the next chapter.

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<sup>243</sup> For *disemia*, see Herzfeld 1992a: 114.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IDEOLOGIES AND MENTALITIES: COMPETING VALUES?

One may certainly maintain that the Panathenaia and the Dionysos festivals were used by the rulers, both the tyrants Peisistratos and his son and successor, Hipparchos, and later Perikles, who expanded the state's control over people by making as many able to attend the performances in the theatre as possible. Substantial public expenditures were of great interest to Athenian politicians because they could be exploited for political ends. By building the Odeion and encouraging musical contests during the Panathenaia, Perikles could for instance satisfy great parts of the voting populace with rich gifts, paralleling the way later Roman emperors made use of "bread and circus", an expression that has almost become symbolic in connection with ideological festivals.<sup>1</sup> Both the representation of the Battle of the Gods and Giants and the tragedies of the Dionysia can therefore be seen as ideological manifestations of how the prevailing ideology, represented by the victory of the Olympian Gods over the Giants, conquered "wild" nature, as is also illustrated by the union of the polis and its victory over the Persians.<sup>2</sup> One may also understand tragedy in this way, based on Aristotle's notion of *katharsis*, when he maintains that the tragedy, through pity and fear, accomplishes the purification of the spectators from pent-up aggressiveness; that is, it leads to *katharsis*.<sup>3</sup> The tragic theme is known to the spectators, so they can participate actively and associate themselves with the hero who resembles themselves. After the performance, the spectators react to its emotional magnitude in special ways. The reason is that they have seen an honest person go from happiness to misery, and know that this will not happen to them ("such disasters will not befall themselves") if they do not exceed the

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<sup>1</sup> Veyne 1976; Plut. *Per.* 13.5 f.; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 43.1, 47.2. Cf. Eco 1984: 3, 7; Silverman 1979: 426, 432.

<sup>2</sup> For the victory of the Olympian Gods over the Giants, see, e.g., ARVcl. 6, 9 f.

<sup>3</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1449b21-30, cf. *Pol.* 8.1341b33-1342b13.



collective, agreed-upon rules of the polis.<sup>4</sup> Based on the connection between “action, thought and the body”, which has been examined by recent scholarship, one may perhaps question theories of whether the notion of katharsis refers to moral or medical purification. But why should one preclude the other? The moralising function of tragedy certainly does not thereby exclude its medically purifying function. Moreover, Aristotle generally emphasises the significance of action and movement, in the same way as Plato.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is not only the modern Anastenarides who dance themselves healthy in body and soul. If, however, we look beyond and deconstruct the political manifestations encountered through the tragedies and the depiction of the battle of the Gods and Giants and see what they really consist of, more nuanced perspectives become apparent, such as the relationship between the male polis and the female oikos in the tragedies. One acquires, in other words, a new perspective on various statements regarding men’s dominance over women. Such nuanced perspectives likewise reveal themselves when we deconstruct the “ideological entirety” that officially constitutes the festival itself and has heavily shaped subsequent perceptions of the festival, especially the Panathenaia. This in turn, provides a parallel to the relationship between the “great” and “little” society, popular and official cult.

## Chthonian and Olympian

Festivals and ceremonies, in the form of offering and purification, are magical rituals which involve good and evil powers.<sup>6</sup> The healing and purification become necessary when the latter power dominates. Here, too belong the relationship between Olympian and Chthonian deities, life and death, the Christian heaven and hell, white and black magic, humans and nature, culture and nature, the tamed and untamed, man and woman, but also barbarians, or the foreigners contra “Us” or the Greeks, be that the ancient or modern Greeks, and old and new ideologies, their spokesmen and social groups. One encounters these official dichotomies in Greek culture, both today and in antiquity, and they are expressed in various ways, be that through Orientalism and the relationship to the “Others” or the relationship between popular cult and official ideology, as it is also

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vernant/Vidal-Naquet 1982: 7. See also Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 10.1172a19-26; Ar. *Ran.* 154-160, 1053-1057. See also Veyne 1983: 44. See Iambl. *Myst.* 1.11 (39.14-40.15), for the purifying function of katharsis. Cf. Nussbaum 1986: 378-391.

<sup>5</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 790c-791b; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 10.1172a35 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Parker 1985: 10.

reflected in the relationship between the two gendered spheres, because an aspect is always defined in relationship to its counterpart.

Here it is relevant to introduce the anthropologist Mary Douglas' notions of *group* and *grid*; various combinations of internal and external lines of demarcation between humans and between societies. This scheme, or cultural theory, allows one to look analytically at social relations in any social context. For example, the group gathers behind/sets up a grid against the outside world.<sup>7</sup> This is reflected, for example, in Homer's view of Olympos (positive) versus Hades (that is, involving chthonic forces and thus negative), which one also encounters in Plutarch.<sup>8</sup> It is furthermore illustrated by Athens' purification of the Akropolis after the Persians' devastation and the repeated purifications of the island of Delos.<sup>9</sup> In this context one may also mention messianic movements, in reference to the primitive purity—back to the origins—as a means of defending oneself against occupants. One may also recall what has already been pointed out regarding “xenos”, in addition to the “fear of freedom”, which can be expanded to the fear of the unknown.<sup>10</sup> Here, too we have the relationship between Athens, the conquered Eleusis, and the rival to Athens, Megara, which, according to Pausanias, was situated on the road from Eleusis<sup>11</sup> and indicates a marking of a border area, and the bipartition which occurs through the lines of demarcation and restrictions in connection with initiation cults. We experience this in both the Dionysos cult and the Eleusinian Mysteries, but also in connection with the contemporary Anastenarides. Another variant is the taboo area in the modern Greek church, the *hieron*, the holy place, altar or sanctuary, an area separated from the main body of the church by the *ikonostasis*, the icon stand or screen with three doors. The one in the centre, through which only an ordained priest may go, becomes a variant both of the holiest of holies and

<sup>7</sup> Douglas 1996: Ch. 4, 1982: 1-8, 11-13, 115-119, 245 f. Cf., e.g., Di Nola 1980: Ch. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 361a-b.

<sup>9</sup> Hdt. 1.64; Thuc. 3.104. Akropolis: Hdt. 8.53 ff. Cf. Parker 1985: 33 for “purification” and “group-grid”, see also 10. Cf. Douglas 1991.

<sup>10</sup> The “fear of freedom”: Dodds 1951: Ch. 8. Messianic movements: Julia 1974: 149.

<sup>11</sup> Paus. 1.39,1, cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1997: 149 ff. re. Athens-Eleusis-Megara. Cf. Thuc. 1.139 with Parker 1985: 161. See also infra. See also Paus. 1.14,3, 1.38,6, 2.37,5.

the temple of Hades, to which only the priest has access, and only once a year.<sup>12</sup>

In a society where a heavenly religion represents the ideology, the invocation of the deceased and the underworld is less respectable. Nonetheless, it is from the underworld that life, in the form of the harvest of the soil, comes. Following accordingly is the paradoxical invocation, which is perhaps given a more legitimate expression by the fact that the heavenly deities also have a chthonic aspect. The official view of magic therefore represents the polarity between various ideologies, such as an official religion versus a popular religion, what many elitist ideologists would call belief and superstition, and which in many cases is also expressed (somehow) between what is official and “unofficial”. For the rulers it will be of interest to condemn popular magic, which is hence defined as harmful, superstition and so on, as opposed to their own magic which is beneficial, official or white.

In practice, however, it appears that this polarity or division, represented, for example, by the combat myths in which the Olympian Gods conquered the power of the Chthonian ones, and later “the Christian victory over paganism”, is an ideological simplification which obscures reality. Reality is in fact full of overlaps and contradictions since deities, such as Apollo or the Panagia, are both good and evil.<sup>13</sup> They both rescue and punish, like Demeter, and constitute a kind of parallel to the chthonic symbols which are both female and male.<sup>14</sup> The logic regarding the connection between pre-Christian chthonic powers versus Christian ones is, for instance, illustrated by the offering to the hearth, which was performed both in antiquity and still takes place today. Since it is at the hearth that the subterranean forces or those who normally dwell underground can be found during Christmas time, people have an ambivalent relationship towards it. The subterranean forces are considered to be dangerous, based on the scare propaganda or scaremongering characteristic of the new ideology, Christianity, in order to conquer older deities. Nonetheless, it is to these ambivalent, but also fertility-bestowing powers that people make sacrifice in the dangerous transition period, because they reside here at the hearth, the symbolic point of life within the

<sup>12</sup> Paus. 6.25,2. The holiest of holies: Luk. 1.10. See also Moss/Cappannari 1960: 101 (cf. the Ninth Day's ritual, Tinos); Vikar 1984: 84 f. Cf. Hp. *Jusj.* 1-36 for the ritual words' holiness. The Eleusinian Mysteries: *HHD.* 476-482. Dionysos cult: Eur. *Bacch.* 470-495.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Herzfeld 1984: 653-664. Apollo *II.* 1.9-16, 35-44, 75; Soph. *OT.* 2 f., 27 ff, 70 f.; Plut. *Thes.* 22.5, cf. 18.1. Cf. Moss/Cappannari 1976: 2-5 good/evil God.

<sup>14</sup> Demeter: Paus. 1.13,7.

family.<sup>15</sup> This again becomes representative of the ambiguity behind the concepts.<sup>16</sup> The concepts of taboo and holy might, for example, be compared with a good versus an evil God, while an eye can both ward off and cause evil. A person, or an eye in itself (either one belonging to a person or in the form of an amulet), may either cast or remove the Evil Eye. One is a consequence of the other. Connected to this are variants of the theories of matriarchy and patriarchy, which I will discuss more in depth in the next section.

“Malevolent miracles” caused by chthonic deities are often the origin of ideological festivals. A common aetiological myth for example provides the mythical background of the emphasis on the phallus both in the Rural Dionysia and in the City Dionysia. In the latter, according to the legend, the reason was that when the Athenians initially rejected Dionysos, the male part of the population was punished with a disease of the genitals. The oracle at Delphi advised them to worship Dionysos and perform a phallic procession in his honour. When they did this, their illness was cured.<sup>17</sup> It is hardly accidental that the deity in this context was called, *Eleutheros*; that is, “Deliverer”. This means that the mythical background of the importance of the phallus in the Great Dionysia, the purpose of the wintry Dionysia, and the establishment of the cult of Demeter at Eleusis all show that the official ideology uses and manipulates the popular cult. Through the factors of sex/gender, agriculture, and gift-giving, these examples also demonstrate the strength and power of popular belief.

The problems of dealing with unruly Goddesses are expressed in several ways. Today, for instance, one encounters the “malevolent miracles” illustrated by the Panagia’s demands regarding problematical and dear return gifts, such as “sacrificing” one’s child on the day of the August festival. This is a parallel to similar demands made by the ancient Mother Goddesses, who might also demand other maiden sacrifices, such as Artemis’ demand that Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter in exchange for fair wind during the voyage to Troy. Furthermore, Pausanias tells of the former custom during the festival dedicated to Artemis Triklaria in Akhaia, in which the most beautiful local girl and boy were equipped with floral wreaths as *parthenos* and *pais* before being led to the altar of

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<sup>15</sup> Stewart 1991: provides the logic. Bleeker 1975: 212, however, reflects the same ideology as Paul. 1. Cor. 12,23 and Hes. *Op.* 727, 729, which nonetheless become paradoxical when seen in light of *Op.* 391 f. See also Vanggaard 1969: Ch. 10; Payne Knight 1974: 152.

<sup>16</sup> Parker 1985: 1-17.

<sup>17</sup> Schol. Ar. *Ach.* 243, cf. Paus. 1.2,5. Cf. Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 7.4, Rabe 1906: 279.24-281.3.

Artemis to be sacrificed.<sup>18</sup> In that way they ended the famine that Artemis' malevolent miracle comprised. These are variants of first fruit offerings, or an abundance of life in return for abundant life in the future, and especially concerns girls' passage rites at puberty.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the logic behind the Evil Eye illustrates how the prevailing ideology seeks to keep potentially dangerous forces in their place, by using powerful Goddesses in their service. Therefore it could be a Goddess who demanded the maiden sacrifices.

Thus the "malevolent miracles" illustrate how the ideology requires divine sanction to carry out its actions, the necessary procedures. This may indicate that the myth is invented after carrying out these actions, or while considering doing so. However, this signifies that both the God (often the "neighbour's" God, worshipped as an enemy) and a similar course of action must already be familiar to the culture in the form of common knowledge derived from similar former events so that people generally know these stories; otherwise, they will not accept them, since they do not accept anything.<sup>20</sup> In any case, it might be regarded as an illustration of an ideological manipulation of the common mentality, a common value system.

The overlap between Chthonian and Olympian is, for example, illustrated by the fact that Zeus, the sky God, also has a chthonic aspect. Moreover, both Demeter and Herakles were accepted into the Olympian Pantheon.<sup>21</sup> We encounter Chthonian deities who could also have Olympian aspects and the other way round in other connections as well. The connection between Poseidon and the modern Agios Nikolaos, who fulfils one of the functions attributed to the ancient God of the sea, is also pertinent, despite the fact that a number of other Gods in antiquity also received offerings from seamen. In addition to that, Poseidon certainly had other aspects as well.<sup>22</sup> If, however, one sees this in relation to the point about "malevolent miracles", the case is put in a different light. Incidentally I have seen as many churches dedicated to the Panagia as to

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<sup>18</sup> Paus. 7.19,4 and 7.20,1 f.

<sup>19</sup> Dowden 1989. See also Paus. 7.19,1-20,2 for Artemis' malevolent miracle. For the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, see Aesch. *Ag.*, e.g., 238 f. Cf. Blum/Blum 1970: 45 f., 82-88, the Panagia.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Ar. *Av.* 375-381. See Paus. 6.9,7 f., cf. Visser 1982: 403-428, for Gods worshipped as enemies.

<sup>21</sup> Eur. *Herakl.* 9 f. and Demeter: *HHD.* 483. Chthonic Zeus: Hes. *Op.* 465 and sky God *Op.* 87. Scullion 1994 gives a good account of the overlap between Chthonian and Olympian.

<sup>22</sup> The sea God Poseidon: *Od.* 3.5 ff.; Plut. *Mor.* 367c.



Agios Nikolaos because of her special aspect as the protector of seamen.<sup>23</sup> Connected to this is not only the point about “malevolent magic”, but also the point that both modern saints and ancient deities possessed several and often contradictory or paradoxical functions and qualities.

In connection with the fertility cult and the relationship between female and male values, one sees that in antiquity, the Goddesses who were too terrible to be mentioned by name were nevertheless among the most honoured deities in Athens.<sup>24</sup> The significance of the Furies or Fates illustrates the relationship between human (that is, male) culture and wild nature (that is, woman), which they have not conquered and is therefore described as wild and dangerous, but which is nonetheless necessary. We also see this dichotomy expressed in the festivals, but the actual dichotomy only provides a one-sided male ideological perspective, conforming to Bourdieu’s description of the calendar of the Kabyles.<sup>25</sup>

That there existed in antiquity an interaction in the relationship between Olympian and Chthonic deities as well, is demonstrated by all the rituals in which a male deity “takes over” after a Mother Goddess. To assert that a real takeover took place seems, however, to echo the many variations on the statement about the male Athenian appropriation of the female body, which was supposed to have been “subjugated to the reign of the phallus”, concluding that the finished process crowned “the victory of patriarchy”.<sup>26</sup> Adonis is no more than an empty shell if he has no place to put his manliness. Therefore both of the sexual spheres are found within the religious cosmology, now as earlier, and thus mirror other spheres which overlap one another.

In connection with the relationship between Chthonian and Olympian and the gendered dichotomy, it is important to stress the significance of power from below and within as well as the meaning of the female body. Still, women are officially associated with what the male culture has categorised as different, such as nature as opposed to culture, barbarism, superstition, magic, irrationality, what is concealed, unofficial, and deceitful, interior spaces, anarchy, and lack of freedom.<sup>27</sup> The problem one meets with in phallogocentric interpretations is very similar to Orientalism’s

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<sup>23</sup> Kephallēniadē 1990 and 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Aesch. *Eum.* 916-955; Eur. *IT.* 943 f., cf. Paus. 2.11.4.

<sup>25</sup> Bourdieu 1980. See Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7 for discussion, also see the following.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur 1977 and 1994. Keuls 1993 (“the reign of the phallus”). Loraux 1989 (“appropriation of the female body”).

<sup>27</sup> For this honour and shame-constructed dichotomy, Bourdieu 1980; Campbell 1966; Arist. *Metaph.* 1.5, 986a23 ff., 986b34-987a2; Plut. *Mor.* 370e-f. Cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7 for further references and discussion.

fear of the foreign. Accordingly, it is imperative to note how a woman describes love, pain and separation; Sappho, for instance.<sup>28</sup> The sparse fragments we possess say much more about female thinking than the descriptions men have provided, both in the past and in modern times. Women and emotions were on the contrary criticised and disparaged by the ancient ideological spokesmen, followed by the church fathers and Western ideology, as barbaric, female, and unmanly. This is due to the fact that the male producers of the sources cannot identify with the women about whom they write. Consequently, Aristotle associates the woman's anatomy and reproductive capacity with mental, emotional and moral capacities. This is a view also found in other ancient producers of sources, such as Plutarch, and in the modern context of honour and shame.<sup>29</sup>

Several female scholars have dealt with the problems around emotions. Catherine Lutz and Abu-Lughod, for example, provide a strategy in order to analyse discourses about emotions as they are used pragmatically in social interactions. According to Lutz and Abu-Lughod, this is preferable to considering emotions as reflections of inner conditions, since modern Western ideologies about how emotions are natural and individual occasions that the conventionality of the emotions triggers accusations of artificiality and falseness.<sup>30</sup> Dubisch maintains that emotions must be studied in their cultural context, in the same way as gender. C. Nadia Seremetakis demonstrates how women use laments in modern Mani, which illustrate how women employ laments and presentations of emotions to show how to "be good at being a woman" in general, and mothers especially.<sup>31</sup> From a male perspective, on the other hand, one gets Plutarch's disdainful descriptions of "mad lamenting people", most often in relation to women, barbarians, or common people, such as the "malignant ["female"] women" whom his ["manly"] wife, Timoxena, threw out of a funeral.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Sappho. *Fr.* 83. Cf. Stehle Stigers 1981: 45-61.

<sup>29</sup> See n.27 *supra* and, e.g., Arist. *Pol.* 1.1254b3-15, 1.1260a, 3.1277b10-25, *GA* 738b26-28, 727a2 ff., 728b23-32, 716a14-24, 727b31-34; Plut. *Mor.* 102e, cf. 103a, 145e, 142d-e; Migne Vol. 59.346 for Hom. 62.4 in John. (cf. Schaff 1995: Vol. 14, 230 [4.]). Cf. Danforth 1989: 5 for a modern variant. Cf. Watts 1988: 21 f. re how women express their feelings.

<sup>30</sup> Lutz/Abu-Lughod 1990. Cf. Abu-Lughod 1993b: 205 and 1988: 21. Holst-Warhaft 1992: Ch. 1 provides a survey.

<sup>31</sup> Seremetakis 1991. Dubisch 1995: 224.

<sup>32</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 610b-c; laments, women, barbarians, etc.: 113a; mad lamenting people: 114f, cf. 116e, 117a.

Women are very often depicted sitting weeping over their dead children and men after other men's bombing raids and other ravages of war.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, it is not only women who have emotions. With regard to my own fieldwork, both the parents of the deceased Panagiotis were suffering; the mother was crying both in public and at home in private, holding her hand to her heart while saying "*ponō*", meaning, "I have pain, I suffer". Based on the logic of how Greek women can present public performances of "being good at being a woman", she could employ several aspects of the available cultural materials upon which women may draw for the creation of the "poetics of womanhood", including the role of the mother, motherhood, the female body, emotion and suffering. The father did not have this option. He was calm in public and mourned at home in his house, but I never saw him cry, in contrast to many other Greek men; still, they seldom weep compared with women. This is a natural consequence of the male ideology of honour and shame, due to which the likes of Plutarch would have referred to them as womenfolk. Thereby he stands apart from another ancient context, the account in which both Hekuba and Priamos present strong emotional reactions to the death of their son, Hektor. In the *Odyssey*, however, the weeping Odysseus is compared to a woman,<sup>34</sup> thus clarifying who laments most often. Nevertheless, we also encounter other lamenting men in Homer, such as Achilles.<sup>35</sup> Panagiotis' parents may moreover be compared to Plutarch's letter to his wife following the death of their daughter, in which it seems that she is the one who has to be strong; if not, he will collapse (succumb to grief),<sup>36</sup> although in other respects, he is very critical of these "female modes of expression", since both tears and laments are connected with women, barbarians, and common people, as already indicated. He thus parallels Abu-Lughod's illustrations of conflicting value systems among men within the modern context of honour and shame in North Africa.<sup>37</sup> It is women—and not men—who cry when they see other suffering mothers on Tinos, and when I show pictures of a mother by the tomb of her deceased child to illustrate a conference talk, it is women who react spontaneously, not men. But, as the Greeks say, "it is difficult, if not impossible to know how the real inner state of another person is. One can

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Rüdick 1990 and e.g., *Od.* 8.523-531.

<sup>34</sup> *Od.* 8.523-531. Hektor's death: *Il.* 22.405-436, cf. 33-89.

<sup>35</sup> *Il.* 23.12 ff. See *Il.* 9.13-15, 16.2-4 for men's vs. *Od.* 19.204 f. women's laments. See also Foley 1984: 59.

<sup>36</sup> *Plut. Mor.* 608c2.

<sup>37</sup> Abu-Lughod 1988, cf. supra, see also 1993b: 202 for songs about loss vs. honour.

only know of what is publicly expressed". With regard to love, it seems that women and men are quite similar in Plutarch, where he provides characteristics belonging to both men and women.<sup>38</sup> These are conditions which can be compared with the fragments of Sappho. If one were to apply the ideology of honour and shame directly to a society, it would not be a society consisting of living men and women, but machines. Women can in any case show emotions in public to a greater extent, and therefore have a great advantage compared to the northern European ideology of not showing emotions, which conforms to the male ideology of honour and shame. In that way, the emotions become an important part of the aforementioned repertoire for expressing the "poetics of womanhood". On the other hand, Greek men generally show more feelings than northern Europeans of both sexes, but, as already mentioned, they are then referred to as womenfolk in keeping with the official ideology of honour and shame, which is the habit both among men and women. A modern man who moves into the woman's traditional domains by becoming a "single father" after a divorce may lament, as women usually do, over everything that he has to endure.<sup>39</sup>

One comes closer to women's representations of their own experience by looking at the collective women's festivals from a female perspective, which takes as its starting point the logic behind the "poetics of womanhood" and what it means to "be good at being a woman". This logic also surfaces in the few sources we possess from ancient women. By taking this value system, which women share while performing their rituals centred around so-called female phenomena, domains or cults as one's starting point, and by showing regard for how women themselves consider their existence, a different assessment of sex or gender and gender relations (that is, the position of women and, by definition, the position of men within Greek societies) is obtained. One realises that women neither are nor have been "mute", although this is how their menfolk have officially wanted to see them.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 767a-b, cf. 766 e-f and 767c.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. also other forms of "purification and healing", the importance of which northern Europe is in the process of realising nowadays; i.e., dance and movement.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Thuc. 2.45,2; Soph. *Aj.* 293; Arist. *Pol.* 1.1260a20-30, cf. 3.1277b17-24; Plut. *Mor.* 381e, cf. 142d31 f. See also Ar. *Thesm.* 540-541. Female muteness is also reported in other cultures, Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 21. See Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for discussion of the notion of the "muted group theory" within anthropology and ancient scholarship, including a critical discussion of Herzfeld's (1991a) version of a "poetics of womanhood or irony thesis", which he has developed, in combination with E. Ardener's (1975) idea of "the mute model",



It is therefore crucial to be conscious of one's point of departure. This means that a female perspective can be attained when one employs the religious festivals and cults that can be analysed from them as perceived from the female sphere with the aim of saying something about the relationship between various ideologies or value systems in ancient and modern Greek societies. This perspective has not been especially in evidence in feminist or other scholarship, because it has for the most part relied on the usual androcentric perspective, even when one has conducted fieldwork in the female sphere. Official Christianity has been considered a male religion in the same way as the official ancient Greek religion. One may observe how the two religions have been "translated" and thus described in the northern European tradition, which consciously or unconsciously has added its own official or unofficial views on women into the translation.<sup>41</sup> A modern translator of the Christian Bible who conducts fieldwork in the Middle East in the course of working on her or his "translation" would probably have to reconsider her or his view on the importance of both the Jewish and the primordial Christian woman, as is also the case with the Greek. Ultimately, this concerns the Mediterranean women in a Mediterranean context, in which one encounters a number of fundamental value systems which seem to be very similar and cross narrow ideological boundaries, both religious and political. In Hesiod, the men manage perfectly well without the woman; initially, that is. She exists only for reasons of sex and procreation, and it is considered a scourge without equal to receive this "possessor and giver of all gifts", as is clearly expressed in the myth of Pandora. Nevertheless, the men unfortunately had to associate with this scourge to procure offspring, whether they wanted to or not.<sup>42</sup> Thus follows the double or ambivalent aspect of Pandora, which makes clear how important the woman is to society.

In Greek culture, the woman has traditionally been associated with birth, caves, and the like. But this does not necessarily mean that the

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from his study of Cretan men through the "poetics of manhood". Cf. also *infra*. See also Alexiou 2002 for additional sources for women's rituals and links to antiquity.

<sup>41</sup> One may, e.g., ask in which context it is best to consider Arist. *HA*. 581a33-581b2, a traditional Greek or northern European one? Cf. also Arist. *Pol.* 3.1277b24 f. Re "male religion": Walcot 1966 re Hes. *Th.* 570-612, *Op.* 60-105. Davis 1984: 24 re Gen. 2.23, 3.20; Paul. 1. *Cor.* 11,7, cf. Campbell 1964, 1966; Machin 1983. See also Kraemer 1988. The recent analysis of Davies 2018: 270 unfortunately demonstrates that the outdated view on the relationship between men and women in the Mediterranean based on a British/American view still is present.

<sup>42</sup> Eur. *Hipp.* 616-624, *Med.* 573 f. Myth of Pandora: Hes. *Th.* 570-591 (612), *Op.* 60-100 (105).



associations between the woman and these phenomena only constitute a value system testifying to an androcentric view, based on a possible hypothesis that it is because the man cannot reproduce himself that the woman exists, and therefore, from the man's viewpoint, that she is associated with birth and thereby healing and death. Nor is such an interpretation a "reduction" down to mere mother worship, as Dubisch, *inter alia*, has claimed. According to Dubisch, "[w]e must move away from such terms as 'mother worship', to which Marian devotion is sometimes reduced, and toward a more general exploration of issues both of political ritual and symbol and of the symbolism of the feminine."<sup>43</sup>

One may ask whether Dubisch, by claiming that mother worship is the same as a reduction, does not in fact contradict herself and her magnificent analysis of the "poetics of womanhood" subsequent to her analysis of time among Greek women, to which I am very indebted, since it is an excellent way to demonstrate the importance of mother worship, the female and the female sphere within political rituals and symbolism. The analysis demonstrates the overlaps we see with regard to the two gendered spheres, today as before, and that the two spheres are not as separate as many have claimed. The early socialisation process, which still takes place in an exclusively female environment, also seems to have formed stronger layers among men than they officially express after puberty. Therefore, what emerges as the salient point is the fundamental importance of the woman and mother worship for the survival of the polis, thus mirroring its dependence on the aforementioned mysteries, which are linked to the life-cycle rituals of birth and death, belonging to the female sphere. The sources authored by ancient men may come up against Sappho's fragments, which express receptivity, introspectiveness, or "all-consumingness", and simultaneously show how a woman describes love and separation, in which pain is a central theme.<sup>44</sup> By combining this information from Sappho with modern women, who are concerned with the meaning of maternity, the body, the belly and the womb in a different way than men, one learns of important similarities between Sappho and her modern counterparts. One also observes that men and women have different interests and values. Women also often use their womanliness, and they have a different and more positive view of it than men do. Behind male negativity lie envy, fear, and uncertainty, which is probably due to the fact that they do not understand womanliness or the "miraculous processes"

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<sup>43</sup> For the statement in Dubisch 1995: 246, cf. Brumfield 1981: 1. Loraux 1989, however, would call this appropriated.

<sup>44</sup> Sappho. *Fr.* 42, cf. 28, 118b, 103. See Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for the early socialisation process vs. men's post-puberty period.

attached to it. This should also be taken into account when attempting to demonstrate the importance of mother worship. Modern Greek women are very proud of their motherhood, which gives them a distinct connection with the Panagia herself, the mother above all mothers, who has a sovereign position in Greek culture. It seems to have been likewise with her ancient parallel, Demeter, and other Mother Goddesses. This form of the “poetics of womanhood” corresponds more to Greek women’s experiences of what it means to “be good at being a woman” than Herzfeld’s analyses, which take their point of departure in his interpretation explaining Cretan men through the “poetics of manhood”.<sup>45</sup> Men and women are different, and Herzfeld’s version of the “poetics of womanhood”, based upon his thesis about the central role of irony, provides a valid explanation neither of the behavior of the modern Greek women nor of the women of antiquity, as Allaire C. Brumfield maintains in the wake of Herzfeld.<sup>46</sup> In light of this, contemporary women and gender research should nuance its critique of mother worship, which has great value in Greek culture, neither making the woman passive nor maintaining an androcentric ideology. In practice, a re-evaluation of mother worship would be a real attempt to shift away from an androcentric perspective and see things from the world of the woman. When one takes as the basis for one’s investigation the “poetics of womanhood” and Greek women’s experience of what it means to “be good at being a woman”, in which the woman’s body and motherhood are the most important factors, one learns that there are perspectives other than the androcentric. To claim that mother worship is a diminishment is the same as taking up an androcentric position, because the consequence of the statement is that mother worship is assessed to be subordinate to such phenomena as politics. Conversely, the outcome is that the official male politics are quite dependent on mother worship. As a supplement to and comment on Hesiod’s misogynistic description, one may mention that Pandora was worshipped on the Akropolis; to be precise, next to the earth-born Erichthonios, who was reared by Athena.<sup>47</sup>

The problem with androcentric interpretations of sex, gender roles, and power may be illustrated by Barrie Machin’s study, in which he intends to show “the negative evaluation of women in Mediterranean societies” through a description of how the official Orthodox “ritual acts” during the passage rites of birth, baptism, marriage and death “conceal the feminine

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<sup>45</sup> Herzfeld 1985, cf. 1991a: 79-97.

<sup>46</sup> Brumfield 1996: 73 f., cf. Herzfeld 1991a, see supra this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Paus. 1.24,7.

biological role in procreation".<sup>48</sup> The ritual acts underline women's inferior position by intensifying and thereby asserting "the social basis of reproduction and the primacy of men". This is clearly illustrated by the mass-baptism performed during the festival dedicated to the Panagia, where God, the priest, and other male agents have the primary roles, just like they do in other baptismal services, marriage rituals, and burials. From another position, however, one may not only impart nuances to his claim, which moreover is very similar to Bourdieu's mentioned thesis about male dominance,<sup>49</sup> but claim the contrary. The festival dedicated to the life-giving, healing Mother Goddess, the Panagia, is the most important one in contemporary Greece, and it is during this festival that the mass-baptism takes place. During the liturgical year, moreover, her Annunciation is equally vital, as it is for the Greek nation-state. Likewise, the birth of the Virgin and not least her Presentation in the Temple ("entrance") are more significant than the birth of Christ. This is also reflected in the agricultural year in the festivals celebrated during two of the most critical periods, around the time of sowing and in the spring.



Figure 53. Ancient terracotta group of a woman giving birth, being helped by another woman (see van Straten 1981: Fig. 44=Nicosia, Cyprus Museum 1935/B. 56).

<sup>48</sup> Machin 1983: 114-123, esp. 123 for citations, also for the following. Machin deals with a mass-baptism on Crete, where he has conducted fieldwork. Cf. Ch. 1 supra and Håland 2017: Ch. 4 for Tinos.

<sup>49</sup> Bourdieu 1990, 1998.

Regarding practical tasks, it is not necessarily the male sphere which controls the birth sphere, as many scholars have claimed, based on a conventional, literal reading of ancient sources written by men. To mention some aspects of women's central role in rites of passage, it is women who give birth, deliver babies (that is, receive the newborns, Figure 53), and care for mother and child as they did in antiquity, when the child, the mother, and the women who had assisted during the birth could not re-enter the social world until after a limited period of time, as is also the case in later societies. During the baptism, the woman undresses and dresses the child; during marriage, it is the mother who chooses her son-in-law and undertakes all the practical tasks; and when a person dies, she washes and prepares the corpse, laments, and takes care of the memorial ceremonies (Figure 54).



Figure 54. Woman cleaning the family tomb, on the *psychosabbato* (*psychē*=soul, *sabbato*=Saturday; that is, Soul Saturday or All Souls' Day) dedicated to *Thauma Eollybōn Ag. Theodorou* ("Agios Theodoros' Miracle with the Kollybōn"); that is, the third psychosabbato during winter, 1<sup>st</sup> Cemetery, Athens, 3 March 2012.

Women bring men into the world by giving birth to them, feed them, and in the end, send them into the next world. It is not for certain that these sanctions are merely invented by men in order to shut out women; it might



as well be women who do not want to admit men into their domains.<sup>50</sup> The same concerns decision-making processes. In that way, women can decide which tasks they must carry out before men, such as the modern priests, enter in order to carry out their own tasks. Based on a comparison with equivalent modern material, one realises that in antiquity, women may have been just as strong in their role as custodians of the regulations as men. Goddesses may react ferociously if men attempt to decide something without their consent or invade their domains. This may be illustrated with Zeus, who marries off Korē against the will of her mother, Demeter, and her punishment which is to prevent the grain from germinating.<sup>51</sup> Another variant is the bridegroom, Hades, who gives Korē the pomegranate seed to eat so that she should give him a son. However, he gives her a contraceptive, because the pomegranate seed contains female sex hormones.<sup>52</sup> He is probably ignorant of the fact that he is making her infertile rather than fertile. By this action, Hades demonstrates what happens when men try to use plants, the use of which it is women's prerogative to know. Hades' ignorance of plant symbolism therefore occasions that their marriage becomes childless and he does not get the son he desires, because he is meddling in women's business. This may also suggest something about which sanctions women could enact under the actual or equivalent circumstances.

In rituals connected with the life-cycle passages of birth, marriage and death, we find the same relationship as in the official festivals, in both ancient and modern Greek society. Men are the performers of the official rituals, but the point is that these rituals cannot take place until the "women-dominated" rituals have finished; the official actions and rituals in which men are agents cannot be performed before women have done the preliminary work and thus manifested their "poetics of womanhood".

We encounter the real meaning of an "Almighty God", who nevertheless needs Mary to give birth to the son of mankind. This contradicts the idea that God created the original human being, Adam, in his image, and thereafter the woman from his rib. An almighty God should not need women to give birth to a child. The Greek variant, Zeus, who swallows the Goddess Metis so that he can generate his daughter, Athena, and must also soften up Demeter so that she will let the grain sprout to provide food for the people, may therefore be regarded as being less obscure than Christianity. We may view the mentioned general statement that Christianity

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Ar. Ecc.* 443.

<sup>51</sup> *HHD.* 91, 305-312.

<sup>52</sup> Nixon 1995. Hades gives Korē the pomegranate seed: *HHD.* 412 f.



is a “male religion” in this context as well.<sup>53</sup> This “male religion” must nonetheless be defined in relationship to its “counterpart”. One researcher who seems to forget this is Carol Delaney, who in her description shows how the functions of honour and shame demonstrate a distinctive construction regarding reproduction corresponding to the monotheistic religious belief.<sup>54</sup> This Mediterranean androcentric ideology is nonetheless as dependent on saints or other, equivalent mediators today as the ancient almighty, the Olympian Zeus, was on Metis, Hera, and “lesser deities”. Local nymphs, for example, took care of Dionysos after the “second” legendary birth; that is, after the almighty Zeus had fetched him out of his mother’s womb and sewed him into his thigh in order to give birth to him once again.<sup>55</sup> The significance of lesser deities is also illustrated in several of Plutarch’s texts, such as in the essay *Isis and Osiris*, where he is nonetheless as critical of the popular cult’s arsenal of deities,<sup>56</sup> as the authors of the biblical scriptures. Here, however, one learns that the ideologists of monotheistic Judaism struggled with the popular religion in order to enforce their new ideology as much as later church fathers did. For example, people did not stop making sacrifices and offerings in high places or under the green trees, whatever the ideologists of the monotheistic God say.<sup>57</sup> Based on a comparison with the contemporary circumstances, it seems that the ideologists still want to abolish the same popular belief, both in Greece and in the remaining Mediterranean region.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. supra for Machin 1983, cf. also Davis 1984: 24 and 28 for the remaining northern Mediterranean region. Re Zeus-Metis, see, however, Foley 1994b: 112 for another view.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Delaney 1987: 36. Cf. Bourdieu 1990, 1998 and Machin 1983 for parallels. In this context it is relevant to refer to Leyla Gurkan’s (Center for Islamic Studies, Turkey), paper, “Going beyond Boundaries: The Place of Gender in the Story of Adam and Eve”, presented at the Conference, *Religion on the Borders: New Challenges in the Academic Study of Religion*, Södertörn University College, Stockholm, Sweden, April 2007. Here she undertakes a new reading of the Biblical Genesis (creation narrative) from a Muslim perspective, and Eve is given a different presentation than the traditional one.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Makistou 1978: 30 f. for local nymphs.

<sup>56</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 351c-384c.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., Kings 1:22,44, Kings 2:12,3, 15,4 and 35, 16,4. The problems with monotheism in practical life: Kings 2:21,2 ff, Kings 1:11,5 f.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. the ancient/modern Greek ideologists who want to abolish popular belief, see, e.g., Stewart 1991: 275 Fig. 33. Cf. Abu-Lughod 1988. See Eickelman 1981: 10-13 for the marabout vs. official Islam. Cf. Gellner 1963: 145-157, see Lacoste-Dujardin 1981: 47 for pre-Islamic mediators. See also Håland 2017 re my

Today we see the importance of motherhood in the way a pregnant woman does not conceal her pregnancy; on the contrary, she displays it openly. This example of demonstrating how to “be good at being a woman” may give us new perspectives on the ancient myths, where we often meet with a kind of male envy of women’s capacity to give birth, most clearly symbolised by the aforementioned manner in which Zeus became almighty. His father, Kronos, also gives birth as a woman, although with the “upper mouth”.<sup>59</sup> The woman, on the other hand, gives birth with the “lower mouth”, based on the Greeks’ thinking that the woman was captured between two mouths, the one which speaks and eats and the other *stoma* (the cervix of the uterus and the labia of the vulva); that is to say, between two cervices or necks, because the female body is captured between the upper and lower mouths, or the mouth above and the one below. To be precise, in accordance with the ancient Greeks’ perspective on gynaecology, the woman is captured between the throat or neck and the cervix of the uterus.<sup>60</sup> In this way men do not appropriate the birth sphere, but rather demonstrate their own helplessness. It does not seem as if men control the birth sphere, although they make an attempt. As Nancy Demand has pointed out, the Hippocratic medical treatment did not improve women’s chances of survival at childbirth, but had an unfavourable effect on women’s well-being as patients. By replacing female nurses with male ones, new burdens were added to pre-existing childbirth complications for women. According to Demand, this was due to the fact that the women were used to a sheltered existence.<sup>61</sup> What is probably most significant here is that they were used to living in a sphere in which women knew what to do. One may also ask whether medical authors appropriate the birth sphere with their theoretical writings about how best to institutionalise childbirth and the like. The majority of women have nevertheless given birth to their children in the female sphere with

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fieldwork experiences. One may note a different use of *liknon* attached with a ribbon mitre (or *mitra/mitrē*, garment, headband) on the crown worn on the head, which testifies to the fact that more magical forms endure than the one which Kakouri 1965: 94 discusses. Therefore the Pope’s mitre might also testify, in a similarly magical manner, to the fact that he has the female sex symbol on his head and is therefore subordinate to Mother Earth; i.e., the Panagia. See also Goudē 1990: pl. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Hes. *Th.* 493 ff., cf. Plut. *Mor.* 246b for the male view on pregnancy. See Sissa 1984: 1134 re male deities giving birth, but from a different perspective than mine.

<sup>60</sup> I.e., *auchēn*, Hp. *Steril.* 3.230 (Littré Vol. 8: 438.10), cf. *Mul.* 2.169 (Littré Vol. 8: 348.7) for *trachēlos* (neck, throat). Cf. Sissa 1984: 1126 f., 1987: 10 f., cf. 24, 75 ff. for the two mouths and necks.

<sup>61</sup> Demand 1994: 152.

the help of other women (Figure 53), in an atmosphere in which men were only presented with the newborn child, whom they could never be entirely sure they had fathered.<sup>62</sup>

Women's knowledge of fertility magic means that they also have the power to prevent fertility, such as through their knowledge of the uses of magical plants.<sup>63</sup> In other words, even if "reliable" contraceptives did not exist before 1965, women have traditionally—and at all times—had knowledge of plants, herbs and their own cyclical rhythms. But this has been an insufficiently investigated area. One may perhaps still be critical of the statement that women are as fertile as they wish, since it has been pointed out that men govern the conception and regulation of childbirth, generally based on Aeschylus' statement in *Eumenides* about the man's importance in reproduction, a factor we see again in Aristotle, for instance.<sup>64</sup> Here, too we see the importance of the person with whom one conceives and whether one is married or single. The significance of regulations and who acknowledges the child are also central, and it has been claimed, based upon a traditional, literal reading of the male-produced ancient sources, that the woman does not have anything to say. Still, the information we possess may be assessed from an alternative perspective to the one usually expressed by the ideology of honour and shame. When Athens' women had to swear an oath at the sanctuary of Apollo concerning the identity of the alleged father of the child, it was hardly because they were powerless. Do I now still ignore the sanctions against women who have children out of wedlock, like Danaë or Kreusa, or other women who raise doubts about their virginity? And finally, do I show a lack of understanding of the anxiety and pain this can bring about to the one who breaks the rules, because this also belongs to a description from the woman's own point of view?<sup>65</sup> And is it guaranteed that informants will confide such circumstances to me? One of my female friends from Tinos, a sociologist my own age, has a daughter born out of wedlock. Neither the now-adult daughter nor her mother have been bothered by the relationship, nor have people on Tinos. In Olympus, however, the oldest daughter of the priest is, in many ways, the "tragedy" of the family and lives "outside of society" in a kind of liminal state, not because she bore a child out of wedlock, but because her husband returned to the USA a month after their marriage and found another, and "there she

<sup>62</sup> See Hes. *Th.* 485 for a parallel.

<sup>63</sup> Papamichael 1975; Nixon 1995; Foley 1994b.

<sup>64</sup> Arist. *GA.* 716a20 ff.; Aesch. *Eum.* 658-666.

<sup>65</sup> Kreusa: Eur. *Ion.* 1473-1487. Danae: Nonn. 8.290-302. The women's oath: Isae. 12.9; Dem. 40.(2), 11, cf. Pl. *Thet.* 150b-c.

goes”, according to people in the village. It is my experience that women are just as strong custodians of sexual morality as men, if not stronger. For example, one encounters this reality especially among older women in Olympos, a village where the women who wander the backstreets and use an insignificant door to enter the church—which also has its own women’s section and men’s section, as is usual in Greece, Athens included—would probably, from a Western feminist viewpoint, be seen as totally dominated by men. In the actual village, however, women have a very powerful position.

Machin’s above-cited description from Crete is illustrative of other “honour and shame realities” in Greece and the remaining northern and southern Mediterranean area, which are considered from an androcentric perspective. One encounters a variant in Seremetakis’ critique of the complementary thesis, which she claims conceals gender hierarchies and makes the woman passive, in the same way as the continuing use of one-sided gender duality to form a conception of major parts of social life in modern and ancient Greece.<sup>66</sup> Although one agrees with the critique of the common use of the gendered honour and shame dichotomy in the study of Greek culture, the rest of her critique should nevertheless be nuanced, as is also the case with Page duBois and several other scholars of antiquity, and supplemented with scholars who adopt a different perspective.<sup>67</sup> The complementary thesis does not necessarily belong to the gendered honour and shame dichotomy as it has been described from an androcentric perspective, which, on the contrary, revolves around the thesis of male dominance and not complementarity. As a counterweight to the male ideology’s honour and shame dichotomy, it is advantageous to apply complementarity theses to Mediterranean culture. Nor does such a perspective make the woman passive.<sup>68</sup> By conducting fieldwork on the woman’s domains, as Seremetakis has done, she has, together with other scholars, demonstrated how laments in the past and present have been a means for women to comment on the official society, while the same laments, because they are so powerful, have been regarded as a threat to

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<sup>66</sup> Seremetakis 1993b: 22 f.n.17, cf. 24n.22. An earlier critique of the complementary thesis is given by S. de Beauvoir 1976 Vol. 1.

<sup>67</sup> duBois 1988 vs. e.g., Iosifidou 1991 and Leizos/Papataxiarchis 1991; Alexiou 2002.

<sup>68</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for discussion. Cf. Jackson 1983a.



the very same society.<sup>69</sup> That modern Greek female scholars and other intellectuals feel differently about this themselves is another factor.<sup>70</sup>

If one therefore wishes to understand the reason for the concealment of gender hierarchies, one may analyse another ritual context, such as carnival, as Carole Counihan has done by demonstrating how the man's inferior role in the processes of production and reproduction is caricatured through transvestism. The official androcentric ideology of Sardinia defines power and autonomy as necessary conditions of manliness. Nonetheless, the carnival ritual exposes the cultural contradictions in the men's attitudes towards women, because they show both the fear of women and the desire for them, the combined repugnance and esteem they feel. The resolution of the conflict on Sardinia is the carnival finale, which takes the form of a ritual called the search for "Giolzi"; that is, the female sex organ, and it is a woman who is caught and examined in depth because she is the one who "has Giolzi". The search for Giolzi underscores the economic and social interdependence of men and women as well as the capacity to transcend their differences and unite in a positive and pleasurable union, according to Counihan.<sup>71</sup>

In the Greek context, the body is traditionally depicted as a sex organ, mythically, metaphorically, and linguistically. The female sex is very fascinating to male poets and philosophers, by whom the sources on the subject are indeed composed. This is illustrated by the mythical Teiresias who became a woman for a time in order to know "all the truths", the lesser known aspect of Herakles, or Sokrates' dependence on "his teacher", Diotima.<sup>72</sup> In antiquity, "men became women", according to the myths, "to fulfil themselves"; that is to say, in order to know "everything".

By providing a nuanced assessment of the woman's real power and asking why it is underestimated and by whom, the problem may perhaps turn out to be that when one sees the "sowing of the female body" from the top down, as does duBois, an androcentric perspective is assumed.<sup>73</sup> Power may be considered from perspectives other than the modern

<sup>69</sup> See Seremetakis 1991; Alexiou 1974; Holst-Warhaft 1992.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. also, e.g., Chioles 1993: 151-172 and Holst-Warhaft 1992: Ch. 6 for modern Greek female poets.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Counihan 1985: 11-24. Cf., e.g., "Boules" in the carnival in Naoussa, Greek Macedonia, Figure 88 *infra*. Cf. Devereux 1991: 140 re circumcision (which is common in the region), which makes the man more masculine, but also more dependent on the woman.

<sup>72</sup> Pl. *Symp.* 206b-212b, cf. Halperin 1990: 257-308, though from a different approach. Herakles: *Diod.* 4.14,3. Teiresias: Paus. 9.33,1 f.

<sup>73</sup> duBois 1988.



Western one, and by equating public sphere, phallus, and power, one obtains a one-sided result. It instigates serious problems when one such as Georges Devereux, in spite of his other intentions, employs an androcentric perspective, which in practice sees power as an inherently male phenomenon.<sup>74</sup> In this way, the associations between women's lives and the agricultural year throughout the Demeter hymn and later the Christian festival cycle's feasts dedicated to Mary become an alternative interpretation, which employs a different perspective on the material and seeks to see it from the female sphere. It then becomes apparent that the preliminary work and complementary or concluding work are of equal importance.

According to Seremetakis, when examining society in terms of the optics of death—that is, women's death rituals or, to be precise, women's eyes—theory shifts to a defamiliarisation of the social order by death. But it may seem as if the social order which is defamiliarised is the official social order, and this seems to take place during all the passage rites associated with the life cycle. In that way, Seremetakis' thesis of "dissynchrony" in connection with death rituals may be considered to be deeper-lying rules or values related to all rituals in conjunction with the life-cycle passages. By employing this method, one also sees how important the life-cycle passages are in all "modern" institutions, which are ruled by these deep structures, as seems to have been the case earlier as well. According to E. Morin's definition of anthropology, it is a useful principle to work, *inter alia*, across space and time because the archaic structures *remain below* the developed structures.<sup>75</sup>

In the collection of articles titled *Ritual, Power, and the Body*, edited by Seremetakis and published in 1993, the contributors employ historical perspectives on the representation of Greek women in ancient times and today. In the introductory chapter, Seremetakis carries out an examination of the anthropologies undertaken on both modern and ancient Greece from the mid-nineteenth century on the theme of "gender, culture and history", in a context where she also asks for comparative analyses between the two periods. In her discussion of the "methodologies and thematic convergences", or common features of the themes and methods of the anthropologies carried out on women and gender relations in modern and ancient Greece, one experiences the same problems with which I am concerned; the texts are authored by men, "embedded" and produced in a male-dominated atmosphere, and one must try to "move beneath" these ideological

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<sup>74</sup> Devereux 1991.

<sup>75</sup> My emphasis. Morin 1970: 8 f. I differ from Seremetakis 1991: 15 on some points.

representations to restore the excluded contexts and experiences.<sup>76</sup> In modern Greece, one also encounters the problem with the official “male voice” on two levels. The male voice is the first voice one encounters in a fieldwork situation, and moreover, it is male ethnographers’ voices that have authored most of the ethnographic representations published on women and women’s lives. This means that the anthropologists working on material related to both modern and ancient Greece must confront textual and extra-textual representations of women emanating from male-dominated institutions found in several historical periods, whether these are philosophy, politics, religion, the state, archaeology, or anthropology, according to Seremetakis. And one might add that on many occasions female informants will, of course, also reproduce a male ideology, depending on which role they fulfil at any given time—their particular role at the moment, since the actual role expresses different values. This, however, does not make them subservient, since they in fact have “their own (or female) ways”.<sup>77</sup> The point is that women experience the world differently than do men.

I have encountered the same obstacles that Seremetakis mentions, in addition to the fact that I quite naturally have avoided one of the problems she discusses, by the fact that I have not been “introduced in society” by male voices, but on the contrary by female voices. This is due to the fact that my informants have generally been women whom I have met in or at so-called women-dominated arenas or spaces, be that in the church, at the garden gate, in the courtyard, on the staircase or rooftop, by the public oven, at the cemetery, or in the kitchen, as a natural consequence of the topics I have discussed.

In connection with this, I would like to give some additional information about those who introduced me to the fieldwork situation and taught me how to conduct fieldwork. From having travelled much around the Mediterranean with my mother at a younger age, I was later able to learn much about fieldwork technique from female researchers, since the Norwegian anthropologist Mia Finrud Di Tota taught me field technique during my fieldwork on religious festivals in southern Italy as I worked on my M.A. thesis in 1987. During the work for my PhD dissertation in Greece, I visited one religious festival with the Greek folklorist Dr Anna Papamichael-Koutroubas in 1991 and another with the late folklorist and sociologist Maria Michaël-Dede in 1992. Moreover, many of my informants are women I met in so-called women-dominated spaces, as

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<sup>76</sup> Seremetakis 1993a: 27 f.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Abu-Lughod 1993a: 23 f.

already mentioned. This initially afforded me an entrée into female Greek village society which I might not have otherwise obtained because I learned the conventions of behaviour at first-hand: how I should behave as the—or one of the—youngest, from being a daughter to being a student. I especially experienced this on Tinos and in Olympos, for example.

This does not mean that I have not also wandered around in the “male sphere” and talked with men. The fact is that I have “wandered” in both spheres, something that I might perhaps not have done so easily if I had been a Greek female scholar. It should also be mentioned that I did not embark on the studies of religious festivals as a researcher of women or gender, but, as a result of the fact that I visited religious festivals and discovered that these were arenas in which women played a role, and an especially dominant part as the central performers of the cults embedded in the festivals, I soon understood these festivals and cults were, and still are, actually areas related to the female sphere.

During the work on modern and ancient festivals and the cults derived from them, I also realised the importance of the female body and mother worship in both ancient and modern society. Therefore, I clearly distinguish myself from both Brumfield's and Dubisch' views on mother worship and Mother Goddesses, since Brumfield has classified the latter's theorists as belonging to pre-Greek Bachofenian theories of matriarchy, while Dubisch, as mentioned, thinks mother worship is a reduction.<sup>78</sup> I also disagree with duBois' view of the fate of the female body in Greek male culture and Seremetakis, who sees a merging between so-called “naturalised, essentialist notions such as biological determinism in the context of gender studies and racial determinism in the context of modern Greek studies”.<sup>79</sup> That the biological body is important for society can hardly be denied. Several researchers claimed many years ago that we know little about the importance of biology.<sup>80</sup> Today one is aware of the importance of biological sex, such as in studies of problems during puberty. Therefore, one needs to go further and nuance the constructionist understanding that one encounters in most of the scholars who claim that to be a woman is a socially constructed role.<sup>81</sup> Scholars of antiquity such

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<sup>78</sup> Dubisch 1995. Brumfield 1981: 1. Bachofen 1861 is also discussed by Georgoudi 1991: 477-491.

<sup>79</sup> Seremetakis 1993a, cf. Danforth 1984. duBois 1988, 1993.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., Ardener 1975; Jackson 1983a.

<sup>81</sup> Bourdieu 1990: 20, 1998; Delaney 1987. For constructionism, which claims that gender and sexuality are culturally constructed, see Ortner/Whitehead 1988. The constructionist stance is, for example, represented by the system and structure-oriented scholars, who are concerned only with the code of honour and shame.

as Jane Rowlandson have also examined biological determinism.<sup>82</sup> However, there is no consensus in the debate, since biological determinism is a contentious phenomenon, and the relationship between biology and culture is not unambiguous. We see this several times in ancient sources, as when Plutarch asks a friend to refrain from lamenting over his dead son because in doing so he is behaving like a woman, since mourning is feminine and unseemly for free men.<sup>83</sup> Although it is my assumption that the difference one encounters between female and male authors, female and male informants, and so on can be biologically determined, and I think it injudicious to repudiate biological determinism categorically, as gender researchers generally do, biological determinism does not, of course, preclude the categories from being mingled. I entirely agree with what Seremetakis says about racial determinism, but I cannot see it as neither the natural result of biological determinism, nor a phenomenon only encountered in contemporary male ideology. Therefore, on the basis of my presentation of the relationship between men and women, official ideology, and the importance of deeper-lying rules or mentality in Greece, from a chthonic point of view, I distinguish an internal contradiction in both the mentioned collection of articles and the objectives of gender studies, since one repudiates that the biologically determined has any significance within gender studies, while the book as a whole discusses “Ritual, Power, and the Body”. Through the rituals women carry out in which the body is a central medium, they demonstrate that power has not been taken from them, in spite of persistent attempts. This is apparent, for instance, when it comes to ecstatic dances, motherhood, and other performances of “being good at being a woman”, such as the actual lament, the metaphors employed in the lament in general, and the lamentation about the “Verga of Almyros” in particular, in which we encounter the metaphor of the belly and the inside of the woman (that is, “the rounded belly of a storage vase”). Likewise, it can be seen in duBois’ parallel illustrations of the metaphors regarding the female body which were employed in ancient Greek androcentric society.<sup>84</sup> If women were indeed powerless, Seremetakis would not have been able to edit the article collection, nor could I have made my analyses on the basis of fieldwork on religious festivals.

The problem is that one has been searching for women at the taberna and not by the public oven, at the garden gate, or in the courtyard or kitchen. Women are found among women and men among men in Greece,

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<sup>82</sup> Rowlandson 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 113a.

<sup>84</sup> duBois 1988, 1993. For “Verga of Almyros”, see Seremetakis 1991: 237.



including when they appear in public, such as at the cemetery, on the rooftop, by the public oven or, until quite recently, at the village fountain. Actually, the female scholars who have looked for women in the public arenas they themselves occupy—which were not only dominated by men earlier, but often are today as well, and especially dominated by a male way of thinking—have acted automatically or unconsciously, as I did when I spontaneously dragged my young female informant with me into the closest “kapheneio” in the village of Flambouro because it was terribly cold.<sup>85</sup> This is because we easily forget that the Greek world might perhaps be unlike our own northwest European one, which makes us act erroneously or search for people in the wrong places, which may yield the wrong results if the measure of value is the northwest European one and not that found in the female sphere in Greece. Therefore, the problem might rather be that many modern female scholars have not taken the consequences of working on the female sphere and female matters into account. This might be due to an ongoing or inherent legacy from former female researchers, by which I, as mentioned, have not felt myself bound, either by academic background or milieu; nor have I been able to consider the women with whom I have talked during my fieldwork as “mute” or oppressed individuals and present them as such in my work. Whether or not mother worship and an upgrading of the importance of the female body in Greek culture constitute “the missing link” in Seremetakis’ scheme,<sup>86</sup> in the same way as with other contemporary feminists’ examinations, the two aspects are very important under all circumstances.

And regardless of how we look at it, the society consists of two biologically different sexes which have to be united if the society is to endure. This statement might perhaps seem banal. Nonetheless, this is a topic I have found to be quite central to the festivals, where the female body has an especially important role on which the male society depends. This does not mean, however, that men have subjugated it completely. Rather, what one discovers is that men are as dependent on women for reproduction as women are on men. The problem with theories of matriarchy and patriarchy is that, in the eagerness to exclude the one for the other, it seems that scholars stand on opposite sides of a fence and

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<sup>85</sup> However, we left when I noticed how weird both she and all the men there felt. The waitress was completely acclimatised; she was an adult woman at work, but the young girl felt utterly out of place in there. At her parents’ taberna, on the other hand, she was in her own environment. The circumstances in Flambouro may be due to the fact that this is an area in which one encounters several ethnic groups. See Håland 2017: Ch. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Seremetakis 1993a.



scream out their preferred theory, thus forgetting this very central point. It is due to the ability to maintain two cognitive systems simultaneously that one encounters the two competing theories in Greek androcentric culture, according to which men can both approve of women's importance in the production of children and food and view them as polluting creatures who destroy men's creative activities.<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, the theoretical foundations of Seremetakis' edited collection, which is mainly based upon one-sided readings of negative perceptions of women by male authors of ancient sources, need to be re-evaluated, particularly from a critical historical and alternative female point of view.

In ancient Greek society, therefore, the so-called "pre-Olympian" or chthonic ideology can, from a long-term perspective, be considered as an enduring mentality, because it can always be found beneath the official performances of newer ideologies, or rather, constitutes elements integrated into the official performances of newer ideologies. Despite the fact that the sources often express conflicting ideologies or value systems, one just as often sees that the newer ideology has had to adapt to traditional customs related to deeper-lying rules or mentality in a kind of mutual contract; otherwise the rituals could not have been parts of the same festival. Accordingly, the rituals are more conservative than all new ideologies, often preserving the most important condition: that a God dies and is resurrected in accordance with a periodic cycle and is therefore the partner of a great Goddess, a mistress of life, who neither dies nor grows old. This results in several "layers" within the ancient festivals as well, as is illustrated by the ritual in the Marshes during the Dionysos festival. Also of central importance is the ritual descent into the peribolos of Aphrodite with offering gifts and the following ascent with sacred symbols as parts of the initial ritual in the ideological Panathenaia festival, as well as the equivalent rituals during the Demeter festivals (cf. Figure 55).

Likewise, it is neither impossible that the harvest festival, the Thargēlia, or an earlier version of it, may originally have been dedicated to Demeter, although it in historical times is Apollo who is associated with the festival. This seems to be the case only in Athens. In other poleis, the harvest festivals are dedicated to Demeter, the significance of which is illustrated by all the epithets linking her to harvesting. On the island of Kos, for instance, they celebrated the festival in honour of *Damatros halōados*, "Demeter of the Threshing floor".<sup>88</sup> On Sicily, there were statues of "Demeter of the Grain" and "The Mother of Abundance". In

<sup>87</sup> See Bloch 1977: 289 f., cf. Strathern 1972.

<sup>88</sup> Theoc. *Id.* 7.155.

**Becotia**, she was called *Megalartos* ("The Great Bread") and *Megalomoros*.<sup>89</sup> None of these names were ever given to Apollo, although the Thargēlia was dedicated to him. We nonetheless encounter her significance in Athens as well. In connection with the procession to Eleusis before the time of sowing, she is called the great and powerful Goddess, "the harvest queen" and "the giver of grain" in Aristophanes (*Karpophoros*; that is, fruit-bearing).<sup>90</sup> Although Artemis also received a first fruit offering during the Thargēlia festival, Demeter *Chloë* (that is, young, green), Demeter of the green shoot, is the first deity to receive an offering, in the form of goat sacrifice made to her on the first day of the festival, 6 Thargelion. This is also how it was seven months earlier in Pyanepsion, when the festival of *Proerosia* ("before plowing-time"), which was dedicated to the Goddess, marked the start of the agricultural year. In the same month, the Thesmophoria was also celebrated (cf. Figure 55).

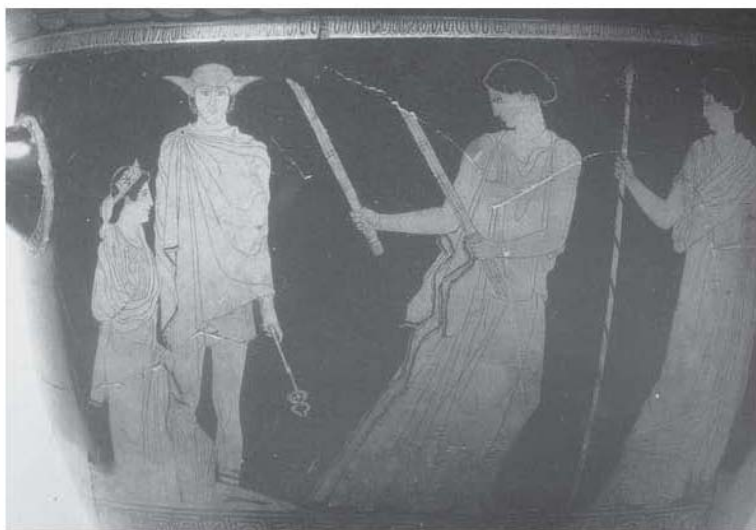


Figure 55. The *Anodos* ("rising") of Persephone (=ARV 1012,1, see ARVcl. 121).

The Olympian Apollo cult was superimposed on this chthonic layer, because the offering during the actual festival of the Pyanepsia was dedicated to him in the form of the ritual meal, the panspermia.

<sup>89</sup> Ath. 10.416b-c. Re Demeter Megalartos, cf. Brumfield 1981: 148; Loukatos 1984: 125.

<sup>90</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 382 f.

That being the case, does this mean that the rulers make use of features within the popular belief and equip the deity of a new Olympian ideology with them? Or do they need to give him the actual offering related to the crop to have him accepted by the people? Both the festivals of the Thargēlia and Pyanepsia were named after the mixed stews representing all the fruits of the earth, which were offered to Apollo. Although he has “taken over” from Demeter, the offerings dedicated to him are nonetheless identical to the ingredients usually offered to the agricultural deities. This can therefore signify that the festival illustrates how an Olympian God only replaced the chthonian from the perspective of the official ideology; otherwise, he would probably not have received offerings usually associated with agricultural deities. Moreover, the *eiresione* (an olive branch richly covered with cakes of grain, bread and figs and other seasonal fruits), which was carried in procession during the festival of the Pyanepsia was associated with him.<sup>91</sup> This was because he was the God of purity, and it is possible that a “malevolent miracle” was the ideological motive for the festival dedicated to him. The *eiresione* was connected with the hero Theseus’ offering, which consisted of boiled beans, *pyanoi*, and the ritual is called *Pyanepsia* (boiling of the beans). Theseus established the *Oschophoria* festival, which was celebrated on either the same day, 7 Pyanepsion, or the previous day, and the clusters of grapes carried in procession were dedicated to Dionysos and Ariadne. Finally came the Athenian ideological cult in honour of Theseus, who received offerings in connection with the festival, but he was also honoured with the Theseia festival on 8 Pyanepsion.<sup>92</sup> The Athenians continued to perform the offering, Pyanepsia, to avoid famine. Once when Athens suffered from drought, they bound wool on branches and dedicated them to Apollo as a sign of prayer. Therefore, *eiresione* was a variation on the customary olive branch bound with wool (cf. wool-hair-life), which was used in connection with purification and prayer, which illustrates the connection between the festival and Apollo, the sender of plague as well as the purifier. “Below” these expanded male ideological festivals, however, one continuously encounters the importance of the preliminary offerings to Demeter made in order for the earth to produce the necessary food.<sup>93</sup> In fact, it is possible

<sup>91</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 22.4 f.

<sup>92</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 36.2 f. Offering in connection with the festival: *Thes.* 23.3. Dionysos and Ariadne: *Thes.* 23.2 f. See Parke 1986: pl. 33 for Theseus’ ritual dance, cf. Plut. *Thes.* 22.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Eur. *Supp.* 1 f., 28-35. Apollo’s connection with the festival: Rice/Stambaugh 1979: 136 f. Cf. Parke 1986: 75 ff. For the branch in relation to purification/prayer, cf. *Il.* 1.14 f., 21; Eur. *Supp.* 10.

that it was still the original and nourishing Goddess who was valued most highly, since she continued to receive offerings before the male Olympian God during the festivals, and the ingredients in the offerings dedicated to him were actually associated with the “harvest queen”, “the giver of grain”. The Grain Mother Demeter provided lentils as well.<sup>94</sup> The most important crops of antiquity, grain, vines and olives, were associated with female divinities, although the male ideology described it somewhat differently.<sup>95</sup> According to this male description, it is nonetheless the daughters of Anios, Apollo’s mythical son who provide wine (*Oino*), grain (*Spermo*), and oil (*Elais*). This fact demonstrates how dependent this male ideology is on female production/reproduction, as it is women who provide the food.

Both Demeter and the the *Moirai*, or Fates, demonstrate the strength of the chthonic powers. One may also mention the tale of Dionysos Zageus, in which the chthonic Moirai had plans other than those of the “almighty” Zeus, in spite of the support he received from both Apollo and Athena.<sup>96</sup> In other words, this is an instance of the Olympian forces’ inability to cope with the chthonic forces. The Moirai are equalled in strength to the God Zeus by the ideologue Aeschylus.<sup>97</sup> The modern mixture of grain, polysporia or panspermia, which is dedicated to the Panagia at the time of sowing, is equivalent to the ancient panspermia. The mixture has been dedicated at weddings and death festivals, both earlier and today. This demonstrates concretely that in the last instance, it is dedicated to the Earth Mother, since it has been dedicated at the most important agricultural festivals, both in antiquity and today. One may say that this is also the case with Adonis, whose privilege it is to fertilise the earth. Simultaneously, the ambiguity in the relationship between the Olympian ideology and the chthonic force of the fertile earth demonstrate that Adonis also heralds the return of future life from the maternal womb.<sup>98</sup> We see the importance of matrimonial union, creation and birth, aspects which are also central to the ancient philosophers.

The importance of the hieros gamos, or matrimonial union between the female and male principles, as a means of explaining the transformations

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<sup>94</sup> Paus. 8.15,3. Grain Mother: *Diod.* 5.5,2, 5.4,3 ff; Paus. 1.14,2 f., cf. *HHD*. 473 ff. Cf. *Plut. Thes.* 18 for another example of the “male seizure of power”.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Detienne 1989: 89 ff. Re the following: The divinity most closely associated with the vine was Dionysos. However, this chthonic God also has female traits, Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Makistou 1970: 198 f.

<sup>97</sup> Aesch. *Eum.* 1045 f.

<sup>98</sup> See furthermore Makistou 1978 for the logic re the maternal womb.



of nature is illustrated by the fertilisation of a Chthonic Earth Mother in both ancient and other creation narratives; in African ones, for instance. In all cases, life emerges through an interaction between powers both below and above the surface of the earth in the form of the Chthonic Earth Mother, who is fertilised by a heavenly male Olympian God. Once again, we see the importance of this Chthonic Earth Mother in duBois' thesis about how the female reproductive power lies behind the thinking of the development of male Western philosophy, since the male philosophers cannot explain anything without doing so against the background of the female body, which is a picture of the earth as well as the cosmos. This picture is also illustrated by the Maniot women's own lamentation about the Verga of Almyros.<sup>99</sup>

Paul Veyne has stated that from the time of Isokrates and the "birth of philosophy", to be a cultivated person was to be someone who did not think in the same fashion as the ordinary "people".<sup>100</sup> But regardless of how much the representatives for "cultural dignity" have traditionally criticised "cultural ignominy", the "Western philosophy" is not necessarily representative of actual Greek society, because the philosophers, naturally enough, are not spokesmen for the society in which they live. On the other hand, their thoughts are nevertheless moulded by, anchored in, and emanate from their own peasant society and carry with them its basic rules, or mentality. As Giambattista Vico has stated, the words which are found in every single language are of peasant origin. These are the words employed by philosophers, artists, and other intellectuals.<sup>101</sup> This means that, although the philosophers are not the spokespersons of the society,

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<sup>99</sup> For the Maniot women: Seremetakis 1991: 237 f.; duBois 1988, cf. Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 20 ff. for the African parallel. Despite the reservations expressed (Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7), cf. also Motte 1973: 157-324 (cf. Pestalozza 1965) with the logic behind Watson 1982, cf. Gen. 1.2 and Hes. *Th.* 176 ff., see also 126 ff. Cf. Hestia-Hermes: Vernant 1982a Vol. 1: 124-170. Based on the prevailing paradigm, which claims that natural science's conception of reality is influenced by prejudiced attitudes embedded in the culture (in other words, culturally determined), the thinking in Watson's description of the contemporary scientific version is controversial (like his teacher, D. Morris). Still, the description provides interesting perspectives, because one encounters a similar logic in other contexts which are directly or indirectly relevant to Greek material. See also Bloch 1988 re contemporary science and the holistic view of death in many pre-industrial societies, a description that proves useful in the attempt to get a comprehensive perspective on Greek material, cf. Danforth 1982: 6 vs. Seremetakis 1991: 2, 13.

<sup>100</sup> Veyne 1986: 280 f.

<sup>101</sup> See Herzfeld 1992a: 186, for Vico. 2,2,2,1. Keesing 1981, for the statement that the philosophers are not spokesmen for the society in which they live.



they are nevertheless created by the society, and carry with them its basic values, to which their new ideologies are adapted as well. The agricultural cycle seems to be absolutely central to the origin and gestalt of the festivals. Moreover, it was probably significant that the authors of the sources operated in agricultural societies. This might be illustrated by many of the statements from, for instance, Hesiod, Aristotle, Thukydides, Aristophanes, Plato, Plutarch, and Athenaeus. For Aeschylus, Nonnus, and other authors who produced a great portion of the written sources, it is popular theory which lies behind their ideas and thoughts. Both Aristotle and Plutarch were well informed about popular belief and magic, and like other little boys, they were moulded and socialised by their mothers, though in adulthood, they had to dissociate themselves from much of this knowledge in adherence to the logic of the honour and shame society, much as modern men do.<sup>102</sup> In one permutation of this, Diotima, the prophetess, instructed Sokrates, who was dependent on her. Despite this official dissociation, much lies hidden between the lines in their writings because it is encoded, and they cannot dissociate themselves from it because it is so self-evident; this is just the way things are. Thus we encounter a great many paradoxes.

Accordingly, Plutarch, for example, can condemn magic and nevertheless accept it, especially if it is "white".<sup>103</sup> Here we discover a variant of the paradoxes, which illustrate how a society classified as an honour and shame society may nevertheless very well have a conflicting value system which accepts much of what is in total disagreement with the official paradigm of honour and shame; magic, for instance. Both in the modern society and in the ancient context, magic is disparaged and associated with women, common people, strangers, and the like, thereby illustrating the relationship between official ideology and human experience. It might seem as if the relevant popular aspects have more to say within the official male value system as the result of its own underlying, immanent values than we are really aware of. Many of these values often seem paradoxical, and they may be denied in one situation only to be completely self-evident in another. In any case, the ideology needs to be adapted to some deeper rules and roles or mentalities. The cults of death and fertility as well as healing, of which magic is a general feature, may be considered ideologies,

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Pl. *Resp.* 377c and Gilmore 1987b: 13 ff. See also Stehle 1997: 321 ff. Cf. Dracoulides 1962: 106n.2; Walcot 1996: 114-133. See also Glinister 2017, re the *bullae*, a bubble-shaped apotropaic amulet found around the neck of swaddled-infant votives.

<sup>103</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 138d1; accepting magic: 138c-d, 143d38; vs. condemning magic: 145b-e, 139a5, 166a.

but also as long-lasting mentalities. The same concerns the meanings which, according to both official and popular beliefs, are associated with the symbols of these cults.

This is what we concretely encounter in connection with some of the particularly important aspects found in the festivals, such as earth, water and fire, because they are focal symbols in the rituals, which are often performed in "very ancient" holy places rich in symbolism, in caves, for example. Regarding the importance of the popular cult for the official ideology, one may also mention the cult of Pan in a cave a little beyond the plain of Marathon in Attica.<sup>104</sup> One also learns that the philosophers are moulded by the value system of the peasant society especially in the case of the early Greek philosophers, whose thought centred on elements of the natural world. It is therefore important to examine the position of these elements; that is, fire, earth, and water or mud as fertility and healing symbols, both in the popular and the official cults. They are important in the rituals of the religious festivals today, and were also essential in ancient Athens. Accordingly, holy fire, water or earth are fetched forth in the same way as other amulets. Related to this are the ingredients in the amulets, which are often found in a cave.

It has been argued that the birth of the world in spring is not only a mythical and poetic theme, but also a philosophical dogma from the stoics, and a parallel to the modern Easter in Greece.<sup>105</sup> Based on the central theme of the festivals, we must not forget the divinity incarnated in the elements, heaven, earth, water and fire. In Hesiod, everything emanates from the matrimonial union between Gaia and Uranos.<sup>106</sup> From Hesiod we also learn about the importance of water, associated with the birth of Aphrodite, which is likewise illustrated by Adonis' sexual renewal, when his image is thrown into the sea.<sup>107</sup> A modern parallel is the renewal of the Epitaphios of Christ when it is immersed in the sea, as takes place in several places in Greece, such as on Tinos (Figure 56), where people also fetch earth and water.

<sup>104</sup> Paus. 1.32,7; Rice/Stambaugh 1979: 123. Cf. also the symbolism behind the cave with Seremetakis 1991: 237 f.; Pestalozza 1965 vs. Pl. *Resp.* 515 f.

<sup>105</sup> See Motte 1973: 222n.46 for citation of Schilling 1964: 13 re Philon of Alexandria, *Quaest. et Solut.* 1,1.

<sup>106</sup> Hes. *Th.* 45 f.

<sup>107</sup> Theoc. *Id.* 15.132-142. Aphrodite's birth: Hes. *Th.* 188 ff.



Figure 56. The Epitaphios is carried into the sea, Spítalia beach, Holy Friday on Tinos, 2012.

The fire was central at Eleusis, but is also focal in the contemporary Anastenaria cult. Equivalent objects are, in other words, important in both the ancient and modern religions, as is apparent in the festivals.

According to Motte, the ceremony of the Arrēphoroi during the preliminary ritual to the Panathenaia is archaic. He thinks that the archaism in the ceremony is striking in regard to the relationship between the city Goddess, Athena, and Aphrodite.<sup>108</sup> Instead of focusing on the eventual archaism in the ceremony of the Arrēphoroi, as Motte does, one may rather ask why specific ceremonies, phenomena or materials seem to be holier than others. It is not my intention to give an unequivocal answer to such a complex question, but only to reflect on the issue based on the topics discussed here.

The point of the mentioned ceremony seems to be the descent into and ascent from the bosom of a fertility Goddess with key objects to secure the fertility on which the male polis depended. We also encounter essential objects in other contexts, such as the very ancient and most holy cult statue of Athena Polias on the Akropolis. This, the holiest of all the images of

<sup>108</sup> Motte 1973: 133 re his evolutionism coloured assertion.

Athena on the Akropolis, according to Pausanias, was Athena's ancient cult image made from olive wood, of which "a legend concerning it says that it fell from heaven".<sup>109</sup> This ancient wooden statue of Athena might have been seated, looking like a "woman's Goddess" (cf. Figure 57).



Figure 57. Statuette of a seated woman. A possible illustration of the cult object? Akropolis Museum, Athens.

It formed the centre of devotion and was the most important cult object, rather than the massive chryselephantine "gold and ivory" statue that

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<sup>109</sup> Paus. 1.26,6.

Pheidias made of Athena *Parthenos* (Virgin) between 447 and 438 BCE. The importance of the Goddess is also illustrated in Herodotus' account of the episode when the rich man Peisistratos drove into Athens in triumph, accompanied by the tall and beautiful local woman called Phye, disguised as the Goddess.<sup>110</sup> In that way, he demonstrated that the Goddess was in agreement with his conquering the city and setting himself up as a tyrant. The story does not necessarily demonstrate that the Athenians were stupid and easily taken in.<sup>111</sup> We have several other stories from the ancient context about both the deities' interventions and the supernatural qualities of a cult image, *xoanon* (carved image or cult statue): Regarding the three ancient Theban maenads who founded a Bacchic thiasos each, the one named "The Female Thessalian's (Thiasos)" was also called "Fell from Heaven".<sup>112</sup>

One encounters similar modern phenomena in the cult of the icon on Tinos and the contemporary Anastenaria cult. It is the "very ancient" symbols that are most important. They are said to have a kind of divine "origin", or in another way to be especially strongly linked to a deity, and although most of the miraculous icons from primeval Christianity are, according to tradition, said to have been painted by the evangelist Luke, they are rediscovered after someone having seen the Panagia in a dream, asking the dreamer to set her free from her imprisoned existence, very often in connection with the modern Greek fight for liberation from Turkish rule, paralleling older fights against barbarians, such as the Goths, and the introduction of Christianity. This is illustrated in the undated newspaper cutting of an article, framed and glazed, which hangs in the cave-church from the fifth or the sixth century dedicated to the Panagia Chrysospēliōtissa (or Spēliōtissa), the Panagia of the Golden Cavern (the Panagia tou Brachou), situated on the southern slope of the Akropolis in Athens (Figure 44). The legend recounted in the article tells how the Panagia helped the Athenians save the city from the assault of the Goths: When Alaric came, he wanted to destroy the city, but a light appeared before them. Alaric saw the Panagia on the city wall and departed. It is the vision of the Panagia that has accompanied the armed forces of the Greeks. Thus she becomes the counterpart of the ancient virgin Goddesses Athena and Artemis, who also used to appear on various city walls in periods of war; for example, when the inhabitants of Ilion or Troy dream

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<sup>110</sup> Hdt. 1.60,3-5.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also Parker 1996: 84n.68.

<sup>112</sup> According to *Inscr. Magn.* 215.(a)24-40 (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE). For *xoanon*, see Zeitlin 1991: Ch. 8 and 12.



of Athena participating in the fight.<sup>113</sup> We have several other ancient parallels of both divine participation in battles and intervention, such as by sending a snowstorm in the war between the democrats and the Thirty Tyrants, giving help during the battle at Salamis, or during the Jewish exodus from Egypt.<sup>114</sup> Later variants of divine help in which icons are central are Agia Pelagia's dream, or the "Tinos legend", and the stories about the Anastenarides' holy icons from Kōsti, of which, according to tradition, the oldest icon is said to wear a piece of Agios Kōnstantinos' clothing. Furthermore, several of their icons were typically found or made after the saint appeared in a dream ordering the dreamer to make an icon, or indicating where to find an icon. The topic parallels the ancient legend with reference to the making of a new image of Demeter for the Phigalians by the artist Onatas, after a vision he had in his dreams. Another variant is Agios Charalampos, who appeared on Tauros around the beginning of the struggle against the Turks. In Eleusis, the traditions of Demeter and Korē have remained alive right up to our own time; most recently, Demeter is said to have been observed on the bus near Eleusis in February 1940.<sup>115</sup> Hence she becomes a parallel to the aforementioned cases in which Goddesses or saints appear when there is a need for divine help. We see how important aspects such as mother worship and death cult or chthonic deities related to the cycle of the agricultural year and the food supply are starting points for ideological festivals in the proper sense of the word. Both the classical celebration of the Panathenaia festival at the beginning of the year and the other festivals for Demeter, Dionysos and Adonis reveal some basic and crucial features which in reality seem to be the holiest aspects of the festivals for people.

Consequently, Motte's evolutionist claim about Aphrodite-in-the-Gardens and the custom of offering phalluses of "durable" material in the womb of the sanctuary should also be reassessed, because this is not a "developed" phase compared to "the primitive" custom of offering symbols of male genitals made of perishable materials, even if we can find them.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, one cannot deny the importance of the fact that we can still see the durable source material. When comparing claims about the evolution of symbols from the worship of head, bones, and genitals to the

<sup>113</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 10.3.

<sup>114</sup> Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.24,163,1-3. Salamis: Hdt. 8.65, 8.84. War between the democrats and the Thirty Tyrants: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4,14 f.; *Diod.* 14.32,2 f.

<sup>115</sup> Østby 1989: 78. See, moreover, Lawson 1910: 79-84. See Paus. 8.42,7 for the Demeter statue.

<sup>116</sup> Motte 1973: 136 f. Perishable and imperishable materials is a central topic within the "body history", Richlin 1997.

worship of anthropomorphised deities (such as Osiris and Dionysos in antiquity) and people (such as Agia Pelagia and Agios Nektarios today) in other words, the owners of the aforementioned limbs with the practical performance of the cult (or worship of these anthropomorphised deities and later saints, that is, the cult performed by people when worshipping the aforementioned Osiris, Agia or Agios), both earlier and later (that is, in the “evolutionary sequence”), it turns out that in practice, it is still the bones, head, and genitals (of Osiris, Agia Pelagia and Agios Nektarios) that are considered to have the most power; that is, one assumes them to be the seat of life. One encounters similar circumstances today, and may, for instance, compare the sacred parcelling out of a human body for the common good and the bread symbolising Christ. Today, the significance is also shown by saints with many sanctuaries, each of which contains a piece of her or him, like Agios Nektarios, whose most important sanctuary can boast of having his head (Figure 58), paralleling the head of Agia Pelagia on Tinos.



Figure 58. Venerating Agios Nektarios' holy head in his new church, Aegina, 8 November 2011.

Other examples might include a saint's bones, or one or more teeth. It is too simple to maintain that a cult is more developed because we can see the durable remains, mentioned by Motte, and define these as "superior" art. This assertion is further refuted by the fact that mud, manure, bread, blood, herbs, and so on are valued highly and constitute important fertility amulets, in line with the rotted remains of the piglets in the ancient Thesmophoria festival, and therefore are regarded by the common people to be equally holy as the (for us) sumptuous works of art. It is the insignificant objects that have been in contact with these especially important sacred symbols, be they statues of Goddesses or Gods in caves formerly or icons in caves today, that people take with them in order to secure the next year's fertility. A wad of cotton wool which someone has used to wipe off the "sweat" from the Panagia's icon (Figure 2) is a valued amulet, which is usually laid on the pilgrim's chest or put in one's handbag. A relevant parallel is the custom on Tauros, according to which people have "ensured their right to be among the first to take of the blood", according to the local villagers. By coming into contact with the bull's blood, people are protected against all kinds of sickness during the coming year. Accordingly, everybody immerses their hands in the blood. The male pilgrims daub a cross on their foreheads and palms with the blood, while the women dip their handkerchieves and pieces of cotton wool in the blood and draw crosses on the foreheads of their children. The same happens during other rituals on the island, because people are convinced that the blood has healing properties and wards off evil. Behind the ritual act of touching the modern icon lie several things. The icon is a microcosm in itself, since it is made of all the substances of the world. Furthermore, it has not been painted by anyone. Perhaps the insignificant objects which become fertility amulets are more sacred because they are transformed? Until recently it was the holy manure on Demeter's altar at Eleusis which would ensure the fertility. As recently as 1814, people collected all the manure around a great Demeter statue at Eleusis before it was brought out into the fields.<sup>117</sup> In so doing, it became especially holy. This parallels the point of mixing the "remains" of the symbolic sex organs with the corn seed during the Thesmophoria; namely, to have abundant crops. Related to this is the law requiring the initiates to bring

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<sup>117</sup> Cf. Eitrem 1940: 146. See Constantine 1984: 214 for Demeter cult in 1801. Perhaps this is the context in which one should see the offerings (?) hung on the Dionysos figure and arranged on and below the table in front of him in Figure 23 (=ARV 1151,2, see ARVcl. 177) supra? In other words, these objects become sacred by being in contact with the statue of the God (cf. Figure 2 supra for the modern parallel).

handfuls of agricultural products with them to Eleusis during the mysteries, and other offering gifts related to agricultural activities, gifts which, however, are also often related to the maternal womb, due to their shape as jars or terracotta vessels or their content, such as baskets with offering-cakes and biscuits and the pigs. In that way, one encounters the wish for fertility based on the thinking behind sympathetic magic, in the same way as with many of the votive gifts offered to the modern Mother Goddesses, the Panagia and Agia Elenē. One offers what one wishes to receive more of in return, based on a logic very similar to the one Hesiod expresses when he recommends the giving of a large gift in order to get more in return.<sup>118</sup> The significance of gifts and counter-gifts is obvious within Orthodoxy, since in Greek terminology, *antidōro* signifies the blessed bread (literally, “counter-gift”) and what people are preoccupied with during the liturgy is the blessed bread they are going to fetch when the liturgy is over. In this context, one may mention the episode during the the Ninth Day’s ritual of the Panagia on Tinos in 2006, when people thought that they had received insufficient blessed bread and forced the churchwarden to cut up more bread and distribute it. Such a blessed piece of bread can be put behind the ear, if the person has a bad ear or is hard of hearing. It is believed to have a healing effect because the evil is driven out.<sup>119</sup> After Easter, the peasants in Serres bury the withered *hassili* (the “gardens of Adonis”) in the fields because it “is good for the crops”. Alternatively, the peasants will often plant rows of lentil seeds, the main ingredient of the *hassili*, next to the cornfields. In that way, the productivity of the grain is increased when the lentils are close by, they say. Lentils promote the health of both animals and people, and were a valued fertility symbol in antiquity, originally a gift from Demeter.<sup>120</sup> The offering gifts still emphasise the importance of agricultural and human fertility.

Thus, despite the continually disparaging formulations about sexual symbols and fertility, one encounters the strong and enduring significance of the sexual symbols regarding life. The connection between agriculture and sexuality encountered in the Greek reality is in no way something that only is present in “Eastern” cultures, as maintained by Detienne.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, the sacramental Eleusinian meal, consisting of symbolic sexual

<sup>118</sup> Hes. *Op.* 349 ff. Cf. also Michaël-Dede 1979b: 223.

<sup>119</sup> One may mention that bread was used when the Fresco hall in Bergen was restored in the 1990s.

<sup>120</sup> Paus. 8.15.3. Cf. Plin. *HN.* 22.70, 142-147 and Pilitsis 1985: 160-165. See also Plut. *Mor.* 377b-c. Cf. Salaman 1930: 48.

<sup>121</sup> Detienne 1989: 246.

organs, has its parallel in later periods' "high" rituals with their "primitive" elements, cults with survivals from former cults.<sup>122</sup> We have an example of a new ideology which has included an old ritual, or adapted to the ritual. Consequently the ritual has also acquired a new ideological meaning. In other words, the city Goddess Athena, as the ideologists used her, would not have been especially successful among the people if the aforementioned archaism in the ceremony of the Arrēphoroi was not present, as it is with the other mentioned examples. Therefore, the archaisms are important to take into consideration if one attempts to acquire a new perspective on the cult. The significance of Eros and Aphrodite in the Panathenaia festival, seen in the preliminary ritual when the Arrēphoroi descend into the peribolos of Aphrodite in her urban sanctuary dedicated to "Aphrodite-in-the-Gardens", *en Kēpois*, seems to exemplify the importance of older rituals being included in a new ideological festival. Therefore in the Akademy outside of Athens one may find altars dedicated to Eros, Prometheus, and Hephaestos in addition to Athena.<sup>123</sup> The significance of Hephaestos is related to the origin of the Earth Child, and the connection with Athena provides a parallel to the relationship between Eros and Aphrodite. The Earth Child, Erichthonios, was the result of Hephaestos' unsuccessful attempt to rape the virgin Goddess: Erichthonios was begotten by Hephaestos, who, while chasing after Athena, discharged his seed on the virgin Goddess's thigh. After Athena had wiped off the seed with wool, she flung the wool onto the earth, which absorbed it and gave birth to the Earth Child (Figure 59), the phallic snake God, Erichthonios, who was fostered by Athena. The myth of the Earth Child who is taken to the sanctuary of the virgin Goddess, Athena, belongs to generation and cultivation of new fire, a wonder of nature, this illustrates the conception and fostering of a beautiful child.<sup>124</sup> Therefore Eros' altar corresponds to the altars of Prometheus and Hephaestos as a source of new fire, and during the Panathenaia the fire on Athena's altar was lit in a special ritual which, *inter alia*, consisted of a torch race from the altar of Prometheus in the Akademy.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> For the Eleusinian meal, see Athanassakis 1976.

<sup>123</sup> Paus. 1.30,1 f.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. the logic in Triomphe 1992 and Robertson 1992: 107. For the myth, see Apollod. 3.14,6.

<sup>125</sup> Paus. 1.30,1 f.; Plut. *Sol.* 1.4, lighting of fire from the altar of Eros. Cf. Robertson 1992: 106 f. for discussion of the various altars. See *Ar. Ran.* 129, 1087 ff. the race to light the fire, cf. *ARV* 1333,1 the end of a torch race.





Figure 59. Birth of Erichthonios; Athena receives the baby Erichthonios from the hands of the Earth Mother, Gaia. Attic red-figure stamnos, 470-460 BCE (=ARV 495,1, see ARVarc. 350.1).

Moreover, the fertility aspect of Athena is also demonstrated by the fact that she received pig sacrifices as well.<sup>126</sup> This ritual may have been adopted by Athenian ideology. Accordingly, what is significant is that they must adopt a common Demetrian ritual to show that she is as good as Demeter. The presence of both Arrēphores and Kanēphores, the ritual descent into an underground cavern dedicated to a Goddess, and the ascent with sacred symbols as parts of the initial ritual to the festival dedicated to Athena testifies to the significance of the fertility of both the earth and the women for the official ideology. Accordingly, the result of the matrimonial union in the cave, whether this concerns symbolic offerings thrown or carried down by the Arrēphorei or the women during the Thesmophoria or the ritual in which the *hierophant* (that is, *hierophantēs*, *displayer of holy things*) and the priestess consummated a sexual union, which was a ritual re-enactment of the sacred marriage between Zeus and Demeter, is most clearly symbolised in the divine “child from the hearth” during the Eleusinian Mysteries. This result is also a “key ritual” in line

<sup>126</sup> Robertson 1992: 109n.73, see also, e.g., 101.

with the one in which women descend into grottos or caves during festivals dedicated to Mother Goddesses.

During the discussion of the ancient festivals based on a comparison with the modern ones, we realise that there are not only parallel central rituals connected with the life-cycle passages, but also key objects that are fetched, obtained or offered, today as in the past. These rituals and objects are often so “insignificant” that the scholars have generally not seen them, often because they have not had knowledge of the similar modern rituals in the same geographical context and their central importance to the culture, and if they had observed them, they would hardly have mentioned them, because they are not part of the so-called “great history”.<sup>127</sup> In all the modern festivals I have visited, there is a connection between the mythical, magical, fertility-providing power and reproduction, as is seen in the logic behind the ritual “plundering” of the Epitaphios for flowers after the procession in the village on Holy Friday. Then, people take flowers and candles from the Epitaphios of Christ, completely stripping the tomb of candles and flowers to use as amulets against bad luck and illness for the next year. We encounter a parallel in the ancient plundering of emperors’ statues; that is, stripping them of fertility-providing amulets that have been hung on them and replacing the garlands on the statues, taking the old ones as remedies for diseases.<sup>128</sup> The same magical power is found in the modern symbols that have been close to, or preferably in direct contact with, the Panagia’s icon on Tinos. This also relates to the earth fetched from the hole where the miraculous icon was found by the pilgrims, who are eager to fill their handkerchieves with some of this earth before they proceed to fetch holy water from the “Life-Giving Spring” and, as the last step, approaching the stones where they leave their black pilgrimage clothes (penitential robes) and shoes as dedications to the actual stones, the ruins of the foundations of the Byzantine church. Usually pilgrims process around in the church with their newly-bought votive gifts, which they use to make the sign of the cross over the icons they consider to be the most important in the church before they are dedicated to the Panagia. This is done by passing the votive gifts three times over the miraculous icon in the shape of the cross, before putting them into the slot of the brown “votive box” to the right of the icon. Through the bread symbolising Christ, we experience the holy parcelling out of a human body for the common good. We also encounter this with

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<sup>127</sup> We encounter a parallel assessment in Braudel 1969: 108. Cf. Soph. *OC*. 62 f., discussed in Håland 2017: Ch. 3.

<sup>128</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 4 and Fig. 60 (Epitaphios), cf. 1993a: 10 f. (ruler cult). Cf. Makistou 1970: 70, cf. 69.

relics and the saints with many sanctuaries, like Agios Nektarios, each of which contains a piece of him or her, thus echoing the many tombs of the ancient fertility God Osiris. Also related to this is the importance of the bones of the ancestors, both earlier and today, and the logic behind both Dionysos Zagreus, and the sacrificial animal in contemporary Agia Elenē and on Tauros.<sup>129</sup> In other places, people fetch holy earth from the tombs of the deceased. One may ask if this is only Christian, or whether it is a cult of nature; are we dealing with phenomena that the new religion has adapted and transformed and which has thereby acquired a new content, a new meaning, or does the old meaning still endure? To be precise, is the cult of nature related to basic values still persistent in this Christian belief? Pausanias tells of a similar custom in the pre-Christian world, wherein the inhabitants of Tithorea used to take earth from the tomb shared by Zethus and Amphion, which was a small mound of earth, and put it on the tomb of the heroine Antiope to ensure that their land would yield a rich harvest.<sup>130</sup> This ritual took place approximately by the end of the modern-day April or the beginning of May, which is just before the grain harvest in the region, and the deeper meaning of the ceremony which belongs to an agricultural society, is necessarily similar for the ancient and modern farmer alike; that is, to secure food, life and health. Moreover, there are additional meanings adapted to the other ideologies of the respective societies. In this context, we also have to keep in mind that during the modern processions, both in Melikē and in Agia Elenē, people do not only collect the fertility symbols that are gathered in the konaki, but also go around the village carrying the fertility, be that in the form of the icon, sēmadi, the male staff of the Kalogeros, or the sceptre belonging to the king of the ritual, fertility symbols which represent both the official church (icon) and an enduring cult of nature. The sēmadia, the large red kerchieves and handkerchieves that are draped over their icons, are often called “the clothes of the grandfather”; that is, the clothes of Agios Kōnstantinos, probably because the oldest icon, as mentioned, is said to wear a piece of Agios Kōnstantinos’ clothing. Sēmadi was also once a standard part of Thracian formal male dress. It has traditionally been a wedding symbol, and today it is an important element in the touring of the houses, when the Kalogeros and Agios Kōnstantinos bless the houses in the village before important periods within the agricultural year. The

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Makistou 1970: 70 f. The bones of the ancestors today: Alexiou 1974: 48; earlier: Hdt. 1.67 f.; Plut. *Thes.* 35 f.; Thuc. 2.34. Osiris’ tombs: Plut. *Mor.* 358a-b. Cf. the cake of which everyone gets a piece on New Year’s Day, Tsetakou-Karbelē 1991: 17-19.

<sup>130</sup> Paus. 9.17,4.

ancient maypole consisted of an olive wand or staff wound with laurel leaves and fresh flowers, with a bronze ball on top and little balls around it. This means that Apollo received the same offering as we see with the thyrsos staffs connected with his opposite, Dionysos. The modern wedding pole is crowned with similar symbols. All of the modern customs in which one paints the sign of the cross with mud, soot, shoe polish, blood, oil or icing sugar during the various festivals illustrate the use of ingredients which are purifying and fertility-promoting, and present a mixture of nature cult and newer ideologies.

Concerning the relationship between competing ideologies and value systems, it is important to emphasise the meaning of everyday symbols for the official ideological religion. Both in antiquity and today, the history of the political ideology has had some important “pegs on which to be hanged”, which mean a great deal to people, for example, death or fertility cults, as regards the cult dedicated to ancient Mother Goddesses or deceased heroes, such as Theseus. We also encounter this in the modern Panagia or the deceased Agios Charalampos. It is also evident in passage rites, for example, those of girls or boys who are ready for marriage. When one scratches below the surface, one sees how social institutions are explained by way of myths that go straight to the primary level: copulation/reproduction, food, and killing, based on the law behind sympathetic magic. The same logic lies behind midwinter rituals during which the disguised walk around in the streets and provide outdoor performances related to weddings, birth, and other actions that can induce production, the germination, and fertility. Therefore, the so-called insignificant rituals and perhaps even more insignificant symbols become very important when trying to obtain a new understanding of ancient culture and history.

To criticise the manipulation of fertility symbols in the form of sexual symbols as an impure act, as the church fathers did and many scholars have done in their wake,<sup>131</sup> is to demonstrate neglect, or to put it bluntly, even ignorance of the fundamental significance of the act or gesture in

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<sup>131</sup> E.g., Mylonas 1961: 297 f., cf. 293, 296 who attempts to reject Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2. 12P-22P. re hieros games. The thinking concerning primitive vs. sophisticated is also encountered in Broneer 1942: n.55; Moreau 1951: 293, and Kern 1927: 54, who claims that Baubō's personification of *cunivus* is “an obvious mockery of the sacred truths of Eleusis”. Jacoby's claim that “Iambē belongs to the Eleusinian cult, not to some ‘rural festival’”, *FGrH* 3: b. 2.328, *Fr.* 103 (1954: 325n.9), cf. Olender 1990: 94n.57, also belongs here. Although Olender 1990 gives (several) good examples of how important elements have been downgraded, he also fails to liberate himself from evolutionist thinking, 92, as does Motte 1973: e.g., 136 f.



Greek culture. The fact is that much cultural violation has been committed by northwestern Europeans, for whom the meaning of central phenomena, such as the death cult or the belief in “the Evil Eye”, have been unknown, due to their lack of knowledge of the significance of gestures and amulets as a means of communication to ward off evil. It may be claimed that gestures are not important because traditional historical source criticism cannot verify the results obtained. In present-day Greece, gestures are a central part of the social language. Although the meanings of gestures may have changed, and one will therefore never be able to answer the question of whether it is the same meaning which lies behind a specific gesture, the importance of gestures is a phenomenon encountered both in antiquity and today. Regarding the changed meanings of gestures, this also pertains to the meaning of many words, even if they are written the same way in both Ancient and Modern Greek. The important issue is how and in what way significant concepts, gestures and symbols retain constancy, for example, amulets for warding off the Evil Eye and the very concept of casting the Evil Eye, *baskainō*. One can find parallels to the cyclical gesture, which all modern Greeks perform during agitated conversation—both with and without their mobile phones—in ancient vase paintings.<sup>132</sup> One also encounters the significance of action in contemporary rituals, be that in general within the Orthodox Church, during the important life-cycle passages, but also in other life situations, in the same way as in the carnivals: everything must be performed or done. Both the ritual itself and the term for *dromena* (M.G. *drō*, to act), the dramatic plays performed during the modern carnivals, taking place at key passages during the agricultural year, when it is crucial to communicate with food-producing nature, can be compared with the ancient tragedy (cf. A.G. *drama*, action, play, *draō*, to act), which was a ritual or cultic act of worship, a dramatic performance dedicated to the fertility God Dionysos, son of the Earth Mother, Semele. According to Aristotle, both the tragedy and comedy

represent people in action and doing things...they are called “dramas,” because they present people as doing things. “Drama” being derived from *dran*, “to do”.<sup>133</sup>

He emphasises action when he discusses how the tragedy accomplishes catharsis, and the modern rituals may perhaps give a new understanding of

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<sup>132</sup> *ABV* 31,7=*ABV*. 31,7 may illustrate a possible parallel to the cyclical gesture, which all Greeks perform during agitated conversation.

<sup>133</sup> *Arist. Poet.* 1448a25-1448b2.



how ancient people might have experienced this.<sup>134</sup> This also shows the importance of festivals and other rituals; that is, if one is willing to detach oneself from the Orientalism of former research in an attempt to understand how a very dynamic people have mythologised and ritualised the realities of life to become their religion.

Motte's and Vernant's theses of development from religion to philosophy or reason are in practice variants of James Frazer's understanding that an "age of magic" preceded an "age of religion", wherein one sees the "Adonis gardens" as fertility medallions or symbols.<sup>135</sup> The fact is that they are fertility symbols, but that does not mean that a magical era precedes religion, because there is no distinction between the two, since magic and religion, both earlier and today are so interwoven, as they are in Greek religious rituals, and both, like science, are products of experience. Fertility symbols were important in all the ancient festivals, for instance, in the Panathenaia, the Thesmophoria, and at Eleusis. Today people make pilgrimages to Tinos in order to fetch fertility symbols. Nevertheless, many scholars will disagree and may prefer to see it differently, based on both their view and definition of religion/magic/fertility, which is usually still "Frazerian" to a greater or lesser degree, despite the abundant anthropological scholarship carried out on the actual topics in recent years.<sup>136</sup>

However, many scholars' views are also coloured by the problematic relationship between Orthodoxy and survivalism. Therefore Dede can, for instance, maintain that "the Christian religious character is also present" (that is, in the wedding pole).<sup>137</sup> The point is, however, that the wedding pole has a fertility-giving function based on its religious character, as regards both official and popular cults. One encounters a variation of the same view in Holst-Warhaft, who claims that ritual and religious language is not necessarily one and the same, because the beliefs encountered around death and the afterlife as expressed in the women's laments in rural Greece are often in conflict with the belief of the Orthodox Church.<sup>138</sup> This, however, is too simple, because there are several levels of belief, and

<sup>134</sup> Accomplishes katharsis: Arist. *Poet.* 1449b21-30. See also *supra* this chapter. On the importance of action, see also Jackson 1983a: 337, 339, 341, 343n.39, 344n.47, cf. Turner/Turner 1984: 204. Cf. Morris 1967 for gestures/behaviour, etc.

<sup>135</sup> Vernant 1982a; Motte 1973. See Håland 2017: Ch. 2-3 and 6 for comprehensive discussion, also re the following.

<sup>136</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 3 and 6 for elaboration, also for definitions, cf. also Ch. 2 *supra*.

<sup>137</sup> Dede 1976: 197n.7.

<sup>138</sup> Holst-Warhaft 1992: 10.

the point is that there is absolutely no conflict for the women singing these laments; the belief around death belongs to religious language, just as much as it belongs to the Christian ideology. One may, moreover, add that if there is a conflict with the official ideology, one has to keep in mind that various priests in Greece may have differing opinions. This was evident, for instance, during the modern ritual celebrated on “New” Friday after the Resurrection of Christ in the Athenian Akropolis cave and the Anastenaria festival in Agia Elenē, as I experienced them in 1992. In both celebrations, priests participated, while both parish priests claimed that the rituals were pagan. In the Akropolis cave in 1991 and 1992, the parish priest in the Byzantine Church of Agios Nikolaos on Plaka refused to officiate. Consequently, he had to be replaced by another, while the parish priest in Agia Elenē had to perform a service in 1992 and left soon afterwards, since he did not accept the ritual. Other priests, however, attended both rituals. Today, the situation in the Akropolis cave has totally changed, indicating that the problematic situation at the beginning of the 1990s has ended. In 2012, the service was officiated by a priest from the Church of Agios Nikolaos, who told me that they perform ceremonies during the two festivals dedicated to Agioi Anargyroi as well. The change within the Church is also illustrated by my conversation with the young priest of the Church of Agia Marina in Athens the same year.<sup>139</sup>

### Religion and Magic: “Our magic is stronger than theirs!”

In the Greek context, one discovers another relationship to the division into two concepts, traditionally called “belief” and “superstition” in the West, because these two are complementary and in reality situated within the same religious cosmology, not only for the villagers, but for many contemporary Greek Christian scholars as well. Yet, many of them distinguish between folk belief and Orthodoxy, while others dissociate themselves from what is called “primitive superstition” in the name of “modernity and development”, just as many within the Orthodox priesthood condemn rituals within the people’s religion, such as those in Agia Elenē and Agia Paraskeuē. Others may disparage customs as old pagan superstitions on one occasion and themselves perform the same on another, such as fetching some of the wick from the ever-burning lamp hanging in front of the miraculous holy icon in the sanctuary on Tinos in the hope of having children, despite their atheism or pure Orthodox faith,

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<sup>139</sup> See Håland 2014: Ch. 5 and 8. See also Ch. 5 *infra* and Ch. 2 *f. supra*. With the reservation expressed, cf. nonetheless the discussion in Møtte 1973: 144n.250.

or they may thunder from the pulpit that “our magic is stronger than theirs!”. The priest proclaimed this from the pulpit when the people of a village were shocked to have found magical symbols buried in the cemetery.<sup>140</sup> Another priest might perform active magic, such as when he drives out the Evil Eye on modern Tinos, without that being any problem. The priest on that occasion stands in the south door (on the right) or the liturgical entrance to the altar and reads prayers while placing his cloak over people who feel unwell, thus driving out the evil. Officially, one does indeed speak of having the priest “remove it”; that is, having the curse lifted. The ancient sources testify to a similar attitude. Thus can one interpret the worldview that emerges through the Hippocratic doctor’s condemnation of charlatans, and many aspects Plato and Plutarch connect with women, “common people”, or the “Others” and condemn or deny, but still seem to accept in practice, being representatives of the popular cult. Plato expresses an ambivalent view in various contexts. His statements in *Charmides*, for example, testify to an ambivalent attitude regarding magic and the magical arts, such as enchanting through the use of charms or spells, which in this context is something he ascribes to the “Others” or the Thracians, while in the *Laws* he seems to accept the same, although it is performed by women.<sup>141</sup> Plutarch’s attitudes have already been discussed. He is known for criticising “superstition”, but in some contexts he demonstrates the opposite.<sup>142</sup> In connection with the description of the “wandering womb” in medical writings, also encountered in Plato, and similar modern conceptions, one may point out that today, people think that doctors do not know such diseases, which are preferably cured by women. Today the “wandering navel” is indeed a common disease affecting both men and women.<sup>143</sup> It must nevertheless “be assembled” from all the parts of the body. This logic, which one experiences throughout Greek culture, will be discussed further in the following, because traces of the same can be seen in ancient sources, despite what “Hippocrates” might think. The Hippocratic doctor criticised magicians

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<sup>140</sup> Bhun/Blum 1970: 256, cf. 19 for the following. Here it is tempting to remind one of the senior US general who stated at the beginning of the Iraq war: “Of course we win, because our God is stronger than theirs!” He was evidently not informed of the origin and background of the three eastern Mediterranean world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

<sup>141</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 790e; *Chrm.* 156.

<sup>142</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 352e, cf. 385e-f, 377b, 378b, 356b. See 384a for the paradoxes, cf. 381e-f. For superstition: 164e-171 f, 377e ff.

<sup>143</sup> Bhun/Blum 1965: 53, 166 ff. For “the “wandering womb”: Hp. *Nat. Mul.* 3 (Littré Vol 7: 314.14-316.8); Pl. *Ti.* 91 c-d.

(“purifiers”) and others who tried to cure people with methods the former considered superstitious.<sup>144</sup> We encounter equivalent critiques in other sources, but also the opposite attitude.<sup>145</sup>

Similarly, in the modern context, there are echoes of the relationship between the official ideology and popular belief, the aforementioned “woman’s thinking” Plutarch criticises, in the power struggle between the “wise woman” and her remedies on the one hand and the village’s medical doctor on the other. The latter is educated by modern society’s educational institutions, whereas the village’s own medicine woman or “wise woman” has inherited her knowledge (orally and practically) from earlier generations. As a parallel to the contemporary “wise woman”, Homer tells us of the inheritance of medical knowledge; that is, the medical doctor Makaon, who was the son of Asklepios.<sup>146</sup> The paradoxes and “profession struggle” in the modern context are also apparent in medical writers’ desire to prevent women from seeking cure through religious cults.<sup>147</sup> Another thing is that if one goes through the Hippocratic writings, comparing them with the methods used by the magician, one sees that Hippocratic medicine is in many ways a continuation of traditional practice and belief.<sup>148</sup> This is also true of the notion of katharsis, which is not only necessary for society, but the entire human organism, which is a microcosm based on the Hippocratic dictum that health is the harmonious balance and interworking of the four bodily fluids (humors).<sup>149</sup> When one of these develops in such a way that the balance is disrupted—that is, the humors are unbalanced, aggravated, or out of sorts—illness results, and it is necessary to undergo purification in order to get rid of the infected matter. One disinfects by means of fire, a poultice made of soil, stone dust, bread or barley groats, or soaking in a bath. One can also “wipe away” the pollution. Whether this is done by a rite or is called medicine, it is based on the thinking of an undifferentiated ideal of purity, both physical and metaphysical, which is necessary both for health and for maintaining the correct relationships with the deities and other members of the society. Macrocosm and microcosm in the form of cosmos, polis, the village and the human body are not only assumed to be equal, but are cured or purified likewise, based on the thinking behind sympathetic magic. For Hippocrates (*Hebd.*), the human

<sup>144</sup> Hp. *Morb.Sacr.* 2-4 vs. Eur. *Hipp.* 294-296; Plut. *Mor.* 166a.

<sup>145</sup> Soph. *OT.* 4; Il. 1.14 f. vs. Men. *Phasm.* 50-60; Theophr. *Char.* 16.

<sup>146</sup> Il. 4.193-220. Cf. Parker 1985: Ch. 7. See Blum Blum 1965: e.g., 170 f. for the modern context.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Foley 1988: 1313, see furthermore Demand 1994: 100 f.; Håland 1999b.

<sup>148</sup> See, e.g., Hp. *Aër.* 7 ff., *Insomn.* 89-90, 92 f.

<sup>149</sup> Hp. *Nat.Hom.* 4. Cf., e.g., *VM.* 19 and 24.

body and the earth are similar, while Plutarch's comparison of humans with nature parallels his predecessors, such as Aristotle.<sup>150</sup>

The term "superstition" is relative since it may signify devotion to beliefs and practices that have officially been abandoned. Emperor Tiberius was not superstitious when he believed in astrology, but believing in it today would be superstitious. It is doubtful whether there existed a concept of superstition in antiquity, since the Ancient Greek meaning of "deisidaimonia", in its derogatory sense, is "excessive piety" or "excessive religiosity". When translated as "reverence or fear of the Gods" or "religion", however, it has a positive sense.<sup>151</sup> The negative sense has been translated as "superstition" or excessive respect for the Gods, as when one makes far too much of the cult/worship compared to "the norm" represented by the educated elite. It can be used derogatorily about a cult which differs from the official ideology, which is often connected to oriental cults and is set in opposition to "the ancestors' God-given dignity, which is our own religion".<sup>152</sup> Our ancient sources yield a positive as well as negative sense of the concept, since it seems that both meanings are still present, as superstition covers belief and more (the old faith and the new), although we tend to think negatively of it.<sup>153</sup> The ancient written sources were authored by the male intellectual elite, who criticise the ordinary population's worship of the Gods as "excessive reverence of the Gods" or "superstition". Plutarch gives many examples of this, especially in his above-mentioned essay on *Superstition*.<sup>154</sup> Probably even the most "enlightened" person is ultimately subject to the contemporary "superstition" of her or his time.

A new faith has to be made to fit with the old one, and neither those who shape and launch the new faith, nor those who receive and accept it can instantaneously abandon the old one, any more than they can leave or abandon their earlier condition or their own body.<sup>155</sup> The old faith will live on as a remnant, a leftover or custom: it literally drags behind, and

<sup>150</sup> Arist. *GA*. 783b, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 364b. See also Jackson 1983a: 341 and 1983b: 127 ff., cf. Triomphe 1992.

<sup>151</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 5.1315a1.

<sup>152</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 166a-b. Cult which differs from the official ideology: *Mor.* 165b-c.

<sup>153</sup> See Ch. 2 supra. Cf.  *OCD*. 1023 f. on the relationship of *religio-superstitio* to *eusebeia-deisidaimonia* and *M.G. thrēskeia-deisidaimonia*. Cf. Meijer 1981: 259-262; Stewart 1991: 248. See also Smith 1983: 254 f.; Julia 1974: 142, cf. Brown 1982: ix.

<sup>154</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 164e-171f.

<sup>155</sup> Davis 1992: 26n1 discusses a parallel case, cf. Pl. *Symp.* 207d-208a. Cf. Pina-Cabral 1992: 50-52 for this way of thinking.



becomes incorporated into the framework of the new faith, consciously or unconsciously. Bourdieu claims that those who are able to dominate by acting “rationally”, manipulate, and control what he calls *doxa*—what is indisputable or unchallenged—rule society, since they control the value system of the people. Bourdieu’s description of *doxa*, however, is problematic, because what those in power now label superstition cannot be abandoned, as they have not abandoned it themselves, although they have redefined it.<sup>156</sup> It will, in short, carry on as a “built-in” norm, or it will be considered as “superstition” by the new faith when called for, and in such situations the new faith will regard it as a competitor.

As claimed by Veyne, there is never one single truth, and even Augustine, representative of theological monotheism, reckoned that the power of the pagan deities should not be underestimated.<sup>157</sup>

That the so-called “reality” is therefore more complex than the usual descriptions imply is also attested to by the different roles or “layers” of beliefs within one and the same person, Plato as well as the modern peasant. Plato, for instance, claims that the body is insignificant. Nevertheless, he lets Sokrates take a bath before his execution.<sup>158</sup> Here we are probably seeing a paradox between “word and deed”, “belief and superstition”, official ideology and human experience, or different value systems. In the *Laws*, Plato claims that the body is of no value, while simultaneously according scrutinisers an honourable burial and denying burial to criminals.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, he contradicts himself, since, in spite of his own words, he continues to treat the body as a symbol of honour or dishonour.

The relationship between competing value systems or ideologies, doctrinal belief and “merely superstition” as expressed through the festivals and the cults that can be derived from them, parallels the relationship encountered at the personal level, where the two religious layers are clearly shown in the use of amulets. Plutarch tells us of statesman Perikles, who on his deathbed excused himself to a friend because he wore an amulet around his neck.<sup>160</sup> It was in fact one of the women of the house who had placed it there: Perikles

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<sup>156</sup> Cf. Bloch 1986: 177 for the logic to which I am referring, see also Ch. 5 infra. Bourdieu 1982: 164–168 for *doxa*, see also infra.

<sup>157</sup> August. *De civ. D.* 10.16. Cf. Veyne 1983: 28 f. and 144n.33: “La pluralité des modalités de croyance est un fait trop banal pour qu’il soit utile d’insister”.

<sup>158</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 115d–117a. See also Blum/Blum 1970: 224, cf. Stewart 1991: 248, see also Ch. 9.

<sup>159</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 960, cf. honourable burial: 947, vs. the insignificance of the body: 959.

<sup>160</sup> Plut. *Per.* 38.2.

showed one of his friends who had come to see him an amulet that the women had hung round his neck, as much as to say that he was very badly off to put up with such folly as that.

In another context we learn about Isis' amulet, which is very important while she is pregnant and more vulnerable to evil forces.<sup>161</sup> In other words, when a woman in such circumstances wears the amulet, it seems to have a different meaning and function. The significance of communication forms other than the verbal should be kept in mind when working within the Mediterranean context, and much can be gauged from comparing present-day gestures and use of amulets with ancient vase paintings and other visual representations, such as on sarcophagi. The written sources are likewise important. In contemporary Greece, many young men carry a small golden horn alongside a cross around their neck and almost all youngsters carry blue beads, usually as part of a bracelet. This parallel use of amulets in modern and ancient societies, where it was admittedly mostly associated with women, barbarians and superstition, suggests that youngsters of ancient times may have performed a similar gesture as that of their contemporary counterparts, a gesture which therefore becomes an "action-oriented" replica of the amulet.<sup>162</sup> Many signs intended to ward off the Evil Eye found on sarcophagi and graves resemble the sign or gesture made today by Greeks, Turks and Italians with similar intent: to keep away the Evil Eye. One may also mention the invocation performed to heal someone stricken by the Evil Eye, when the "wise woman" invokes both Christian and pre-Christian deities. This way the ritual becomes especially effective.

On the basis of the relationship between the ancient Dionysian cultural pattern and the Apolline ideology of moderation, it is understandable that Plutarch criticised "the superstitious", because he himself was priest of Apollo at Delphi.<sup>163</sup> In that way, he defended his own ideology with the same fervour as the modern Orthodox priest: what the superstitious feared did not come from the traditional Olympian deities for whom Plutarch was advocating, but only from the "barbarian", "strange" and foreign deities who stood in opposition to the official Greek ideology. Moreover, the negative sense of the concept of *deisidaimonia* has associations with

<sup>161</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 377b65, 378b68.

<sup>162</sup> On the use of amulets, women, barbarians and superstition, see, e.g., Plut. *Mor.* 171b; cf. Theophr. *Char.* 16. For the following, see also Finrud Di Tota 1981a: 102; Maloney 1976a.

<sup>163</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 164e-171f.

*hybris*, arrogance, which was ideologically disgraceful, and he concludes that the golden mean must be followed.<sup>164</sup>

Into the same boat are therefore put both atheists, the superstitious and cults which have lost their way, since these represent inferior religions and are generally practiced by Jews and Carthaginians. Traditional Greek religion (that is, the ancestors' hereditary religion) is defended and superstitious fear of the deities rejected. The wife shall worship the same deities as her husband and not turn to foreign cults or foreign superstition.<sup>165</sup> In the essay *Isis and Osiris*, he draws parallels between Egyptian deities and their Greek counterparts, but from an ideological perspective.<sup>166</sup> Plutarch differs from Herodotus, who in his second book attempted to derive all Greek customs, rituals and theology from Egypt. Plutarch, on the other hand, following in the footsteps of Plato (*Cratylus*), maintains that many Egyptian words, Isis and Typhon, for instance, are Greek or derived from Greek words.<sup>167</sup> At the end of the comparison, we learn that Egyptian rituals are full of foolish customs, be that the worship of animals, plants, statues of deities, or other barbarian customs that in many contexts are related to women and superstitious low-status groups.<sup>168</sup> One may recall the mentioned Greek ambivalence regarding cult and influence, encountered both in antiquity and today, which is also a part of Orientalism, both in ancient times and later.<sup>169</sup> According to Theophrastus, the superstitious is afraid to put his foot on a grave, while Hesiod testifies to the opposite view.<sup>170</sup>

According to Plutarch, superstition flourished in Athens in the chaotic circumstances following Kylon's pollution and subsequent bloodbath, when Solon, the great lawgiver, had to put things straight with the help of

<sup>164</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 171f. See 165b-c (definition of *deisidaimonia*, cf. Ch. 2 supra). For a parallel to Greek circumstances, Devereux 1991: 45 f. I.e., evil and good powers are defined in relation to one another due to the mutual dependency between them, cf. supra.

<sup>165</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 140d19. Superstitious fear: 610e-f, 756a-771c, 1101c, 1105e. Traditional religion: 611d-e, 612a, cf. 756b. Carthaginians: 171b-d. Jews: 169c, cf. 669c-672c. Inferior religions: 165b, 166a-b, 168d.

<sup>166</sup> See, e.g., Plut. *Mor.* 352b, 364d-e, 362b, 354c, 363d, 375f, cf., e.g., 378d-e for other cults.

<sup>167</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 362d-e, 375e-f. Greek: 351f.

<sup>168</sup> Statues of deities: Plut. *Mor.* 379c-d, see also 382a-b. Plants: 378c-d. Animals: 377e, 379d-e. At the end; i.e., from 377c ff.

<sup>169</sup> See Burkert 1993: 262 f. for a comment on Greek propaganda in Egypt, while Blomqvist 1995: 180 discusses Plutarch's condescending attitude towards foreign cults and polemicising against other religions.

<sup>170</sup> Hes. *Op.* 750 ff. vs. Theoph. *Char.* 16,9 f., cf. *Char.* 25.

the “purifier” Epimenides.<sup>171</sup> Like the modern priest, the ancient priest, Plutarch, was employed by a public institution. He criticises humility towards the deities while demanding humility himself, hence criticising religious attitudes that might compete with his own ideology.<sup>172</sup> At the same time, he unconsciously maintained the tradition he officially opposed, like the modern priest who believes himself to have stronger magic than his opponents, although magic is officially illegal in the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>173</sup> To be precise, we see the official view’s ambivalent attitude both today and in antiquity, when Plutarch criticised magic while applauding it on other occasions.<sup>174</sup> That a priest today, for instance, performs exorcisms within the Greek church is legitimate, but if it is a wise woman who does the same, it is condemned as magic and superstition. Similarly, with regard to the contrast between the social layers, in antiquity it was not deities in general that were denied by the intelligentsia, but the peoples’ deities or the way in which people worshipped the accepted deities. As already mentioned, Plato is an eager critic of the popular death cult and necromancy or exorcism, while one encounters the opposite in Aeschylus.<sup>175</sup> In the Orientalist description he gives in *Persians*, however, he reveals himself to be ambivalent as well, in that way conforming to Euripides.<sup>176</sup> Clement of Alexandria gives a Christian critique of the pre-Christian cult of the dead which can be compared with the critique in Plutarch, who nonetheless accepts the same in another, more familial context.<sup>177</sup> In one context he praises the cult of nature while criticising what he thinks is the popular cult, human-created deities, and the festivals held in their honour. We also encounter this critique in other contexts: he points out the close connection between agriculture and religious rituals, but does not applaud the belief of the common people because they deduct the probable explanation “for the seasonal changes in the surrounding atmosphere, or with the growth of the crops and seedtimes and ploughing”, directly from what is familiar. People are full of fear and have atheistic or superstitious opinions because “God is

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<sup>171</sup> Plut. *Sol.* 12.1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 169.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Blum Bhryn 1970: 256, cf. 225 f. re the two-sided obedience of priests and medical doctors. Re Plutarch, see Håland 1999a and b.

<sup>174</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 381e-f vs. critique: 377a, 378a.

<sup>175</sup> Aesch. *Cho.* 456-461 vs. Pl. *Leg.* 909a-c. See also Lagouros 2002: 88, on exorcisms today.

<sup>176</sup> Eur. *El.* 678-681, cf. Aesch. *Pers.* 619-622, 675-693.

<sup>177</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 612a vs. critique: 377b-c, 378d-379e and 114d-115a, cf. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 3.39P.

not senseless nor inanimate[,] nor subject to human control". One may compare his view of common people's worship with his negative view of women, magic and amulets. He condemns the worship of statues of deities, thereby anticipating the later problems between iconodules and iconoclasts.<sup>178</sup> One might allow oneself to philosophise over what he would have said about the contemporary pilgrims on Tinos who "go to the Panagia", by which they mean the icon.<sup>179</sup> The contrast between the social layers is explicitly illustrated by Plutarch's critique of the popular form of the Dionysos cult, which is incompatible with his own ideology where the Dionysian has been incorporated, as we learn in his original presentation of his deity's all-encompassing omnipotence. Therefore, he reasons, the deity should be worshipped in his Apolline variant.<sup>180</sup>

Despite all the paradoxes in the aforementioned sources, which express conflicting value systems akin to what one encounters in other Mediterranean societies, one can ascertain that Veyne's assessment of superstition or paganism in antiquity is measured from the perspective of a normative Western Christianity, in an extension of its interpretation of the statements from the philosophers of the age, as already discussed.<sup>181</sup> Much of what here is called paganism and superstition is part of the faith in the

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<sup>178</sup> Statues of deities: Plut. *Mor.* 379c-d, see also 382a-b. Women, magic, amulets: 139a, 140d, 141c, cf. 145c-d. God: 377f. People: 377d-e, cf. 378a. Clear/known: 377b-c. People's belief: 379a-379e. Agriculture/rituals: 378d-f. Nature cult: 477c-d.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Veyne 1983: 124 and see 52-68 on the views of different social layers (but, cf. 64, 66 f.), cf. 1986: 280 (see also 279 ff. re the ancient condemnations of paganism. He deals with what he calls the second wave of paganism from the Roman imperial period, 281). Cf. Brown 1982: ix, the religious experience of the elite vs. the people, see also Smith 1983: 254 f.; Parker 1985: 15. Julia 1974: 142, belief vs. superstition; i.e., what does not conform to religious mentality (ideology?) is pagan/magic. Therefore, social history must turn to language studies and analyses of myths in order to understand, 145. See also 150 ff.: witchcraft vs. ideology. Cf. Tupet 1986: 2657-2675; Payne Knight 1974: 106 ff., 102, 113, 206, 131 ff., pl. 9.2. Cf. supra this chapter for "Group and Grid", cf. Eco 1984: 2 and the relationship belief/superstition, ideology/mentality. See Mavrogordato 1955-56: 42-53 for "survivals" in antiquity in the motifs of fairytales, cf. Robertson 1992 for the same way of thinking re rituals in antiquity. See also Stewart 1991: 115 for laments and enduring ideas re demons, etc., from antiquity until today, see 291 f.n.28 and cf. Loukatos 1985: 165; Megas 1992: 18 for the ambiguity in modern society. See nonetheless Makistou 1970: 81-90 (cf. 11-14), 110-112, cf. 157. See Ch. 3 supra.

<sup>180</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 382a-c, e-f. Omnipotence: 389 vs. popular Dionysos cult: 377b-c, cf. 357f.

<sup>181</sup> Veyne 1986: 279 ff., cf. n.179 supra. See Ch. 3 supra.



Eastern Church. What one criticises as paganism among the “common populace” of antiquity is the same as the Orthodox Church has generally taken up as part of the religion.<sup>182</sup> But, just as one encounters an ambivalent view of this in the ancient sources, it has been condemned by some within the Orthodox elite over the years; in other words, not only by the elite of the Western Church.<sup>183</sup> Although different statements from Plato might have seemed “Western and modern” for a Western scholar, he may be out of step with his own contemporaries in the rest of the population. In addition, as we have already seen, he has aspects akin to Hesiod, for example, which the aforementioned scholar would rather ignore than mention because it does not fit into the presentation given when he wishes to present ancient culture as his own precursor. Therefore it has been easier to maintain that the ancient intelligentsia belongs to the West, whereas the common people belong to the Orient.<sup>184</sup> The relationship between the mentioned Hellenic and Romeic models, in other words, echoes the ancient elite versus popular culture.

This is, moreover, a parallel to the antagonism between the lamenting women’s magical rituals and the official burial ritual, a conflict also reflected in the modern laments, between the women’s world with its connection to death and the afterlife and the official Orthodox Church’s liturgy and beliefs. As already stated, we encounter similar circumstances in antiquity, when both Solon and others were of the opinion that women’s traditional ritual laments for the dead induced “madness” in the same manner as other ceremonies connected with women, such as ecstatic dance.<sup>185</sup> The ritual chaos of the festival on Tinos, where prone or crawling women and gypsies are active participants, come into the same antagonistic relationship to the male world represented by the Church, priests, and the police, who in their attempt to “maintain order” end up obstructing a great deal of the others’ worship in practice.

While the church tries to prevent the pilgrims from offering their hair to the icon on Tinos, the custom continues, and many of the church’s workers speak enthusiastically of all the hair they find inside the “votive

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Ch. 2 supra. See also Stewart 1991, cf. Mavrogerdato 1955-56.

<sup>183</sup> See, e.g., Pina-Cabral 1992 for illustrations of this factor.

<sup>184</sup> Cf. Nilsson 1961: 3 f.

<sup>185</sup> Plut. *Sol.* 21.4 f., cf. 12.5, see also *Mor.* 608f-611b; *SIG* 1218. See also Caraveli 1986: 183, cf. Seremetakis 1991: e.g., 3, 163 f., 174, cf. 95-98, 1993c: 119-149, cf. Dubisch 1995: 220 ff.; Holst-Warhaft 1992: 1-3, 20-27 (despite a well-founded critical assessment, 45-47, of Seremetakis 1991: Ch. 6), 47 ff. for gendered spaces in the death rituals and laments. See also 27 ff. for laments and madness, and cf. Corrington-Streete 1993: 95-117 for a variant.

box” next to the icon when it is opened. Furthermore, the church staff would prefer me not to see the letters found in the “miracle archive” on Tinos, which, according to them, tell of black magic, but the letters are there and I am reluctantly permitted to see them, while it is emphasised that they are not representative of the correct doctrine. This is also how it is with all the attempts to prohibit people from furnishing themselves with candles and other symbols after the termination of the liturgy out in the courtyard surrounding the church two days before the great August festival, or celebration proper.



Figure 60. Hair offering dedicated on the remains of the oldest Byzantine church dedicated to the Panagia and John the Baptist on Tinos. August 2009.

The same regards the pilgrims' dedications of their black pilgrimage clothes (Figure 42), hair (Figure 60), or money to the stones, the ruins of the foundations of the Byzantine church dedicated to the Panagia and John the Baptist, concretised by the sign prohibiting the throwing of money offerings onto the stones ("do not throw money"). Nor are people permitted to put clothes on the shelf under the canopy holding the silver figure depicting the Panagia on her deathbed, which is worshipped on the Ninth Day's ritual. People perform all these forbidden rituals anyway (Figure 49). Might we discern here parallels to Plutarch's condemnation of the various performances of magical purification by the superstitious?<sup>186</sup>



Figure 61. Mourning women surrounding the funeral bier. Fragment of plaques, ca. 530 BCE. National Archaeological Museum Athens (inv. no. 12697).

<sup>186</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 165e-171f, cf. Theophr. *Char.* 16.

His criticism concerns such actions as rolling in the dust, sitting on the ground, immersing oneself in the ocean, eating this and drinking that, performing

ridiculous actions [with]...emotions of superstition, its words and gestures, [having confidence in] magic charms and spells, rushing about and beating of drums, [performing] impure purifications and [participating in] dirty sacrifices,

which, unlike the pure ones for which he himself is an advocate, are related to “barbarous and outlandish penances and mortifications at the shrines”, in line with the laments of the death cults (Figure 61).<sup>187</sup>

Thus in the present-day context it is not only the gypsies who represent what many within the church consider superstitions, because at the same time, most of this is accepted and amulets are distributed by the church itself. In 1996, many obstacles and barriers were installed to prevent people from carrying on as they usually do, probably because the entire festival was broadcast live on TV, and many in Athens consider much of this to be mere superstition. This is especially true of foreigners, since the faces of most Greeks light up somehow with a “sublime”, “elevated” or “solemn” expression just hearing the name Tinos mentioned. The Church of the Annunciation, however, is interested in presenting itself as “modern” without too many of the rituals belonging to the popular belief. People on Tinos were, in contrast, so bothered by the searchlights, restrictions, and so on that the 1996 festival did not have the atmosphere one usually encounters, at least not until the TV recordings had finished and the searchlights had been turned off following the evening service. This was also the case in 2007. Due to foot-and-mouth disease among the sheep and EU restrictions, the church has done a great deal of work on prohibiting the gypsies from bringing sheep to Tinos since 1993. Fear of sick animals no one wanted to buy and all the fuss in connection with the sheep led the church management to forbid the gypsies from bringing sheep in 1995. They were asked instead to offer the sum of money that the sheep was worth. This was probably a means of excluding them from the island, and the demand was frustrating for a people that calculates values in animals and not in money.

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<sup>187</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 171b, see also 168a-b for other laments.



Figure 62. Pilgrims arrive with a sheep offering to the Panagia. The sheep is put in a shopping trolley from the nearest supermarket, Tinos, August 2012.

Still, I have annually observed some who have managed to come with their usual animal offerings even since the prohibition has been introduced, and sheep were still offered in 2006 and even in 2012 (Figure 62). The church, on the other hand, tries to keep the gypsies completely away from Tinos as a result of the antagonisms between them (*‘kakos kosmos’*; that is, “bad people”) and the other Greeks (*‘kalos kosmos’*; that is, “respectable”; literally, “good people”). These are descriptive formulations (from common Greeks) encountered all over on Tinos. As a consequence of the ambivalent relationship between the gypsies and the other Greeks, the latter come to the island to baptise their children as soon as the gypsies have left. Although both the gypsies and the other Greeks are all Greeks per definition, this is not the case for either the local Tiniots or the gypsies themselves. The former talks about Greeks versus gypsies, while the latter generally are concerned with pointing out that they are absolutely not “Tsingani”, but call themselves “Romani”. In 2007, however, the place’s most fashionable restaurant began to serve gypsies, based on the argument that they “leave 40,000 Euros behind, and it is better to let them in than that they should sit cooking in the streets and in



the park". More recently, especially because of the crisis, they have been admitted into the hotels as well, since most ordinary Greek pilgrims have problems financing longer stays on the island and most go back to Athens as soon as they have worshipped the icon, or they might spend their nights in sleeping bags in the parks as the gypsies did early in the 1990s. In other words, the present situation has completely changed since 1990. Then, the gypsies also had money, but were not permitted to enter hotels or restaurants.

So at the same time that we experience a tension between the church and women, as well as between the official Greek society and the gypsies, it is gypsy women who generally "are visited by the Panagia", who, both as mother and Goddess, also notified a pious nun. It is also other Greek women who understand what goes on when a gypsy woman outside the church, looking intently towards the bell tower, has a vision (Figure 63) and starts to scream and complain in a mixture of fear and happiness during the *olonychtia* between 14 and 15 August. At once, inside the church, another woman assures her husband: "she sees the Panagia". This demonstrates who are considered to be closest to the powers; namely, women.



Figure 63. Woman (right/front) seeing the Panagia in a vision while crying out in fear and happiness simultaneously outside the Church of the Annunciation, Tinos, 14 August 1994 (photograph by Hartmut Müller-Stauffenberg).

It is a parallel to the circumstances in antiquity, where women and barbarians were despised at the same time as the oriental cult was absorbed. It is also a Goddess who provides for the food supply, as does the individual mother.

Therefore, by way of comparison with the modern festivals, it becomes necessary to question some of the “established truths or assumptions”, as is also the case with the importance of the “ideological” Panathenaia and Dionysos festivals, for example. Were they important because an ideology-performing power elite desired them to be so, as has usually been claimed? According to Louis Gernet, the festivals as performed in classical times may be regarded as political institutions in the proper sense of the word; furthermore, he states that the festivals scarcely say anything about the past.<sup>188</sup> This assertion, however, conflicts with another argument that rituals by definition are unchangeable, although, through the dynamics of history, new values and meanings are continually added.<sup>189</sup> Alternatively, were the festivals important because there were fundamental features in the cults that were of great importance for people and had deep roots in the traditional popular cult? Did the power elite eventually use these elements in order to manipulate the people, as one may state if one adopts the logic Pierre Bourdieu employs in connection with his aforementioned doxa-concept?<sup>190</sup> According to Bourdieu, those who are able to dominate, manipulate and control doxa rule society. This is the description traditionally encountered in scholarship about antiquity, where it is claimed that the populace is dominated by the rulers and women are dominated by men. One may, however, ask whether it might have been that the rulers needed to include these possible essential elements because of the demand of the people. How can the Bourdieuan claim that the ruler can control the people’s value system cohere with our knowledge that there are several, often conflicting value systems within the same society and often within the same person, depending on the person’s role in the given situation, in addition to the fact that value systems are gendered? I have already argued that Bourdieu’s doxa-concept is, however, not particularly suitable for explaining the paradoxes encountered in Greek culture, because the ruler is just as subject to the unconscious aspect of doxa as everyone else. He is therefore no more able to liberate himself from this than is the Greek-Orthodox priest who blesses the sacrificial bull on modern Tauros and thereby adheres to a belief system which many believe no longer exists in Greek culture. This paradox can be illustrated

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<sup>188</sup> Gernet 1981: 17.

<sup>189</sup> Robertson 1992; Limberis 1994: 62.

<sup>190</sup> See supra this chapter for Bourdieu 1982.

by the possibility of believing and simultaneously not believing in a phenomenon, such as the aforementioned Evil Eye.<sup>191</sup> How can this be related to the ancient culture?

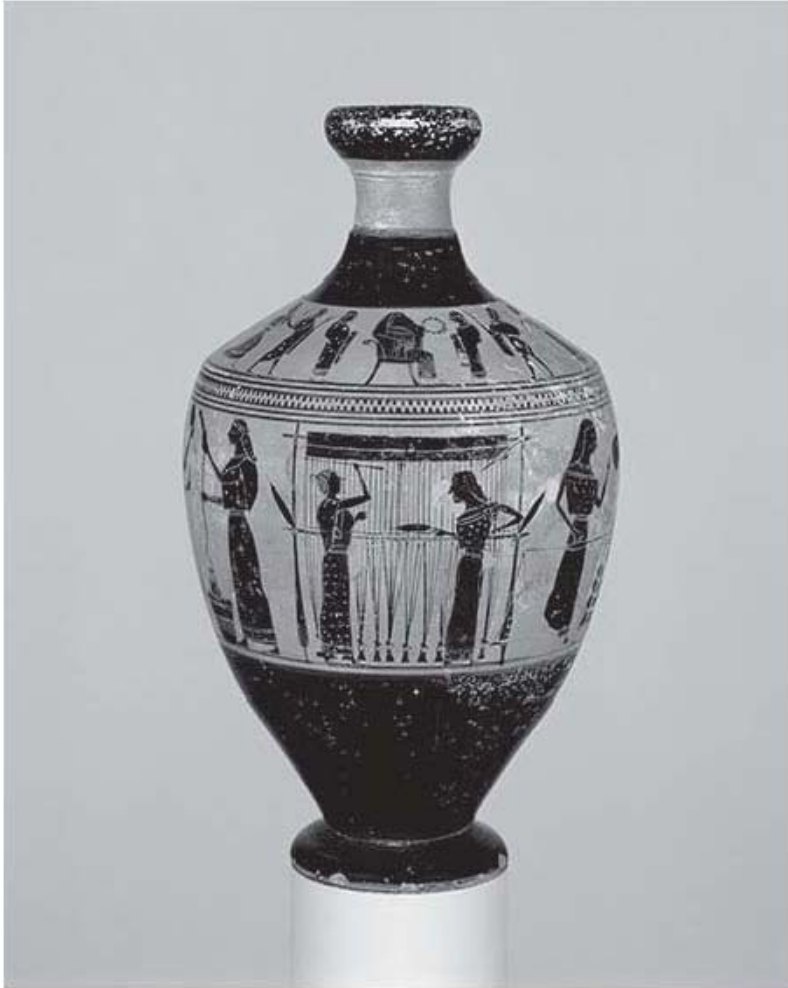


Figure 64. Women making woven cloth. *Lekythos* (oil flask), ca. 550-530 BCE, Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA. (Downloaded 14.11.2018 from: [https://www.metmuseum.org/teah/works-of-art/31.11.10/hb\\_31.11.10.jpg](https://www.metmuseum.org/teah/works-of-art/31.11.10/hb_31.11.10.jpg))

<sup>191</sup> Häland 2017: Ch 3.

It is difficult to give an unequivocal answer to such complex conditions regarding the ancient context. As should be apparent by now, there are, however, certain features in the cults that generally seem to be quite important. According to tradition, Peisistratos established and developed new cults in the city because he wanted to weaken the old, local aristocratic cults and strengthen the unity of the Athenian polis. Might he nonetheless have attached new meanings to already-existing festivals? Athens was already celebrating a festival for the virgin Goddess, Athena, when Peisistratos introduced the elaborate version. The reorganised, further-developed or “newly introduced” festival from approximately 566 BCE celebrated in classical Athens represented the unifying ideology of the polis, but the elements had to be taken from or adapted to the people’s own cult. This concerns, for example, the importance of the peplos, the weaving process itself (Figure 64), the ritual descent into and ascent from the peribolos of Aphrodite carrying sacred, secret objects prior to the festival proper, the ritual race run by young men in honour of the virgin, and the procession over a former cemetery where during the Anthesteria the priest of Dionysos symbolically married all the women of Athens and thereby the Athenian polis at the place where the political Agora was situated. In other words, one encounters central rituals connected with two of the most important stages of life, death and marriage.

With the exception of the festival of Adonis, all the ancient festivals that have been discussed were ideologically important in the Athenian polis, but in order to make them important to ordinary people, the death cult in the form of original ancestor or hero cults, to give two examples, had to be further developed in Athens. Therefore Dionysos could be introduced from Eleutherai, the location that could claim to be the birthplace of the God or at least to have been founded by him, although the Athenians would not have anything to do with him at the beginning.<sup>192</sup> Dionysos Eleutheros was probably a very important aspect of Dionysos for the Athenians. He was perhaps already worshipped in Athens prior to the “establishment” of the City Dionysia, as this festival in its classical form is known to posterity, for the Athenians would most likely not reply to the “voluntary” surrender of the people of Eleutherai by seizing their most important idol.<sup>193</sup> The annual arrival of the God from Eleutherai, therefore, was not necessarily a consequence of the incorporation of Eleutherai into Athens, whenever this may have occurred, although it may have been used ideologically, and thus served to underline that political fact (the

<sup>192</sup> Paus. 1.2.5. Founded by him: **Diod.** 4.2.6, birthplace: 3.66.1.

<sup>193</sup> Paus. 8.46. “Voluntary” 1.38.8, cf. 1.20.3 surrender.

incorporation of Eleutherai) in one way or another. Special clans or family deities were transferred or reorganised in the cult of the polis, as is evident in the Eleusinian Mysteries, symbolised by the former king family's connection with Demeter (Figure 65).



Figure 65. Demeter, enthroned and extending her hand in benediction toward the kneeling Metaneira, who offers the *triune* wheat that is a recurring symbol of the mysteries. Vaia Painter, red-figure *hydria* (water jar), ca. 340 BCE, from Apulia. (Downloaded 22.11.2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian\\_Mysteries#/media/File:Eleusinian\\_hydria\\_Antikensammlung\\_Berlin\\_1984.46\\_n2.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries#/media/File:Eleusinian_hydria_Antikensammlung_Berlin_1984.46_n2.jpg))

Athens entered the cult when they conquered Eleusis. The mysteries therefore are usually thought to comprise a combination of cults from the previously independent Eleusis, a very fertile agricultural district by the Rharion plain ("the Rharion Field"), and Athens, where we find the origin of the worship of the Demeter of spring in the month of Anthesterion in what was originally a local mystery cult. When Eleusis became incorporated into Attica, the connection between the two cults was



arranged so that the mysteries in Agrai became the Lesser, into which one had to be initiated before one could be initiated into the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis. Pausanias explains the relationship between Athens and Eleusis when he states that when the mythical heroes, the Athenian Erekhtheus and (the original Thracian) the Eleusinian Eumolpos' son, had fought against one another, the peace between Athens and Eleusis was concluded on these terms: that Eleusis was to be subjugated to Athens in every way, except that it should retain independent control of the mysteries.<sup>194</sup> However, in practice the cult became mixed with the cult from Athens, as demonstrated by its celebration in classical times. The outcome of the fight was to the Athenians' advantage, as is also illustrated by the fact that the administration of the festival came into Athenian hands. It belongs to the story that it was supposed to have been Eleusis that attacked Athens.



Figure 66. Thracian king and queen. Reproduction of fresco from the Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak (central Bulgaria).

<sup>194</sup> Paus. 1.38,2 f., cf. 1.27,4 the original Thracian. See also 1.38,1-6, 1.14,2, cf. *HHd.* 473-479. *Diod.* 5.4,4 explains why the Athenians celebrate the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Since the description is Athenian, and the incorporation of Eleusis belongs to the Athenian expansion in Attica in the sixth century, or perhaps even earlier, it was certainly Athens that attacked, not Eleusis. As to the assumed Thracian influence in Eleusis, one may recall the ambivalence and fascination with that which comes from Thrace (cf. Figure 66).

The “sermon” of the archons on who discovered the grain while the women were inside providing for fertility during the Haloa festival may, according to Brumfield, represent an Athenian ideological addition to the festival, since the role of the Athenian agricultural cultural hero, Triptolemos, in the hymn is emphasised. This also accords with Pausanias’ account of “[t]he Greeks who dispute most the Athenian claim to antiquity and the gifts they say they have received from the Gods”; that is, their claim to having received the gift of grain first.<sup>195</sup> Isokrates in particular, but also Diodorus Siculus, is concerned with the Athenians’ role. But the archons at Eleusis might just as well have preached that it was the Eleusinians themselves who discovered the cultivated food (Figure 65). Nor do they explicitly mention the mythical Triptolemos, and whether he was a son of Eleusis, as Apollodoros claims, or not, though several of his alleged mothers were from there.<sup>196</sup> Associated with this are the three sacred ploughings in Attica, at Skiron, in the centre of Athens, and nearby Eleusis, respectively.<sup>197</sup> The same ideological emphasis may be the background to the fact that an Athenian ploughing took place nearby or inside the Athenian Eleusinian temple, which Plutarch states was carried out in the centre of Athens, “near the base of the Akropolis”. Likewise, this ideological emphasis may underlie the importance of the Athenian priests from the family of the Bouzygai (cf. *Bouzygios*; that is, the ox-yoking). Plutarch, however, also tells us of the ploughings which took place at Skiron, “on the road to Eleusis”, and “in the Rharian Plain, near Eleusis”. The ploughing performed in Athens, in Skiron and on the Rharian Plain may have been a display of power or marking of territory that had come under Athenian control. Several tillings within a given area may be a way of securing a good result. One may assume that Athens’ fertility was not only ensured by ploughing out at Eleusis. Also ploughing

<sup>195</sup> Paus. 1.14,2, cf. *HHD*. 473-479. Brumfield 1981: 113 f.

<sup>196</sup> Apollod. 1.5,2 (son of Eleusis). Mothers: Paus. 1.14,2. He mentions several possible fathers (he himself believes Keleus to be the father, while others nominate Okeanos, for example, or Dysaulēs) and mothers for Triptolemos, such as Gaia or the daughter of Amphiktyon (1.14,2 f.), while Apollod. 1.5,2 claims it is Metaneira. He also gives other alternatives. *Diod.* 5.4,4-5; *Isoc.* 4.28 f.: Athenians’ role.

<sup>197</sup> *Plut. Mor.* 144b42 also for the following.

in Athens and on the road in-between may have been thought to increase the magic's efficacy. All the processions renew, purify, and mark the boundaries of the city's territory. In that way the connection between the fertile Eleusis—to whose mythical hero Eumolpos Demeter revealed the mysteries, as she did to Triptolemos—and Athens is marked.<sup>198</sup> In this way, a fertile agricultural landscape under Athenian control and Demeter's protection was marked, since the rite was in honour of the Goddess. The Eleusinian Mysteries were ideologically important in the same way, since the procession between Athens and Eleusis demonstrated the fact that the area was under Athenian control, as was also the case with regard to Eleutheraí. The moving of the "hiera" from Eleusis to Athens and back again marked that Eleusis, being located not far from the border to Athens' rival, Megara, belonged to the Athenian polis, and thus the entire Athenian-dominated area was purified.<sup>199</sup> As during all of the other processions, what has been polluted becomes purified.<sup>200</sup> The festival in itself renews and confirms the internal social structure and the relationship between the society and its protector.

Another variant is the magnificent procession with clear patriotic overtones, which certainly gave the Athenians a reinforced sense of what it meant to be an Athenian during the Festival of All the Athenians, as is the case on Tinos today. Finally, all processions from a city centre or between different poleis also express the need to conquer the wild sources of fertility. There is a good illustration of this in the contemporary cult during the White Tuesday ritual, where the civilised society leads a purifying procession from the village of Olympos out into the fields or the unpredictable and almost wild nature surrounding the village with apotropaic bells, incense, icons, and so on, in order to attract rain and thus ensure fertility (Figure 11).

Although the festivals are used by the rulers, the new ideology has nonetheless been added or adapted to traditional religious customs and value systems, connected with deep-seated rules or mentalities, represented by the death cult, fertility cult, and healing, consciously or unconsciously. This is illustrated by the fact that, although the festivals that are celebrated twice a year may be due to the linking of one local cult with another in a kind of superior "national" or "common" official cult, it might just as well be an important underlying need to celebrate at different

<sup>198</sup> *HHD*. 473: Triptolemos and 475 f.: Eumolpos.

<sup>199</sup> *Plut. Sol.* 8 ff.; *Hdt.* 1.59 ff.; *Thuc.* 1.139: Athens-Megara; *Paus.* 1.39,1 Eleusis-Megara. Cf. *supra*.

<sup>200</sup> See Parker 1985: 160-166 for sacred space, cf. Di Nola 1980: Ch. 7. Cf. Graf 1996 for the logic.

critical periods with the annual cycle encountered here. We find, for example, the cult of Demeter in Agrai at the sprouting of the grain in Anthesterion, while the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated before sowing in the autumn. The modern parallel, Agios Charalampos, has his day in the liturgical year on 10 February, while the local ritual on Lesbos is celebrated in early summer. The summer festival has different reasons, as has already been pointed out. People have their summer holidays and opportunity to return home, the sea route is more passable, and it is much easier to perform the open-air sacrifice on the summit of the Tauros mountain, but it also takes place just before the grain harvest; that is, during an important moment within the cycle of the agricultural year.

We encounter other obvious parallels in ancient Athens, where people celebrated the Lenaia festival during winter and the City Dionysia, or the Great Dionysia, during spring at the opening of the sailing season. The first festival was restricted solely to Athenians, while the latter was also for visitors.<sup>201</sup> That the local and rural Dionysos festivals, the Rural Dionysia, also took place during winter indicates in a twofold sense the need for a sacrifice to the vegetation deity, who was underground at that time, to obtain a new, fertile year. Simultaneously, essential activities related to wine-growing were carried out, since many farmers were busy with the pruning of the grape vines. We experience the various mentioned calendars in connection with the Tinos festivals as well. The Day of the Annunciation on 25 March is also the Greek Independence Day (Figure 67), and in the nineteenth century, the Annunciation festival celebrating the anniversary of the Greek revolution was more important than the festival dedicated to the Dormition the Panagia on 15 August. There are several reasons for the change that has taken place. Today, it is indicated by the fact that the crowd of pilgrims is greater in August than in March. The August festival is celebrated during a period of holiday and leisure, and it is easier for people to come to the island, albeit especially after the second half of August. In general, the summer is a better time for seafaring, today as it was earlier, although the two first weeks of August in particular might still be a bad period for sailing, as the strong, northeastern winds called *Meltemi*—the ancient Etesian (*Etesiai*, annual) winds—are particularly strong, and many ships are cancelled, even big ones.<sup>202</sup> There is no airport on Tinos, so people are dependent on arriving by sea.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 504-508 re the festival being only for Athenians.

<sup>202</sup> The beginning of August is a bad period for sailing, cf. Hes. *Op.* 663 f. vs. summer in general, cf. *Op.* 618-630.





Figure 67. The holy icon of the Annunciation is carried in procession and passed over the waiting pilgrims, Tinos, 25 March 2012.

Moreover, the cult dedicated to the heroes of the Elli was added after this Greek destroyer was sunk during the 1940 festival (Figure 68), as indicated by the posters announcing the festival.

This means, in other words, that we are presented with different meanings or layers of the cult during both the ancient and modern festivals. The festival on Tinos is not only the most important fertility and healing festival on the island where mother worship has been documented in the Geometric period as well, but it is also an important ideological festival for the “new Greek nation” which came into existence when the banner of Greek resistance was first raised on 25 March 1821, the day of the Annunciation; namely, the start of the revolt against the Turks during the celebration of the Annunciation festival. In this way, the Annunciation of the Panagia on 25 March is now celebrated as a day of double import, the Annunciation of “the new Greek nation”; that is, the Greek Independence Day and the day of the angel’s announcement to Mary that she would bear the Son of God. In other words, two rebirths, of humankind and the Greeks, are combined.





Figure 68. Wreaths have been laid for the deceased heroes of the “Ellī” before the festival day, Tinos, 14 August 2005.

This double rebirth is implicit in much of the shrine’s iconography, ritual and history, such as the scene on the icon and the name of the church housing it. This combination appears, *inter alia*, in the procession and all the other rituals attributed to the same festival, and although the procession is performed in both March and August and broadcast live on TV during both events, more people are present in August. The ceremony is generally a passage rite for both the individual and society. The new Greek nation renews, purifies and heals itself for the next year in agreement with Orthodox belief, which in August celebrates the Dormition or Falling Asleep of the Panagia, but simultaneously one also recalls “the last time the nation was threatened”. In this way, the national bonds are renewed once again. Therefore the Church of the Annunciation dedicated the whole collection of votive offerings in order to assist the Allies during World War II, and we have a parallel to the alleged use of the treasure of Athens during the Peloponnesian War, according to the official ideology. Furthermore, the speeches of the Athenian statesman Perikles as presented in Thukydides can be compared to the ideological speeches on Tinos, where the Foreign Affairs Minister in 1993 was concerned with the clouds

of war in the Balkans, while in 1996 the crisis with the Turks on Cyprus was the main theme of the speech given to the crowd of pilgrims by the Minister of Defence, rousing the audience to thunderous applause.<sup>203</sup> One may also mention the political-ideological manipulations of the bishop, as I experienced him in Argostoli on the island of Kephallonia in 1992. With much oratory the eloquent bishop ended his speech referring not only to the earthquake and the “snake feast” in the neighbouring village of Markopoulo, but also to Biblical Zion, sin, and people trying to rob present-day Macedonia, or the Greek interpretation of “Skopja” or Skopia (that is, the Greek popular name of the new Macedonian Republic of 1992).<sup>204</sup> It was interesting to see the “burning” eyes of the young listeners

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Mazarakēs-Ainian/Papaspyrou-Karadēmētrίου 1987 for other variations. Thuc. 2.55-70. For the following, see also Håland 2011a.

<sup>204</sup> The former Yugoslav province declared its independence on 6 September 1991, when its official name became the Republic of Macedonia. However, in Greece it was called FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) or FYR Macedonia until very recently. The conflict between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia is discussed at length in Håland 2017; see also Ch. 5 infra re my own experiences with a Macedonian folklorist at an international conference in 2007. It should be noted that on 24 January 2018, a bilateral meeting about the name of the Republic of Macedonia took place between the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, and his Macedonian counterpart, Zoran Zaev, in Davos. Six months later, a historical agreement was signed, which is believed to lay a new foundation for the two countries' relations and change dynamics in the Balkan Peninsula. The Republic of Macedonia is now to be called the Republic of North Macedonia. Nonetheless, the agreement has met with reactions from the right-wing side within the Greek conservative party, New Democracy; see Krithari, Elvira, “North Macedonia: agreement sparks controversy in Greece” (“What the agreement really offered, apart from turning the page for two Balkan countries, is a chance to observe political tendencies in Greece, by highlighting parties' true colors and capacities”), in *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso*, 29.06.2018

(<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Macedonia/North-Macedonia-agreement-sparks-controversy-in-Greece-188814>, accessed 03.09.2018). Following a referendum held in the northern state on 30 September 2018, Macedonia continues to be divided on the name issue; see Minovski, Ilija, “After the referendum, Macedonia still divided on the name issue” (“Despite the low turnout in Sunday's ‘name referendum’, Macedonia's government is still pushing to reach a compromise with the opposition to change the Constitution. In case no agreement is secured, though, snap elections will follow”), in *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso*, 03.10.2018 ([https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Macedonia/After-the-referendum-Macedonia-still-divided-on-the-name-issue-190314/\(from\)/eng-newsletter](https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Macedonia/After-the-referendum-Macedonia-still-divided-on-the-name-issue-190314/(from)/eng-newsletter), accessed 07.10.2018). As illustrated in the same newsletter, the problems continue ([https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Media/Multimedia/Greece-protests-in-Athens-against-the-Prespa-Agreement/\(from\)/eng-newsletter](https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Media/Multimedia/Greece-protests-in-Athens-against-the-Prespa-Agreement/(from)/eng-newsletter),

in particular as most of them swallowed this obvious propaganda whole. We met with a similar performance when he ended his liturgy in the church at Markopoulo on 14 August the same year, on the eve of the feast of the Dormition of the Panagia, when his final speech contained all the “historical” elements from the ancient Olympian heritage to present-day “Skopje”, Cyprus and Epirus, these being the most important topics generally emphasised in the speeches of the nationalistic Greek Orthodox Church. These events from 1992—in the midst of the Balkan crisis—again parallel the ideological speeches on Tinos the following year. Such polemics are not unusual during Greek Orthodox liturgies. Also, on the island of Tinos in 2009, the bishop ended his final speech on the eve of 15 August by reclaiming all the “missing parts” of Greece, and the congregation, almost asleep, “woke up” and applauded enthusiastically. Naturally in recent years, the speeches have been most concerned with the ongoing economic crisis.

The ideological Panathenaia festival which legitimised Athens has been connected to the traditional cult in several ways, thus becoming a parallel to the later festival of the Panagia. The Panathenaia festival was also related to a spring festival celebrated on the island of Delos—the vernal Delia—by Ionians from Attica, the islands in the Aegean Sea and the coast of Asia Minor; that is, the descendants of the Ionians, who settled here during the “exodus” of the Dark Ages (the “Ionian migration”, ca. 1200–800 BCE).<sup>205</sup> The festival on Delos was a “tribal feast”. It was in this location that they had the tribute chest during the first years of the Delian League (or Athenian League); thus the Delos festival legitimised the Delian League. Also, as on modern Tinos, pilgrimages were organised to go to Delos in connection with the festival.<sup>206</sup> Moreover, Delos is a good example of a sacred place, initially marked by the presence of a famous plain, which has become a religious centre and ended up attracting worshippers from a larger area or from the whole of Greece.<sup>207</sup> Athens purified Delos in 426, in the middle of the Peloponnesian war, and the Athenian leader Nikias “established” the so-called Delia festival (albeit in

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accessed 08.01.2019). As illustrated in the same newsletter, the problems continue ([https://www.balkanicaucasus.org/eng/Media/Multimedia/Greece-protests-in-Athens-against-the-Prespa-Agreement/\(from\)/eng-newsletter](https://www.balkanicaucasus.org/eng/Media/Multimedia/Greece-protests-in-Athens-against-the-Prespa-Agreement/(from)/eng-newsletter), accessed 08.01.2019).

<sup>205</sup> Thuc. 3.104.

<sup>206</sup> Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 54.7.

<sup>207</sup> *HH* 3.146–164 (178), cf. 45 f., 115–119. Cf. Motte 1973: 171–191. See Gallet de Santerre 1958: 133, 168, 180, 190, 246–248, 251; Bruneau 1970: 1–11, 65–93; Bruneau Ducat 1983: 31–45; Rice/Stambaugh 1979: 117 f.

an extension of a former one), to be celebrated every fifth or sixth year.<sup>208</sup> The cult of the Mother Goddess, Leto, was an important condition for this later ideological use of the area, symbolised by her giving birth to Apollo and his sister, Artemis, on the sacred plain. Artemis was moreover also a famous Mother Goddess, who was especially worshipped in Ephesos. Also connected to this is the former Aegean Mother, who also was worshipped on Delos and furthermore is said to have received the same votive offerings of ships that the sailors dedicate to the modern Panagia on the neighbouring island of Tinos.<sup>209</sup> The mother worship on the former sacred island of Delos is echoed by the modern mother worship on Tinos, where there have also been former cults dedicated to Demeter, Kybele, and possibly Aphrodite. The possible cult of the latter is due to all the pigeon houses on Tinos, which may be related to the ancient dove sacrifices to Aphrodite on the neighbouring island of Delos.

All the festivals are used by the rulers for political purposes, but the elements of the festivals are traditional in the popular cult. Since the specific festival consists of so many elements, it is not given what was, and is, most important for the individual participant. Homer's epic poems were recited from memory during the Panathenaia. This was an important means of uniting people around a common identity.<sup>210</sup> During the comparable festival on Tinos, the singing priests are followed by the speech of the Minister of Defence. The multi-lingual printed church pamphlet that tells about the legend and the ideology around the festival is distributed free of charge to the pilgrims at the shrine's office. This is also the case in modern Agia Paraskeuē. Here the pamphlet, which is distributed to interested visitors from the office of the organising committee, describes the festival of Agios Charalampos and its origin.

In the modern festivals, the core is similar despite new ideas, additions, and expansions through the dynamics of history. It was probably like this in the ancient festivals as well. There are several "layers" within these festivals, and in several of the ancient ones what initially was only a procession, sacrifice, competitions, and a meal between the festival participants (such as the Ionian tribe who met regularly on Delos or the Athenian population) once the deity had received her or his share, could develop into the large-scale festivals of the classical period, such as the Delia festival, the Panathenaia and the City Dionysia.<sup>211</sup> It also

<sup>208</sup> Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 54.7, while Thuc. 3.104 says every fifth. He also writes about the purification.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Graves 1991: 394 for the cult of Brizo on Delos.

<sup>210</sup> Shapiro 1992: 72.

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Parker 1996: esp., 77, see also 89, 91 ff. See Thuc. 3.104 for Delos.

demonstrates how a new ideological/religious centralisation consists of old elements.

Mythical Olympian deities' takeover of the domains of the Chthonian powers and male deities' takeover of Goddesses' cult domains reflect the human sphere. There is an ideological change in the male polis' "appropriation" of women's traditional laments, through the classical tragedy and funeral oration which focused on praise of the dead. "The strategy" of the polis was copied by the Christian ideology in the early Byzantine period, and likewise by the modern Greek nation-state.<sup>212</sup> That the "appropriation" was only partly successful is demonstrated by the continuity of the ritual laments, as it is still women who perform them (cf. Figures 9 and 61). Lamentation is essentially a female art form that gives women a means to express not only pain, but frustration and anger as well. Actually, the art of lamentation gives women considerable power over the rituals of death, and laments have therefore traditionally been a very important weapon for women, both in the Mediterranean region and in the Balkans, and have become "dangerous voices". The laments are a part of the "female ways" and belong to the "poetics of womanhood". A lamenting woman does not produce only pity, nor are the messages her laments convey ever completely repressed. The *moirologhista*, the great singer of laments, in the modern Greek village is rightly regarded by men with a certain fear. She has an authority to communicate with the dead that is recognised by all around her. "She is both poet and priestess, spellbinder and exorciser of spells", she is a witch with magical power employing her "female ways".<sup>213</sup>

Thus the laments have not been silenced, and the women have not lost their domains or become "mute" or "muted" in other ways, based on the technical "mute notion" or the theory regarding the "muted group", which is not necessarily concerned with verbal silence. Greek women make themselves conspicuous in village society, and they are not at all powerless. One experiences this at the cemetery today, a place where the women are in charge, and commandingly call the priest to come bless the washed and decorated tomb. He often runs hither and thither at the women's shrill shout of command: "*Pater*"! One sees the same in the cult of the life-giving mother on Tinos, where, moreover, authoritative women are often very vociferous, as is the case in all ritual contexts in which

<sup>212</sup> Holst-Warhaft 1992. Funeral oration: cf. Thuc. 2.34-46. Classical tragedy: Aesch. *Cho.* 22-31, 327-339.

<sup>213</sup> For "female ways", "dangerous voices" and "appropriation", see Håland 2017: Ch. 7, cf. also 2014, esp. Ch. 4-5. See Holst-Warhaft 1992: 193 for citation. See, i.e., de Martini 2000 for the Italian context.



women reign supreme. Accordingly, if one employs the modern rituals in an attempt to shed light on the ancient context, one gains new perspectives on it, for example, the Haloa and Thesmophoria. Whether the archons stayed outside the sanctuary, discoursing on their original discovery and dissemination of Demeter's gift of cultivated foods to the populace while the women were literally "within" on the threshing floors, securing that very food (that is, fertility) with their magical rituals during the Haloa, or the male part of the polis had to hand over their Assembly place, the Pnyx, to the women during the Thesmophoria (that is, a male Assembly had to give way to the Thesmophoria and be moved to the theatre), the men's political business was displaced by the women's higher duties to Demeter and her grain, so as to ensure the food supply. In both situations, one encounters the importance of rituals which only women can perform. Since the fecundity of the earth and that of the women is seen to be identical and therefore are expressed similarly in the cult, and since the agricultural festivals are dedicated to a chthonic Mother Goddess, Demeter's power over agricultural fertility is apparent. This also testifies to the tacit confirmation that the chthonic forces symbolising birth and death have a very crucial significance for the well-being of the polis.

Accordingly, the official and Olympian culture's frequent ideological disparagement of the chthonic cult conceals the realities, or the underlying value system, which, although it is often condemned, is nonetheless present. As today, much of what one encounters in the popular cult seems, paradoxically enough, to be important in the official religion as well. The written sources indicate that it might have been analogous in antiquity, mirroring the division we often encounter between written and visual sources and all the examples of a male deity installing himself in a great Goddess' domain, contrary to the usual wedding practices in a society in which it is the girl who usually moves in with the husband's family and thereby leaves her own. Just taking an example from fifth century Athens ("the height of the classical period"), which is the main source of knowledge we have about Greek culture in antiquity, one may mention the conservative Aeschylus, who is so in accordance with the importance of female influence (being so implicit in the society) that he contradicts himself, presumably without being aware of it.<sup>214</sup>

Both in antiquity and today, it is the women who are considered to be most knowledgeable and competent in the use of magic. Kirke (the Goddess of magic, enchantress, sorceress or witch), Medea, and the modern wise woman, Maria, are all attributed special relationships with

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<sup>214</sup> Aesch. *Eum.* 658-667 vs. 293, cf. *Cho.* 127 f.

the chthonic deities who perform magic, in contrast to the patriarchal heavenly deities.<sup>215</sup> In the ancient context, however, Demeter, albeit in her ideological, tamed and pure form, also has a special position among the deities on the Olympus, since she provided for the food supply. Therefore her magic becomes white in contrast to the oriental witch Medea's evil magic. Helen's magic is also positive, once she has ended her sinful life and lives as an honest wife.<sup>216</sup> The ideological cleansing of classical literature in the form of the tragedies describes, as we know, the Olympian deities as Hellenic aristocrats. This official division represents the ideology as opposed to the world of the common people. Many of the Olympian deities were also quite clever magicians. This is also how their modern parallels are ideally described and actually perceived. In case of drought, the priest may be sent for to conduct a rain litany to break the drought, as in Olympus (Figure 69) or Melikē, where he generally has to compete with the Archianastenis or the Kalogeros, two recognised rain magicians. Formerly the Archianastenis' successfully entering into ecstasy was considered important to ensure prosperity in the coming year, as well as a means of securing fertility.<sup>217</sup>

Not only contemporary priests and monks, but also male magicians are regarded as "female" in the ideology of honour and shame. It was also thus in the ancient context, where magicians were generally itinerant and alien (and therefore female) as well. People had an ambivalent view of them, just as they did of women.

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<sup>215</sup> Blum Blum 1965: 182-189, Maria. Medea, Ap. Rhod. 4.184-234, was also divine, Pind. *Pyth.* 4.9 ff. Kirke was an especially competent Goddess of magic, and was referred to as a sorceress by Homer, *Od.* 10.276-335; *○v. Met.* 14.399-415. See Bernand 1991: 161 ff. for the witches in Homer. See, moreover, Arist. *HA.* 6.18,572a 10-30; Plin. *HN.* 28.20-23, for other variants of womanliness and magic.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Graves 1985 Vol. 2: 159, t, for the disastrous effect of Helen's earlier activities. Helen's positive magic: *Od.* 4.219-233; Demeter's: *HHD.* 225-230 vs. Medea's: Ap. Rhod. 4.1667 ff.; *○v. Met.* 7.181-276; Paus. 8.11,2 f.

<sup>217</sup> One may also mention a modern parallel from Italy (personal information from Mia Di Tota): Late in the winter of 1989, after three months of drought in southern Italy, the sea had sunk 60 cm, the rivers were almost dried up, and water was rationed. During Sunday's Mass, the priests prayed for water in the churches. In the village of Avellino, *maghi* with prestige were sent for by the farmers. They conducted rituals of rain magic, and the press was very satisfied. Similar circumstances are encountered in modern Romania, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 2.

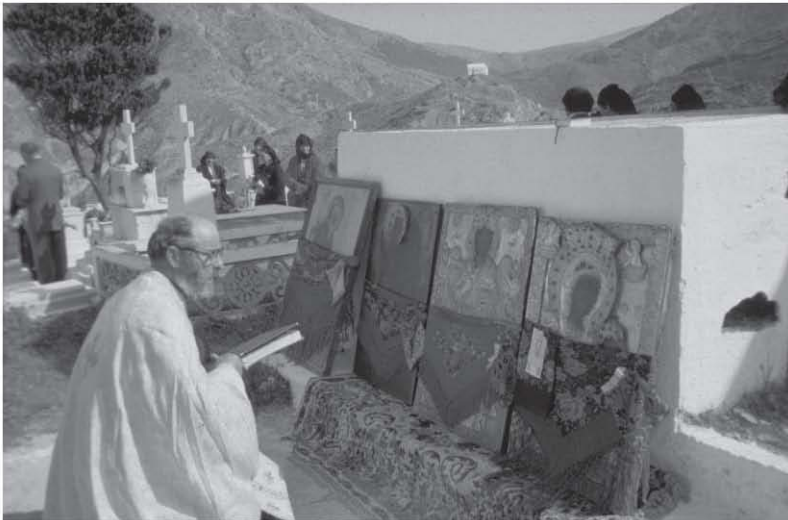


Figure 69. The priest on his knees in front of the icons, praying for rain in the cemetery in Olympus on White Tuesday 1992.

Was this perhaps why the greatest male magicians were known as transvestites?<sup>218</sup> Accordingly, they are considered to know all the secrets of life, and constitute a kind of parallel to the tragic men who had to go through a feminising process in order to gain wisdom and come to a new understanding of the relationship—and mutual dependence—between *oikos* and *polis*, or women and men. Further parallels are Zeus, who swallowed Metis, and Teiresias' aforementioned sex change. This dynamic is also reflected in the general tendency men have to dress up as women, as in the Dionysian processions. An equivalent to this can be seen in the modern carnival, where men dress up as women (Figure 8), or boys as girls, in order to obtain a share of the power that the women possess. Therefore male transvestism expresses their powerless attitude towards women and

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Ivanov 1984: 13, 17, 25. For a critique of magicians: Hp. *Morb.Sacr.* 2-4, cf. Pl. *Resp.* 364b-c vs. Plut. *Sol.* 12.5, but cf., e.g., *Mor.* 171b re his ambivalence. According to Blum Bhun 1970: 371n.1, the shaman's power is attributed to someone who becomes a transvestite. See 1965: 182-189 for Maria, a wise woman, vs. Dionysios, 195-198, who does evil magic, and is therefore female as opposed to Mantheos, the great magician, 193-195, who does good magic. See Hart 1992: 158 f. for men's ambivalence towards priests. See furthermore Loraux 1989.

their need to come to terms with women's reproductive ability.<sup>219</sup> This coexistence of male ideologies expressing both antagonism and mutual dependence on women bears witness to the wish to become all-knowing, and as in the mythical descriptions of the hermaphrodite and the ambiguous character of many symbols, in the final analysis, this attests to the belief that both sexes are incomplete and therefore must complement one another.<sup>220</sup>

Accordingly, the sacred wedding (*hieros gamos*) both was and is central in Greek culture. In the cult dedicated to Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē, we encounter the conception of the holy dyad, which also has ancient parallels. These saints also represent a variant of the antitheses around the polarisation of the female and male roles found in the honour and shame scheme: the son, Agios Kōnstantinos, is associated with maleness, aggressiveness, separation, mind, life and immortality. His opposite, his mother, Agia Elenē, is the woman associated with love, union, earth, darkness, matter and death, according to Schott-Billmann. Implicit is the chthonic view, which is in accordance with the logic characterising the agricultural population, for whom the death process is regarded as the nature cult's cyclical descent to the underworld and subsequent rebirth from that realm. From this perspective, nourishment and life are connected with the woman, while the martial and death are associated with the man.<sup>221</sup> The great protective Mother Goddesses of antiquity manifest both aspects, both Athena and Demeter, as does their modern counterpart, the Panagia. From Eva Stehle Stigers' thesis about "The Enclosing Goddess" and the perspective of Greek logic, Athena is an

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<sup>219</sup> See supra this chapter for discussion of the complementary thesis. Cf. Jackson 1983a: 336; Counihan 1985: 17, see also Gilmore 1987b: 14; Triomphe 1989: 226n.55. For gender and identities in Greece, see Loizos/Papataxiarchis 1991 vs. Seremetakis 1993b for a critique. See Giannakopoulos 1991: 79-83 for the importance of social sex or same-sex relationships, "homosociality" (cf. *omokoinōnikotēta*) and sex in modern male culture resulting from the fear of feminisation through the marking of virility, cf. Karagiannēs 1983. See Herzfeld 1991b: 72-78 for men's need to confirm their maleness as the role of the woman obtains a foothold in the traditional male sectors of public life.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. n.219 supra this chapter. See Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 22 f. for African thoughts about androgynous fusion, cf. 20-31 for male and female types of societies. Applied to Greek material, one sees that these conceptions are present in the same culture, although the female aspect is found "between the lines" in the traditional male description/s, cf. various types of societies, "Olympian" and "Chthonian" elements and the importance of the *hieros gamos*. See also Hes. *Th.* 116-128; *HHD.* 305 f.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Schott-Billmann 1987: 85 with Håland 2017: Ch. 4-7.

incarnation of the female and male principles, since Athena *Parthenos* (the Virgin, Figure 70) stood inside the Parthenon temple and Athena *Promachos* (“the Warrior”; literally, “fighting in the front” in full armour) stood outside.<sup>222</sup>



Figure 70. The Varvakeion Athena, a Roman marble copy (ca. 130 CE) of the colossal gold and ivory statue of the Athena Parthenos by Phidias (438 BCE). National Archaeological Museum Athens (inv. no. 129).

This gendered description of the cosmos is not only evident in the Greek and Mediterranean material, but similar symbolic classifications are

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<sup>222</sup> Stehle Stigers 1981 vs. Devereux 1991: 66 for a different view. Is it the fear of the woman and her power that motivates descriptions of Mother Goddesses as hermaphrodites? See Detienne 1989: 250, cf. Devereux 1991: 93-100 Demeter, see also Barb 1953: 210. See, moreover, n.220 supra.



found in other regions of the world, for instance, in Latin American and Indian religions. In relation to this, “the cross of Empedokles” (also called his cosmic cycle) is also relevant. This is the model of the four elements, fire, water, earth, and air, classified against each other two by two with the dry, cold, humid, and hot in between them.<sup>223</sup> A Pahlavi text paralleling Bourdieu’s cyclical model (Figure 71), which is also very reminiscent of “the cross of Empedokles”, associates women with what is below: earth, matter, plants, water and fish, while men are classified with heaven, metal, fire and wind, as opposed to the female-associated sources of nourishment.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, one encounters the same classifications in the other ancient material as well. Fish was, for example, a taboo food on the Haloa, perhaps because it was associated with the female sex. Similarly to other Greek thinking, the male-produced descriptions organised female and male roles around polarities, a feature also present in the contemporary ideology of honour and shame.

Contrary to the modern descriptions which have been provided, I have chosen in the preceding analysis to read the sources based on my observations of the modern female and male spheres, coupled with the themes which are taken up in the sources and associated with men and women.<sup>225</sup> To be precise, I have chosen to read the sources “between the lines”, as opposed to the literal reading that one encounters in Zeitlin and Helene P. Foley, for instance.<sup>226</sup> Based on a literal reading of the male-authored sources’ description of the division between the female and the male and their unequal capacities in reproduction, the “general constructionist” scholar will arrive at the conclusion that women are evil, dangerous and worthless, beings men would prefer to do without, the same view disseminated by the contemporary ideology of honour and shame. In the same sources, however, one may read quite a lot about the importance of female elements, such as the earth, belly/womb, menstruation, and knowledge of magic in addition to the importance of uniting the two sexes.

<sup>223</sup> D.L. 8.76, cf. Schott-Billmann 1987: 90 f. See also Lincoln 1991: 219-225, cf. 199; Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 28 f., cf. Bloch 1982: 211-230 for parallels from other societies.

<sup>224</sup> Lincoln 1991: 224 f., 227n.19, see also 254n.5, cf. 256n.21 and 257 f.n.28, cf., however, the following. Cf. Triomphe 1992: 75 and Barb 1953: 226n.145, cf. Lloyd 1970: 255-280 for the hot and cold, dry and wet in Greek thought. See also Bourdieu 1990: 6 f., 1966: 222. See also O’Brien 2006 for the same in a different geographical context.

<sup>225</sup> Arist. *GA*. 716a2-24, 727b31-33 (cf., however, Eur. *Ion*. 1003-1015), 765a35-765b26, 783b26-784a12.

<sup>226</sup> Foley 1988; Zeitlin 1984.

From the vantage point of the value system associated with the female sphere, one attains a different perspective on the sources written by men. According to Hesiod's *Theogony* (the birth of the Gods) as well as the writings of Aristotle, and Plutarch, the universe consists of contrasts, where various elements are complementary and influence one another in order to create something new.<sup>227</sup> What is the point of union, if women do not have any importance? The point is that the elements are also central to the festivals discussed above, and they acquire another meaning when deconstructed and considered from a gyno-inclusive perspective. One encounters the importance of uniting two principles to make a third, the semen's need for nourishment, and accordingly the importance of the maternal womb. In that way, womanliness and nourishment are emphasised to the same degree as maleness.<sup>228</sup> Although from a male perspective the female counterpart to male semen is without generative power, one nevertheless sees that the female womb and body are essential to nourish the male semen.<sup>229</sup> It is significant that the earth is considered to be female in nature, as she is called mother and generates life within herself, as opposed to the man, who must generate life in another; namely, the woman. Furthermore, one realises how important the mother is for the result.<sup>230</sup> We see here the important complementarity which seems to be a kind of Mediterranean logic, despite all paradoxical formulations.

Based on the logic behind fasting and purification, fertility and sterility are complementary because the dry is as important as the wet, and the two must be united so that the crops may grow. Therefore, when the dry is associated with male "vitality" and the passage to the "female period" likewise begins the wet and fertile period of the agricultural year, we encounter a certain complementarity, which manifests in the same ways it does in the two gendered domains. If the dichotomy may be considered to codify a gendered hierarchy in which the very cosmos is classified by gender, the gendered qualities are nevertheless placed into a cyclical model which also includes the course of the agricultural year, as pointed

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<sup>227</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 370e-f, cf. 951d-e, see also 369b ff., 373f-374a, cf. 374b; Arist. *Metaph.* 1.5, 986a23 ff., 986b34-987a2; Hes. *Th.* Cf. Empedokles (see n.223 supra) and Pythagoras (see, e.g., Plut. *Mor.* 370e; Arist. *Metaph.* 1.5, 986a15 f.).

<sup>228</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 364d, 372e-f. The semen's need for nourishment: 375b-c59. Uniting two principles to make a third: 373f-374a, 374f-375a.

<sup>229</sup> Arist. *GA.* 765b10-16, 729a9 ff. Female counterpart without generative power: *GA.* 727a2-30, 765b8-22.

<sup>230</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 7.1335b12-20. Generates within herself: *GA.* 716a14-23. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 7 for a comprehensive discussion.

out by Bourdieu.<sup>231</sup> As opposed to the one-dimensional or one-sided androcentric and constructionist analysis of Bourdieu, which does not see the meaning of the lower part of the cyclical model or that the two parts can be complementary, but on the contrary, claims that male dominance is total, it is nonetheless not a given which gender or value system dominates the other, since every dichotomy presupposes two opposites that are mutually dependent on one another and therefore complementary. Dominance may function in a number of different ways, and the power is not always where it pretends to be.<sup>232</sup> This cyclical thinking, which also surfaces in ancient sources written by men and fragments from Sappho, demonstrates that the usual structuralist dichotomy proves insufficient to explain Greek culture; it would be the same as dealing only with an honour and shame perspective, or, as Bourdieu argues, a totalitarian ideology.<sup>233</sup> If both value systems are taken into consideration, one realises that each of the two sexes has their own respective division of work in the processes of production and reproduction: The earth cannot bring forth life without rain, just as the seed needs a place in which to be planted and maternal nourishment. Life emerges through an interaction between powers below and above the surface of the earth in the form of the Chthonic Earth Mother, who is fertilised by an Olympian male heavenly God.<sup>234</sup>

Accordingly, to maintain the life cycle, the matrimonial union of the female and male is required, because the official ideology is as dependent on the individual *oikos* in the ancient context as it is in the modern context of honour and shame. Just as men and women are complementary, so it is with people and their leaders, the popular cult and official cult, in the same way as with “East” and “West”, because a “dichotomy” always presupposes that something is measured from something else, and a leader without a people does not exist. The ancient Apolline ideology could therefore never run away from its inherent Dionysian mentality.

<sup>231</sup> Bourdieu 1980: 354 for the model. See also Figure 71 infra.

<sup>232</sup> Burguière 1978. For dominance: see Thompson 1984.

<sup>233</sup> Bourdieu 1980, 1998. See, however, Sappho. *Fr.* 97, and cf. with male-produced sources, see supra. See also Pl. *Ti.* 39a; Plut. *Mor.* 104b, 106f, 110f-111a. See also Detienne 1989: Fig. 68 for the cycle, although he does not draw the same conclusion.

<sup>234</sup> Paus. 1.24,3. Cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6 and Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 20 ff.



They can be coupled on the model Bourdieu presents from the Kabyles (Figure 71), which also demonstrates an agricultural calendar,<sup>235</sup> and which has parallels with the one we encounter in the Greek region, past and present.

Many of the scattered source references we have from ancient Greek men who mention the agricultural calendar, festivals, and the two sexes in the ancient world are strikingly similar to the material on which Bourdieu has based his modern honour and shame version of the calendar. It places everything belonging to the humid and the female, the very production or the “gestation period” within the agricultural year, at the bottom, the below, the inside, the “belly”, or the production period of the cycle. Thus this is the wet, fertile and “female” period within the agricultural year, which begins at the time of ploughing and sowing.

If one sees the religious festivals in the order determined by the agricultural cycle, the festival dedicated to the “Dormition” of the Panagia, announces the transition from summer to autumn and winter. The festival also includes distinct elements of the death cult, fertility cult, and healing. It is also an important ideological festival for the “new Greek nation” which came into existence in 1821. The parallel Panathenaia festival was the most important festival of the Athenian city-state, and the most central ritual was the procession through the city up to the Akropolis with the new dress, a peplos, for the Goddess Athena, followed by the sacrifice of many animals. The festival was also an important fertility and healing festival, including elements of the death cult and celebrated at the end of the climatic “fluctuations” during the dog days.

The female component of the Bourdieuan dichotomy—or rather, the division of the gendered sphere—leads into the final festival, because the modern festival cycle terminates around the grain harvest with a festival dedicated to a male saint. It can be seen as a phallus feast, which is celebrated with the fertility-ensuring bull sacrifice dedicated to the patron saint Charalampos on the summit of the Tauros mountain. This can be seen as a modern parallel to the ancient Athenian sacrifice of an ox to Zeus, the sky God, or more exactly, Zeus of the City. This took place during the Dipolieia and was called Bouphonia, “the slaying of an ox” for “Zeus of the City”, and terminated the old official political Athenian year. This sacrifice was also performed on top of a mountain, the Akropolis cliff, approximately at the same time of the year (14 Skirophorion, ca. 29 June). The ancient God of the sea, Poseidon, received the same sacrifice of an ox, although it was in practice also dedicated to the dead Erekhtheus,

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<sup>235</sup> Bourdieu 1980: 354.



who received annual sacrifices of bulls and rams at the Panathenaia festival, while his foster mother Athena the virgin Goddess, received ewes and cows, according to the ideology.<sup>236</sup>

If the male phallus festivals are placed in relation to the female fertility festivals dedicated to, respectively, the Panagia on Tinos and the ancient parallel female fertility festival dedicated to Athena, the gendered division of work is demonstrated through a *hieros gamos*, today as earlier. Based on the agricultural calendar of the Kabyles, which has parallels in both modern and ancient conditions in Greece, the climax of the annual cycle is marked with a “male” festival on the warm, dry and “male” season of the year, at the very end of which the *Adōnia* was celebrated. On the basis of their many common themes, it is therefore appropriate to compare the ancient festival calendar, which begins with the Panathenaia, with its modern counterpart.

It is not my intention that an emphasis on the importance of the chthonic perspective should reduce the significance of the complementarity of the two sexes, as this is demonstrated through the importance of the union. The female period of production within the agricultural year cannot be isolated from its complementary male, dry part of the agricultural year. This relationship is evident in several places in the Greek material, where the male part is especially clearly expressed in the summer celebration of the *Adonis* festival in antiquity and the festival of *Agios Charalampos*, or the following festival dedicated to Prophet *Ēlias*, “the saint of the mountains”, today.<sup>237</sup> That a period is characterised by “female aspects” does not, of course, signify that men may not hold festivals then, and vice versa. The relationship between the *Apatouria* festival of the young men of Athens and the women’s *Thesmophoria* in antiquity is an example of “male” and “female” festivals quite close to one another in the female production period. We encounter the same circumstance in the relationship between the *Haloa* and *Poseidon*, for although the *Haloa* festival was dedicated to *Demeter* and *Korē*, a procession and bull sacrifice in honour of *Poseidon* also took place, and in addition to being closely connected with *Demeter*, the month when the festival was celebrated was named after him. It is therefore possible that a *Poseidon* festival at the beginning of the month has become merged with the *Haloa* festival. Moreover, *Dionysos* seems to have had his share in the *Haloa* as well, since the wine consumption and phallic element accord with *Dionysian* rites, and other festivals during the same period were also *Bacchic*. Furthermore, the

<sup>236</sup> See *II*. 2.546-551, for annual sacrifices to *Erekhtheus*.

<sup>237</sup> *Loukatos* 1981.

women's Skira festival was celebrated in the male period, just before the summer festival of Adonis, when the intermediate Dipolieia marks the transition to the new year, when the Panathenaia festival is celebrated. Dipolieia may have been placed at this time ideologically, in order to terminate the year before the dog days set in. Adonis is celebrated in what is nearly a transitional period, analysed in terms of this division given here on the basis of ancient sources, although this fact about the Adonis festival does not appear in the ideological calendar, in which he is not mentioned, since the festival of Adonis was never incorporated into the official Athenian cult. This may be due to the fact that the king of the deities, Zeus, must still be at the top of the male, upper part of the calendar. If this is the case, Athena can also be attributed with positive qualities when she is celebrated at the beginning of the new year, based on the actual ideological division we are concerned with here. Considering the importance of the dry period and the time around the grain harvest, however, these positive male attributes can equally apply to the sun God Apollo, who was celebrated during the Thargēlia. Adonis is placed in the liminal period, during the dog days.

Both sexes underwent rites of passage in connection with the Panathenaia festival, namely the Arrēphoroi and the young men's ritual in the sanctuary of Aglauros. The importance of the two sexes is also apparent in such aspects as hunting, war and killing connected with men, versus love, life, care and nourishment, related to women. Here, too we see blood's connection with life and death in the same way that sexual intercourse is connected with life and death.<sup>238</sup> The hunt has an erotic character, and there is also a connection between killing, aggression and fertility. We encounter complementary relationships, such as "woman-food" and "man-war", in unions such as that between the war God Ares and Aphrodite, the Goddess of love. The same logic is illustrated by the frequent warlike abductions of women that were occasions for marriages.<sup>239</sup>

In reality, we encounter parallel female and male features in connection with all of the festivals. It is a matter of which principle is predominant, so the one does not exclude the other, but on the contrary, underscores the importance of uniting opposites. Therefore there are "opposite poles", separate female and male festivals which take place at especially critical periods. This might signify that it is necessary to hold

<sup>238</sup> See du Boulay 1984 for the meaning of blood.

<sup>239</sup> Cf. also Vernant 1982b, who deals with the correlation of war and marriage and the description in Ruddick 1990, where she discusses the opposition between the "preservative love" of mothering and the military destruction of life. For Ares-Aphrodite, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 370c-d.

ceremonies in which the two sexes are separated and a “hieros gamos” in both the female and male periods of the cycle, when the circumstances are most precarious. It may be that we are dealing with male ideological additions, a desire to secure a male role in the life-giving earth, since it is the female festivals which are most important for the fertility of the crop. Accordingly, there are festivals for which the woman, like the earth with which she is associated, must provide so that the food is ensured.

Although only a representative selection of the festivals during the agricultural year have been examined here, this certainly does not exclude other festivals. I have therefore mentioned a number of relevant examples in several contexts. Both sexes hold festivals throughout the year, but this does not displace the dry-wet cycle, since the female agricultural deity has the most important and relevant agricultural festivals around the most crucial periods of the agricultural year, although an ideological male element has often been attached. The grain is, under all circumstances, the paramount article of food in the society, though wine and olives are also important. From a chthonic perspective, the significance of the generative part of the agricultural year has therefore been assigned greater emphasis than in the Bourdieuan description, which, by contrast, reflects the male honour and shame dichotomy and emphasises the actual sowing and result of the production, thereby paralleling various statements from ancient authors of sources, such as Aeschylus and Aristotle. Therefore the calendar of the Kabyles, like our ancient, male-authored sources, must be considered from another perspective in order to uncover the complementarity or the two value systems built into the calendar and its festival cycle.

One also realises that much of what is encountered in the popular cult is important in the official religion as well, and sees that the various spheres overlap one another; they both coexist and compete, like the two sexes and their respective spheres. Furthermore, a female and male period do not exclude female festivals from being celebrated in the male period and vice versa; here, too, overlaps are in evidence, because the dry and the wet interweave with one another. Accordingly the two spheres, today as before, are not as separate as a number of scholars, such as Sarah B. Pomeroy, have claimed.<sup>240</sup> Therefore it is important to regard the ancient Athenian festival calendar beginning with the Panathenaia from the point

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<sup>240</sup> Pomeroy 1995.

of view of the people themselves; that is, not only from the Akropolis or in its Shadow,<sup>241</sup> and here the modern context can be of help.

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<sup>241</sup> The expression “In the Shadow of the Akropolis” has been used in many contexts, both within ancient scholarship, film, and fiction as well as by an Athenian renting a flat in a nice area just below the cliff.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## NATIONALISM?

### IDEOLOGICAL USE OF THE POPULAR CULT, OR A TWO-WAY CONTRACT?

#### **Place, Space, Time and Gender, the Nation and the Foreign: Different Perspectives**

Concerning the relationship between men and women and that between the elite and the people, or the great versus little society, both of which are concretised through the power of the state versus local society and Church versus local belief in the modern society, we see that the various spheres overlap one another; they both coexist and compete. The relationship between the official ideology and the popular cult, however, implies that some aspects need to be further elaborated upon.

Concerning the modern nationalistic use of festivals and the relationship between the Greeks and the Others that we encounter in ancient Greek sources, it might be either friendly or critical. The Greeks admire and often bluntly envy the Persians, and an Athenian such as Themistokles wanders in and out of the court of the Persian Great King, while other instances reflect distrust and criticism of “all sorts of barbarian lament singers or other softness”. Sometimes we also encounter something in between, a kind of ambivalent “admiration-fear” towards Thracian magicians.<sup>1</sup>

Today, there is a need to create boundaries within the nation-state against others. Can these needs coexist, and can they show us something about the needs of people expressed in the ancient festivals? What, in other words, can the contemporary nationalistic use of festivals tell us about antiquity? We encounter, for instance, many rituals that had long traditions in the Thracian agricultural region in the northeast until the emigrants brought the rituals with them to Greece and (unconsciously)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hdt. 4.93 f.; Pl. *Chrm.* 156.



added a layer of homesickness to the old agricultural content. This content does not disappear when the state today wants to celebrate, for example, the Anastenaria in order to demonstrate connection with an ancient tradition, which the state has not wanted until quite recently, since its interest and ideology was in accordance with the programme of the dogmatic teacher of Theology, Anast. Chourmouziadēs, who lived in the 1800s.

There are many elements in the modern religious festivals which are very similar to much of what one encounters in the ancient festivals, and which some (that is, the “survivalists”) will claim has endured from antiquity until today, while others (the “anti-survivalists”) will think the same elements were introduced in posterity; in order to legitimise the association of the Greek nation with ancient greatness, for instance. Introducing something at a later time, means that one must have knowledge of ancient conditions. To introduce something at a later time, however, is a topic that belongs not only to the modern reality, but the ancient one, because it affects competing or complementary ideologies and value systems, today as it did before. This means, among other things, that paganism, magic, and superstition are not just condemned today, but have been exposed to the same repeatedly throughout history, and what is interesting is that neither the “superstition” nor the so-called paganism disappear, although the rituals, beliefs and practices that receive such a stamp always seem to be dying out, but this is just wishful thinking from the critics.

Another factor which also belongs to the preceding are the different conceptions of time and therefore views of history encountered in Greece. These are gendered, but they also belong to Us versus Them, or what Dubisch has called the Eurocentric linear conception of time versus the cyclical time found in the Greek peasant society, a time which also is connected with religious rituals<sup>2</sup> due to the importance of the agricultural calendar and its festivals. In addition, there is mythical time, which is also a dreamtime or “frozen” time, and which in the European context especially is found in the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> So-called “frozen” time—“liminal” time or “dreamtime”—presupposes a static perception of time without movement and involves an orientation towards the past; its vehicle is oral tradition. This has implications for a Western, androcentric analysis of history and rituals, and is important both in relation to the feminist concern to avoid male-centred temporal limitations and when considering how the

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<sup>2</sup> Dubisch 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Roth 1994.

Greeks understand their own history, since the Greek informants do not necessarily employ the same historical categories or worldviews as a northwestern European, as one learns when analysing the local history linked to the Greek pilgrimage centre on Tinos. Greek history linked to popular religiosity then becomes situated beyond time and a parallel to both cyclical time associated with religious rituals and the “frozen” history, which is similarly mythical, while the Eurocentric history becomes linear. In other words, I will also delve into some consequences of the three dimensions of time one encounters in the Greek context, especially because of their implications for dealing with ancient history. This also has relevance in modern scholarship, where globalisation and internationalisation are two topical themes, because this “case study” from modern Greece is an illustration of a society with its own forms of logic. In addition, it has relevance for northwest European ethnocentrism contra various parts of the world.

Hence many of the modern rituals seem to be very persistent, and there are many reasons for this. As the contemporary Greek festivals do not especially attract tourists, one may therefore ask: Who and what are the reasons for the endurance of the festivals? Is the reason that the modern heads of church and state use them in the service of nationalism? Or are there other reasons that the festivals persist? What is the real consequence of the fact that the “emigrants” return “home”, and why do they in actual fact return “home”?

## The Emigrants Return Home

It is often immigrant Greeks from Turkey, among other places, who maintain the traditions best, as their distant predecessors are said to have done when they set out during the Dark Ages or later. Scholars have pointed out the connection between Arkadia and Lesbos in antiquity, and provided explanations for the migration from mainland Greece to the east; that is, the migration to the islands in the eastern Aegean Sea and the coast of Asia Minor in the Dark Ages, *inter alia*, based on place names and cults. From a long-term perspective, key factors in this context include the presence of kourmpania in the northeastern region and the modern horse-breeding around the Bay of Kallonē on Lesbos, the same activity that took place in the regions around ancient Troy, not far away.<sup>4</sup> According to

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<sup>4</sup> See also, e.g., *Il.* 23.346 f., cf. Paus. 8.25,8. See 8.25,1-10, 8.42.1-5, re the connection between Demeter, Poseidon and the horse in Arkadia. Dowden 1989: Ch. 3, cf. Aikaterinidēs 1979: 65 ff.; Ledyard Shields 1917: ix, 44.

Michael Grant, the emigrants during the Dark Ages settled by the sea, as close to the homeland as possible.<sup>5</sup> To a great extent, it has also been thus for many of the “descendants” who returned. After the Turks defeated the Greeks in 1922, referred to in colloquial speech as “The Great Catastrophe”, and the subsequent population exchange after the Conference of Lausanne in 1923, nearly one and a half million Greek Orthodox were forced to move from Turkey to Greece, and nearly half a million Turks, or rather, Muslims, departed in the other direction. This mutual population exchange was based not upon language or ethnicity, but religious identity, and involved nearly all the Orthodox Christian citizens of Turkey, including its native Turkish-speaking Orthodox citizens, and most of the Muslim citizens of Greece, including its native Greek-speaking Muslim citizens. Furthermore, we encounter the diffusionism from Thrace, both earlier and today.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 72a. A Pontic orchestra at the annual memorial ritual for the Greek Pontic genocide at Syntagma Square in Athens, 19 May 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Grant 1978: 12.

<sup>6</sup> According to diffusionism, societies do not develop in parallel, but the great “inventions” are made in specific places and spread to other societies from there (the “cradle of civilisation” model).



Figure 72b. The *kollyba* (a mixture of wheat, nuts, fruit, and honey), “for the victims of the genocide” at the annual memorial ritual for the Greek Pontic genocide at Syntagma Square in Athens, 19 May 2012.

Once again, it appears that orgiastic ceremonies, with all their distinctive characteristics, to a greater or lesser extent are found among refugees from Thrace who now live in Greek Macedonia, where they continue to celebrate their old customs once a year. The modern Pontian Greeks of Kazakhstan, remote descendants of Greek emigrants in the archaic period and later, started to “return home” after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Pontian (or Pontic) Greeks had experienced a peripatetic existence after the Turkish massacre in 1913 (cf. Figures 72 a and b, see also Figure 91), when many escaped to the Caucasus. From there, many were deported to Kazakhstan when Stalin wanted to speed up the industrialisation in the region, and when the “Perestroika” was launched, and travel restrictions were eased, the Pontian Greeks could at last go home to the motherland they had never seen.<sup>7</sup> During their turbulent existence, the Pontian Greeks maintained many of their old cultural patterns, as did the Greeks who lived in Cappadocia.<sup>8</sup> That not

<sup>7</sup> Iossifoglou Kyriakopoulou 1990: 26-30.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dawkins 1934.

everybody “went home” is illustrated by the Greek fishing communities of Trabzon. It has been claimed that these communities were “assimilated by force” or “converted” to Islam and became Turkish, like the Turks and Macedonians (“Bulgarians”) became Greek.<sup>9</sup> One may compare their circumstances with Turkish-assimilated Armenians. Nevertheless, the popular cult endures beneath the surface appearance of “assimilation”, as is illustrated by Pontian Greeks as well as by Cappadocians and the Trabzon fishing people’s continuing maintenance of their traditional rituals. The immigrant or “returning” Greeks naturally enough present many common cultural patterns with people in continental Asia Minor, present-day Turkey, as a result of the mutual influence which has taken place throughout history due to its dynamic and ever-changing nature.

The villages of Greek Macedonia, where most of the described festivals are celebrated, are the residences for Greek refugees from many regions: Albania, Bulgaria, Asia Minor or modern Turkey, and Cyprus. One might wonder whether this is a kind of buffer zone against the Slavs and the “infidels”.<sup>10</sup> As in general with refugees, they are very clever in keeping the traditions alive, and furthermore are among the most resourceful people in Greece. Their new hometowns are copies of the villages from which they emigrated, and hence parallels to the ancient colonies that were copies of the mother polis. Several modern villages have been founded by the refugees, who have usually named their new settlements after the village they had to leave by adding the prefix *Nea* (New). We encounter, for example, villages on the island of Limnos or the village of Nea Skioni in Halkidiki in northern Greece, which are populated with refugees from Asia Minor, while the Greeks who came from Smyrna (modern Izmir), founded (or rather were settled in) the southern suburb of Nea Smyrna at Athens. Moreover, the holy spaces surrounding the konaki, the shrine of the Anastasiades, a landscape such as one encounters in Agia Elenē and Melikē, are copies of the same location, the original cultic

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Karakasiidou 1993 and 1994. Re the “assimilation by force”, this is stated by the Norwegian anthropologist Ståle Knudsen (personal communication, 1991). Re northern Greece, cf. also n.204 Ch. 4 supra, and see also Cvetanoski, Ilcho, “(North) Macedonia and the Prespa agreement, success or defeat?” (“Contrasting reactions in (North) Macedonia to the ratification of the Prespa agreement by Greece. The government celebrates a unique opportunity and investment in the future, the opposition laments an unbalanced agreement and loss of identity”), in *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso*, 06.02.2019 (<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Macedonia/North-Macedoniaand-the-Prespa-agreement-success-or-defeat-192496>, accessed 09.02.2019).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the Norwegian “conquest” of the county of Finnmark.



space back in Kōsti. The ritual place at the fringe of the village is always situated next to a tree, and the holy spring in Kōsti is found in several other places in Greece. The different groupings or splitting into factions we encounter in the small villages is clearly illustrated when people are sitting outside their own taberna or “kapheneio” around an open square, and never set foot in the one situated right across the street, which is usually a boundary between two population groups, as in Agia Elenē. This is also experienced in the big city of Athens, populated as it is with emigrants from villages all over Greece and former Greek regions, where people live “as they lived at home”; that is, next to the same neighbour. The Olympians who have emigrated, be that to Baltimore in the USA or to Piraeus, the port of Athens, live next to one another in the same way they did back home, where everyone still has one or more relatives and preferably a house, like the Tiniots. Those who have moved out continue to maintain the same traditions. Moreover, they return home to the village during the most important festival of the year, and many emigrants do also return to settle permanently in the village after some years living abroad. After the civil war of the 1940s, many Communists fled eastward, and usually ended up in Tashkent in Uzbekistan. The massive home-coming began after 1982, and among the Greeks returning home are those who have been in western Europe due to labour migration or some years in Australia, South Africa, or the USA. It is important to die or at least to be buried “at home”, in their native soil. Therefore the children of emigrants from the village of Olympos are asked to bring the bones of their parents home from the USA for burial in the village, and an extract from a published lament states: “...ramène-moi que je sois enterré dans ma terre”.<sup>11</sup>

At home in the village, the wealthy emigrants are especially eager to bid higher than their local competitors, the traditional leading families, during the auctions that take place at the various festivals. Chapels, public buildings, windmills and festivals in Olympos are “offered” by emigrants who have returned home from Baltimore. In Agia Paraskeuē, the son of a deceased emigrant dedicates a great sacrificial meal for the entire village. Otherwise, boasting and gift-giving or gift exchange is also important on other occasions, from the sumptuous distribution of food on the tombs during visits to the cemeteries to dedications to the churches, such as the

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<sup>11</sup> “Bring me home so I can be buried in my own earth.” Vernier 1991: 249. See also Caraveli 1985, re Olympos-Baltimore. See also Håland 2014: Ch. 6. It will be interesting to see the results of the great labour migration that is taking place among young Greeks today, many of whom seek work in, *inter alia*, Norway and Germany.

Church of the Annunciation of the Panagia on Tinos. Everything of which the churches consist, such as doors, benches, railings, and so on, are usually gifts from some wealthy person, and the names of the donors are always written on nameplates affixed to the dedications, telling who has given what. We also encounter the importance of the gift-giving or gift exchange during the visits to the houses carried out by the “Kōstilides” in Agia Elenē and Melikē (Figure 31), both through the *kerasma* (pl. *kerasmata*; that is, treat; pouring out; of wine, for example) “treatment”, the gathering of food and other (predominantly) edible gifts “to the bags”. Consequently, the individual landlord is also somewhat obliged to tuck money into the treasurer’s pocket as a payment for the blessing of the house. Thus, by the help of offerings, votives or liturgies, money is collected for the church, the *konaki*, or the celebration of the feast, such as with the money collected in Koimēsē, Agia Elenē, Agia Paraskeuē, or the proceeds are donated to the poor, for instance. This modern parallel to former social security (such as in the 1880s)—and also a kind of equivalent of the ancient liturgies, *leitourgiai* or “services for the people”—therefore has a great importance today as well, including—and perhaps especially—for “those who left for foreign lands”. Here we see an analogue to the gifts from those who “left for foreign lands” in ancient times. ●therwise the poster on which the names of the donor and his family are listed, placed on the horns of the sacrificial bull in Agia Paraskeuē, is another version of the (*chartia*) *paraklēseis* (prayer or supplication papers) on which people inscribe the names of ill and dead people, which we find during all the saints’ and healing festivals, especially in the “miracle churches”, such as on Tinos. Related to this are the *psychochartia* (“soul papers” or lists of names for commemoration) at the cemeteries, such as in ●lympos, as well as the handwritten letters written in memory of the dead hanging on the Epitaphios in the same village. In the church on Tinos, people write the “letters”; that is, the prayer or supplication papers, on which they inscribe the names of ill and dead people. The supplication papers are placed in a box for the priests so that they may read a prayer and perform a blessing over the named persons, living or dead, during important stages of the liturgy. The papers on which the names of the deceased are written are called “soul papers” because the priest prays for the soul of the person. This is common during all saints’ festivals in Greece, and the blessings read in the shrine on Tinos are, of course, particularly effective. The objective of the supplication and soul papers is clearly illustrated during the White Tuesday ritual at the cemetery in ●lympos (Figure 10) in the new communal *ossuary*, the very last resting place where the bones are placed after their exhumation, which

in Greece is customary after three or five years. Inside the building there are three censers, and next to them lies a pile of money as well as a huge heap of the written “letters”, the psychochartia. In this new “common ossuary building”, the priest concludes his prayers and blessings of the graves. First, however, he reads out the names with great speed from the heap of “soul papers” that lie ready. Meanwhile, people continue to bring more money, which is added to the pile. For the ancient Pausanias, it was not only important to tell about the rich gifts that the deities had received, but also about who had given them.<sup>12</sup> Thus was one remembered. Plato’s criticism of dedications probably did not especially matter to people.<sup>13</sup> The logic behind the dedications or gift-giving is also found in the contemporary tama, or votive gift, which may be in the form of a pilgrimage to Tinos. In relation to that, I would like to state that during the twenty-nine years that I have engaged in several periods of fieldwork on Tinos (1990-2018), the crowd of pilgrims continues as before.<sup>14</sup> During the first years of this fieldwork period, the pilgrims preferred to go to Tinos on the bigger ships. Among these was the pilgrimage ship called the “Panagia”, which was especially popular, and it was rather the younger tourists, whose destination was the cosmopolitan or “jet set” island of Mykonos, who went with the Sea Jet hydrofoil from the port of Raphina in Attica. This has changed since the turn of the millennium. The pilgrims still arrive on the big ships and more and more take the ferries, but now the Sea Jet mainly carries pilgrims as well, although this is especially true for those who come on a day trip from Athens, and while the pilgrims perform their worship up in the sanctuary, the Sea Jet often waits at the harbour, as there are not always passengers for Mykonos.

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<sup>12</sup> Paus. 1.14,4, 1.18,6, 9.16,3.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 909e-910a and Paus. 1.21,7. See also Pomeroy 1995: 47.

<sup>14</sup> Since 1990, I have engaged in several periods of fieldwork, particularly involving research into the festival dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia on 15 August on Tinos. I witnessed the festival in 1990 and annually in the periods from 1993-1998 and 2004-2013, but also visited the island in the autumn of 1996 and 2018. I have carried out fieldwork on the festival dedicated to the “Vision” of Saint Pelagia four times (2005, 2011-2013), and visited the festival of the Annunciation twice (2012-2013). I also made several return trips to the island in the period from January-August 2012 during an extended research stay in Athens, also visiting the festival of the “Finding”. Håland 2017 gives a comprehensive presentation and discussion of the Dormition festival as well as an extensive bibliography on the island and its history, while my 2014 book presents the other festivals, especially the festival dedicated to the “Vision” of Saint Pelagia and the festival of the Annunciation.

Religious festivals are also symbols of unity and represent “roots for emigrants”. For the “returned” “Köstilides”, therefore, many of the everyday symbols of Kösti and the entire dream the emigrants and their descendants have of their lost home have been transformed into holy symbols for those who emigrated, the Anastenarides. Furthermore, it is Thrace that is the point of reference when the holiness of the drinking water is described. This importance of water is encountered down in the spring house of Agia Elenē, in the icons found there, which are dedicated to the well because “the drinking water both here and in Thrace is [always] dedicated to a saint and it is for this reason that they are called Agios [Saint]”.<sup>15</sup> In this way, the Anastenaria cult celebrates the past. Their cultic apparatuses belong to “former (that is, Thracian) days”, such as the sēmadia, thus constituting an ancestor cult oriented towards their place of origin, since the “Köstilides” celebrate their “Köstilidian” community and identity through their religious rituals. Their cult represents ancestor worship in the proper sense of the word, since the male costume from Kösti, through sēmadi, or the clothes of the ancestors from Kösti, is made holy as an extension of the clothes of Agios Kōnstantinos. The same regards terms like the konaki, folksongs, and the sacred version of the traditional Thracian folk dance called the “handkerchief dance”. For the “Köstilides”, then, it was not Greece and Greek culture that became holy, but their own Thracian past. Likewise, for the university-educated youths in the urban areas who are becoming members of the brotherhood, the Anastenaria constitutes a romantic return trip to the past at the same time that it guarantees a strong religious experience and unity among the members. The young experience something at once exotic and familiar, since the ritual directs them into an altered state of consciousness at the same time that they are surrounded by the same symbols from the Orthodox Church, with which they have been familiar since childhood; they are possessed by the same spirit that possessed grandmother. Although the Anastenaria represents the past for these youths, this is not the past represented by Kösti, as it is for the older members, but the past represented by Agia Elenē and other traditional Greek villages. The grandchildren of the immigrants from Kösti are also immigrants to student housing in Athens or Thessaloniki. For them it is as important to return home to Agia Elenē and Melikē as it was for their forebears to go home to Kösti, a return trip that was, however, an unattainable dream. One example is the photographer John Demos, who, *inter alia*, has collaborated with the American anthropologist Loring M. Danforth, the foreign scholar who has

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<sup>15</sup> Personal information from Maria Michaēl-Dede.



published most extensively on the Anastenaria. Demos claims to be particularly interested in the Anastenaria because his ancestors came from a place near Kōsti.

Today, therefore, everyone participates in the festivals, and if possible, both migrated emigrants and resettled students or labour migrants come home. On modern Lesbos, one encounters the emigrants living in the USA, South Africa, and Australia who return home for their summer holidays when the annual feast is celebrated. To Olympos they return home for the feast from Baltimore, Piraeus or Rhodes. During Easter, a man from Marseille, searching for his past, comes as well, and falls into a reverie when he recognises a gesture his father—a former refugee from Smyrna (modern Izmir, in Turkey) via Lesbos—always made when he ate lettuce. This man, the son of a Greek refugee from Smyrna, observes something extraordinary: his father came to Lesbos when he was ten years old, moving to Marseille after the war in the 1920s. He lived in France for the rest of his life, but he always ate lettuce straight from the stem, like the old men in Olympos. Although the Anastenaria is reserved for the initiated, in general, all the “Kōstilides” participate in the celebration. Moreover, in northern Greece, one encounters—in addition to the second generation of Thracians—people home on holiday from their labour migration in Germany, and the pilgrims pour in to Tinos from all over Greece as well as Cyprus or Lebanon. Furthermore, we have all the emigrants living in the USA who come back home to Tinos for their summer holidays in conjunction with the August festival. One may also draw attention to the fact that it is but a short step from rural to urban life in the modern EU state of Greece. Since it is not only students who have moved to Thessaloniki and Athens, but also persons seeking work in general, most Athenians have one foot in their or their parents’ childhood village, and everyone goes back home for the most important saint’s festival, especially if it takes place during summer, when “everyone returns to their home villages”, as my Athenian former landlady used to say. Since 2011, many have been going home to their villages because they have become unemployed and are having economic problems in Athens. Therefore, due to the present situation or “crisis” in Greece, many of those living in Athens are going home again, and we have a kind of resettlement from the urbanised regions to the islands and the countryside in general. All of these factors, of course, provide further dimensions to the festivals, which, in addition to all the other common activities, are gathered under the “umbrella” of religion. There is not only one, but several meanings in the religious rituals. A rite may, for instance, have a clear ideological, Christian meaning at the same time that it has a more



subconscious meaning related to more deeper-lying values. We therefore encounter many levels of meaning in the festivals. It is precisely this which makes them so enduring, despite the fact that the traditional peasant society is on its way out in the region. The feast or ceremonial meal and the celebration continue, although the Goddess, God, hero or heroine has changed her or his name. Although I analyse many different meanings from the festivals, it is not for certain that everyone sees the same in them. The fact is that the festivals have very different meanings for different people, and everyone has one or another reason to participate. For both the elderly and the young, it is due to their communication with the fertility-giving and healing deceased saint. Many also regard the festival as an excuse to meet people. The youths in the village, who are oriented towards modern western culture, look forward to the rock concert of the year, but perhaps also the traditional horse races. Others might be waiting for the most popular zurna player. The villagers also look forward to the great fair, the competitions, and the annual meeting with the emigrants, who now return home to the familiar and dear village where they have their own roots. Therefore, the saint's festival is a confirmation of identity which demonstrates village unity; it symbolises the ties between particular individuals, the ancestors, and the history of a people. Consequently, the contemporary saint's festival or other popular festivals are not dying traditions reserved for the marginal groups of a society; on the contrary, they are becoming more and more popular.

Also in ancient times, the festivals were important for those who had emigrated. Therefore Athenians, relocated colonists, and metics (*Metoikoi*, resident non-Athenians) participated in the Panathenaia and the Dionysos festivals. Commitment was a key word, and at a festival a ceasefire was introduced and social ties were renewed with guest-friends, thereby ensuring future credit as well. The women's festivals were naturally enough reserved for women, while the public accessible Demeter festival was reserved for the *mystai* (those about to be initiated into the Mysteries), who little by little came from all over the Greek world, but also outside of Greece proper. Similarly, the Greek world was influenced in turn by oriental cults, such as the cult dedicated to Adonis, which, again, became assimilated with their own cult.

Today, the "archaisms" are often important in the villagers' self-understanding, usually as a kind of protection against the big city, or the way it is in Olympos, for example, and perhaps even more so for those who emigrated and need a link with the past (cf. Norwegian-Americans). In Olympos, tourists are condemned at the same time that people become elated by their prospective sales potential when they arrive. In many ways

this is a divided society. One may therefore agree that people in Olympus are typical examples of residents of a culture undergoing profound changes.



Figure 73. In the village of Olympus in 1992, many women prefer to make the Easter breads and cakes the old way, in the traditional common ovens outside, although they have electrical cookers.

Other scholars, such as Bernard Vernier, have pointed out how people generally “use” the tradition.<sup>16</sup> According to a German sociologist I spoke with in 1992, who also visited the festival in 1986, there had been major changes in Olympos since then. At that time (in 1986), visitors were accommodated in private homes, and there were no modern comforts. In 1992, a windmill or outdoor oven was perhaps refurbished and turned into a rounded, modern-style bathroom. At the same time, many women prefer to make Easter breads and cakes the old way, in the traditional common ovens outside, even though they have electrical cookers (Figure 73). The same regards the roasting of the “Easter lamb”. Consequently, this society seems divided, uncertain and atypical, because they are drawn to the “positive” features of “modern” life, freedom, education, money, and the like, versus the disadvantages: the scattering of families, rootlessness. The result is the question everyone asks themselves: “Where do we really belong? How will Olympos be in a few years?” However, this is a question which arose throughout the entire twentieth century, and what is interesting in this context is that, although there is much that changes, there are some features that endure, for example, the Easter festival and all its constituent elements. Is this because the rituals that are important to people have an incredibly good ability to adapt to new conditions? Or is it perhaps rather the new conditions that are adapted to the old rituals? According to Dubisch, the fact is that people adapt the sanctuary on Tinos to suit their changing needs, though there probably is a reciprocal interaction taking place.<sup>17</sup> How can one otherwise explain the informants’ claim that “[i]t has always been like this, and it is for the good of it” (“gia to kalo”)? Or is the current wording a kind of safety measure people come out with in the midst of a world that seems to be falling off its hinges precisely because there are so many changes?

Rituals or elements in the rituals can be modified or be given new meaning, although this does not necessarily involve that the old meaning disappears entirely. The official ideology most likely depends on “employing” deeper-lying collective values within society in order to achieve its “desires”, and these values are not something one can just “introduce”, mainly because they are unconscious or implied for those governing the society themselves, who are just as subject to the unconscious aspect of the Bourdieuan doxa as everyone else. They are virtually stuck in their own superior value system, which means that deeper-lying rules or mentality ultimately seems to guide and orientate

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<sup>16</sup> Vernier 1991: 189.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Stewart 1991: 115 vs. Dubisch 1995: 93.

their behaviour. This regards modern rulers, Plato, and authorities such as Pope Gregory the Great.<sup>18</sup> This also affects the current popular social-scientific thesis which maintains that every identity, such as ethnicity and the like, are historical constructs in line with reality and with our cultural representations of “the self” and “the other”, as Anastasia Karakasidou has argued.<sup>19</sup> She also claims that all categories of belonging, identities and consciousness, are human constructions, and that all national ideologies influence popular consciousness.<sup>20</sup> The top-down argument one encounters within the social-scientific theory of nationalism makes people seem to be passive and insensible tools without brains or thought, whom a ruler can manipulate and direct at her or his own discretion. Such a mechanical image is too unnuanced and loses the entire spectrum of both popular concepts and values and what it is that constitutes the unconscious factor, an aspect we really know too little about. There are some central factors which this social-scientific explanation does not include. This assertion corresponds to Bourdieu’s one-dimensional explanation of power, in which he assigns a totalitarian role to the official ideology with regard to the structuring of experience, and maintains that the one who can act “rationally” and thus dominate, manipulate and control doxa rules society.<sup>21</sup> It is too easy to assert that people become as chess-pieces in a game, in which one or another person, being bright and clear-headed, has constructed, for instance, a history or identity and made people accept it. The fact that Karakasidou herself works on material related to popular culture testifies to the fact that “it also goes the other way round”. That the Greek rulers have not managed to indoctrinate people is indeed seen in northern Greece, where we encounter the continuing existence of the Macedonian language after many years of “purging” it from Greek speech. In 1992, for instance, people in the northwestern Greek Macedonian town of Philorina had to swear publicly that they would not speak Macedonian any more, since in those days it was officially forbidden to speak anything other than Greek in the northern part of Greece. However, people still speak Macedonian amongst themselves at home and the like, and are still proud of being Greeks, as they are in Koimēsē. The thesis claiming that ethnicity is something that the elite can construct for their own purposes; in other words, seems to be insufficient, because many of the actual circumstances we encounter within the society remain unexplained.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Ch. 2 *supra* and Davis 1992: 26 f.n.1. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 3 for a comprehensive discussion.

<sup>19</sup> Karakasidou 1993: 18 f.

<sup>20</sup> Karakasidou 1994: 136, 142.

<sup>21</sup> Bourdieu 1980, 1982, 1998. See also Ch. 4 *supra* for discussion.



This, however, in no way means that the cult is not dynamic. The dynamic nature of the cult is evident in the fact that saints constantly acquire new attributes or extended qualities, since they protect various functions and phenomena in society; Taxiarchēs (Archangel Michael), for instance, who in the last thirty years has been celebrated especially at the airports on his feast day. Another variant is the Panagia, who might be helpful for refugees who are victims of modern political regimes or the various purges of newer nation-states. Pontian immigrants' worship of the Panagia *Soumela*, or "Panagia of the Refugees", for instance, is a modern parallel to ancient deities who obtained expanded attributes and new qualities, since they protected various functions and phenomena in society.<sup>22</sup> Although this example demonstrates how a cult is formed, it is a main divinity (or Holy Person), the Panagia, who acquires a new aspect or quality. Therefore, the claim that the past is invented or created in the present and changes the past is only a partial explanation. The past has continually been created or invented and re-created or transformed, and the present has to cope with all of these pasts. Against arguments claiming that people have invented the tradition in order to adapt to new historical situations, one might perhaps also argue that the Greeks have rather reproduced the concepts and ideas of the past in order to invent themselves.<sup>23</sup> By claiming that the death cult is continuously being re-created in contemporary Greece in order to form bonds with a constructed past, it might seem as though there have not been death cults formerly, and this is a wrong interpretation. This does not, of course, rule out that the modern death cult may be "invented", or, to be more precise, in many instances is pretty new—at least if one sees it in relation to the death cult that existed in antiquity. Cults may still be established today, the newly established cult of Pelagia on Tinos, for instance, which undoubtedly is very important from a nationalistic point of view, since she was sanctified on 11 September 1970, at the same time that Tinos was declared a sacred island. In other words, this event took place during the "Regime of the Colonels" or "The Junta". What is significant, however, is the similarity of rituals connected with the death cult and how it includes different levels, as do other popular cults that are important to the official ideology: Firstly, the personal, individual cult with all the rituals that are always connected

<sup>22</sup> Paus. 2.17.7, Athena Alea, cf. 1.23.5 Athena Hygieia, cf., however, Plut. *Per.* 13.8. Fann 1991: 340–356, Pontic cult.

<sup>23</sup> The formulation is reproduced from Hastrup 1992c: 114, where she deals with Island, which is a parallel to Greece, cf. Stewart 1991: 115, see also Herzfeld 1992b: 68 ff. See, however, Hobsbawm/Ranger 1994: 9a–c, nonetheless, see, e.g., 13.



with death, burial, and the subsequent rituals in the domestic or family sphere. This can be coupled with the official Church's cult of deceased saints. The same rituals are performed in honour of these saints, as is clearly demonstrated by the bull dedicated both to a deceased father and to Agios Charalampos. The relationship between the popular death cult carried out within the domestic sphere and the official festivals is furthermore clearly illustrated by the Panagia's death or "Dormition" on 15 August, which is followed by her burial, or the "Ninth Day's ritual of the Panagia" on 23 August, thus reflecting ordinary death rituals and the subsequent memorial service. Moreover, the women's ritual lamenting over their own dead family members while tearing their loosened hair and beating their breast in front of the Epitaphios of Christ in Olympos (Figure 9) is followed by the ceremony at the cemetery on White Tuesday after the Resurrection of Christ. This again can be seen to be coupled with the festivals of the people, such as the August festival dedicated to a Mother Goddess who seems to have been celebrated at this time throughout the Mediterranean region in various manifestations, both in antiquity and today. Accordingly, we encounter the popular customs or former official ideology to which a new ideology has been attached. If one examines the long-term scheme, we encounter deeper-lying rules that guide people's actions. This can also be regarded as a mutual or two-way contract between two different ideologies. In other words, we see the relationship between a long-lasting mentality and a new Christian ideology, since the crucial point is the performance of the cult of a Mother Goddess at particular periods of the year.

Therefore, it is also wrong to claim that the death cult has only existed in Greece since the 1700s to serve the modern nationalistic propaganda. How, then, can we explain, for instance, the cult of Agios Gerasimos (Figure 74), the healing patron saint of Kephallonia, which started in the 1500s; that is, before survivalism and the adjoining modern nationalism was particularly widespread, at least in Greece? Gerasimos died in 1579 and was canonised or sanctified in 1622, since his body had undergone no decomposition when it was removed in 1581 (cf. the celebration of "the removal of his relics"), but rather exuded a pleasant, sweet and heavenly fragrance, which along with the uncorrupted body is a common reason for the consecration of deceased persons as saints. That one encounters the same cult in a so-called European region of Greece as in the so-called eastern and oriental parts also testifies to the fact that one cannot relate this to an "oriental heritage" from the Turks. It should nonetheless be emphasised that Gerasimos was born in 1509 in Trikala, in upland Corinthia in the Peloponnese. He came from the aristocratic family of

Notaras, which had been famous in Konstantinople during the Palaiologos dynasty. He also lived as a monk for twelve years in the Holy Land, then five years on the neighbouring island of Zakynthos before he settled down in a cave on Kephallonia in 1560.



Figure 74. During the festival dedicated to Agios Gerasimos, his relics are carried in procession and passed over the sick, Kephallonia, 16 August 1992.

Moreover, the cult of the Anastenarides, which is documented from the thirteenth century, also represents a death cult, not to mention the earlier cult of the dead in both the Byzantine and pre-Christian eras. The cult of the Anastenarides actually has abundant documented parallels in those ancient cults. Ancient cults in general were permeated by precisely such a cult of the dead.<sup>24</sup> In connection with this we see the manipulation of the bones of the deceased.<sup>25</sup> Not only bones are manipulated, however; dates probably are as well. While the mythical Theseus may not have died during sowing time, he was nonetheless honoured with a festival at this time of the year, since his bones were honoured in Pyanepsion.<sup>26</sup> The Holy Skull of Agia Pelagia was found on 8 October, the day another Pelagias *Osias* is celebrated. Moreover, the festival dedicated to Agios Gerasimos takes place at the same time of year that Greek emigrants return home to Kephallonia, in August, around the date of the disastrous earthquake of 1953. Dēmētrios S. Loukatos tells about a potential other reason which is ascribed here to Agios Mēnas and others:<sup>27</sup> The saint is expected to protect the island against new earthquakes, after revealing himself during the previous one. Therefore he is celebrated at this time. In these examples, we encounter the production of meaning in the same way as we see in the 15 August festival on Tinos and the sinking of the Elli on the same day in 1940 and the subsequent cult and annual wreathing of the heroes of the Elli (Figure 68) in connection with the ritual dedicated to the Panagia. The same regards the wreathing of the tombs of the builders (or “owners”) of

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<sup>24</sup> Håland 2014, see esp. Ch. 2 and 6 for Agios Gerasimos. The Palaiologos dynasty ruled from the 1100s until 1453. In Greece, people have recently started to make pilgrimages to the tomb of the deceased monk, Vissarionas Korkoliakos, whose body, just before Easter 2006 (i.e., on 23 April) was reported to have been intact fifteen years after his death. This monk from the Monastery of Agathanos in central Greece died in 1991 at the age of eighty-three, cf. Ch. 6. For ideological use of the cult of the hero in antiquity, see esp. Ch. 7, cf. also Robertson 1992: 244-249. Cf. also, e.g., Loukatos 1981: 131-136; Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 173 f. for Gerasimos. See furthermore Spencer 1954: viii for European Philhellenic enthusiasm/public opinion which existed in England in the 1500s, cf. 3 and Vryonis 1978 re Mystras in the Peloponnese before 1450.

<sup>25</sup> Håland 2014: Ch. 6. Cf., e.g., Hdt. 1.67; Paus. 8.9, 3, 3.3, 7; Plut. *Thes.* 36.

<sup>26</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 35 f. Cf. Håland 2014: Ch. 5, 2 and 9 for discussion, also re the following.

<sup>27</sup> Loukatos 1982: 169n.3. Strictly speaking, Pelagia is not an Agia; i.e., saint, but *Osia*; i.e., venerable, blessed, though the term also means saint. Her official name is *Pelagias os*. (i.e., *Osias*) *en Tēnos*, thus distinguishing her from another Agia Pelagia within the Orthodox Church from whom she took her name, and who is celebrated on 4 May. See Håland 2014: Ch. 2.

the Church of the Annunciation situated at the east side of the church in the courtyard. Related to this is the relationship between the liturgical versus the popular festival of Agios Charalampos on Lesbos.

The relationships between the cult of Aphrodite and Adonis, the Chthonian and Olympian in Greek religion, or the rituals dedicated to pre-Christian and Christian water Goddesses (Figures 52 and 75) in the Akropolis cave testify to the fact that older rituals can acquire new or additional meanings. Particularly the last case, the water cult in the Akropolis cave, presents a clear parallel to Maurice Bloch's study of a 200-year period of the same ritual under changed political and economic conditions, where he demonstrates that the stability of the ritual enables it to serve different rulers. His analysis of what he calls "ritual fixity" is useful in order to try to explain the continuity of rituals; to be precise, the circumcision ritual of the Merina people, the objective of which was to become a human being, to become a part of the ancestors, to be incorporated, to submit oneself to traditional authority. In the early times, the ritual concerned incorporation into the family, then it became centred around the royal heir, where the elders assumed the role of the relatives, and finally in recent times it played a counter-cultural role as a challenge to Christianity. Therefore, although the politico-economic circumstances have changed, the ritual is largely stable, according to Bloch. In another context Bloch discusses symbols, song, dance and features of articulation and asks whether religion is an extreme form of traditional authority.<sup>28</sup> He equates politics and religion, although one may maintain that politics are only part of an ideology which again is a part of the religion.<sup>29</sup> As regards the circumcision ritual of the Merina people, Bloch claims that the "political dominators put on a mantle that has been worn by" former rulers, but that does not make "the mantle anew". This is possible because the "rituals are on the boundary between statements and actions"; the very nature of ritual communication lies beyond normal conversation, events and argumentation.<sup>30</sup> According to João de Pina-Cabral, who also refers to Bloch in a context in which he examines fixity and recurrence in connection with pagan survivals in Europe, "[t]his is possible...only because rituals are neither actions nor statements, they are not means of communicating, but rather of expressing".<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Bloch 1974: 57, 79. Cf. the 1986 study of the Merina people.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also Dubisch 1995: 158 f.; Stewart 1991. See also Bloch 1986: 188 "[i]deology is partly...in a world of its own".

<sup>30</sup> Bloch 1986: 195, 181 ff., citations are from 182 and 191, see also 1982: 219 f.

<sup>31</sup> Pina-Cabral 1992: 53, although the way he renders Bloch's ideas does not do him full justice. One should therefore consult Bloch 1986: 183.





Figure 75. Votive relief with nymphs (National Archaeological Museum, Athens 1966, see Travlos 1971: Fig. 193).

One may, however, argue that there is no difference between a means of communication and a means of expression, because both of these await a response, and that there are other ways of replying than verbally can be experienced in either rituals performed to secure fertility or any other passage rite. In other words, an answer is always required, consciously or unconsciously; otherwise the ritual would not be worth much, as Bloch also implies.<sup>32</sup> A new authority may appropriate power and an important ritual or, to be more precise, transform itself in order to adjust to it, and although the ritual can thus be given a new meaning, it is only a partial or additional one, since the core remains the same. Bloch also asserts that, although the official politics or dominators changed, there was a core that allowed the ritual to be used by new types of dominations.<sup>33</sup> In the Greek material that has been discussed, there are several examples of similar cases where the same ritual endures because the old core fits into the new reality. The ritual which takes place in the Akropolis cave can be used to illustrate this. By fetching holy water from the spring of the ancient nymphs (Figure 75) or the modern Panagia (which is an action), this very action shows that the water is still holy (which is a message and therefore illustrates communication), regardless of whether a new ideological deity is attached. On the basis of a Christian ideology, one would certainly

<sup>32</sup> Bloch 1986: 182.

<sup>33</sup> Bloch 1986: 195.



maintain that the Panagia makes the water holy, but this is not how it works in the practical cult, where it seems rather that it is the water itself that is holy.<sup>34</sup> But even though equivalent situations can provide similar answers, and a ritual can be stable in practical action while the actual ideological meaning of the ritual changes, this nonetheless does not explain how or why such a custom may both have had and acquired more meanings through changing conditions in ancient times and also through the later Christian history, for instance, an official and a private meaning, implied or unconscious, depending on the context. That the ritual may be used in the traditional form while its real social meaning changes may be illustrated by the customs in which people fetch earth on Tinos or holy and healing water from caves. That the content or “function” is stable while the mode of expression is different—that quite different practices and situations may be functional equivalents—is demonstrated by the use of modern symbols in weddings in Athens and the entire, very modern context, which nevertheless is strikingly similar in essence to the traditional village wedding and its symbols, which are also not much different to those of the ancients. Although a given social or ideological meaning can shift, it appears that another implied social meaning or individual meaning may be identical. The point of both a symbol (cf. water) and a ritual action (cf. “fetch it/the water”) is indeed their “ambiguity”, a topic also discussed by Bloch, who underlines the emotional power of rituals, since in practice they represent *everything* for people (my emphasis).

As Pina-Cabral has maintained in an extension of Bloch’s study, in his own dealing with fixity and recurrence in a study of the problems around pagan “survivals” in European culture, long-term continuity cannot be explained by a single factor, and endurance will explain the continuity of ritual practice far beyond the particular living conditions when it was formed.<sup>35</sup> The mentioned cave cult on the slope of the Akropolis cliff should have illustrated that this likely applies not only to rituals, but also to sacred places in the landscape, such as caves, to be precise, but also springs, mountaintops, and so on, as well as the texts and proverbs that Pina-Cabral mentions.

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. n.11 Ch. 2 *supra*.

<sup>35</sup> Pina-Cabral 1992: 46-54, cf. Dubisch 1995: 158 f. also for the following. See Håland 1993a: 14 f. for a relevant case.



Figure 76. Copy of the votive plaque known as the Ninnion Tablet depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries, found in the sanctuary at Eleusis (mid-fourth-century BCE). Archaeological Museum of Eleusis (Original: National Archaeological Museum, Athens).

One need only mention the different elements in the Eleusinian agricultural ritual (Figure 76). According to Apostolos N. Athanassakis, the names of the main protagonists in the Homeric and Orphic versions of the Eleusinian drama can be explained in Indo-European terms. He maintains that this was a process of superficial Hellenisation conforming to the realities imposed by the dominant group.<sup>36</sup> Although this is not the place to discuss such topics as Indo-European conquest/Hellenisation, the claim is still worth a comment. As should be apparent from my discussion of Bourdieu's assertion regarding doxa earlier in the book, it is not just to

<sup>36</sup> Athanassakis 1976: 104.

force a new ideology upon an ostensibly conquered people—or more precisely, a people one is trying to conquer. It may, moreover, just as well be the conquerors who absorb from the conquered ones, as in the case of Athena Alea.<sup>37</sup> Alea had been an independent Goddess, but was later absorbed by Athena. Simultaneously, however, Athena was absorbed by Alea. Consequently, one may speak of a mutual adjustment. But precisely for that reason, I think one should reconsider Athanassakis' further assumption that the important mystic Eleusinian symbolic drum (*tympanon*) may have lost the meaning it had in the more "humble" Eleusinian cult (here he does not distance himself from George E. Mylonas (1961), whom he criticises in another context), because the meaning may still be there, albeit implicitly. The meaning related to the fertility of agriculture must necessarily be intact, since the society is still an agricultural society. Therefore, Athanassakis may also be right when he maintains that when the initiated called out, it may be that they, like Clement of Alexandria, did not know (at least not with complete consciousness) that when their ancestors "ate from the drum", they did so from a sacred drum called *Iambē* in one tradition and *Baubō* in another. Their certainty lay in knowing that they did something they had always done and the ancestors had done before them, and "it was for the good of it"; contrary to Clement, they naturally enough did not think that there was anything strange in the ritual. Accordingly, this is an example of the fact that different traditions have become mutually adapted to one another and fused into a common cult (the cult of supposed conquerors from the north and the original Eleusinian one<sup>38</sup>), as has happened countless times in connection with other cults in a region where there have been just as many emigrations and immigrations as there have been in the inner parts of the Mediterranean region. However, this does not necessarily mean that a symbol has lost its original meaning, but only that new meanings have been attached.

Accordingly, one may also question Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood's assertion that there was a radical change in conception and practice in the Eleusinian mystery cult dedicated to Demeter and Korē and its place in the Athenian religion at the end of the seventh or early sixth century BCE.<sup>39</sup> The background of the claim is the assertion that an agricultural cult with *poliadic* (cf. polis) content was transformed into one including a considerable eschatological/soteriological component. One may note the

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<sup>37</sup> Paus. 2.17.7.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Romaios 1949: 195 for this aspect.

<sup>39</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1997: 159.

great emphasis she puts on purification in her description,<sup>40</sup> and the purification aspect is of central importance in the worship of Asklepios, which after its establishment in 420 BCE was connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries. One encounters a similar view in Ken Dowden, who works with a division between magic, initiation, and religions of salvation.<sup>41</sup> His division strongly recalls Frazer, but he is not alone. Pina-Cabral employs the same division between salvation religions (“a peculiar” phenomenon) and animism (“a rest-category”).<sup>42</sup> I do not believe that this division matters for the performers of the cult, and it should be nuanced when considering the fertility cult in a Greek context.<sup>43</sup> Numerous examples of initiation occur in the modern Greek religion of salvation, such as the Initiation (or Blessing) of the waters on 6 January, and we likewise meet with it in the ancient context in the importance of purification and healing to secure fertility. This is clearly shown by the definition I have given of the healing cult in the Greek context: For the Greeks, religion is a kind of medicine because the religious rituals are performed to ensure people’s health and fertility in collaboration with the dead in the underworld (Figure 77). The religious festivals are therefore a unique area for analysing healing since they are also healing festivals, and people’s intention in performing them is magico-religious.<sup>44</sup> This is manifested in the purifying procession that passes through the socially defined territory. The divine or deceased mediator also possesses healing power.

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<sup>40</sup> Sourvinou-Inwood 1997: 155 ff.

<sup>41</sup> Dowden 1989: 6 f.

<sup>42</sup> Pina-Cabral 1992: 48.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Keesing 1981: 330 re the performers of the cult.

<sup>44</sup> The term—used by anthropologists—is an implicit recognition of the lack of a clear distinction between magic and religion. Cf. n.58 Ch. 2 *supra* for one of my informants on Tinos, who was healed on 7 August 2000. Since then, she has gone on annual pilgrimage to Tinos during the Dormition. She has also told me that, although she had graduated in Mathematics, she was unemployed for a longer period, but the Panagia answered her prayers in the church, and the annual pilgrimage also became a thanksgiving offering after obtaining employment. Cf. also one of my male informants, who has gone on pilgrimage annually all of his fifty years of life along with his parents and his older brother. This is a votive gift, because the Panagia had healed his father for an illness before any of the children were born.



Figure 77. Women venerating the right-hand tomb of Agios Nektarios, Aegina, 8 November 2011.

Many of the symbols linked to the festival are important in themselves in relation to healing, particularly the icon, which represents a microcosm in itself, being made of all the substances of the world. Processions during religious festivals as depicted in ancient vase paintings also illustrate decorated sacrificial bulls and musicians. Colours, ribbons, plants, purifying lemon water, amulets, and musical instruments are fertility and healing amulets. Other symbols associated with healing include nature formations at the place where the festival is performed, such as caves with springs where people fetch holy water. Healing in this context means the way one copes with the critical transition periods in nature and human life; that is, how people handle the life-cycle passages of birth, illness, and death in interaction with each other and their divinities. The healing term encompasses purification, which we encounter in the processions, but also the “healing” that is important during illness. Today we encounter this mingling in the procession on Tinos, when the icon is passed over the faithful to heal or purify them for the following year (Figure 78). This



definition of the healing cult in the Greek context makes the mentioned division superfluous, because to initiate is to heal.<sup>45</sup>



Figure 78. A former version of the procession with the icon of the Panagia during the festival dedicated to the Dormition on Tinos. Pilgrims lie in the street named Euangelistrias, waiting for the icon to be passed over them. ● Archive, Photogonia, Tinos.

In the foregoing, I have discussed several enduring elements in the Eleusinian agricultural cult, and it should have been evident that the logic encountered in agricultural societies around the conception of life out of death, as emerges as early as in the Demeter hymn, gives, as Brumfield has also pointed out, no support for evolutionary theories about cult and religion implying that the Eleusinian cult represents a development from a primitive agricultural cult to more sophisticated speculations around the individual and her or his destiny.<sup>46</sup> These evolutionary theories are also relevant, *inter alia*, to the discussion with regard to magic and religion. All these speculations seem to be influenced by the mentioned “Humboldtian” ideal, according to which, the classicist has to stand at a distance, in the past and far from everyday life. Nevertheless, it may be everyday life in an agricultural society that gives scholars new perspectives.

<sup>45</sup> Höris 1995: 16. See Håland 1995 (2012) for Tinos.

<sup>46</sup> Brumfield 1981: 209 f. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 5 f.



Figure 79. Demeter and Korē, marble relief 500-474 BCE, Archaeological Museum of Eleusis. (Downloaded 23.03.2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological\\_Museum\\_of\\_Eleusis#/media/File:Demeter\\_and\\_Kore\\_marble\\_relief\\_500-475\\_BC\\_AM\\_Eleusis\\_081135.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archaeological_Museum_of_Eleusis#/media/File:Demeter_and_Kore_marble_relief_500-475_BC_AM_Eleusis_081135.jpg))

Based on the evolutionist view, the mysteries began as a magical rite to increase the crop, and theological elaborations that were dependent on the analogy between the life of the grain and human life were added later. This analogy, however, is not so sophisticated that only literate societies can comprehend it. That there is a connection between the sphere of the deceased and the sphere of fertility is quite usual in ancient thinking, and Korē is an example of this very logic in the context of an agricultural

society (Figure 79). There are many parallels from contemporary pre-industrial and pre-literary societies.

According to Sourvinou-Inwood's cited variant of the evolutionist view, this change is an echo of contemporary attitudes towards death and burial ideology and a result of the political tensions that developed in the archaic period. Her claim needs to be nuanced when one changes one's perspective because the agricultural element has not yet disappeared, nor has the importance of the Athenian polis, though now everyone could be initiated as long as they spoke Greek and had clean hands,<sup>47</sup> perhaps the result of the competition between the poleis to hold the most magnificent festival. Consequently, it is important not only to consider the ideological layer within the cult, but also the foundation of the ideology.



Figure 80. A clay model of the *ekphora* (that is, “carrying out of the corpse”). Over the bier is a shroud, beneath which lies the body, first part of the seventh century BCE. National Archaeological Museum Athens (inv. no. 26747).

With regard to the alleged radical changes in the death cult, I discuss this topic at length in another context (cf. also Figure 80). This is because I think it is necessary to elaborate on the problematic several scholars have

<sup>47</sup> Isoc. 4.157; Hdt. 8.65.

discussed when connecting the legislation, changes in attitudes towards death, and the mystery cult with attempts to curb women's dominance in the male polis.<sup>48</sup> The reason is that attempting to curb women's dominance is not the same as accomplishing these attempts.



Figure 81. The entrance to the Sacred Spring, the Akropolis Cave at Athens, 2006.

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<sup>48</sup> Holst-Warhaft 1992; Loraux 1981. Re the death cult, see Håland 2014 (the book ensues from my project, *Greek Women and Death, Ancient and Modern: A Comparative Analysis*, which was financed by the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> framework Programme), see also 2008.



Rituals and sacred places in the landscape (Figure 81) or texts and proverbs demonstrate that endurance is possibly a characteristic of culture that should be investigated more closely.<sup>49</sup> The importance of constancy and endurance is nevertheless not the same as maintaining that something has lost its ability to communicate; rather the contrary, and the Greeks communicate not only verbally, but also through rites, symbols, dance and gestures. All good fairy tales and folk songs survive because they have several hidden meanings. It is therefore important to remember that in this way, the connection between folk songs, laments and dances, and the traditional customs and rituals to which they are adapted and of which they are a part continually secure both reciprocal continuity and renewal. In other words, it is not for certain that endurance is such a useful term, since its usual connotations in one sense make the elements static, thus losing the dynamics and mutual adaptation that are a prerequisite for rituals to actually endure, since they belong to the elements that really constitute a culture, in which the ability to communicate remains intact to the highest degree.

Much of what one sees today in the festivals is not at all a new occurrence linked to the modern nation-state. As is also evident in other contexts,<sup>50</sup> much of what we have observed also existed in antiquity, such as the code of honour and shame, the elite's criticism of the popular cult, and so on. Therefore, there is no reason to avoid studying the phenomenon; on the contrary.

Another thing is that it is not for certain that the ancient people attached the same meaning to those phenomena, to which we encounter parallel cases in modern Greece. A great deal of what one encounters today can also be considered to be so-called *revival* or rebirth, as this takes place in many social groups consolidated around one common symbol or another. But so-called revival must also assume firstly that one knows what existed previously; that is, that one has basic source material on which to build in order to re-create or create the festival or custom afresh, and secondly, there must be a need for this among the people.

In the Greek wine-growing regions there are what can be classified as "natural wine festivals celebrated in autumn", while the wine festivals organised by a tourist association are examples of typical revivals. Loukatos distinguishes between the wine festivals celebrated in autumn versus what he calls amusement parks, which take place from June until the end of summer.<sup>51</sup> As he maintains in a different context, it is popular

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<sup>49</sup> Pina-Cabral 1992.

<sup>50</sup> Golden/Toohey 1997. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Loukatos 1982: 156n.2.



within tourism to orientate oneself towards the folklore, and festivals are often new inventions.<sup>52</sup> However, sources used to create these festivals are obtained from antiquity, so here we are faced with antiquity as interpreted by the Greeks. It has nevertheless been argued that traditional harvest festivals no longer exist in Greece, because the society is not traditional and such collective undertakings as harvest festivals, which were celebrated after another collective undertaking, the harvest, was completed, have disappeared.<sup>53</sup> According to this reasoning, today people harvest neither jointly nor manually, but when the expert tells them to do so, and with machines. In this industrial society there are only commercial festivals. Against this claim, one may object that even the expert is dependent on the “appearance” of the crop in order to give her or his forecast, and the crop depends on both weather and wind and growth and ripening. One cannot escape the fact that there are numerous similarities between the modern and ancient societies, in which the main products were the same as today, grain, vines and olives (Figures 82 a and b, cf. Figure 92), the “trinity” that actually forms the basis of all subsistence agriculture in the Mediterranean region.<sup>54</sup> The modern society’s need for old magical fertility rituals is illustrated, for instance, by all the rain magic which flourishes amid other magical rituals. Moreover, the crop is generally ripe at the same time in the same regions, for example, among the contemporary neighbours of Agia Paraskeuē, since it is the weather which is the decisive factor, and the harvest was marked with local festivals or individual offerings in antiquity as it is today, resulting from the pressure of work. During the grape harvest, every farmer or wine grower depends on people picking grapes in such rugged environments as the terraced landscapes on Tinos.

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<sup>52</sup> Loukatos 1972a: 570, 1978: 99-106. See also Kakridē 1989. Cf. Hauschild 1992: 29-44. Re the following, see, e.g., Grove 2017 for a description of a different perspective; i.e.; antiquity interpreted by the British. One may, of course, disagree about what is most useful if the goal is to reconsider ancient society; i.e., to investigate the sources from a northern or southern European perspective. The present scholar, however, sees the former as a kind of neo-imperialism.

<sup>53</sup> According to Alkis Raftis (personal communication, Athens, July 1992), the traditional society in Europe disappeared in 1914. In Greece it disappeared in 1940.

<sup>54</sup> It is worth noting that the olive production in the region has increased considerably in recent years. One may also mention that in the autumn of 2011, poor Athenians picked olives from the trees around the Akropolis area.



Figures 82 a and b. Athena's sacred olive tree in front of the Erechtheion in the Pandrosion, Akropolis of Athens, August 2007 and 2005.

This is moreover a common kind of Greek landscape, in which it is hard to imagine how one should be able to use modern agricultural machinery. On the touristic island of Santorini, which is well-known for its wine production, people also have to pick grapes by hand. Here larger “wine festivals” take place throughout the summer, but only for “tourists”, who have to pay a fee. Harvesting must be done quickly (it is a “time of war”; that is, a battle against time, now as in Hesiod, due to fear of destruction of the crop), and the threshing especially remains a joint undertaking using common threshing floors. This is illustrated on Santorini, where the grain crop is brought up to the wine factory next to the threshing floors on the backs of donkeys at the end of September. Perhaps this is a parallel to the centralisation and redistribution of the palace economy of the past; that is, people’s “contribution” of staple produce to the big man of the redistributive Minoan economy, except that the modern redistribution is, of course, somewhat changed. Since the harvest is collected in a central place, it becomes a collective undertaking. This is also the case when it is commercialised so that tourists also participate in the wine festivals. Then it is collectively expanded because more people become participants in what was originally limited to a small core of people.



Figure 83. Threshing floor on the island of Santorini, September 1992.

Next to the aforementioned wine factory on Santorini, there are three quite new threshing floors (Figure 83), and one older, very well-preserved one,

where people thresh the barley after the harvest during summer in the old way: people bring the grain up to the threshing floor and the donkeys are walked round and round while the grain is threshed. Here it may be relevant to mention a persistent custom at the spring festival among the Kabyles in North Africa. There the collective storage chamber/granary is the place where the festival takes place, even when it has ceased to receive the grain from the group because people have acquired individual granaries.<sup>55</sup>

We have cases of the production of meaning in which the core remains the same (the production of/cultivation of wine) as well as the threshing of grain, although the grain harvest itself is not done by hand. It is worth noting all the meanings that can be attached to the modern harvest festivals on the eastern outskirts of Athens, where all the participants in the wine festival in 1992 were locals apart from myself. Festivals are celebrated in the interior of Attica (in the middle of the Mesogaia or Mesogeia plain), which is a wine-growing area. In a region dominated by the winery, Cambas, several festivals were celebrated in autumn 1992, in Katzas, Leondari and Pallini. Many make their living directly or indirectly from wine-growing, so it is not only tourist associations that organise the wine festivals. During the festival the clever pupils of the village are honoured and dignitaries catered for free of charge, while the common people must pay for the food themselves. Dancers from the Dora Stratou Dance Theatre perform dances from contested border regions: Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus, ending with a Pan-Hellenic *Tsamikos* (male war dance), into which other participants are drawn. In this way a sense of belonging to the group is indicated and confirmed, people are wishing one another “Many Years” and “Happy Winter”. This, then, becomes another version of Bloch’s circumcision rituals, but with the communications intact in the ritual.

The point is that both the modern and ancient peasant population was and is closely linked to the soil and basically dependent on the distinctive seasonal rhythm in the region. Therefore it is logical to assume that both populations probably react very similarly to the actual seasonal rhythm in their environment by way of the rituals performed in times of crisis or the thanksgiving offerings that take place within the agricultural cycle (Figure 84, cf. Figure 92), although there are, of course, also other meanings related to the festivals. In antiquity the festivities were celebrated before and after the harvest proper, since the time in between was needed for the harvest work itself, as is the case also today, and, although it has been

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<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu 1963: 71, cf. 64 f. The threshing floor is illustrated in Håland 2017: Fig. 87 in Appendix 3.

claimed that collective undertakings no longer exist since people harvest individually, today as before the collective ritual of the group is important. Nor is the festival only dedicated to extra-human nature, a deity or deceased saint, as it is also dedicated to the inter-human society.

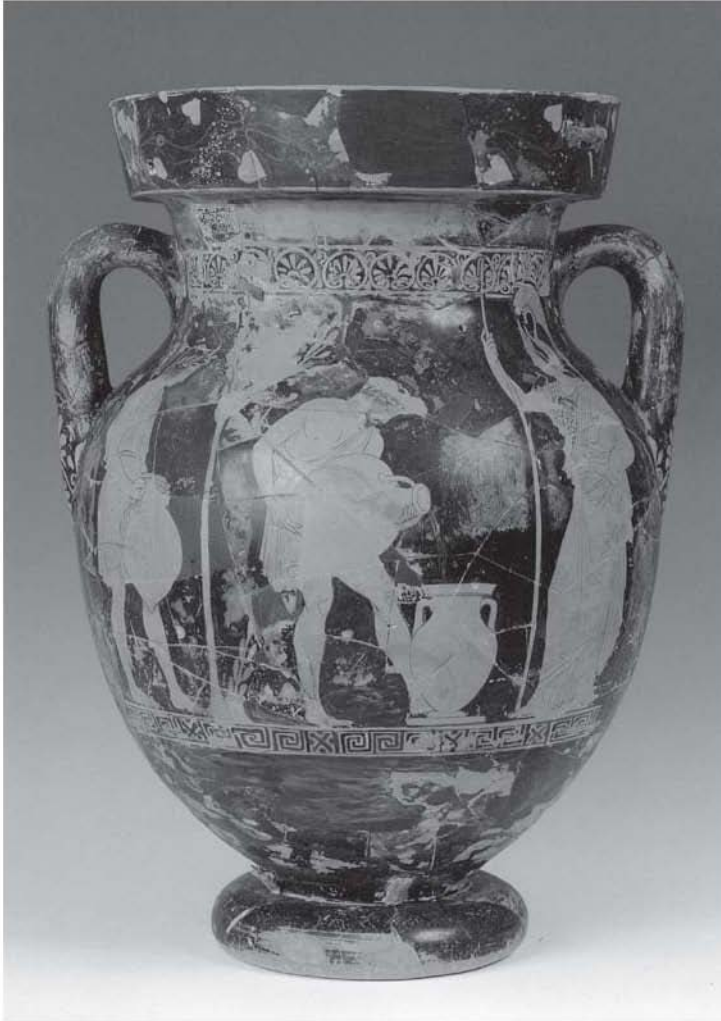


Figure 84. Concerning offerings, the Gerolanos amphora in the Piraeus Museum (cat. no. 7341) shows olive oil being poured in the presence of Athena. Courtesy Piraeus Museum.



Concerning the relationship between the nation, church and politics today, one may draw attention to the days on which the ideological nation-state celebrates its most important festivals: around central periods within the agricultural calendar which are usually related to an important passage within the life cycle of the Mother Goddess, the Panagia, as it was in the ancient context regarding the festivals of Demeter and Athena. No one can deny that the festivals change from year to year, but at the same time the very core of the ritual is similar from year to year, and likewise the festival itself.



Figure 85. A poster proclaiming 15 August as the “Day of the Armed Forces” and the symbols of the navy, the air force and the army are shown along with the Panagia and an illustration of an ancient hoplite helmet.

On Tinos this is exemplified by the posters announcing the August festival, which have new illustrations every year. In 1990, fifty years after the sinking of the Elli, one of the posters depicted the front page of a newspaper from 15 August 1940. The Panagia is always presented, and whether she is hovering over the sea, an illustration of an ancient hoplite helmet (Figure 85), the national symbol, the Acropolis of Athens, or alternatively the sanctuary on Tinos is depicted on the posters, the message is always the same: 15 August is proclaimed as the “Day of the Armed Forces”, and the symbols of the navy, the air force and the army are depicted.<sup>56</sup> In 2002 a memorial over Elli was also inaugurated in the harbour (Figure 86).



Figure 86. In 2002, the heroes of the Elli also received a memorial in the harbour in front of which a cannon from the ship was placed, Tinos, 15 August 2012.

Among the components is a cannon from the destroyer, and since then it has been from here that salutes are repeatedly fired during the ceremony on 15 August, before the procession returns to the church. Tinos is

<sup>56</sup> Håland 2017: see front page Fig. 1, see also 2009a for a mixing of modern and ancient symbols. See also Dubisch 1995: pl. 11 (a jet flying over Tinos), and Ch. 9 for the relation between nation, church and politics.

furthermore an appropriate place to celebrate both the nation and its protective Mother Goddess, since the place is especially “pure”, being a region that has only been under Turkish rule for a short period of time.

When comparing my experience of the Babo festival and the slides I took in 1992 with photographs taken thirty years earlier, they are strikingly similar.<sup>57</sup> This regards all of the modern festivals which have been presented here, which, apart from the rituals in Koimēsē and Olympos, have been thoroughly documented by Greek folklorists during the past 130 years or thereabouts. Regarding the festivals in Melikē and Koimēsē, it is important to be aware that all the essential elements are present, so although they improvise as they go along, the main ritual is always the same, or as the informants themselves told me in Melikē: “[t]here is always a core that is the same, and so we find out what we do this year.” This is the essence of rituals, and this is also the case during other popular festivals, despite many scholars’ statements that “the festivals are dynamic and change from year to year”, an explanation that easily loses sight of the barriers affecting the performers, and hence their own explanations. One may recall what was pointed out in the previous chapter, namely, that the logic behind the endurance of rituals, indicates that little disappears over time, though much is added to the elements which remain, which means that one usually adds much to a festival, since it must be updated. That does not mean, however, that anything is eliminated. In other words, as long as the main ritual remains the same, the festival is also an annually recurring event for the participants, and this fact does not contradict the dynamics of the festival.<sup>58</sup> A good explanation of change is not necessarily a good explanation of continuity, and vice versa, and both parts are important when dealing with the relationship between popular cult and official ideology. For the informants it is enough to know that: “[t]he custom is very old”. Another thing is that there is too much disagreement between the organisers, *inter alia*, about the details or sequence of the celebration, resulting in the fact that the celebration is not always the same. Nonetheless, people gradually arrive at a compromise, such as regarding the location for the performance of the wedding ceremony in Koimēsē if someone does not become angry and walk away, as happened in Melikē during the Kalogeros. It is determined by what they remember,

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Dracoulidēs 1962: Figs. 8-10, 14 and Håland 2017: Figs. 28-31, 33, 35 f.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Thrakiōtēs 1991: Ch. 3 and Dracoulidēs 1962: 104 f. for descriptions which have many common features with my experiences at the Babo and Kalogeros festivals, the Koimēsē wedding, and the carnival in Flamouro. Dracoulidēs states that, according to the villagers, there are certain variations within this scheme, which one encounters under different names in different villages.

but the main symbols and actions are always similar. That the festivals are vital does not necessarily mean that they change in the sense that it is something completely new which emerges, but rather that a continuous production of meaning takes place via the process by which new meanings are added to older rituals. Thus one may, of course, also maintain that this is something entirely new that emerges as the result of a new combination, but the combined elements are always the original ones, nonetheless.<sup>59</sup>



Figure 87. A mother, who has crawled up wearing kneepads, lifts her daughter up to kiss the icon, Tinos, August 1994.

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<sup>59</sup> Gernet 1981: 364, has some important, wise words concerning this circumstance. See Håland 2017: Ch. 4 for the problems in Melikē/Koīmēsē.

Rituals are therefore also good examples of how children are socialised into society, be it during the afternoon ritual in the church of Olympos on Holy Friday, the carrying of icons in the same village and in Agia Elenē, lira or drum-playing when sons and daughters take over the parents' instruments in the konaki, a school class in Melikē who visits the Kalogeros ritual, the children who in turn are lifted up in front of the icon so they can kiss it the way their parents do (Figure 87), or the children who fetch water along with their mothers from the "Life-Giving Spring".<sup>60</sup> They are taught through a learning process of direct observation and imitation, and in this way the tradition is preserved: the heritage goes on. It is therefore especially the modern carnival festivals or the festival in Monokklēsia where the main rituals are known in advance, while many variants of the performance details and modes of performance are allowed, which can shed light on how it might have been during the ancient popular festivals, especially those that stood outside of the official calendar and supervision of the polis, such as the Adōnia. Since the festival was informally organised, one should not introduce too much system into the ritual. It is therefore important to distinguish central key points in the festivals, such as the meaning and importance of descending into a cave and ascending back up again carrying important symbols.

Western scholars are generally concerned with what they consider to be the "lack of historical knowledge" in the villages they visit. Is this because the villagers do not remember? Or is it enough to talk about what it was like "in earlier times"? Is this not the case in all societies? Is there solely one individual who remembers, digs and divulges for the others—and is this the way "history" is preserved? Even though I speak with many different people, I am often introduced to a special person, "because it is he/she who knows most about what happened in earlier times". Here it is relevant to return to a topic which belongs to what Dubisch has called "Their history" or the local history versus "Europe's" or European history, which also touches on her formulations about "the nation and the foreigners" as well as the certainty of what is selected from the past.<sup>61</sup> Here one may also be reminded of the relationship between the Babo festival's ancient heritage or non-ancient heritage, which for a Greek peasant woman is not necessarily what a Western scholar wishes or thinks it should be. This relationship is also demonstrated by the variation or explanation of the heritage one encounters in the informant who thinks that the Babo festival is the same as the one she has read about in

<sup>60</sup> See also Jackson 1983a: 337, 344n.46, cf. 342n.9.

<sup>61</sup> Dubisch 1995: 278n.21, see also Ch. 8 f., cf. Hastrup 1992b: 9. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 2 f., see also Ch. 4 re the following.



Aristophanes. Here we encounter the Greeks' versus our modern northern European interpretation of both festivals and antiquity. Another case is the carnival in Flam bouré, where I am assured that "the festival is very old, several hundreds of years" when I ask how old the festival is. "Yes, do you [I] not know how old the carnival is in Naooussa (Figure 88), Sohos, Patras, Europe, are you [am I] stupid?"



Figure 88. "*Boules*" (janissaries) in Naooussa, Greek Macedonia, during the carnival on Meat Sunday, 1 March 1992.

These cases illustrate the informants' relationship to time. I encounter a similar situation during my researches in the Akropolis caves, where my informants are Maria, her mother, Eirinē Melas, and Panagiotis. Despite the latter's participation, the main performers of the rituals in the caves are women. They assert that since childhood they have been brought to the Life-Giving Spring to fetch holy water along with their mothers: "[i]t has always been like this", they say. This demonstrates, in other words, the way Greek children are socialised, but also the problem with regard to my questions about how old a custom is. Greek informants do not necessarily always think, or "see", in a "European historical linear" way, but have their own, very often local history. The undated newspaper cutting, framed and glazed, which hangs in the cave-church dedicated to the Panagia Chrysospēliōtissa gives a description of divine help and the finding of the icon in connection with the assault of the Goths in 395 CE. This is a

common causal connection in Greece in periods of conflict, such as rebellions and the fight for liberation from Turkish rule, as illustrated by Agia Pelagia and the “Tinos legend”, but also in other stories from more recent times when the nation has been threatened. It is also an interesting parallel to several relevant sources from antiquity, as already stated. The point of mentioning it here is, however, that when I ask my informant, Panagiotis, when and where the article hanging in the Chrysospēliōtissa cave was published, because as a researcher I have to produce documents in support of the information I give, the discouraging answer he gives is that he does “not remember where” he “found it, only that it is some years old”. He “found [that is, read] it some years ago”, “the year I was on Tinos during the Panagia” [that is, 15 August 1989]. In addition to this example of informants’ dating of an event, however, we see the particular interpretation my Athenian informants give to the article, since they recount the legend described in the article in their own way, which means that they emphasise the relationship between the pagans and the Christians and the magical power of the icon; namely, they say that the icon was brought to the cave when people who did not believe in Christianity were present. Moreover, it should be mentioned that I have always regarded the two caves as caves, though my informants always refer to them as churches. They are concerned with the Christian religion and do not seem to be interested in a possible connection with pre-Christian antiquity. Through their explanations for all of the wonders and miracles they connect with diverse icons and other symbols in the cave, they present in many ways a kind of static perception of time without movement, which involves an orientation towards the past in the form of primordial Christianity. Here we see how Greek history, linked to popular religiosity, becomes situated beyond time, and is a parallel to both the cyclical time associated with religious rituals which follow the agricultural calendar and the mentioned “frozen” history, which is similarly mythical.

One may agree with Klaus Roth, who on the basis of his fieldwork experiences in the Balkan region warns against encouraging this third aspect of time, the so-called “frozen” conception of time, “liminal” time or “dreamtime”, which shows the significance of folklore for national liberation and national identity or produces a mythical past.<sup>62</sup> Roth is obviously correct, as evidenced by recent years’ events and the situation in

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<sup>62</sup> Roth 1994. See also Håland 2011b, 2014: Ch. 9, 2017: Ch. 2 for discussion of history/histories. In this context it is relevant to refer to Bea Vidacs’ (University of Pécs), paper, “Religion and Nationalism: The Holy Crown of Hungary”, presented at the Conference, *Religion and Nation(alism): Entanglements, Tensions, Conflicts*, University of Tartu, Estonia, 10–11 November 2016.

the Balkans, but there is no getting away from the fact that this form of time actually exists and it is necessary to be aware of its existence if one is to obtain an understanding of what actually happens in the Balkans, like in many other places.

The significance of myths and legends is important when one attempts to reconstruct people's history. One especially experiences this when working on festivals. Although the Greeks in general cannot be classified as people lacking a written language, where the social history is handed down through the generations (although, according to most scholars, it is only a matter of a few generations) in the form of narratives or legends, it is orality that one encounters among informants today. A great many of the elements linked to the festivals that have been described are related precisely to such a transmission, or—especially in the contemporary context—a combination of the two, since it often can be a problem to separate oral from written tradition, such as when a written pamphlet is reproduced to other pilgrims through people's oral information after reading it, as on Tinos, where all the employees of the church know it by heart. One must be mindful of who wrote down myths and why, and at the same time, it is crucial to realise that myths can tolerate almost all kinds of treatment except historians' indifference or meticulousness. The re-creation or adaptation of the myths is both accepted and very important to the continuity of the culture.<sup>63</sup> The importance of myths and legends, especially as regards the socialisation of children, is seen in the Tinos legend, the story about Agios Charalampos' appearance on Tauros, the Anastenarides' oldest (collective) memories from Kōsti, and the account from the Akropolis caves.

In antiquity, we encounter the cyclical time which is usual in agricultural societies, but also mythical time, which is a variation on what has been categorised as so-called "point in time" in contrast to "linear time", as can be understood from Pausanias' presentation of his accounts when he travels around and tells stories connected with a special geographical point or area, be that a cave or a monument. Here, places are

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<sup>63</sup> I owe this argument to Fann 1991: 352. See also Finnegan 1990: 137, cf. Herzfeld 1990: 151–172. Despite many important points, one should nuance Stewart's (1991: 10 f.) assertion that in local religion there is a difference between orality and literacy, since literacy allows an accumulation of details, systematisation, etc., which is reflected in the worldview because literacy allows a different way of thinking than orality. See Barber/Barber 2004, cf. Goody 1993, for the complex relationship between orality and literacy. Moreover, see, e.g., Finnegan 1990: 131 ff., cf. Milman Parry's findings re heroic poetry, see also Lord 1977: 71–80; Caraveli 1982.

combined with deities, persons and events. They do not follow a linear development or sequence, and the presentation seems to have more in common with that of “frozen” or cyclical time. We also encounter the significance of myths, legends, and socialisation in several of Pausanias’ accounts, for instance, when he deals with Phigalia in Arkadia.<sup>64</sup> When comparing his description with the contemporary Greek context, such or similar accounts have become practically “normal fare”—or quite usual—for any fieldworker. The sanctuary dedicated to Eurynome was only open once a year, on the feast day.<sup>65</sup> Consequently Pausanias was never inside and never saw the xoanon or wooden statue of the Goddess, and can only tell about it from his informants’ descriptions. Today as well, many sanctuaries are only open on the feast day, and there may be different reasons for this. Pausanias’ description of various informants’ accounts of a different statue of a Goddess (the statue of the Black Demeter) that neither he nor they have seen<sup>66</sup> can be compared with the account from the village of Maratea in southern Italy, where everyone bowed and showed reverence in a specific place inside the church previously occupied by a statue of the Madonna. Many persons did not know that the statue had been there formerly; they bowed because their mothers had done so when they were children. In Greece it is also the case that the believers do not always know why they do what they do; for instance, everyone kisses the glass top above the holy skull of Agia Pelagia (Figure 89). It rests in a marble lectern in the church dedicated to her up in the Monastery of Kekhrovouno dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia, where she lived and had her visions. When they kiss the lid of the shrine, they are actually kissing her head, because it is her head that is inside the shrine. However, not all of them know that; they are just kissing the lid (and thus her head) because that is what everyone else does. This is also the case with many other rituals, such as the fetching of holy earth on Tinos, the kissing of the silver lid covering the hole where the miraculous icon was found, and the icon resting in a lectern next to it. When someone does this, the woman who follows of course does the same, and so on. I have observed similar rituals several times: if one pilgrim does something very pious, the next does not want to seem inferior, so he or she does the same, and may add gestures that are even more pious.

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<sup>64</sup> Paus. 8.41 f.

<sup>65</sup> Paus. 8.41,5 f.

<sup>66</sup> Paus. 8.42,12 f. The wooden image of the Black Demeter depicted her with the head and hair of a horse: Paus. 8.42,1-4.





Figure 89. People venerating Agia Pelagia's head in her church, Monastery of Kekhrovouno, Tinos, 23 July 2012.

Then, if there is no one immediately following, the third, arriving some minutes later, may only kiss the icon and pay no attention to the lid at all. While it could of course be that the third person is not quite so knowledgeable about the stories relating to the symbols, a pattern of imitation nevertheless suggests itself. This does not make people stupid or less religious. One has to accept that all informants do not have the same criteria of truth; for some it is sufficient to know that it is "holy", and that does not mean that they are easily taken in and want to be defrauded. A more "privileged" and popular version from local informants' description of a legend or myth, as Pausanias indicates, is therefore the same as a fieldworker often experiences today. In this case, ordinary people do not know about the statue that is said to have formerly been inside the cave where they perform sacrifice once a year, with the exception of one person, the oldest male inhabitant of the place.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Paus. 8.42,11-13, see also 8.42,1-7 and 11 f. re the statue/cave/dreams and vision/annual sacrifice.



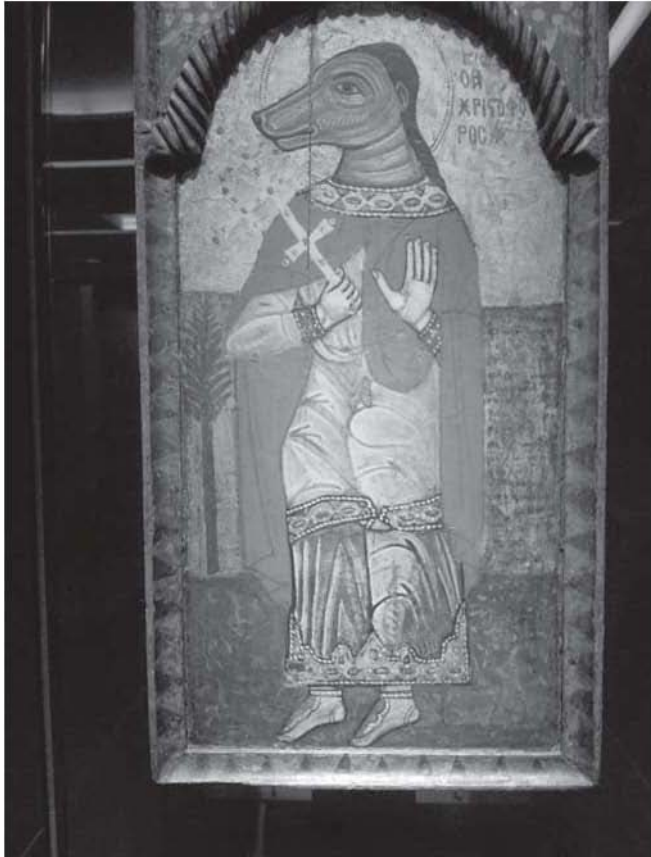


Figure 90. Agios Christopher Doghead (*Kynocephalos*; that is, with a head of a dog). (Downloaded 28.11.2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynocephaly#/media/File:Saint\\_christopher\\_cynocephalus.gif](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynocephaly#/media/File:Saint_christopher_cynocephalus.gif))

If we compare Pausanias' descriptions with contemporary circumstances, the descriptions of Demeter and Eurynome, respectively, are not "outlandish", as claimed by N. Robertson,<sup>68</sup> but completely in line with

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<sup>68</sup> Robertson 1992: 236. Eurynome: Paus. 8.41,6: Her *xoanon* was a wooden statue bound in golden chains, depicting a woman's upper body and the lower body of a fish. Demeter: 8.42,4, cf. *supra*. In spite of Robertson's, important points re the way in which Pausanias in his openness tells us the facts (Robertson 1992: 235-

modern parallels, such as the contemporary Panagia *Gorgona*, the All-Holy Gorgon, who on an icon might be depicted as riding a devouring sea-monster. Likewise, the animal mask reappears in the Kalogeros ritual, although many religious folklorists would emphasise its absence today,<sup>69</sup> not because it is “outlandish”, but because they think it is pagan. And how then, should one explain Agios Christopher Doghead (*Kynocephalos*; that is, with a head of a dog) (Figure 90)?<sup>70</sup>

In Greece it has not been the same as it is in southern Italy, where the rule is that priests and people stick together as regards maintaining the popular rituals.<sup>71</sup> Although the priest who officiated at the liturgy in the Akropolis cave was a possible exception, based on my own experiences, the arrangements had been made for him to be there in 1992, since he was asked based on positive experiences the previous year. In 1990, the man who usually organises the festival in Koimēsē was in mourning because a family member had died, and no one could take over from him. What happened was that a young girl dressed herself up. This was unprecedented, because it is always two men (the bride is a man disguised as a woman) who should play the couple to be married, but thanks to the young girl, the ritual was actually performed. Despite the strong position of the tradition, many nonetheless fear that rituals such as the one celebrated in Koimēsē and other places are in the process of dying out. Therefore, in recent years many folkloristic societies have been organised, such as the one we encounter in Agia Elenē. Unfortunately, problems may arise between these societies and the people who actually perform the rituals, as seen in Melikē. This concerns antagonisms between the public versus the private or domestic, or the state and local society, rich and poor, men and women, and those with and those without an (often university) education. On the other hand, it is wrong to maintain that the rituals are reserved for the poor and marginal, since students coming from Thessaloniki and highly-educated people, such as the medical doctor Tasos, the leader of the Anastenarides in Agia Elenē, are among the members of the group. Nonetheless, problems arise, such as concerning the folkloristic society,

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238), he fails to take into account many factors in his description of Pausanias' source re his assertion about readers who are easily taken in, who want to be defrauded, etc., cf. the commentary supra re what the different performers can make of a ritual.

<sup>69</sup> E.g., Michaël-Dede, cf. Ch. 3 supra. For Panagia *Gorgona*, see Vermeule 1981: Fig. 20.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart 1991: 154-156 Fig. 20.

<sup>71</sup> See, though, supra for the current changes in Greece, generally due to the fact that the priests are better educated, cf. also Håland 2014.

the “Thracians” and the “Melikēotes” in Melikē, and the disagreements within the group of celebrants in Agia Elenē in 1992.<sup>72</sup> It has also been maintained that it is thanks to the protection of folklorists and tourist magnates that the Anastenaria festival is celebrated in public today.

Therefore we encounter antagonisms between the various population groups in this multi-ethnic geographical region. How does the mentioned emigration and immigration and the entire population mixing affect the festivals today? What can this tell us about similar conditions formerly, and can it perhaps say something about the time to come after us? It might perhaps be easy to say that people bring with them their own traditions and everything becomes a single big mixture, and it is just as hard to assert something like that based on a description illustrating the conflicts between the different groups. It is probably that the similarities and the common customs become merged over time and new elements may be added; if that was not the case, one would not be able to demonstrate a similar mechanism of solving conflicts in Homer and among the modern Kabyles, or discover that a dance brought by immigrants from Cappadocia gains popularity upon teaching it to others in Athens.<sup>73</sup> Although an historian is in no way a futurologist, an episode from the day after the Anastenaria festival in Agia Elenē in 1992 may perhaps indicate something about how an “immigrated cult” is—or can be—spread. Some of the young “Macedonian” boys in the village sat at their own regular or “Macedonian kapheneio” (where the “Thracians” usually never set foot) and discussed the rituals of the previous days passionately, including the icons and the other villages. Generally, those who oppose the Anastenaria by not accepting and therefore not welcoming the Anastenarides pull down the curtains or do not open their doors when the members of the group go round and bless the houses of the village. With all the attention and media focus the ritual is assigned today, the opposite might happen: “The Others” create their own festival or begin to come to the konaki in order to participate in the ritual, if they dare, and if there is room for them among the group, as there should be, although it is their own “ancestors” who are celebrated.<sup>74</sup> This is the case, for instance, in Monokklēsia, where an immigrant woman from Cyprus who has settled in the village is an equally enthusiastic festival participant as the descendants of those who once came from Petra. She is also a member of the feast-committee. Nevertheless, her

<sup>72</sup> See moreover Cowan 1988: 250–257 for the society in Merio. Cf. Finrud Di Tota 1981a and 1981b for criticism of the view that the rituals (certainly in southern Italy, but see also Dubisch 1995) are reserved for the poor and marginal.

<sup>73</sup> See infra, also for the mechanism of solving conflicts.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. nonetheless infra.

participation may, of course, be due to the fact that she is in the same situation as them, and therefore is more easily accepted. The conflicts of recent years should have demonstrated that it can in no way be contested that the Balkan region is multi-ethnic. The problem of ethnicity and identity are, however, very complicated, and, as already mentioned,<sup>75</sup> the usual consideration of the problem, based on recent social-scientific theories of nationalism, should be nuanced when this geographical region is examined. One may refer to the problematic in Agia Elenē, where the “refugees”, “immigrants” or “Thracians”, as the “native” people, the “Macedonians”, often call them, do not constitute a different ethnic group,<sup>76</sup> even if they sometimes do for the “indigenous”, who regard themselves as the “locals” (those who always have lived here) contra the “Thracians”, even if the Greek identity of the latter was in fact the very reason their ancestors arrived in the village in the 1920s. This is not straightforward, however, since the latter also regard themselves first and foremost as “Kōstilides”, celebrating their “Kōstilidian” community and identity through the Anastenaria and regarding other villagers as “outsiders” or strangers (“xenoi”) contra “insiders” or our own people (“dikoi mas”). Danforth has also drawn attention to the fact that ethnic identity is in essence a past-oriented form of identity.<sup>77</sup> However, I can only regret that I do not have the opportunity to discuss the complex problem ethnicity constitutes in this context to the extent that might have been desirable. I have formerly touched on the problematic in several contexts regarding how the different groupings within a single village such as Melikē see themselves and each other in various situations.<sup>78</sup> A problem when working on the village level is that there are so many different groupings. Greeks and Turks are two different ethnic groups, although we might think them are similar (clothing, dances, food, and so on). When people themselves think they are different, as people do in the Balkans and also at the village level, a region becomes multi-ethnic.<sup>79</sup>

The condescending attitude one encounters between the different population groups in Melikē and Agia Elenē, is also found in Koimēsē where many of the villagers are supposedly descendants of immigrants from the northern part of Epirus, Southern Albania, and therefore

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. supra this chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Danforth 1995: 13, see also Danforth 1989: 65.

<sup>77</sup> Danforth 1989: 171n.1. See also supra this chapter re the Kōstilides, celebrating their Kōstilidian identity.

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., Håland 2017: Ch. 4.

<sup>79</sup> See Hastrup/Ovesen 1985: 191 f. for the problematic of ethnicity. See also Vlassopoulos 2015 for a discussion of ethnicity in antiquity.



considered to be Albanians by many. According to Michaël-Dede, for instance, there are many Albanians in the village. This is denied by the people themselves. For the population of Koimēsē it is very important to emphasise that they are Greeks from this place (that is, “from here”), and not Albanians. In addition, those who usually speak Macedonian at home amongst themselves are eager to emphasise their Greekness. In Melikē and Agia Elenē, the “immigrants”, the “Thracians” or “Kōstilides”, constitute the richest groups in the villages, and in the latter village they are also the most influential political group. In Melikē, the “Thracians” are opposed to the “Melikēotes”; that is, the descendant of Greeks who “have always lived here”. The Melikēotes consider themselves to be Greeks and “indigenous inhabitants” versus the “Thracians”. In other words, the “Greeks who came home” have not been entirely accepted as Greeks by their “Greek” neighbours up till now, at the same time that they regard themselves as “Kōstilides”. In the various villages, the different groups of people live in separate neighbourhoods, and preferably do not venture into the others’ areas. Since the Thracians have only lived in the region since the 1920s, those I spoke with in 1992, “that is, the second and third-generation” Thracians, also have to emphasise their Greekness. Officially, the village is Greek, but we learn something else when we speak with people, as in Agia Elenē. According to a kiosk owner in that village, who is “Macedonian”, the Thracians are lazy and they came late. In 1992, the only survivor of those who originally came from Kōsti is very happy when he has the opportunity to speak Turkish. Here the “newcomers” refer to the “Macedonians”, who lived in the village before the population exchanges, as “blacks” or “gypsies”, since many of them are dark-skinned. People in Koimēsē use the same designation for the dark-skinned people in the village of Flambouro, further south. In fact, these are permanent-resident Romani-speaking gypsies, and in many ways we encounter a parallel to the antagonisms which get stirred up on Tinos during the festival. Might this shed light on the relationship between immigrated Greeks who considered themselves as “autochthonous” and the Pelasgians who already lived there? The Flambouro gypsy musicians are, however, as popular during the festivals of the other Greeks as diverse barbarians are said to have been in ancient Athens.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> See also Watts 1988: 16 f. The topic was also supposed to be dealt with by Gail Holst-Warhaft in the project *Gender, Lament, and the Orient in Greek and Eastern Mediterranean Thought*. According to Vemund Aarbakke (Aristotelion University of Thessaloniki), “Melikē has always been Greek”. Personal communication based on his archival researches. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 4 for discussion.



In northern Greece in 1992, people were concerned with all the runaway Albanians who were being converted to Orthodoxy at that time, when there were reports of mass-baptism in Thessaloniki. In connection with these antagonisms, I might mention an experience I had in one of the churches in Melikē: I am asked by an older woman whether I am Albanian. Wide-eyed she tells me that “they are not baptised and they cannot cross themselves [make the sign of the cross]”. Next, I must prove that I can make the sign of the cross (“since all Christians can do that”) and am therefore not a runaway pagan Albanian (that is, Muslim)! She assures me that they are now pouring into Greece and want to be baptised. I meet with similar comments quite often up here in the north. In the church dedicated to Agia Anna in the village of Flambouro, I am asked by the older women of the village if we have churches where I come from. On other occasions one encounters Greeks who regard Protestantism to be pagan, because the Protestants protest against Christianity itself, while others think that this is something closer to the Orthodox belief because they protest against the Pope.

The legend from Agia Paraskeuē which emphasises the Turks versus the Christians is quite common in Greece and southern Italy, among other places. Here, the Turks are always pirates or bandits, and usually they are very dark-skinned.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, the action of the Turk on Lesbos testifies to the fact that the religious practice and the actual saint were known to him. It is not impossible that he himself has worshipped the same saint, albeit perhaps a Muslim variant thereof, as this has been quite usual on both sides, since “shared saints” is a common phenomenon in this region. We encounter this intermingling both through language and rite as regards the “kourmpania”, which is also common among Albanians in Attica. One may ask what is borrowed from whom, since we encounter the Turkish concept (cf. *kurban*) simultaneously with a mixture of the Greek and Turkish (or or. Hebrew) concept.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, Agios Charalampos’ tomb is displayed in modern Turkey. When people lived in the same village, as is often the case in the northeast, they performed the same rituals, although the religious ideology was different. Just as the Muslims in the village went on pilgrimage, *hajj*, to Mecca, the Christian Orthodox went to Jerusalem, called it *hajj*, and added it to the name; for instance, the

<sup>81</sup> According to Karita (n.d.), however, the Greeks were often pirates, as many had only two alternatives in the late 1700s: either one became a pirate or one became a monk, and one might also become a monk after having been a pirate in one’s younger days.

<sup>82</sup> See Ch. 3 supra. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 3. See also Hristov 2016, on its importance in other places in the Balkans.

family name *Chatzipapas* signifies a Christian priest who has been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The intermingling of several “cultural levels” is especially materialised through the obscene carnival figures or masquerades, where the decoration carried on the hats is generally lent by the church, which is exploited by the popular culture in that way, but the popular culture also employs what is often denoted as “Oriental” and “Turkish” elements, concretised through the name of the carnival figures, such as in Flambouro.<sup>83</sup>

Conflicts within the Anastenarides in the town of Langadas caused Sōtērios Liouros to bring the family icon with him to Agia Elenē in 1992, but people struggle with problems and conflicts in Agia Elenē as well. Similar conflicts were also present at the Kalogeros festival in Melikē, both during the celebration in general and during the final meal in their *konaki*. Many conflicts emerge or are intensified through precisely such festive events. By and large, the disagreements between population groups, unions, groups of festival participants, and festival organisers are a great problem in Greece. We encounter this both internally during the Kalogeros and “externally” between the Kōstilides and the Melikēotes, but also in Agia Elenē and Langadas, both internally and externally. We experience another variant through the “cultural collisions” on Tinos and during the Easter celebrations in Olympos. The disagreements have generally been referred to as “the Greek individualism”, despite the fact that it is not only a Greek phenomenon, but applies throughout the Balkans, as has been unequivocally documented in recent years.

On the other hand, people would be offended if someone questioned their Christianity, while at the same time they are very proud of their rituals, which are “survivals” from the ancient Greek culture, according to their own statements. The fact is that there are many conflicts here. They exist not only among different population groups, rulers and subjects, ecclesiastics and laity, men and women, between generations, or town and countryside, but also within an individual person, consciously or unconsciously. It is therefore important to be aware of an individual’s different roles.

Thus, in spite of cultural diffusion, influence, and the like, for instance, in connection with the cult on modern Lesbos, the legend of Babo, or the fire dance in Greek Macedonia, it is problematic to describe popular life in the Balkans, especially because the culture is employed in the service of the national ideology, although “the great (Greek) idea” has officially

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<sup>83</sup> Ch. 3 *supra*.

ended.<sup>84</sup> As regards the “great idea”, one rarely encounters older informants who talk about Istanbul, as most people use quite naturally the term *Kōnstantinople* or simply *η Πολη* (“the Town”), which demonstrates the clear cohesion between Orthodoxy and nationalism.<sup>85</sup> Related to this are the motives behind the Greek state’s work collecting customs, costumes and dances among the Sarakatsani shepherds, in the Epirus area, at the border with Albania, or in other northern border regions, such as in Thrace, or research on Greek customs from regions formerly populated by Greek Orthodox, such as Cappadocia, for instance, in the form of a dance project at the Dora Stratou Dance Theatre in Athens. This is true not only of Greece, but also modern Turkey and Bulgaria, who see themselves as Perikles’ successors, and the school books are rewritten so that they suit the ideology of the new nation-states.<sup>86</sup> We encounter examples of how rivaling factions compete for the historical truth. A similar variant is the struggle for power between the religious creativity of the ordinary people and the Church and its priesthood’s need for controlling the popular ideas and memories of the same people.<sup>87</sup>

In 1992, the carnival in Koimēsē was also an excellent opportunity for the political ideology to direct people’s attention to the highly topical “Macedonian problem” with pointed references including a typically Greek commentary, likewise on the local level. That the theme has been highly controversial within contemporary research is attested to by the so-called “Anastasia Karakasidou case”. Karakasidou’s doctoral dissertation discusses how the Greek nation-state has politicised the Greek-Macedonian culture and denied the Slavic-speaking population their own ethnic identity. The dissertation clarifies how some inhabitants in Greek Macedonia consider themselves to be more Slavic than Greek, more related to the population in the Macedonian Republic on the other side of

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<sup>84</sup> See Håland 2017: Ch. 2 f., 6, and cf., e.g., the descriptions in the “survivalists” Megas 1952; Gault Antoniadēs 1954, and, e.g., Iossifoglou Kyriakopoulou 1990; Dracoulidēs 1962 vs. Danforth 1984 as well as the discussion between Håland 1994 and Schwartz 1994, e.g. See also Håland 1993b.

<sup>85</sup> Cf., e.g., Politēs 1994 Vol. 1: 20-25 and Vol. 2: 19-42.

<sup>86</sup> Personal information from Marit Stålesen, who wrote her M.A. thesis in history on Turkish nationalism as it expresses itself through school books. In this context, one may mention an ongoing research project on the Sarakatsani transhumant shepherds in which researchers from Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia are involved, but no Greeks, despite the fact that most of the Sarakatsani were native Greeks and today the majority live in the actual country, which was also the place they usually stayed during the winter.

<sup>87</sup> Pina-Cabral 1992: 45-60. Blok 1992: 121-126. Cf. supra and infra for what is needed in order to make the mutual contract real.

the border that was formerly part of Yugoslavia. This becomes problematic, partly because many Greeks are afraid that the new republic plans to advance a claim to the Greek province of the same name. She published some of her research results in an article, "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia" in *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* in 1993, which created heated debate, especially among three Greek researchers in the journal *Balkan Studies*, and she replied to this in an extended article in the same journal the following year.<sup>88</sup> When she presented her research results, she received several death threats from Greek nationalists. Both she and Michael Herzfeld, who has been a valuable spokesperson for her work, had to turn to police protection, fearing Greek right-wing extremists in the USA. Cambridge University Press had agreed to publish the book based on her dissertation, but as a result of threats of violent retaliation against employees at Cambridge University Press' Athens office, the publisher decided not to publish the book in November 1995. This decision led Herzfeld to resign from the editorial board at Cambridge University Press, because he thought the publisher had infringed on academic freedom.<sup>89</sup> Although one may assert that the problem has been solved now, approximately twenty-five years after the worst part of the crisis, in 2007, one could find a Macedonian folklorist at an international conference handing out tourist brochures to other participants, in which Macedonia—a country totally without a coastal strip—is presented surrounded by blue sea, beaches, and the Vergina Sun (Star of Vergina) under the heading "Cradle of Culture". Apart from the fact that it concerns a different country, the brochure is almost a copy of similar Greek brochures.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Karakasiōu 1994: 113-146 vs. Zahariadis 1993: 301-307; Goumaris 1993: 309-214; Hatzidimitrou 1993: 315-351. See Karakasiōu 1993: 1-28 for the article which started the debate.

<sup>89</sup> See *supra* and *infra* for more peaceful variants of the same problem. Karakasiōu's book, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, was published by Chicago University Press, 1997.

<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, Dionysos is, for example, also of interest in the Russian context, since the following conference was arranged 12-15 May 2005 in Gurzuf on the topic of *Dionysos-Bakch-Bachus in Russian and World Culture*, organised by the Crimean Centre of Humanistic Research. The conference only included participants from Russia, Ukraine and Poland. See also Lahti 2018 on the dithyramb in the Russian context. Cf. also n. 86 *supra* re the research project on the Sarakatsani transhumant shepherds in which Greeks are not involved. See n. 204 Ch. 4 and n.9 *supra* this chapter re the present situation between Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia.

The fact is, however, that many rituals encountered in Greece, for instance, during the Easter season celebrations in Olympos are also celebrated in Bulgaria, while Greek, Bulgarian and Macedonian carnival rituals are strikingly similar.<sup>91</sup> Today the Anastenaria festival is celebrated both in Greek Macedonia by the descendants of immigrants who fled to Greece from the village of Kōsti in eastern Thrace after the Balkan Wars of 1914, when the area they lived in came under Bulgarian rule, and by the Bulgarian population of Kōsti. Russian scholars are concerned with showing that the ritual is Slavic based on etymological facts, Greek scholars use other etymological facts to demonstrate that it is Greek, and the goal of many of them, here as in other instances, has generally been to show the neighbours' imitation of Greek customs that can be traced back to antiquity. The Greeks who perform the ritual, for their part, might claim that the Bulgarians have imitated their custom: "The Bulgarians have taken after us", people say, but this is something they maintain concerning all of the festivals here in the north that are celebrated across the many national boundaries, and in reality, the geographical region in which the festivals are celebrated has always been multi-ethnic. Nor is it quite correct to talk about a Balkan versus a Mediterranean culture, as many do. A. J. B. Wace, for instance, claimed about a hundred years ago that the carnival customs also discussed here belonged to the north; that is, they are of northern or Balkan origin and not necessarily Greek.<sup>92</sup> This view is probably due to the fact that he traveled around in the north and the wish, which he shared with his contemporary researchers, to see Dionysos as a newcomer from the north. This was later refuted, since today we know that he was already worshipped in Greece during the Mycenaean period. The fact is that many elements, such as the customs performed during the festival dedicated to Agios Lazaros, other rituals, and wedding rituals in general, especially the significance of the wedding pole and the wedding meal, are found both in the north and in the south. Although the wedding pole with few exceptions is not found on the islands, the wedding meal as well as the festival dedicated to Agios Lazaros are present on both Karpathos and Crete. One may also mention the similarities in music and, for instance, Greek dances from Cappadocia as well as the southern Black Sea (or Pontic) region and the modern Turkish dances (Figure 91).<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> For carnival, see, e.g., Thrakiōtēs 1991; Georgieva 1980. See also *infra*.

<sup>92</sup> Wace 1912-1913: 248-265.

<sup>93</sup> Håland 1993b: 57; Stratou 1996: Figs. 85 f. and cf. Richter 1977: Fig. 291 for an ancient variant. Cf. *supra* and Athanassakis 1976: 98 f.; Alexakēs 1990: 26 f., see also 26 ff. for wedding customs, cf. Lockwood 1974: 253-269. Papamichael-Koutroubas 1980 and 1981: Symi, cf. 1975, re versions in Thessaly, cf. Michael-





Figure 91. Performing a Pontic dance at the Dora Sratou Dance Theatre, Athens, August 2006.

Burial rituals are also very similar. This can be illustrated by the way the significance of burial customs has become apparent repeatedly throughout history, most recently during the Balkan War in the 1990s and its aftermath.<sup>94</sup> Everyone will naturally enough claim to be the originators of the customs. This also becomes apparent in the Babo festival, which is celebrated in Bulgaria as well.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, we must be aware of the fact that much of what one encounters here is not unique to Greece, but exists in numerous places, not only in the Balkans, but in the entire Mediterranean region. In the same geographical region, similar fertility rituals are performed, such as an annual blood sacrifice in order to ensure the well-being of the people, the soil and the animals from which they make their living; in other words, to secure the food supply. As we have seen, many of the rituals are strongly reminiscent of similar rituals

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Dede 1991: 30, both there and in the north, cf. also Brillante 2017 on this latter aspect in antiquity.

<sup>94</sup> See *infra*. Moreover, see, e.g., Håland 2014; Alexiou 1974. Cf. Blum/Blum 1970: Ch. 22 for parallels in the Mediterranean region in general, see also Horden/Purcell 2008; Harris 2005 on this topic.

<sup>95</sup> Lodge 1947: 83–85, see also Dracoulides 1962: 107, 116 f.

celebrated in the ancient culture, and today they are re-encountered in the popular culture of countries with Greek Orthodox, Catholic, and, until recently, official communist and official Islamic ideologies. What nonetheless makes the Greek rituals especially interesting is that one often can trace them back to the source material of the ancient culture via Byzantine sources, often in the form of Greek men's statements, not only about women and the common people, but also about their neighbours, such as Thracians or other barbarians further east or south.<sup>96</sup>

According to David Gilmore, conflicts in groups (ritual aggression during carnival) may have unifying effects.<sup>97</sup> However, the examined Greek circumstances seem to testify to the opposite, at least at first sight. This is probably due to the fact that, in this context, it is not a matter of different classes, but perhaps rather populations in a nation-state that, despite its more than 180 years of history, continues to consolidate groups "coming home" as a result of the collapse of communism in the region, be that Pontian Greeks or Greek Albanians. Nevertheless, their worldviews, basic values and norms are similar, although they might have been living under different official political and/or religious ideologies for generations. This is mainly due to the fact that the mentioned ideologies are also subject to common cultural patterns linked to basic value systems transcending the boundaries of contemporary nation-states (where the religious ideologies have indeed proven themselves more stable than the political ones) as well as the ancient boundaries between Greeks and barbarians. This may, for example, be illustrated by the importance of a central element in Balkan and other southeastern European/Mediterranean cultures, the meaning that is assigned to the death cult, both earlier and today. Not long ago, the Serbians' eagerness to dig up their deceased and bring their bones with them while evacuating from Sarajevo in a panic in January 1996 was described as "the Serbians' dramatic and macabre demonstration that any cohabitation with Muslims is impossible". However, this northern European description of "barbarian customs", which emphasises northern European ethnocentrism and Orientalism in a time "when the world is steadily getting smaller", and probably contributes to upholding and creating enemy images instead of greater cultural understanding, may also be used as the basis for telling us

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<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of the problem, see also Håland 1993b, cf. 1993c and 1994, the latter being a reply to Schwartz 1994. See also Stolyarova and Enikeeva 2016: 252 for Tatarstan blood sacrifices to the earth with are strikingly similar to Greek.

<sup>97</sup> Gilmore 1975: 331-349.

something more.<sup>98</sup> The same is evident in the Greeks' flight from the Turks:

[t]he whole village community is responsible for...the bones of their ancestors, on which their good fortune is thought to depend...In the case of sudden evacuation of a village, the bones are...dug up...and taken with them to help found a new settlement.<sup>99</sup>

Ancient people such as the Greeks, the Persians and the Jews were also dependent on the bones of their ancestors in order to fight the enemy. Following a command from Delphi, for instance, Orestes' bones were transported from Tegea to Sparta, and Theseus' from Skyros to Athens in order to fight their respective enemies.<sup>100</sup>

The point of the Serbians' panicked exhumation of their deceased in order to bring them with them is that the Bosnians are potential desecrators of tombs. If they manage to violate the graves, they become a parallel to the Persians' former destruction of the Athenian Akropolis, where the tomb of Erekhtheus was found.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, since the living depend on the dead, it is better to bring them along and rebury them than to expose them to be scattered around and thus become prey for birds and an echo of Polyneikes, whom Kreon in Sophokles' play *Antigone* left lying without grave or lament.<sup>102</sup> The right to be buried was also an unwritten law and thereby a fundamental right in ancient society, although it was not always carried out in practical life, as we learn from *Antigone* and Plato's suggested treatment of criminals: to throw them outside the city walls without burial. Other punishments existed as well, and were well-known in the ancient world.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> It is worth noting how news reports are very often covered by people lacking knowledge of the culture about which they write, as demonstrated by Stein Viksveen's reportage in the Norwegian journal *Bergens Tidende*, 25.01.1996, from which the above quotation is taken (my translation). A consequence of the war is encountered, for instance, in the reportage from Søren Holm-Hansen in *Bergens Tidende*, 03.04.2007, when the ancestral tombs of the Serbs were dug up in Kosovo to be reburied in Serbia.

<sup>99</sup> Alexiou 1974: 48.

<sup>100</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 36.1-2; Hdt. 1.67,2-4. Persians: Aesch. *Pers.* 405. Jews: Exod. 13:19. See also Håland 2014: Ch. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Hdt. 8.53 ff.

<sup>102</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 872-875.

<sup>103</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 21-39, cf. 77, 745, 749, 872-875; Pl. *Leg.* 960b.115, 854d, cf. 909c, Lys. 12.21, 12.96, 12.88, see also Hdt. 1.67 f., 70 f.; Thuc. 1.126 f. for other

The help of the deceased ancestors could be used in the service of conquest, such as when the Spartans got hold of the bones of the hero Orestes in order to conquer the Peloponnese.<sup>104</sup> Because the Athenians believed that Theseus had helped them against the Persians, they dug up his bones on the island of Skyros and reburied him in the midst of Athens, where a cult was dedicated to him.<sup>105</sup> We have a parallel to this logic from the contemporary Balkans:

[●]n 18 June 1987, a Serbian held a speech on a plain in Kosovo called Kosovo Polje, the Field of Blackbirds. “They will never do this towards you again”, he promised the assembly. “Never again shall anyone inflict a defeat on you.”

The speaker was Slobodan Milošević. In 1988, one year after he held the speech, the coffin of defeated Serbian commander Knez Lazar was carried on a pilgrimage through every village in Serbia followed by weeping and mourning people, 600 years after Lazar’s defeat at Kosovo Polje in 1389.<sup>106</sup>

The death cult has traditionally been, and still is, very important in this geographical region. Since all of the peoples involved honour their deceased, they essentially have the same custom. It is perhaps because they know how they can hit hardest that such conflicts are so bloody. Such a fact was already reflected upon by Thukydides in his treatment of a relationship which traditionally has been considered to be much closer than that between the Greek poleis and the Persians during the Persian Wars, the war between Sparta and Athens, in which all the Hellenes became involved on one side or the other.<sup>107</sup> But what we encounter here are fundamental cultural patterns which are of the greatest importance today as well, not only to all the regional or local participants in the bloody wars that have taken place in the Balkans, but also to all of their neighbours, friend and enemy alike.<sup>108</sup> As regards Thukydides’ treatment of the Hellenes as a homogenous group as opposed to the “Barbarians”, as in connection with an assessment of cultural patterns and customs, such as

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punishments, cf. Vidal-Naquet 1993: 44 f. Cf. Vermeule 1981: 42 f.; Veyne 1983: 67.

<sup>104</sup> Paus. 3.3,7; Hdt. 1.67 f.

<sup>105</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 36.1.

<sup>106</sup> Kjeldstadli 1994: 144 f. (my translation). See also Håland 2004, 2014, esp. Ch. 9 for further parallels.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Thuc. 1.1 f. and 1.23.

<sup>108</sup> The remark re “the regional or local” refers to the local participants; i.e., before NATO’s interference. Cf. *supra* for criticism of Orientalism.

the cult of the dead, one may recall the discussion of the identical and different ethnic groups and their similar customs across national and other ideological boundaries, and the fact that they nonetheless have a common value system. Therefore the first-mentioned of the former conflicts in the region, the Persian Wars, when the Akropolis was ravaged, not only demonstrated the importance of the burial ground of the dead, since it was important then, as is generally the case, to destroy this upon the conquest of a polis. Consequently they destroyed Erekhtheus' tomb, which was located on the Akropolis, but they also destroyed the main symbol of the Athenians, the Akropolis itself.<sup>109</sup> During the conflict they could also incorporate another common custom and symbol, giving the ruler water and earth, which, based on Greek ideology, was regarded as a sign of submission and reserved for eternal deities and others with divine status. This was the honour claimed by the Persian king, which many Greeks refused to fulfil, perhaps because he would then, per definition, become a deity. Nonetheless, many of the poleis did so, both Thessaly and Boeotia, for example, were friendly to the Persians.<sup>110</sup> This demonstrates that they have the same fundamental value system, despite different official ideologies, be they political or religious. Also today, the custom is a central element both in the Church of the Annunciation on Tinos and among Muslims in Istanbul.<sup>111</sup>

Here it is relevant to return to the term *xenos*, which has been presented as an illustration of how the Greeks have tackled their fear of strangers both earlier and today.<sup>112</sup> In practice, however, a *xenos* may be anyone from the neighbour to a foreign power, depending on the context, today as in the past, when the same term signified both a stranger and a guest-friend.<sup>113</sup> In other words, with regard to the distinction between "*dikoi*" (our own) and "*xenoi*" (strangers or foreigners), one should also be familiar with the different levels within the value system as well as the

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<sup>109</sup> See Leach 1986: 32 for the logic. Cf. Vernant 1982c: 9 for the burial ground of the dead and conquest.

<sup>110</sup> *Hdt.* 6.94.

<sup>111</sup> See Ch. 3 *supra*. In this connection it is relevant to refer to Sezim Sezer, "Water and Religious traditions in an Imperial city: Istanbul/Constantinople's *Hagiasmas* and Fountains." Paper presented at the 4th IWHA-Conference, *Water and Civilization: Water and Religion*, Unesco Headquarters, Paris 2005. See also Håland 1993a: 5-19 for a discussion of living, deceased, and "eternal" divine mediators, which is equally relevant to the case under consideration here. See also Håland 2010, 2014.

<sup>112</sup> Ch. 3 *supra*.

<sup>113</sup> *Od.* 1.313, *Il.* 6.215, 224. *Stranger*: 9.270. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 7.



competing values. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that peaceful relations have been as common as warlike ones.<sup>114</sup> Thus there are different values in the Mediterranean area, and the unilateral male honour and shame system one encounters in older anthropologists, including American and British scholars, may demonstrate an incomplete knowledge of the culture about which they write. Campbell's emphasis on the distinction between *dikoi* and *xenoi*—that is the family versus everybody else—may also be considered another way, depending on the context.<sup>115</sup> “*Dikoi*” (our own) may be the closest family, the greater family, ethnic groups within the village or across villages, the village proper, or the greater area. For the immigrants in *Agia Elenē* and *Melikē*, for example, all “non-*Kōstilides*” (that is, “not coming from *Kōsti*”) are *xenoi*; that is, “outsiders” or strangers, while the “*Kōstilides*” are seen as *dikoi mas*; that is, “insiders” or our own people, across the various village boundaries as well, as is apparent in the visits performed during the festival, including the visits to other villages. It depends on with whom and what one measures. There are several competing values within the Greek and the Mediterranean cultural area as well, and, as on the inter-human level, conflict, differences, and paradoxes are as predominant as “coherence and structure”. Therefore one also should nuance Philip F. Esler's emphasising that the concept of individualism is a modern western European phenomenon, and that quarrels and competition do not occur within the Mediterranean family.<sup>116</sup> This is a Mediterranean ideology, which one sees is erroneous when “one enters into people's houses”, where the woman rules. Therefore, during the *Anastenaria* festival in 1992, the dispute between the *Anastenarides* in *Langadas* led *Sōtērios Liouros* to *Agia Elenē*, whereas his brother, *Kōnstantinos*, sided with the competing faction. Hesiod tells us about an ancient parallel, the inheritance dispute between two brothers in a culture in which *Eris*, “Strife”, was institutionalised as the Goddess of discord.<sup>117</sup> The fundamental significance of “*agōn*” (that is, *agōn* or *agōnes*, contests) is related to this as well. We encounter a competitive form of equality (a kind of inverted Norwegian/Danish “*Jante rule*”; that is, the rule in small traditional communities, most members of which are afraid of making themselves conspicuous), according to which the starting point is not the notion that “everyone is as good as me”, but on

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<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Il.* 6.119-236.

<sup>115</sup> Dubisch 1995: 180-183, 187-191, cf. Herzfeld 1986 and 1992a, vs. Campbell 1964, 1966, cf. Esler 1994: 31.

<sup>116</sup> Esler 1994: 22 f., see 24 for individualism.

<sup>117</sup> Hes. *Op.* 9-41.

the contrary, “I am as good as everyone else”.<sup>118</sup> It is also untrue that quarrels and competition only occur among men. It occurs among women as well, and at all ages, as I have experienced myself in several of the villages where I have carried out fieldwork, such as regarding the women in the Greek Macedonian village of Flambouro. This does not exclude the importance of being acknowledged by the group, as Esler also states,<sup>119</sup> and as becomes apparent in a Mediterranean village, where the settlement is “huddled together” as opposed to the prevailing pattern in northern Europe, where the farms are situated far apart. Nonetheless, the “patron” (*patronus*) is a single individual, although, according to the ideology, he might be a *princeps* or a *primus inter pares* (“the first among equals”). On the other hand, the use of common names at baptism is widespread throughout the Mediterranean region, and is a sort of social camouflage and a way of warding off supernatural attacks. The name of the saint is regarded as giving protection, and the lack of individual naming is a form of collective security through uniformity. The logic behind this is the belief that supernatural powers are unable to distinguish between two persons with the same name.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, Pina-Cabral has criticised the studies that focus on the so-called Mediterranean characteristics, which he maintains can be also found in northern Europe.<sup>121</sup> Much of this can be seen in Africa as well, which is the reason for the abundant use I have made of research results from this region. Furthermore, the opinion that characteristics such as the “self” have their origin in the Age of Enlightenment has recently been challenged.<sup>122</sup>

While it is my impression that carnival can intensify conflicts on the village level where the group is heterogenous (Melikē, Agia Elenē), such events as the Babo festival, which is celebrated by Monokklēsia’s population consisting of predominantly—but not only—immigrants from the former village of Petra in Eastern Roumelia or eastern Thrace, can, according to themselves, be a pretext to “place Monokklēsia on the map/agenda”, since they want to emphasise that Greece is more than Athens. In this way this ritual demonstrates how a festival creates a feeling of community against the capital, and is an illustration of Gilmore’s mentioned thesis. On the other hand, many of the 1990s large musters

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<sup>118</sup> Knudsen 1992: 95 f.

<sup>119</sup> Esler 1994: 29. For the women in Flambouro, etc.: Håland 2017: Ch. 1, 4, 6-7. Ch. 6-7 also discuss “agōn”/Eris.

<sup>120</sup> Machin 1983: 112 f.

<sup>121</sup> Pina-Cabral 1989. See also Vanggaard 1969 for an illustration. See moreover Håland 2017: Ch. 2 f., 7.

<sup>122</sup> Golden/Toohey 1997.

(mass rallies/gatherings) demonstrated that there is no problem gathering the Greeks against all kinds of external *xenoi*, whether they are in the north, east or south.<sup>123</sup> This might include a tightly-packed concert hall in Athens in 1992 during the “Seventieth Anniversary of The Great Catastrophe” (that is the catastrophe in Asia Minor of 1922), where folk dances were performed especially from the contested border regions in the north and east—Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus—or a music festival in the same place, where the queen of *rebetiko*, the *rebetisa* Sotiria Bellou, was one of the attractions and there was a large gathering from the municipality and southern suburb of Athens, Nea Smyrni. It could also concern the speech given to the crowd of pilgrims by the Minister of Defence on Tinos in 1996, simultaneously as motorcyclists rode together from Germany to demonstrate against the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus. In this way, it seems that the idea of the nation-state has really been successful.

The context of the modern festivals is different from that of the ancient ones. Even so, the festivals in the ancient polis may have had an integrative purpose, as is also the case today. One may perhaps object to the statement that the modern festivals serve an integrating function, since I have discussed so many conflicts, such as between the local population and immigrants and in relation to the way the gypsies are considered. Modern Greek festivals are, however, both integrative and conflict-creating. Modern Greek authorities mobilise the tradition for the purpose of nation-building, such as on Tinos. Nonetheless, one also encounters the opposite in the way in which the Orthodox Church has pursued different rituals, the Anastenaria, for instance. Here, then, as in other respects, one encounters paradoxes that show how dangerous it can be to provide one-dimensional interpretations. This also concerns the ancient context. For example, festivals in ancient Athens could also create conflicts or bring

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<sup>123</sup> A variant of this was also found in Greece before, during and after the winding up of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games, which was quite different from the one encountered, for instance, in the Norwegian press in the spring and summer of 2004, who generally mocked the slow, incomplete preparations; i.e., half-finished installations in the time before the opening ceremony. Concerns were raised over the preparations of the Games, including delays in construction of the venues of the main Games, and whether the Greeks would at all manage to make this work. The very proud Greeks could rightly celebrate themselves after a well-functioning event: The games were deemed successful with the rising standard of competition amongst nations across the world. One may also mention the economic crisis in 2011/13, where Europe in general and Germany in particular is the major scapegoat for ordinary Greeks. The situation is naturally enough considered differently than it is in Europe.

them to the forefront. This is documented as regards a celebration of the Panathenaia and the Thesmophoria. According to Thukydides, the tyrant Hipparchos was killed because the sister of Harmodius was found unworthy of being basket-bearer during the Panathenaia.<sup>124</sup> This was a violation of family honour, because it was the same as saying that she was not a virgin. Furthermore, a husband's honour was violated during the Thesmophoria: It was when she followed the *ekphora* (funeral procession, cf. Figure 80) at the burial of her mother-in-law that the wife of the Athenian Euphiletos was discovered by Erasthostenes, who followed her and became her lover. It was doubly unprecedented because it occurred during the women's fasting period during the Thesmophoria, when they also should be chaste and abstain from sexual intercourse.<sup>125</sup>

The traditional Orthodox custom on Clean Monday, the first day of Lent, when people ask forgiveness of one another, has its parallel in another form of "settlement", the mock wedding between two "opposing" population groups of the village, the "newcomers", "immigrants" or "Thracians" and "those who have 'always' lived in the village", the "indigenous inhabitants"; that is the "Melikēotes" ("from Melikē") or "the Greeks", through their symbolic union, which takes place at the end of the carnival in Melikē. This is in itself a variant of the common carnival wedding, but here the bride and groom come from each of these two groups: the bride is Thracian and the groom is Melikēotēs. Although they had problems finding a bride in 1992 because none of the Thracian girls wanted to be the bride, which testifies to the importance of the conflict between the two groups at the village level, the point here is that this type of wedding is a variation on a common mechanism of conflict resolution encountered throughout the Mediterranean region. It is also a parallel to the customary view of seeing the bride as a foreigner, the one who comes from outside, whether the wedding is the result of capture by violent means or a more peaceful transaction. There are often weddings between enemies,<sup>126</sup> which is the reason for many distinctive features in the rituals around the transaction. According to Homer, Agamenmon offers a daughter to Achilles to resolve the conflict between them, while Bourdieu tells about a parallel among the modern Kabyles in North Africa.<sup>127</sup> There a way to ending a feud, can be to organise a wedding where bride and groom symbolise the settlement between the involved parties, and in this way lucky marriages can guarantee the continuation of

<sup>124</sup> Thuc. 6.56 f., cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 18.2 f.

<sup>125</sup> Lys. 1.20, cf. 1.8.

<sup>126</sup> Alexakēs 1990: 24n.52.

<sup>127</sup> Bourdieu 1966: 237; *II.* 9.141-148.



the society after a period of crisis.<sup>128</sup> Here one can also mention the significance of sexuality and sharing a common meal as well as the relationship between wine, blood and sperm, likewise because another solution to the conflict among the modern Kabyles might be to slaughter and consume a bull together in the form of a traditional dish.<sup>129</sup> In this way they get out of the dispute in an honourable manner, by means of a common meal in which no one loses face.

The special function of the communal meal in all festivities, both in antiquity and today, therefore demonstrates that it is the core of the celebration and a gift exchange, marked by the fact that several groups of people establish or renew social ties by means of the festival, which is a religious act. This is true whether the festival is a public gathering as were the two major official ancient festivals, the Panathenaia and the City Dionysia, or the celebration of a smaller group, be it in the form of a family ritual, one group's reception of another group, or a celebration reserved for one of the two sexes. This mutual gift exchange, which is marked through the offering, is the key word for the inter-human relationship, in the same way as it is in the relationship between human beings and deities.

The community offers the meal to itself in order to restore a potential internal imbalance when they periodically get together in order to confirm group affiliation. This can be compared with a family at the dining table, where the meal symbolises community.<sup>130</sup> As regards the organising of the festival, the community can establish a special surplus stock in order to obtain the provisions for the festival. Today, the village population itself is usually in charge of the financial organisation of the festival for the local patron saint. Making a circuit of the village and a blessing-bringing "touring of the houses" may be employed to collect food or money. Alternatively, there may be competition among emigrants to offer the bull, such as in Agia Paraskeuē, or the folkloristic society may organise the purchase of the sacrificial animal. The method of organisation that we see today may actually be a heritage from previous times, when the official ideology, represented by the Orthodox Church, was often in opposition to these popular festivals because they represented "pagan traditions". This especially relates to the customs in Melikē, Agia Elenē and Agia Paraskeuē. It is therefore also interesting to note the informants' own

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Dowden 1989: 163. See also Loukatos 1964: 162 f.; Gernet 1981: Ch. 2; Håland 2017: Ch. 4, 6 and 7.

<sup>129</sup> Bourdieu 1966: 236 f.

<sup>130</sup> Douglas 1975: 249-275, cf. Wuthnow 1986: 112-115. Cf. also Harrison 1977: 140-157. See also Gernet 1981: Ch. 2.



explanation as to where the items they collect—mainly money and food—will be used, such as during the Kalogeros and the carnival in Flambouro, where the carnival figures collect money in an orange: it will be given to the church. Actually, both in Koimēsē and elsewhere, all the money that is collected goes to the church. When I ask the participants in Melikē, I am clearly told: “to the konaki, the celebration tonight, the church and all!” They also tell me that everything else that is collected goes to these bodies as well. This also becomes a variation on the usual method of collecting gifts for the church, while the ancient festivals were organised in different ways, depending on how significant they were for the state. The collecting of gifts, voluntary or “imposed”, such as the tributes from participants during the Athenian Empire in the 400s BCE, was, however, a key factor here too.<sup>131</sup> Both with regard to the ancient Panathenaia festival and until quite recently, the festival has been a welcome occasion for ordinary people to obtain meat. Belonging to this is the heavy aroma of roast lamb, on Tinos when the fast is broken on 15 August and in Olympos after the Resurrection. Through their organisation, the festivals have ensured that “those who have” give; that is, redistribute to “those who do not have”.

The communal meal during the festivals of today represents a parallel to the ancient sacrificial meal, when the social structure determined how the sacrifice was distributed. Even though the meal today is more egalitarian, the ancient meal nonetheless has its parallels in the modern context, where the priest on Tauros gets kesketisi before any of the others, and the dignitaries have a table laid for themselves in an inner room (beyond the main room) during the Anastenaria festival, while the Anastenarides sit on benches around a carpet with a white cloth laid out on the floor in the midst of the konaki and “regular participants” sit around on the benches that line the walls of the room. This is also the situation in Flambouro, where dignitaries, priests, and the like literally sit in the middle and eat while everyone else is standing or sitting around. Once the dignitaries have finished eating, they go among the people with silver trays from the church and collect money.

It seems as if newer ideologies have had to adapt to deeper-lying rules, or an already existing mentality, in order to be accepted as valid. Consequently, it becomes difficult to say that a change in mentality can take place by the one replacing the other. One may rather speak of an accumulation of other kinds of meanings, or a production of meanings, since potential new ideologies become parts included in a larger system of classification. As to the relationship between change and continuity, the

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<sup>131</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 5.

actual production of meaning itself demonstrates that nothing disappears or is created, but rather that everything is a transformation of pre-existing occurrences. One may also see it the way that there continually exist several parallel ideologies or value systems, which seem to be paradoxical when considered together.

Thus, for instance, the official Athenian polis' ideology as regards the native country or fatherland, and peoples' ideology regarding the family and the ancestors can co-exist, because the different levels of meaning are complementary. One encounters a parallel as regards the establishment of the Christian ideology. Consequently, both the Christian ideology—often what one says officially—and the people's own value system—often what one actually does and says in informal contexts—can co-exist within a closed unity.<sup>132</sup> In this way one can explain that people have different, often conflicting, value systems. Accordingly, the society is not totalitarian, as it would have been if there only existed one monolithic ideology, be that within the ancient polis or the Christian Church, because the practical cult often demonstrates opposite conditions at one and the same time.

This generally seems to be valid for the entire Mediterranean region. As an example, one may mention the death cult from Muslim Morocco, where people meet one another by the tomb of the local marabout (cf. saint) and ask him for various things. They also bring food, which they share with the others who might arrive, in the same way as in Greece on the Soul Saturdays (*psychosabbata*, pl. of *psychosabbato*; that is, Soul Saturday or All Souls' Day) and during the other memorial services performed for the deceased. The ancient dais and death festivals are relevant parallels. Dale F. Eickelman's description of the relationship between the marabout and official Islam demonstrates many parallels to the relations between official and popular cults or different ideologies, both in Italy and Greece. We also have material which tells about pre-Islamic mediators in North Africa.<sup>133</sup> With regard to the connection between different ideologies in Morocco at the end of the 1980s, when I visited the country for the first time, it was, for instance, forbidden for a foreigner and non-Muslim to enter the mosque, but it was not forbidden to enter the "marabout". When I asked the reason for this, I received different answers: For one person, the reason was that: "[i]n the mosque one prays, in the marabout one just asks for little things, as, for instance, if one can have a glass of beer tonight." Another explanation was that: "[i]n the

<sup>132</sup> See, e.g., Ch. 4 *supra* and cf., e.g., Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 10.1172a35f.

<sup>133</sup> Lacoste-Dujardin 1981: 47; Eickelman 1981: 10-13.

mosque people used to gather during the rebellion against the French; therefore it is a sacred symbol of the national Moroccan ideology.” The city of Agadir was destroyed during the earthquake in 1960, “but the tsunami stopped at the marabout,” according to people from the place.<sup>134</sup> As on Tinos, in Agia Elenē and in Agia Paraskeuē the enduring cult of nature is also illustrated within Islam by the fact that the holy city of Mecca is not located anywhere, but actually situated in a place where in earlier times a sacred stone and sacred spring were found.<sup>135</sup> Akin to caves, trees and mountain tops these were also central elements linked to the ancient sanctuaries (Figures 82 a and b).

Such key elements can be classified as enduring cores which are re-encountered in connection with traditional value systems within contemporary “pre-industrial” and “post-industrial” societies. Perhaps their significance can shed new light on the ancient parallels, the archaic, classical, and post-classical societies. Other “nuclei” include animal sacrificess, to give one example. The different cores are related to cults connected with fertility, death and healing, and it is important to be aware of this fact when examining the cultural history of these societies. That one can use contemporary society in the same region to investigate peoples’ value systems at all is due to the fact that we constantly encounter these cores, although, of course, people ascribe new and additional meanings to them as a result of all the transitions, changes and continuities that exist. Of course, the common cultural patterns which have been discussed, such as the importance of honour as a social value, the belief in the Evil Eye, death and fertility cults, and so on, do not only relate to the Mediterranean region, from Portugal in the west to Iraq and Iran in the east. Several of these patterns may also be found in Africa, particularly in the Mediterranean regions, but also in non-Mediterranean regions of Africa, Japan, the Americas, New Guinea, and other places in Oceania, in addition to several places in eastern Europe, as many have pointed out. Therefore, the Mediterranean region can be regarded as an intermediate or transitional area, but what is especially interesting is that this transitional region has handed down sources from a much longer span of time than is usual. In short, the Mediterranean area generally, and Greece in particular, offers a unique opportunity to follow questions of continuity and change over very long spans of time, directly and not conjecturally. For my part, many repeated and extended periods of fieldwork beginning in the early 1980s in modern Greece and Italy, but also in other Mediterranean

<sup>134</sup> See also Ch. 4 *supra* for similarities in the Mediterranean region, cf., Blum Blum 1970: Ch. 22; Walcot 1970: Ch. 6. See also Gernet 1983: 247-257.

<sup>135</sup> See also Håland 2007 (2005). Cf. Ch. 3 *supra* for the following.

regions, have been useful in my attempt to acquire a different frame of understanding than the northwestern European one when working on the ancient sources. Nonetheless, I have used comparative material from all of the aforementioned places where this has been relevant. Actually, along with my fieldwork, many years of reading ethnographic material from various parts of the world, but in particular from the Mediterranean, have also inspired my many thoughts and ideas concerning the varied and complex significances of ancient religious rituals and festivals, gender relations, and the like that are encountered in the sources. What one discovers when working on the material is that the same values might also be found among ourselves, perhaps in a “distorted” state, or they may have been present here in an earlier historical context, and may still be “latent”. In that way, one might both gain new perspectives on other cultures and, in the last instance, see our own with new eyes. Whether the mentioned cores are therefore universal is another matter, which is too comprehensive to address here. One may nevertheless emphasise the logic behind holism, the holistic view of death in many pre-industrial societies, that one generally also encounter in Greece, and Lyall Watson’s thoughts about “the Universal”, but since that is not the topic of the present work, some comments can only be indicated.<sup>136</sup> This is not a book about “all cultures of the world”, only about some aspects of the Greek which is situated on the southeastern border of Europe. The topic is, however, especially interesting in the present era of globalisation.

In spite of all the changes that have taken place within contemporary society as a result of the large upheavals that have occurred over the last hundred years, there are accordingly many features of continuity, that can be related to peoples’ worldview and values. It seems to be that what endures is that which is of great importance. It may have also been thus in ancient societies, for instance with regards to the transition from the archaic to the classical periods. This is, for instance, illustrated by the central position of the lament in the traditional clan cults of the powerful kin groups (cf. Figure 80), and the “use” one encounters in the new ideological polis, as demonstrated by Holst-Warhaft.<sup>137</sup> The same is true as regards the transitions that have taken place in connection with the political changes and the introduction of Christianity during late antiquity. In order to be accepted, a mutual contract must be established between two entities, be they various new and old ideologies and value systems (often

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. n.99 Ch. 4 supra and Pina-Cabral 1992: 45-61. Watson 1982. For the logic behind holism, cf. Stewart 1991; Jung, et al., 1990. Pre-industrial societies: Bloch 1988. Greece: cf. Danforth 1982 vs. Seremetakis 1991.

<sup>137</sup> Holst-Warhaft 1992.

applauded by one and the same person), man and woman, or elite and people. Therefore the power is not necessarily always where it pretends to be. Furthermore, all the first fruit offerings, both human and others (cf. Figure 84), demonstrate that, although the deities are created in the image of human beings through the anthropomorphisation of nature, humans are subjugated to the natural forces just the same, because in the last instance they depend upon them in order to ensure future fertility. Therefore, they must give gifts in the form of festivals. Contemporary informants generally explain the reason for celebrating a festival with the expression:

### **“It has Always Been like That, and It is for the Good of It”**

In his introduction to the reprint of the book, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (repr. 1964) by the English classical philologist John Cuthbert Lawson, which was originally published in 1910, the Greek scholar N. Al. Oikonomides writes that he “once” had “witnessed one of the most impressive of ancient rituals—the sacrifice of a flower-garlanded bull on the steps of a church. But before” he “was permitted to participate” in the ritual, he “had to swear by the Virgin Mary that” he “would never reveal where it happened nor the name of the officiating priest, for fear of repercussions from the bishop”.<sup>138</sup>

Few, if any of the ancient rituals has fascinated the scholars of antiquity more than the animal sacrifices. Walter Burkert has even claimed that the blood sacrifice is the origin of ancient religion. According to him, the sacrificial killing is the central motif in Greek religion because it is a ritual expression of aggression in an extension of the hunt. Among the many pictures from my fieldwork I use to illustrate my various lectures, it is the bull sacrifice on Tauros with which scholars of antiquity are most concerned (the late Burkert included). Why is it like that?

Also: how should one explain the bull sacrifice which Oikonomides describes? Is the reason that it is performed the Greek nation-state’s wish to claim a direct link to the ancient Greek culture? How, then, can one explain the (state-run) Church’s criticism of the same sacrifices, which has also led to the fact that in the 1950s, folklorists claimed in the name of Orthodoxy that Greek blood sacrifices had come to an end thirty years previously?<sup>139</sup> Could there be other reasons why people continue to

<sup>138</sup> Oikonomides 1964: x. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 1.

<sup>139</sup> Pétropoulos 1956: 120. For the nation-state and ancient culture, etc., see Håland 2017: Ch. 2-3.



sacrifice a bull or other animals, despite all the changes that have taken place in the dynamics of history?

The sacrifice that was described by Oikonomides shows three different situations. Firstly, there is the scholar who knows antiquity and is generally concerned with the “survival” of ancient culture. Secondly, there are the ordinary people, who are not at all concerned with antiquity. They carry on doing what they have always done, and consider themselves good Christians. They do not want to be regarded as pagans, as they have usually been described, whether in the Church’s mentioned fight against the animal sacrifices or by observers who came from outside.<sup>140</sup> Such observers were foreign travellers who, for instance, came as pious pilgrims on their way to “The Holy Land” in the early centuries of the Common Era. From 300 CE to the present, travellers have indeed repeatedly described the different local rituals they saw being performed on their way. During this period, all manner of travellers in the East, including merchants, scientists and adventurers, passed through Greece, and some of them have, in the “service of the enlightenment of the people”, wanted to rout what they believed were “pagan” or “superstitious acts”. We of course do not know whether the ancient people ascribed the same meaning to what the travellers observed; we do not even know whether the travellers’ observations were consistent with the observed people’s intentions with the rituals. What we nonetheless do know is that common people—until recently—had an aversion to being called Hellenes. For ordinary people, the term “Hellene” was associated with a mythical people who long ago had disappeared from the surface of the earth; that is, antiquity, and thereby the pre-Christian world had also vanished. In short, the term “Hellene” signified “pagan” in Byzantine Greek. Conversely, people saw themselves as *Romii*, a term that linked them to Kōnstantinople and Christianity.<sup>141</sup> The name belongs to the Romeic ideology and conjures the Byzantine Eastern Roman Empire, and thereby the Orthodox Christian tradition to which the majority of Greeks still belong.

Thirdly, we encounter the view of the bishop. Like the Christian intelligentsia of antiquity and later eras, church fathers, the aforementioned

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<sup>140</sup> Ch. 3 supra.

<sup>141</sup> Håland 2017: Ch. 2; Herzfeld 1986: 18 ff.; Simopoulou 1990: 21–190. Cf., e.g., Alexiou 1986. One might ask whether to be a Hellene was positive in antiquity and became negative later. What do we know about how positive it was in antiquity? If it was positive for a small elite, one could then ask how many they represented. Re “the marginals”, see supra. Re travellers’ observations of customs, see, e.g., Simopouli 1990 for illustrations from 300–1700 CE; Revett/Stuart 1762–1816: 29–36 for the end of the 1700s; Bent 1886: 396, 1965 (1885) for the 1880s.

ancient pilgrims, eager philhellenists, or contemporary dogmatic priests, he is the one who regards them as pagans, because he knows the ancient culture and correct doctrine. Therefore, he is also a parallel to the priest in Agia Elenē, while the contemporary bishop provides a parallel to both the priest mentioned by Oikonomides and the priest who in 1992 blessed the bull on Tauros because he did not oppose the ritual. We therefore experience a kind of reverse relationship. One encounters the same problematics as early as the Byzantine period among various Greek “learned scholars”, where those who were more religiously oriented denied continuity with antiquity, while those who were more secularly oriented occasionally said the opposite. Several intellectuals in the Palaiological period asserted implicitly or explicitly that the Byzantines (that is, those who were Romii) also were Greeks and descendants of the ancient Greeks.<sup>142</sup>

Both the festival dedicated to Agios Charalampos and the Anastenaria festival therefore reveal rituals that are, or were, considered pagan by the official Orthodox Church or its representatives. As the Church’s position is presented in N. Th. Mpougatsos, the Anastenaria festival comprises a combination of paganism and Christianity, and one does not encounter the holistic view expressed by the Anastenarides themselves.<sup>143</sup> But even though representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church label the festivals as profane “survivals” of pre-Christian idolatry, they are situated within the religious and cosmological context of the Orthodox Church, and make extensive use of Orthodox symbolism, faith, and ritual practice.<sup>144</sup>

When a fieldworker sits for hours observing the looks, gestures and actions of the believing pilgrims when they come with their hair offerings to the icon on Tinos or put the clothes or other items of sick people, basil, or crosses on—or next to—the icon (Figure 92), and often when speaking with them afterwards during the festival, one experiences a variety of reactions. Many explain impulsively and completely naturally why they do this, while others say they do it for others, because this is superstition, and so on. One often experiences that there exists a kind of “coalition”, preferably among women, but also other non-ecclesiastics, often among the church staff, who usually help people perform their ritual actions so that the priesthood will not see it, such as when the young father came

<sup>142</sup> Vryonis 1978: 237 and 251f.n.2 gives a thorough account of the source material from Greek intellectuals and others. Moreover, see, e.g., Mullett 1990: 259 ff. for Byzantine literature.

<sup>143</sup> Mpougatsos 1963: 634–637, cf. Chourmouziades 1961: 158; Ch. 3 supra.

<sup>144</sup> Danforth 1989. See also Dubisch 1990: 131; Caraveli 1986: 169–194. See also Stewart 1991: 8 ff; however, cf. 248.

with the clothes of his sick child in order to invest them with power from the icon depicting the Panagia on her deathbed during the “Ninth Day’s ritual of the Panagia” (cf. Figures 49 a-c). During the festival, however, it is also especially propitious to have the priest driving out the Evil Eye in the church, which illustrates the aforementioned ambivalence one encounters within the official Church as well.<sup>145</sup>



Figure 92. Various items have been put behind the holy icon on Tinos to absorb its sanctity. 14 August 2011.

People’s actions and explanations, as stated above, are due to different circumstances. Some pilgrims dedicate their hair offerings to the stones from the oldest Byzantine church on Tinos. The stones are cordoned off by a brass fence, so it seems like a kind of enclosure (Figures 42 and 60). But most pilgrims dedicate their hair offerings to the miraculous icon, and although the church’s staff often tell about all the hair offerings that were in the “votive gift box” when it was opened the previous night, the official

<sup>145</sup> See also Håland 2017: Ch. 3 f. and Fig. 9 in Appendix 3 for exorcism, cf. Dubisch 1990: 120 ff.

Church is not particularly enthusiastic about the actual offerings, and most pilgrims know that. Therefore they want to avoid the attention it might provoke, and most of them try to put hair in the box without anyone seeing them. They offer hair to the icon of the Panagia, not because they take pride in being descendants of antiquity, and because in so doing they are performing the same offering as, for instance, the hero Achilles, as an outsider might think, but in order to be healed.<sup>146</sup> They do not want to be called superstitious or pagans, as some people describe them, both within the priesthood and by many third parties consisting of scholars, journalists, and others who come to Tinos during the festival. The designations thus become parallels to the ancient comments discussed in Chapter 3, be they from Plato, Plutarch or others. One may also mention how some of my non-Greek colleagues in Athens, who do not know Greek circumstances especially well, characterise the pilgrims on Tinos, after having seen some glimpses of the festival on television, for instance, and ask me in a context in which my research project is mentioned: “[w]hy on earth do you go to Tinos and look up these superstitious people when you can sit in peace and quiet and do research at a library in Athens”, and “what on earth does this have to do with antiquity?” Then I usually reply that today’s Greeks are quite within their rights to perform their religious rituals as they see fit. The point is not what we think and believe, but what they think and believe themselves. We do not know what this has to do with antiquity, except that it is likely to give us new perspectives on the ancient source material we possess.

The point is, however, that the believers *must* dedicate important symbols to the icon or secure important symbols of some of the icon’s magical power when it is especially effective, such as during the festival. It has always been like that, and it is for the good of it. Although it is, of course, difficult to say whether the ancient people ascribed the same meaning to similar actions, the contemporary conditions may nonetheless provide new perspectives on those human beings who in the ancient context, dedicated gifts such as hair or clothes to the statues of deities and performed other magical rituals in times of illness, during festivals, and at other important passages, for instance, at birth, marriage or death.<sup>147</sup> It is also in this context that Achilles’ mentioned hair offering becomes especially interesting. Here it might be relevant to mention all the holes

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<sup>146</sup> *Il.* 23.141 f.

<sup>147</sup> Festivals: Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 2.1, Rabe 1906: 275.23-276.28; illness: Men. *Phasm.* 50-60; clothes: AP. 6.265; hair: AP. 6.133. Re probable offerings during ancient festivals, see also n.117 Ch. 4 re Figure 23 (=ARV 1151,2, see ARVcl. 177) Ch. 1 supra.



found by temple entrances, in modern Turkey, for instance, which one merely explains with “it has to do with magic”. If one compares the occurrence with what takes place in the modern churches, people might have put different things there during an important festival, such as some of the crops, amulets, and the like, so that they should acquire power and become an effective fertility symbol or healing remedy, such as when people put equivalent objects on an altar or near an icon during the Easter festival, the festival of the Panagia on 15 August, or the “Ninth Day’s ritual of the Panagia” some days later. The contemporary custom in which people on Tinos dedicate icons of saints and other gifts to the icon often depicting a different saint is a parallel to the ancient offerings of deities’ pictures to another deity, although it was not always accepted by the representatives of the elite.<sup>148</sup> Therefore, comparison with the modern society may provide a new understanding of the critical “top-down” statements we have, seeing them from a “bottom-up” perspective. As we also have seen, the new doctrine or ideology perpetuates the statements of the philosophers of the time, as seen in Plutarch or Clement of Alexandria, because the intellectual upper strata of society or elite often condemns the actions of the ordinary person.<sup>149</sup> Although the first 500-600 turbulent years after the introduction of Christianity was a transitional period with struggles between the two religions, and it is perhaps in such a context that one should consider the criticisms the ideologists of the Church give of the older and competing ideology’s extremely important death cult, one sees, as already mentioned, that the death cult, when performed by the common people, was nonetheless exposed to criticism by the spokesmen of the rival non-Christian ideology as well.<sup>150</sup> In this sense, the two elite ideologies, those of the philosophers and the church fathers, do not differ much from one another.

Thus on Tinos we encounter both popular views, where the gypsies’ is the one that is furthest from the dogmatic Orthodox view, which is nonetheless mixed in most cases with what one commonly calls popular belief. In addition, many do not think especially much about why they always come here during the festival. It is just the way it should be.

There are, in other words, many meanings in both the sacrificial act or bull sacrifice described by Oikonomides and the sacrificial act on Tauros, in which both ancient “survivals” and new Christian meanings are mixed

<sup>148</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 909e-910a, cf. Veyne 1986: 270 f.n.59.

<sup>149</sup> Clem. Al. *Protr.* 3.39P; Plut., e.g., *Mor.* 377b-c, cf. Ch. 3 supra. Cf. also Håland 2017: Ch. 4 re my experiences on Tinos with Veyne 1986: 279 ff.

<sup>150</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 378d-379e, 114d-115a. Older death cult: e.g., Hdt. 1.67; Plut. *Thes.* 36 vs. criticism: Clem. Al. *Protr.* 3.39P; August. *Conf.* 6.2.



together. This is supposed to have been a conscious act on the part of the spokesmen of the new Christian ideology in order to have their new ideology accepted among people.

The continuity of key symbols and rites in new ideologies, such as through the Christianisation of pagan symbols, is a common phenomenon, and several scholars have demonstrated how the transformation of paganism into Christianity may have taken place, for instance, through the development of a Christian sacred topography on the basis of the pre-Christian sacred topography, where the meaning of place is central.<sup>151</sup> The fact that new deities take over the functions of older deities in the same areas or settings is well-known in Greece and Rome, since we have so many sources from these places compared with other areas. Romaios gives a concrete illustration of the Christianisation of a statue of the Goddess Rheia, who was depicted with lions in front of her.<sup>152</sup> When the lions were removed, it looked as if the Goddess knelt in prayer. In this way she became Elenē, the mother of the emperor. The transformation took place during the reign of Kōnstantinos the Great, and at the same time the statue dedicated to the sun God Kōnstantinos, the Sun-Kōnstantinos or Helios-Kōnstantinos statue, was Christianised by putting the sign of the cross on it, thereby purifying it from paganism and consecrating it to Christianity. The same logic might be behind the Christian cross which was placed in the middle of the calendar frieze on the church dedicated to Agios Eleutherios in the centre of Athens. Thus the calendar frieze has become Christianised. Several researchers have demonstrated how Agia Elenē and Agios Kōnstantinos have taken over the roles of Kybele and Attis.<sup>153</sup> Attis' death and resurrection was celebrated in antiquity, followed on 25 March by a sacred wedding, hieros gamos, in the form of a wedding with Kybele. These celebrations parallel both the death and resurrection of Christ today and the Annunciation of Mary, which is celebrated on the same date, 25 March, followed by the birth of Christ nine months later on 25 December, on the same day that the one and only sun God, Mithra (*Sol Invictus*), was celebrated. Around 350 CE, the birth date of Helios/Mithras was taken over by Jesus, and he was circumcised on 6 January.<sup>154</sup> The Mother of

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<sup>151</sup> E.g., MacCormack 1990. See also Horden/Purcell 2008, but cf. Chaniotis 2005. The latter, however, puts more emphasis on what one might label "the Clement of Alexandria perspective" than he does on the perspective of Pope Gregory the Great, see *infra*. See also Pénin 1981.

<sup>152</sup> Romaios 1949: 47n.1.

<sup>153</sup> Romaios 1949; Dracoulidēs 1962; Schott-Billmann 1987. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

<sup>154</sup> Loukatos 1984: 61 f.

Christ seems to replace the Mother of the Gods, while another parallel is the connection between Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē. Rituals dedicated to the procession of the Panagia or, in the Italian context, the Madonna in a carriage decorated with flowers are similar to rituals once addressed to Kybele.



Figure 93. The Panagia *Galaktotrophousa* or “Breastfeeding” Panagia, Tinos, August 2011.

Others have discussed the Mother of Christ's takeover of the Isis cult, for instance, which can be seen in the similarity of the illustrations of the Panagia *Galaktotrophousa* (Figure 93), or "Breastfeeding" Panagia, to those of Isis as the nursing mother,<sup>155</sup> or the Mother of Christ's takeover of the cult of the Mother Goddess Artemis. Not far from the ancient ruins of Ephesos in contemporary Turkey, the house of the Virgin Mary can be seen close to the ancient temple dedicated to the great Mother Goddess Artemis, who was also the Goddess of chastity. The Mother of Christ is closely associated with healing, motherhood and fertility, as is the ancient Goddess Artemis. Makistou, moreover, thinks that the Panagia replaces Artemis on Lesbos, *inter alia*, by the fact that a church dedicated to the Panagia was built over a temple of Artemis.<sup>156</sup> He also draws parallels between festivals dedicated to the two deities based upon an etymological perspective. Inside the archaeological area in contemporary Eleusis is the church dedicated to the Panagia, which is situated on a small hill right above the cave dedicated to the ancient God Hades. Here an annual festival dedicated to the Presentation of the Panagia in the temple, also called her "Entry [into the Temple]", or the Panagia *Mesosporitissa* (*mesos*: middle, half; *sporos, spora*: seed, sowing), "Panagia Half-Way-Through-the-Sowing", is celebrated. From late in the afternoon and early in the evening on the eve of the festival, which is held on 21 November, women arrive with baskets filled with bead, wine, olive oil and cakes (Figures 98 and 30). Since she is the protectress of the sowing, she is also offered polysporia or *panspermia* (*pan*: all, *spermō*: to sow, "all seeds"), a boiled mixture of all kinds of crops and several varieties of grain; that is, all sorts of fruits of the earth, or the fruits of the latest harvest. When the priest has blessed the gifts, they are distributed and eaten by the participants, who mainly consist of women. In 2011, when I attended the ritual, there was an especially great number of participants because it was a Sunday. In Athens, moreover, Agia Marina has received a sanctuary right above the "Hill of the Nymphs". One encounters similar conditions regarding the Panagia, who today is often worshipped where pre-Christian Goddesses were worshipped previously, such as in the Akropolis caves. She has also been worshipped in the Parthenon temple at the top of the cliff, which during a transitional period was a church dedicated to the Panagia. There were churches in both the Parthenon and the Erekhtheion temples for a long period of time, until they were turned into different establishments, mosque, palace and harem, weapons store and museum.

<sup>155</sup> Rowlandson 1998: 71, pl. 11 and 14.

<sup>156</sup> Makistou 1970: 112, 157. See also Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

Today another cult has taken over; the contemporary pilgrims to the Akropolis are us and ordinary tourists.<sup>157</sup>

By expanding the original two-day fast before Easter, in the third century to today's forty-eight-day fast, the Church aimed to eliminate the pagan dromena that were celebrated during spring blossoming. Finally, these were displaced and substituted with the three-week carnival season, *Apokreos*, the central point of which is, however, still spring equinox, and where the modern Kalogeros ritual stands out. Although one may maintain that in this way the Church eliminated one of the most important pagan rituals celebrated around the spring equinox, which was a competitor to the Christian Easter, one may note the enthusiasm with which the carnival is celebrated in Greece, though it has no Christian foundation. Although the attitude of the Church to carnival may still be both hostile and ambivalent, it remains an integral part of Lent, as is demonstrated by the lively ritual Clean Monday meal. Accordingly, carnival is deeply integrated within the "Christian" year. Here also belong the Soul Saturdays or psychosabbata dedicated to the dead in the same period; that is, during the sprouting of the grain, but also around the grain harvest.<sup>158</sup>

Much of the amalgamation certainly also took place unconsciously, through many absorptions that have probably been anything but clearly

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<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, see, e.g., Seznec 1981; Håland 2014: Ch. 3, see 2017: Ch. 5 f. for Agia Marina/Hill of the Nymphs. Concerning the Panagia Mesopotitissa, one might perhaps argue that it is misleading to focus on Eleusis here, since, according to Mylonas 1961: 9-10, the village was abandoned for a while under the threat of pirates just before 1676. Drawing on early travellers to Greece, such as George Wheler, who visited the site on 5 February 1675/6, he writes that the inhabitants (among whom were many Albanians who had been imported in perhaps the fourteenth century) had left the place when Wheler made his visit. One hundred years later, the inhabitants, some Albanian families, had returned. Does this make it problematic to conceive of any actual continuity of the Eleusinian cult *in loco*? The point is, however, that the new settlers might have found it important to link themselves to the cult of the remaining or former residents and this ancient cult site, since it would make them more legitimate heirs of the ancient tradition, a topic I have discussed elsewhere, see Håland 2017 Vol. 1: 45. Furthermore, that the site was abandoned does not preclude the inhabitants from returning for the celebration of the most important festival/s. See also Hristov 2016, especially 128 f., for relevant modern parallels. See also Ch. 4 supra and references re the continuity of the traditions of Demeter and Korē in this very place, a fact which is likewise seen in Mylonas 1961: 10 re the importance of the broken statue of the Goddess to secure the fertility of the crops, also for the Turks.

<sup>158</sup> Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 33 ff., 75 ff., Cf. Hart 1992: 229. See also Håland 2014: Ch. 5, and 2017: Ch. 4-6.



formulated on the conscious level, such as in words or writings, and former paganism “seeped in” in the form of the nature cult in one way or another. The August cult dedicated to a Mother Goddess may have endured through a combination of the logic behind the agricultural year, people’s emotions in connection with the cult dedicated to a Mother Goddess, and all the symbolism that belongs to the cult, such as the ritual activities of cults that generally took place in caves, and the very fact that it was often the symbols obtained from the mediator that were important, such as water. The conscious and clearly considered desire for an amalgamation is nonetheless clearly demonstrated in the letter from Pope Gregory the Great to Abbot Mellitus from 601 CE, where he maintains that they should purge the old temples “from the worship of the devils” and consecrate them “to the service of the true God”, but they should let the people sacrifice. In short; if you treat them softly, they will: “more readily come to desire the joys of the spirit”.<sup>159</sup> That Gregory’s letter deals with the conversion of English pagans should not matter much, since in any event he sat in Rome and was himself part of a Mediterranean culture. The letter from Gregory demonstrates that the new Christian ideology had to be presented in a way that would be compatible with people’s already existing religion. According to Gregory, people would, either unconsciously or from force of habit, go over to his correct doctrine, based on the view that the thought, Christianity, would determine the action; that is, the pagan rituals. But this is quite contrary to the view that the action, the traditional rites, determine the final train of mind (thought), represented here by the new ideology, which must adapt to the deeper-lying rules in the culture, the rituals, in order to be accepted. This also becomes the consequence of the fundamental meaning that the rites, symbols, dance and gestures have in Greek culture. One may therefore be reminded of the claim that thought is action, and emphasise the point of thinking through the body, which also has consequences for the Annales School’s above-mentioned definition of mentality.<sup>160</sup> Conscious actions are likewise subject to an emotional element, which also applies to Pope Gregory himself. Although the amalgamation should take place consciously to win over the pagans, it certainly has not always worked this way in practice. We have seen that the same pope, in spite of his own Christian ideology’s admonitions to “love thy neighbour” and forgive repentant sinners, once refused to bury a monk as a result of deeper-lying rules or mentality, which on the conscious level illustrates an ideology wherein honour and

<sup>159</sup> Bower 1897: Ch. 6. Cf. Wolf 1966: 103; Håland 1990; 1993a.

<sup>160</sup> Ch. 2 supra. See also Jackson 1983b; Moerman 1979: 59-66, cf. Jacobsen-Widding 1989: 22 f.



dignity are fundamental values. The story of how his two ideologies conflicted with one another and where the pope's honour codex triumphed demonstrates that he actually incorporates two paradoxical, opposite traditions in one and the same person. The significance of the enduring death cult in the region demonstrates the seriousness of such a decision, although it may perhaps not be immediately obvious to a northern European.<sup>161</sup>

Connected to this is the logic behind the year beginning with the festival dedicated to the Panagia, which, akin to the other festivals, follows the cycle of nature and the agricultural year and thus lays the foundation for the rituals of the official Church year. The same logic determines the duties of the ancient pre-Christian priest, since they are carried out at important times of the agricultural year.<sup>162</sup> The point of the Orthodox liturgical structure, therefore, is not its incomprehensibility, as claimed by the northern European anthropologist John K. Campbell, who due to his typically Western emphasis on the importance of the spoken and written word, clearly has failed to see how important the ritual actions are within Orthodox belief and practice. It is the richness of the symbolic language expressed through rituals and practices that has been central to making the liturgical structure understandable to people through the festival cycle of the calendar, which is centred around important phases or passages in the life cycles of the Panagia, Christ, John the Baptist and other saints or holy persons, who again are connected with critical periods or passages within the cycle of nature and the agricultural year as well as events within social life, such as on Tinos.<sup>163</sup> In other words, we are dealing with three layers. It is the rituals and use of symbols that are central to the Orthodox Church, because although the Bible is a holy text and represents a fundamental ideology, one experiences something different, or something more, during a stay in the church. After having first worshipped the miraculous icon in the main sanctuary on Tinos, many of the pilgrims sit down with their prayer books, but most of the pilgrims go to the chapel of holy water below the main church to fetch holy earth, water, candles, and bread before they leave. Furthermore, many of these important symbols

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. Ch. 3 *supra* with Pl. *Leg.* 960 and *Soph. Ant.* 21-39. See also Ch. 2 *supra*. Cf. also Håland 2014: Ch. 4.

<sup>162</sup> See n.171 *infra*; Håland 2017: Ch. 6 for discussion, see also Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986. Re modern medicine (chronobiology), sunlight and the cycle of nature, see Lænnun 1988.

<sup>163</sup> Hart 1992: 90-105, 225 ff.; Loukatos 1981: 95; Economides 1986: 11 ff.; Ware 1991: Ch. 14 f.; Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991. See also Ch. 2 *supra* vs. Campbell 1966: 152 f.

emphasise the significance of the human body, particularly the importance of its parts, especially bones, head and genitals as well as general nature symbols, such as earth and water, which are related to the human body in a concrete way.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, representatives of the new ideology's scepticism of the verbal language's inability to deal accurately with the new divinity might perhaps also be compensated with these symbols, which have a more manifold richness of meaning. One may be reminded of Clement of Alexandria's negative concept of the deity or God, because he is sceptical of the language and its inability to deal adequately with the divinity or deity.<sup>165</sup> The symbols, however, are as full of pre-Christian or pagan meaning as the verbal terms and figurative representations of which he is sceptical.<sup>166</sup> Is it then the case that here Clement is expressing the problems that result from the conscious use of what for him are a "pagan religion's" terms for the "new and true religion", for which he is a spokesperson? If so, the language must necessarily be inadequate. In other words, he is sceptical of what for Gregory was quite alright. Clement, in other words, is facing the same problem as feminists who do not want to use the male research's ideological terminology in their own research because the language is adapted not only to another ideology, but also a different gender, and thus another reality.<sup>167</sup> In retrospect, one realises that several Ancient Greek terms have been conserved in the liturgical language of the Orthodox Church, where they signify holy phenomena, whereas the everyday language uses a different, sometimes original Turkish term. Here, too, we have the relationship between *kourmpani* versus *hierio* (cf. *hieros*), which was discussed in Chapter 3. In Greek terminology, consecrated bread today (Figure 94) is referred to as *artos* (pl. *artoi*), which is also the Ancient Greek term for bread,<sup>168</sup> while the

<sup>164</sup> It consists of 96% water, cf. the Christian burial ritual: "[f]rom earth you are born...[f]rom earth you will be resurrected." I.e., in a concrete way. See moreover Richlin 1997: 17 re what the "body history" deals with.

<sup>165</sup> Personal information from Henny Hägg. See also Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.24,163.6, where the column testifies to the impossibility of representing God through an image.

<sup>166</sup> See *supra*, and e.g., Veyne 1986; i.e., if the scepticism is due to the fact that they are associated with pre-Christian deities.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. also Håland 2017: Ch. 6-7 for the problems re using Latin terms for Greek conditions and discussion of structuralism-functionalism vs. healing-fertility. Cf., moreover, Jackson 1989.

<sup>168</sup> See, e.g., Simopoulou 1990: 73n.1. Re the following and the relationship between *psōmi* and *artos*, one should note that *artes* can be purchased at bakeries on Tinos. The small loaves of bread that have been blessed are called *prosphoro*, pl. *prosphora*. This is bread that is "offered" to Christ. When a saint's feast is held,

modern term used for everyday bread is *psōmi*. People come to the church bringing with them bread to be blessed, which through the consecration behind the ikonostasis become *antidōro* (“counter-gift”) to be distributed to the people after the liturgy.



Figure 94. Offerings of bread, wine and olive oil, neatly laid in huge baskets in front of the altar, Markopoulo, Kephallonia, August 1992.

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in addition to the liturgical bread there are offerings of oil, wine, and larger loaves of bread (*artoi*).

To be precise, the pagan term signifies the consecrated bread of the church, while everyday bread has a different designation. Until recently, the vernacular language (Demotic) and the written (including the liturgical) language have been quite different. In the 1800s, a Greek observer, who nonetheless wrote more in *Katharevousa* (literally “purist[ic] Greek, officialese”) than in *Ḍēmotikē* (vernacular language), could describe the original Turkish konaki as *megara* (*konakia*). For him, these were the “priests’ (that is, the Archianastenaris’) houses”. The term may have parallels with the ancient term *megaron* (pl. *megara*; that is, house or room for men or women, inner room of a temple, sanctuary), with all its connotations; it was, for instance, central in connection with the Thesmophoria festival.<sup>169</sup> Among examples of the insufficiencies of the language, one may mention the term *hērōs*, which was the term used by the church fathers to signify the first martyrs, because the new ideology had to use the terms already present in the language. The connection between the Christian saint’s cult and pre-Christian hero cult has been examined by Martin P. Nilsson, while Peter Brown rejects the importance of the church fathers’ terming the first martyrs *heroes* (*hērōes*).<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, the displaying of the holy things at Eleusis becomes a parallel to the revealing of holy symbols, especially the Bible, in the Church of today.

This is comparable to the philosophers, who, despite the criticism they gave their poetical predecessors, nonetheless adapted themselves to them, probably as the result of a corresponding and thereby internally competing value system, as is evidenced by Plato’s statements, since it is precisely in his writings that much of the popular cult is found, in the same way it is in Plutarch, for instance. Regarding Kleisthenes’ reorganisation of the *phyles* (that is, *phylē/phylai*, clan or tribe) at the end of the 500s BCE, he used the old phyles in a new setting based on the area of residence instead of family relations, since he had to use arrangements people knew; accordingly, the new phyles acquired their mythical ancestors sanctioned by Delphi.<sup>171</sup> If

<sup>169</sup> Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 2.1, Rabe 1906: 275.23-276.28. See Håland 2017: Ch. 5 f. for discussion. See also Ch. 3 supra. Re the terminology in Chournouziades 1961 (or. 1873), which belongs to the history of the Greek language after 1830, one should note that *Katharevousa* was a compromise between the “learned” language (more similar to Ancient Greek) and the vernacular language of the time. Modern Greek *megaro* can be translated as mansion, palace.

<sup>170</sup> Brown 1982: 134 n.23, 4-6 vs. Nilsson 1961: 20.

<sup>171</sup> Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21. See also Richardson 1988: 65 f. In keeping with Håland 2017: Ch. 5 n.100 and problematics of the phratries and Aristotle’s account of the amount of these (cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21.6), compared with what recent research has



we compare the philosophers with Kleisthenes' new introduction of the hero cult or the later church fathers, it might seem that, like the aforementioned Pope Gregory the Great, they soon discovered that if people are to understand what they are talking about, they must speak a "language" that people understand. It is not necessarily only a matter of the verbal language, but may, as we have seen, just as well be a cult of deceased persons, the cyclical festivals of the agricultural year, or the (ritual) fetching of holy water. Furthermore, their own language is also part of a common value system because they are products of the society in which they live, despite their new ideologies.<sup>172</sup> Consequently, they were not entirely able to think beyond the usual conceptions either, even though they were philosophers. These are, in other words, parallels to the ostensible "takeover" or "appropriation" of the women's traditional laments in the classical and early Byzantine periods, since the women continued to perform laments at the tombs of their deceased. This also provides a better explanation as to why different conceptions and beliefs about death, marriage, and birth endure, and refutes claims that some are "earlier" and more "primitive" than others (that is, in a negative sense).<sup>173</sup>

By focusing on the relationship between official religion and popular religion, one may therefore disclose similarities and differences between doctrinal and local or popular conceptions of various factors. We also see how what has been termed "several religious systems" can be present within one and the same culture, or within the belief and practice of a single person, without the one excluding the other. In other words, paradoxical concepts belong within the same unit, otherwise the system becomes totalitarian.

As opposed to Bourdieu, I do not assign a totalitarian role to an official ideology when it comes to the structuring of experience, because a society has several, often conflicting ideologies or value systems. Based on such a modification of Bourdieu, the paradoxes one encounters in Greek culture may for the most part be explained by his theory of practice. This is the theory of how human practices both shape and are shaped by the society,

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brought to light, based on the study of the relevant inscriptions related to the phratry sanctuaries, this is one of the points one might have addressed in the discussion of enduring rules to which newer ideologies have had to adapt, such as at the institutional level following the reforms of Kleisthenes, or the relationship between a priest's duties in one or more of the phratry sanctuaries (such as the one in Oropos, see Håland 2017: Ch. 6 n.51 for discussion of *LSCG*. 69) and the agricultural year, cf. the following.

<sup>172</sup> See Ch. 3 *supra* and Sissa 1987: 147 f. for further variants.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Ch. 3 *supra*. See also the logic in Bloch 1988: 11-29.



how practices have both conscious and unconscious aspects, and how not only one, but several conflicting ideologies are embodied in everyday activities and ways of thinking. Accordingly, people know what they are doing; by and large, they know why they act as they do, but they do not know what their actions bring about. Thus it is not a matter of one, but of several, often conflicting ideologies. This also demonstrates that in the long term, it is not so easy to manipulate “doxa”,<sup>174</sup> which is relevant to the aforementioned Pope Gregory’s letter as well. One may agree with Marx, who asserts that the unintended effects of human actions show the many and frequent ironies of history. Furthermore, one may point out, that from the earliest theological writings to the present day, there is the same mirage that various pagan “survivals” are consistently considered to be disappearing, as Pina-Cabral has demonstrated in his study of the belief in demons in Archbishop Eusebios of Caesarea, the inquisitors of the 1500s, and contemporary Portugal. In this way, his findings become a parallel to Stewart’s study of demons in a Greek island community.<sup>175</sup>

Based upon Gregory’s letter, the pagans should have been converted to the Christian faith after 1,400 years, and the symbols surely must have obtained a new and Christian meaning for people. Today, the symbols do have a Christian meaning, but not everybody agrees with this. One encounters, for instance, the bishop of whom Oikonomides writes, when he is only permitted to participate in the sacrificial ritual on the steps of a church if he swears by the Panagia that he will never reveal where it happened, nor the name of the officiating priest.<sup>176</sup> The mentioned bishop has several parallels, be that the priest on Plaka in the midst of Athens, who refuses to officiate in the Akropolis caves, or the village priest in Agia Elenē, who resists the ritual of the Anastenarides. Unlike ordinary people, they do not agree with Gregory. These ecclesiastics condemn several Greek customs as pagan. Other priests participate in the rituals because, like Gregory, they think they have become Christian. The priest who participates in Agia Elenē is akin to the priest who performs the bull sacrifice on Tauros, both of whom have the same view as ordinary people.<sup>177</sup> Although in reality, all of the so-called “survivals”, the specific cult of the bones in the death cult (Figure 95) and the rituals in Agia Elenē, on Tauros, and in the Akropolis caves, belong within the Christian

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Bourdieu 1982: 164-168 vs.190. See also Larsen 1994: 15. Cf. Jacobson-Widding 1990: 9-12 for several ideologies.

<sup>175</sup> Stewart 1991; Pina-Cabral 1992: 50-52. Cf. Blok 1992: 121 re Marx.

<sup>176</sup> Oikonomides 1964: x. Cf. supra.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Stewart 1991: 10 re the same problem with regard to a Catholic priest in Africa and the cardinal in Rome. See also Pina-Cabral 1992: 50.

cosmology as a result of the amalgamation one encounters in the Orthodox Church, in actual fact, not everybody thinks so. This is especially the case within the official ideology's own ranks, and they have many predecessors, such as Kyrillos of Alexandria from the fifth century and Theophilos, the bishop of Macedonia, in the 1780s.



Figure 95. Death cult: Bones exhumed at the cemetery in Seires, northern Greece, on the second of the three psychosabbata, during Carnival and Lent, at the end of winter. Seires, Greek Macedonia, 7 March 1992.

They also have many other parallels, but this also pertains to the priest who performs the bull sacrifice. A variant of the first is the fifth-century bishop who proclaimed that: “[n]ulla est religio in stagno” (there can be no religion in a swamp).<sup>178</sup> It not only was, but is indeed possible, whether concerning the cult dedicated to Dionysos in the Marshes, the setting of the Mysteries at Eleusis, and other swamps in which people worshipped ancient Mother Goddesses, especially Demeter. A modern parallel is the cult dedicated to the Panagia in the village of *Linnē* (marsh) on the island of Euboea. Linnē on Lesbos and the relationship between a monastery and convent, where the monastery is situated on the plain dedicated to the Panagia of the Myrtle, is also central here. This also relates to the ritual in Melikē, in which it is very important that the “*damalakia*”, the young men

<sup>178</sup> Brown 1982: 125 reproduces the citation, cf. Asad 1983: 256n.27.

or king's "oxen", fall to the ground and into the mud on their knees, because this signifies a symbolic copulation with the earth. In this way, they enact a ritual copulation upon ploughed and sown land.<sup>179</sup>

As in other circumstances, it turns out that when the official Church can no longer suppress so-called pagan rituals, or particular characteristics which exist within the official religion, by force, they flourish as never before. They have been present the whole time, whether they have taken place in public or been performed in secret, and if they are not mentioned in some sources, it is not necessarily due to the narrator's unwillingness to recognise something he or she abhors, but to the fact that in a time of strong religious suppression, such actions are less visible. This does not mean that "superstition" is flourishing, nor that "real" values are lost or greedy people work with evil intentions and deceive others, as many within the official Church would have it, but rather that the Church representatives are unable to continue controlling people's religious ideas and beliefs with physical power. This is exemplified by the fact that the village church in Agia Elenē is almost empty during the festival dedicated to Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē, simultaneously as the konaki, the religious meeting place or shrine of the Anastenarides, is filled to the breaking point by believers and other participants from both town and countryside. In connection with the Church's unsuccessful attempt to abolish the festival, the following narrative is illustrative: Danforth reproduces an interesting version from the viewpoint of the Anastenarides in the story of the time the bishop of Sozopolis wanted to suppress the Anastenaria festival.<sup>180</sup> He came to Kōsti and dressed up as a woman before sitting down and watching the dancers dancing barefoot over the glowing embers of the dying fire. As Danforth points out, this is a parallel to Pentheus' (indeed) considerably more dramatic fate in the *Bakchai* when he tried to enter the female domains,<sup>181</sup> since the bishop was so impressed that he left without making any attempt to suppress the cult. In this way, the Anastenarides emphasise that they are under Agios Kōnstantinos' protection.<sup>182</sup> Another variant of the same situation can be found in the official liturgical rituals that take place "upstairs" in the main church on Tinos at the same time that the popular rituals take place in the cave-church below, where people fetch holy earth and water, both of which are very important rituals for a living religion. One may also refer to

<sup>179</sup> For the *damalakia*, cf. Ch. 3 supra.

<sup>180</sup> Danforth 1989: 205. See also Stolyarova and Enikeeva 2016: 249 for rituals taking place in secret in the Russian context during the Soviet period.

<sup>181</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 1099-1121, cf. 645-655, 1095-1097, 1115-1132 for his fate.

<sup>182</sup> Cf. Dubisch 1995: 139 f. for an important point. See also supra.

the sanctuary of Agia Marina, which today is built over the “Hill of the Nymphs” in Athens, where the women formerly used to slide down a smooth rock which forms part of the actual hill, in order to be fertile. This shows how the official ideology wanted to put an end to a so-called pagan ritual by building a Christian church above the cult site. Today it is difficult to slide down the rock because it is partly buried under the church dedicated to Agia Marina. When the church was built, women who wanted an easy delivery, or to be fertile, started going on pilgrimage to the cave of Agia Marina, which constitutes the oldest part of the church and is the central cult site today. Alternatively, they sit on or around the dome right above the cave-church during the wake or sleepless night, which forms part of the annual festival in honour of the deceased virgin Agia Marina on 17 July. Like the alternative 2006 and 2007 versions of the holy earth on Tinos, the cultic rites are conducted in a different way because it is of great importance to people, who also consider it Christian, despite what the spokespersons of the official ideology might think.

The lack of transmitted information about “superstition” in some sources and eras, therefore, is not necessarily due to a lack of belief among the people, but rather to the fact that the Church considered this to be truth in those days, or was unaware of what took place. Thus, there are different views among many of the priesthood and other of the representatives of the ideology and among those in the general population at large who perform the rituals, as there seem to have been in antiquity, exemplified by Plutarch. We again have a confirmation of Veyne’s assertion that there is never one single truth.

Accordingly, many might ask: Who has conquered whom? However, it is a creative absorption and mutual fusion that we encounter through the rituals, and the result is Greek religion. It constantly absorbs new things, because the dynamic forces within Greek religion are ongoing, and in that way, we learn more about the contemporary and ancient Greek religions and that a northern European interpretation of Christianity is not like a southern European one.<sup>183</sup> If the mentioned ideologies seem paradoxical to outsiders, they are not so for the insiders, the Greeks themselves.

Peisistratos’ alleged establishment and development of new cults in the city may be an ancient parallel to many of the contemporary “revivals”. Nevertheless, people’s understanding of the phenomenon may of course be different. Peisistratos’ actions may also represent a variation on the

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<sup>183</sup> Cf. supra re different informants’ statements with Alexiou 1975 (76): 124, 140; Stewart 1991: 115, 248; Pina-Cabral 1992: 45-60 vs. Mavrogordato 1955-56: 53, who from his one-dimensional perspective thinks that the Greeks were and are pagans, cf. Chourmouziades 1961 as well as de Martini 1963 and 1966.



mentioned “Gregorian method”, Pope Gregory the Great’s “recipe” for recruiting new subjects to the Christian ideology. If one sees the festivals based on Veyne’s mentioned thesis of “bread and circuses”,<sup>184</sup> the festivals should have been used ideologically by the rulers in order to keep people in their social place, both today and in antiquity. This should have happened through the modern carnivals, large-scale markings of national days, or the tragedies of the Dionysos festivals as well as the Athenian politicians’ exploitation of substantial public expenditures for political purposes. Based on such an interpretation, they should also be a parallel to the carnival in Rio. The reality, however, is not so clear-cut. The festival in itself represents very profound demands and expectations among people; in short, the people demand festival! This demonstrates that the power is not necessarily where it pretends to be.<sup>185</sup> Both the festival and all those of its components which are used by the rulers are symbols that are especially meaningful to people as well as to the rulers themselves. Therefore, one needs to reconsider traditional statements about the so-called cynical behaviour of tyrants with regards to large-scale building works which were launched in order to keep people busy and thereby docile and “poor”. It is not easy to distinguish between the “deities of the people” or popular deities and those of the aristocracy, since the deities of the former, Demeter and Dionysos, were dedicated cults long before the advent of both the tyranny and the democracy in Athens. Related to this is the mentioned merging of Apollo and Dionysos. The polis was dependent on the products of the earth during the rules of aristocrats, tyrants, and democrats alike. Moreover, the festivals were in no way new, although they were expanded.<sup>186</sup> So-called aristocratic values are not reserved for the aristocrats. Bragging or boasting and the propensity to surpass one’s neighbour is important for the Greek population today as it was earlier, since, as mentioned, a kind of inverted (Norwegian/Danish) “Jante rule” is in evidence, whether it concerns a magnificent former Dionysian procession or a modern carnival procession. At the same time, we encounter the distinctive southern European form of democracy, which thrives alongside the ruler cult and therefore must have a strong leader to put on a pedestal, but also be a scapegoat when it proves necessary. One

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<sup>184</sup> Veyne 1976.

<sup>185</sup> Burguière 1978: 43 f. See also Eco 1984: 8 and cf., e.g., *Ar. Ach.* 193-202, 223-230.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. e.g., Thuc. 3.104. Plut. *Mor.* 389, see also Paus 1.2.5. Cf. also Parker 1996: 75 ff., 96. See 67 ff. for an interesting reassessment of the so-called cynical behaviour of tyrants. See, moreover, Ch. 3 f. supra for the complementary qualities of Dionysos.



may compare Plutarch's description of Perikles<sup>187</sup> with the modern cult of personality in the region, be that the cult of Kemal Atatürk, Nasser, Khomeini, Venizelos or the Papandreous. I might also mention my experience in Flambouro, which is a variant of the aforementioned cases in which we encounter the Greek democracy in practice, when all the dignitaries of the village were seated separately from ordinary people, and catered for on the bill of the village, which was perceived to be quite natural, thus echoing *Odysseus'* experiences among the Phaeacians.<sup>188</sup>

Earlier cults were developed and local cults from conquered territories were incorporated into the cult of the Athenian polis. In this way, we experience a parallel to the programme of "the Gregorian method" in order to make people accept the Christian ideology. So, as regards the ideological use of the cult of the people, Peisistratos and Pope Gregory the Great are two characteristic examples. But the way in which the two used the popular cult also demonstrates that a mutual interaction between the two cultures is necessary in order to come to an agreement. Thereby something new is created.<sup>189</sup>

The Babo festival, the Kalogeros ritual and the Anastenaria festival were all celebrated in "no man's land" until recently, since the actual region has been so inaccessible. People therefore lived very isolated lives, for the most part separated from the "great history", and reproduced their traditional culture.<sup>190</sup> In this context, "myths and legends" become central, and Aime Knudsen's material from Corsica, in which she presents the Corsicans' own history, which is lived in a different historical space than the general "greater" European progressive history, may be seen as a manifestation of the general "dual" history we encounter in the Mediterranean region.<sup>191</sup> Since they seem to have preserved so much of the traditional culture in newer times as well, it is doubtful that the structuring of history and the selective memory are just imposed by posterity. People do not accept just anything, and every new ideology must be adapted to people's own value system so that a mutual fusion results.

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<sup>187</sup> Plut. *Per.* 9.

<sup>188</sup> *Od.* 13.14 f. See, however, Håland 2014: Ch. 7 for the changed status of the Papandreous during the present crisis, clearly illustrated by Figs. 65 a and b, which depict the grave of Andreas Papandreu at the 1<sup>st</sup> Cemetery in Athens, in 2011 and 2013.

<sup>189</sup> Cf., e.g., Di Nola 1980: 36; Stewart 1991: 115.

<sup>190</sup> See also Hastrup 1992c: 115 f. Cf. Håland 1993d: 14. See also Danforth 1989: Ch. 5 and Iossifoglou Kyriakopoulou 1990. See, moreover, Christensen 1984: 63-91.

<sup>191</sup> Knudsen 1992: 82-101. Cf., however, Roth 1994.

From being opposed by representatives who constitute the public face of the Orthodox priesthood, the popular cult became a part of the “common Greek cultural heritage” in the wake of Nikolaos Politēs (1852-1921), the founder of Folklore Studies as an academic discipline in Greece. Perhaps it is a newer variant of the mentioned “Gregorian method” we encounter as regards the later Hellenic scholars, who looked down on the “primitive” peasants they “employed” in order to “establish a continuity to antiquity”. Nevertheless, the Hellenic model they “introduced” was dependent on people’s approval and thereby dependent on similarities between the Hellenic culture and the one into which it was implanted.<sup>192</sup> Thus we encounter a parallel to the duties and deeds of former Christian missionaries and ancient philosophers.

Therefore Solon, Plato, Plutarch, the church fathers, and contemporary rulers, or spokespersons of the new ideology, must adapt their ideology to people’s belief and value system, whether it concerns ancient burial practice, women’s festivals in which more or less unpopular deities are worshipped, the introduction of Christianity, or the later “introduction” of the new Greek nation after 1821. Accordingly, neither do people allow missionaries to force new ideologies on them, whether they preach a polis ideology, Christianity, nationalism or something else, if there is no fertile soil for this in the society. The peasant society uses the researchers as much as the researcher uses her or his “objects”, in spite of what Danforth might think.<sup>193</sup> In other words, one experiences another dimension of the importance of not relying exclusively on official, ideological male categories, but also popular everyday domains associated with women, who moreover do not allow anyone to force anything on them. This fact also confirms the importance of not relying exclusively on a one-sided power concept when studying societies, because doing so means taking the official male elitist description of the relationship between men and women, as well as that between the elite and the people, literally. One realises this when dealing with the relationship between official ideology and human experience.

What usually lies behind the informants’ statements that “[i]t has always been like this, and it is for the good of it”, and that “the core is the same, and then we see what we do this year”, is not just an illustration of how local perceptions of tradition have often worked themselves into what appears to be, and generally is, a revitalisation of old rituals, as is the case

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<sup>192</sup> Cf. Burguière 1978: 43 f. vs. Danforth 1984 and Thuc. 1.20 re his reason for writing history. Lévi-Strauss 1966: 232. See also Hastrup 1992c: 116 f., cf. 1992b: 10 f.

<sup>193</sup> Danforth 1984. See Håland 2017: Ch. 2 for comprehensive discussion.

with many carnival rituals today, or Peisistratos' development of old cults, for that matter. In this way, they do not die out, because, as one should remember, those who introduce "revivals" must also have "knowledge" of the past in order to make this happen, and since the core remains the same, the informants can say what they say. What is important to people is that the essence of the rituals remains unchanged, because: "[w]hoever departs from ancient paths knows what he is about to lose, but he does not know what he will find'...tradition is truth."<sup>194</sup> The safety of the tradition is, in other words, as strong as the fear of the unknown.

Both ancient Athens' fight against the barbarians and the modern heated, nationalistic fight therefore demonstrate how dependent the rulers in both modern and ancient Greece are on the cult of the people to manifest themselves and their own ideology, whether it be the solemn Tinos ritual and burlesque carnival ritual or their ancient parallels, the Panathenaia and Lenaia. The island of Tinos' and its most important sanctuary's use of ancient symbols, which can be linked with the greatness of antiquity, is a common phenomenon in Greece. One of the marble lions from Delos, for instance, presides by one of the staircases leading up to the main church on Tinos, and parallels the church's other use of marbles and columns from ancient temples. In addition to the lions that protect the various staircases of the sanctuary on Tinos, the banisters are furnished with Medusa heads. As has been illustrated above, rituals connected with water are very important, both today and previously, as seen, for instance, in the festival dedicated to the Panagia under her attribute of the Life-Giving Spring, and this spring with sacred water was officially re-inaugurated after the proclamation of the Greek nation-state.<sup>195</sup> Thus we encounter a parallel to the mentioned purifications of Delos and the Akropolis after their destruction by the Persians, when in the latter case the dishonouring of the sacred area led to their having to rebuild it again. The festival dedicated to the Life-Giving Spring was established in Kōnstantinople by the Patriarch in 1833, the year the Greek War of Independence came to a successful conclusion and the Kingdom was

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<sup>194</sup> See Hauschild 1992: 39 for citation, in a context in which he examines how new rituals are based on the tradition, 29-44. See especially 34 and 37. The way in which he presents the aforementioned citation must, however, be cf. with Dubisch 1995: 140, since it is the informant's viewpoint we are dealing with here. See moreover Bloch 1977: 290.

<sup>195</sup> Loukatos 1985: 165 re the establishment of the festival, although he does not intend that one should draw any conclusion about continuity. See Håland 2017: Ch. 2 re the close connection between the official Orthodox Church of Greece and the nation-state. See also the following.

established. Here we encounter holy water or a very old purification symbol, which, on one level, is “reinvented”, or reused, in the service of a national ideology. This is therefore a good example of the close connection between the official Orthodox Church of Greece and the nation-state, in a patriotic sense, which has contributed to the close link between official and popular religion in Greece, as illustrated by the ideological use of old popular symbols in the service of the Greek nation-state. At intervals, this mode of utilisation has burst out throughout Greek history. Simultaneously, on another level, people have carried out their own rituals in connection with the life-cycle passages of death, birth, baptism, and weddings as well as other celebrations of life-cycle passages as well as rituals in connection with the cycle of nature, the way they have always been used to. We have, for instance, seen how the same spring with holy water has been dedicated to both ancient Water Nymphs and the modern Panagia in the same Akropolis cave, despite ideological—that is, religious and political—changes. These are perhaps examples of the nationalistic use of an old cult and “revival”, but the prerequisite for being able to use the cult is the importance of springs with holy, healing water in Greek tradition.

For this reason, I think that the priest who blessed the sacrificial bull on the steps of the saint’s church up on the summit of the Tauros mountain<sup>196</sup> would have looked at me with surprise if I had asked him whether he was a “survivalist” or not. The fact is that he only performed the ritual he had performed so many times before, and as the “old priest” had performed before him, “because it has always been like this, and it is for the good of it”, despite its attempted abolition by the official Church, which, according to many in the village, does not understand anything. That the same ritual takes place in a steadily growing number of villages, to the annoyance of the population of Agia Paraskeuē, is another matter. It is definitely due to this ongoing interest that the ritual has been given by researchers and media as well as tourists, but it also meets a need for the village populations, today as before, and this is of the greatest importance.

The priest who blessed the sacrificial bull on the steps of the saint’s chapel up on the summit of the Tauros mountain (Figure 96) and the entire situation may, in other words, be a living illustration of how the new ideology has had to adapt to deeper-lying rules or mentality in order to be accepted by people. This can provide new perspectives on similar conditions in antiquity, where we only have testimonies from the one part

<sup>196</sup> Cf. Håland 2017: Fig. 82 in Appendix 3, see also 1993e and f.

of society, while the voices of the other part, be that women or ordinary people, are something that must be read between the lines.



Figure 96. The local priest blesses the bull in front of the saint's chapel on the summit of Tauros, Lesbos, 27 June 1992.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE FESTIVALS

Dans le lac fermé qu'est en somme la mer Égée, où affluent les eaux de trois continents, des alluvions se sont accumulées depuis des siècles, et...les eaux, sans cesse enrichies, sont toujours les mêmes et toujours nouvelles.<sup>1</sup>

The above citation from Octave Merlier is reproduced from his introduction to the French edition of C. A. Romaios' book about the Kalogeros and the Anastenaria festivals, *Cultes populaires de la Thrace: Les Anasténaria. La cérémonie de lundi pur* (1949, or. Greek 1944-45). In his poetical description of the relationship between continuity and change in Greek and Balkan popular cults, Merlier is concerned with the fact that the waters from three continents flow into the closed lake which in sum constitutes the Aegean Sea, and that the deposits have accumulated there for centuries. The water which is constantly enriched is continually the same and simultaneously completely new. This example also reveals something about the customs which continuously take place in this region. Why, then, are people continuing to perform the same rituals within a society that is continually changing?

This may be due to the fact that value-norms and ways of thinking in the general population have survived, although the socioeconomic basis has changed, following from both industrial and technological revolutions where new political and religious systems and ideologies have also appeared. We have seen how the same core rituals endure, and I have tried to show how rituals may be considered from a long-term mentality perspective, such as the sacrificing of a bull to a deceased protector or protectress of society or the fetching of water from a spring, and why these rituals are so important to people. But this does not exclude that new impulses at the same time have continually been added and that the festivals actually change in many ways from year to year while still

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<sup>1</sup> Merlier 1949: v f.

maintaining the same core. Furthermore, the part of the southeastern corner of Europe called Greece is a region to which people continually immigrate and from which others emigrate. It might be “emigrants who return home” who in “exile” have conserved the rituals due to various reasons, for instance, one’s own or an “inherited” homesickness, such as among contemporary Norwegian-Americans or Olympians in Baltimore, or they have lived in a “dwelling area” that due to its inaccessibility has been isolated from the outside world until recently. But there are also others who come to the actual place, whether they are fleeing a domicile devastated by war, are political refugees, or seeking happiness (“trying their luck”) in a new country. One or more of the same reasons may also cause people to move abroad, as many did during the “Regime of the Colonels” or “the Junta”, and many are doing during the contemporary economic crisis.<sup>2</sup> These processes have taken place as long as there have been people in the actual region, and we can often demonstrate them, because this is a region from which we have sources from a much longer continuous period of time than is usual. It is important to keep in mind the exceptional character of the Greek sources, since the Mediterranean region in general, and Greece in particular, offers a special opportunity to follow questions of continuity and change over very long spans of time, directly and not conjecturally. People who come and go bring their own rituals with them, which thus become mixed with the pre-existing rituals they encounter there, to which they are usually very similar. This is also the background of the fact that we can talk about the “Mediterranean language”—the cultural patterns which, as mentioned, can be recognised with small variations across the many national boundaries, languages and religious groupings, including the different ideological boundaries within the area. Fresh water literally flows into the same Mediterranean Sea, which in that way is continually enriched, simultaneously as the sea remains the same, almost a lake enclosed by land.

In spite of the historians’ traditional suspicion of the so-called unconscious (“it cannot be weighed and measured, and is therefore unscientific”), other approaches should also be tested when working on material related to Greek culture generally and the relationship between official and popular cults, different value systems or ideologies, in particular. Likewise, the natural sciences dealing with brain research have recently become concerned with such “unconscious” and “inexplicable” phenomena, which were previously discredited as so-called metaphysics,

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<sup>2</sup> I plan to go further into this topic in a future project, with the working title, *Greek travellers and travellers to Greece through the ages*.

and therefore modern research, by including what was formerly discredited, tries to grasp totalities and not just “parts”. Ancient natural philosophers did not distinguish between humans and nature, but looked at them as aspects of the same cosmic whole, just as Greek mythology and (the entire) religion are attempts to explain and understand this relationship. Should we not now, as scholars of antiquity, again take up the thinking of the natural philosophers and approach the reasoning of natural sciences, so that we might once again obtain a comprehensive perspective on the ancient society? What to us might seem like cultural schizophrenia and the exact opposite of the principle of wholeness through an accumulation of paradoxes, which makes many scholars claim that the principle of wholeness does not exist at all in Greek culture, may be considered in another way as well, at least for the Greeks themselves.

Various rituals in the festivals I have discussed might be considered expressions of cultural continuity. More explicitly, a sacrifice to a deceased saint is, in many ways, a continuation of the concept of a deity’s visit to the underworld, such as that undertaken by Adonis. This is also an illustration of the fertility cult, because it is from the underworld that the fruits of the earth come, but simultaneously we are dealing with a purification rite in connection with a transition from one period to another within the cycle of the agricultural year. It might also be older popular belief which is employed in the service of the official ideology, consciously or unconsciously. This is also the way the rituals have been considered by the different scholars who have analysed them, and it has not been my intention to demonstrate that any of the mentioned analyses or interpretations really exclude the others, but rather that they are complementary to one another.

In the comparative analysis between the religious value systems of the ancient and modern cultures, we see how this relationship is expressed through ideologies and mentalities, or words and actions, as reflected in the different religious layers which can be uncovered within a given culture. The area of interest has been centred around how this is expressed through the religious festivals and the various aspects of cults that can be understood from examining them.

When examining people’s mentality, the transitional periods or crises of the life cycle as experienced both in the life of nature and that of human beings is a fruitful area of analysis. The three cults that can be analysed from the festivals, the death cult, fertility cult, and healing practices, also illustrate the mentioned transitional periods.

Not only my own fieldwork, but also the customs that previous travellers encountered demonstrate the importance of conducting a

comparison between the ancient and modern festivals. The reason for this is that rituals per definition do not change much, and although many novelties are added, following from a continuous production of meaning, nothing is really abandoned. One may recall the logic behind the endurance of rituals, which indicates that little disappears over time, though much is added to the elements held over from before. The importance of the tradition is not only revealed in the rituals themselves, but also in the folk songs, in line with the laments, as one, for instance, encounters in connection with the Easter celebration on Karpathos. All good fairy tales and folk songs have several hidden meanings; this is why they survive.

One touches, in other words, on very topical problems when comparing contemporary and ancient Greece, as is also illustrated by the anti-survivalists' persistent opposition to such a comparison, whether it is due to political, religious, or other ideological motives.

Although the emphasis here has been placed on the Mediterranean region as a cultural unity, *inter alia*, by reason of geography, the fact that people have seen themselves like this, which is evident from Plato's ancient statement regarding people who sat "like ants or frogs about a pond,"<sup>3</sup> the rich source material from the region over a longer period of time, and the rich extant comparative material, one should also consider more restricted areas such as the Balkans, but also the Greek-Turkish. This concerns, for instance, all the Turkish terms found in local Greek dialects, as one finds on Lesbos in connection with the bull sacrifice, for instance. It also applies to the different population groups, such as the Macedonians, Albanians, and so on, who have lived for several centuries in the region we today call Greece and adopted customs, assimilated them with their own—as the Greeks, correspondingly, have also done—and handed them down for posterity, in the same way as other Greeks.<sup>4</sup>

There is extensive research within the entire Balkan and Mediterranean region on the same customs. Such a central focus on Greece in precisely this day and age, as I have carried out here, may, of course, bring about many problems, and the danger is great for this to be misunderstood and perceived as propaganda contributing to the contemporary Greek nationalistic tension. This rather demonstrates how dependent the rulers in both contemporary and ancient Greece are, and have been, upon the cults of the people to manifest and confirm themselves and their own ideologies. All through the years and at regular intervals, the need to

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<sup>3</sup> Pl. *Phd.* 109ab.

<sup>4</sup> See also, e.g., Nitsos 2015 for the situation in the village of Tsamantas in Epirus approx. a century ago.

manifest this dependence has been rekindled, while people have performed their own rituals at death, birth, baptism, and weddings as well as at the other celebrations of the stages or phases of life and the course of nature, as they have always been used to doing.

With regard to the relationship between ideologies and mentalities, especially in Greece, but also generally in the Mediterranean region, one finds that, for a select number of religious rituals, there may be more than one meaning. It is possible that a rite can have an ideological Christian meaning, simultaneously as it also has an implied or unconscious meaning, which can be related to an underlying and enduring mentality. In this context, one encounters the relationship between the ruling ideology within the society and the popular cult. This relationship often emerges as a tension, which one encounters within the ancient pre-Christian cult, in Christianity, and in the other major world religions in the region, Judaism and Islam. Here we also encounter the phenomenon of heritage, and the possibility that the contemporary cult, or at least features within the cult, such as various rituals in order to ensure the crops, life and health, may be a heritage from ancient times. Although the ancient social and cultural codes—including verbal and nonverbal ones—in general may, of course, be different from the contemporary ones, there are nonetheless similarities.

One experiences that today's existing survivals from the ancient culture are not necessarily only inscriptions, artworks and ruins, since the study of ancient people's religion may also gain a broader and more comprehensive clarification when one conducts studies of its potential survivals in the religion which belong to their descendants, the modern Greeks, but also other peoples in the same region. The reason for this is that today there are several more or less new nation-states in the geographical area where ancient Greek culture once flourished. It would therefore be necessary to master their various languages in order to write a traditional cultural history of the area, which has not been the aim of this work. I have consequently limited myself to a select region within the ancient Greek cultural environment and the Greek cultural area of today. Material from the neighbouring areas has been included where necessary, and then in translation. This is mainly because it is impossible to set boundaries for any one culture as the actual geographic area was and is multicultural. Likewise, these areas have many shared cultural characteristics. It is these characteristics that are of interest, because they represent the basic rules of Mediterranean culture and society. The Mediterranean and oriental influence, which has always been present in popular culture, is an important focal point when trying to gain new



understanding of ancient Greek culture, and its relationship with modern Greek culture.

Thus, through my fieldwork on modern religious festivals in Greece and the ensuing work on the material, I have taken on board a vast subject within which there are many topics that can be further elaborated upon. In this context, I have elaborated upon the relationship between competing ideologies based upon the concrete festivals, which in turn provided a basis for saying something about the relationship between ideology and mentality expressed through gender relations and various religious beliefs, often associated with different social groupings.

Therefore, when embarking on an examination of the relationship between ideology and mentality on the basis of the relationship between official religion and popular religion in ancient and modern societies, religious festivals are a suitable starting point, because religious life is very resistant to the changes that are introduced in a society. In spite of what has been said about the rich source material, we generally have fewer sources for ancient Greek culture than we have for later societies. Another problem is which frame of understanding one should use to interpret the ancient source material. My starting point, therefore, was the theory that, through personal participation in relevant modern rituals taking place in the same geographical region, combined with other anthropological analyses of present-day Mediterranean societies and studies in ancient history in general, especially studies of a representative selection of the ancient source material, one can contribute to shed new light on ancient parallel festivals. In the last instance one may thereby contribute to deepening our knowledge of ancient society, since the festivals have always been very important in Greek culture.

It is therefore crucial to emphasise the importance of everyday symbols or mentalities for the official ideological religion. Even though the modern Orthodox religion is based on the sacred text which is written down in the Bible, it is nonetheless first and foremost the ritual acts and practices that characterise the religion, now and previously. Therefore we still encounter festivals, processions, gifts and animal sacrifices.

From antiquity until today, death and fertility cults have been the axes or central points around which it all revolves, the key points or structure of meaning underlying everyday life. These key points are important for the history of the political ideology, pegs on which it is hung in order to be accepted, since these key points mean a great deal to people, as we see in the cults dedicated to ancient Mother Goddesses, deceased heroes or vegetation deities, and the modern Panagia or other deceased saints. The agreement with this mediator must be renewed periodically by way of a

festival and simultaneously the inter-human social contract is renewed, most often marked with an animal sacrifice (cf. Figures 13, 16, 96 and 97) which is consumed afterwards as a communal meal by the festival participants.



Figure 97. Pitsa Panels, Archaic Greece, ca. 540-530 BCE. National Archaeological Museum, Athens (inv. no. 16,464) (photograph by Giannis Patrikianos).

When scratching beneath the surface and delving into things in depth in order to investigate the thinking which lies behind passage rituals, one sees how social institutions are explained using myths that go straight to the primary: mating/reproduction, food, and killing, based on the law behind sympathetic magic. The same logic lies behind mid winter rituals, when dressed-up people walk around in the streets and give outdoor performances related to death, burial, resurrection, marriage, bride theft, birth, and other actions which may induce production, rain, and germination: in short, fertility. Therefore, the so-called insignificant rituals and perhaps even more insignificant symbols become very important in order to obtain an overall or comprehensive picture of Greek culture and history.

To criticise the manipulation of sexual symbols as an unclean act reveals ignorance of the fundamental significance of the gesture itself in Greek culture, be it the cyclical gesture, which all modern Greeks perform during agitated conversation, or the concept of the dramatic play that is performed during the modern carnival, which can also be compared with the ancient tragedy. The meaning behind the gesture or cyclic movement in short, the meaning behind action or doing something is re-encountered in rituals, be they within the Orthodox Church, carnivals, or other life

situations: in a nutshell, everything must be performed or done. Thereby follows the significance of festivals and other rituals.

To investigate the relationship between official ideology and traditional popular cults is in many ways to discuss the relationship between “internal collective forces” and external pressure from people who, paradoxically enough, belong in part to the same forces they oppose in many situations, although they are not always aware of this themselves.

For thousands of years, the Greeks have repeated similar gestures, rituals and prayers in connection with important moments in life and death. This simple lesson in a world in which nothing is certain saves the human beings from doubt and gives them vital security, on both the extra-human and inter-human levels. Therefore, they can still do as they do, and explain it with, “it has always been like this, and it is for the good of it”, even though a “rational” outsider may claim that it does not explain anything. However, this outsider in so doing reveals her or his inability to understand the logic of the Greeks by failing to understand anything at all, thereby testifying to her or his indigence, as an outsider.

Therefore, an investigation of an environment where we find a kind of dual culture which is partly changing, partly persisting, or perhaps rather changing in different ways and at different rates<sup>5</sup> and therefore not exactly identical as a result of the dynamics of history, is at least very similar to the former culture, and can demonstrate a great deal about the relationship between “progressive forces and stability or fixity”, or perhaps the relationship between power from outside or above and power from within or below.

Therefore, the various suggestions for analyses and elaborations of previous analyses based on a comparison with modern festivals in the region have hopefully provided some impetus as to how we may proceed when interpreting ancient society. There is no doubt that ancient scholarship has much to learn from research on modern societies, especially the communities we find in the same geographical region wherein the ancient sources were produced. What we learn is that, in the contemporary Mediterranean region, we do not necessarily encounter the same frame of understanding and values as in northern Europe. This knowledge is a helpful tool for a scholar who is planning to analyse former societies. Although we have more sources from the Mediterranean area than is usually the case, we have fewer sources for the ancient period when compared with later periods within historical research. Moreover, the ancient source material is authored by such a small part of the total ancient

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bloch 1986: 188 for this thinking.

population over such a large geographical area and time span that we should include the alternative sources we have at our disposal if we want to provide as comprehensive a presentation as possible. If one wants to obtain a different view of the ancient popular cult, the modern society in precisely the same geographical region suggests itself as an obvious supplementary source, because people, as a result of their mentalities; that is, the fact that history is slow to change, often continue to do things the way they did before. This is also valid, even though new explanations are constantly being added due to the dynamics of history, *inter alia*, because new people are always arriving while others move abroad; the customs are mixed and new ones emerge. In this way, the mentioned continuity, stability or “fixity” in religious practices over thousands of years is in constant flux or motion.



Figure 98. Women arrive with baskets filled with offerings of bread, wine, olive oil and cakes on the eve of the festival dedicated to the Panagia Mesosporitissa; that is, the “Presentation of the Panagia in the Temple”, Eleusis, 20 November 2011.

One may nonetheless peel off some layers and learn that they continue to do what they did before, and perhaps thus try to obtain a new understanding of why they did it by adopting their own perspective (cf.

Figure 98). This knowledge is useful to bring with us in the present era of globalisation, because all people do not necessarily act and think in the same way as we do ourselves, whether we are westerners or originate in other parts of the world.



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# APPENDIX

## OVERVIEW OF MODERN AND ANCIENT FESTIVALS

**Table 2: Schematic Survey of Selected Modern Greek Festivals:**

Although the calendar year begins on 1 January in Greece as in other places, the official ecclesiastical year commences on 1 September, while the new agricultural year, or the year of the grain, begins at the time of ploughing and sowing, which varies according to region and is also dependent on the rains. This scheme comprises three categories of festivals: festivals I have visited and describe in this book (**bold**), festivals visited but not described (*italicised*), and festivals not visited (normal type):

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Time of celebration</i>	<i>Dedication</i>
<b>Dormition of the Panagia</b>	<b>Tinos</b> (National)	<b>15 August</b> period of leisure, grain harvest complete, <sup>1</sup> passage from summer to winter is heralded	<b>Panagia</b> ( <i>the festival of the Panagia in Markopoulo, Kephallonia, local variant visited in 1992</i> )
<i>Agios Gerasimos</i>	<i>Kephallonia</i> (National)	<i>16 August</i>	<i>Agios Gerasimos</i>

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<sup>1</sup> These key words are elaborated upon throughout the book. See also Håland 2017: esp. Ch. 6. This also applies to the points listed under the other festivals, several of which may relate to various festivals depending on the region, etc. Since the agricultural activities take place simultaneously, and to avoid repetition, all the relevant points cited under the modern festivals will not be repeated under the ancient, which were celebrated at approximately the same time. See also Foxhall 1995: 98 f., for an overview of agricultural jobs and festivals in Attica, cf. Brumfield 1981: Ch. 2.

"Nine Days after the Sleep" (Burial of the Panagia)	Tinos (National)	23 August the end of the 15 August cycle, the end of the dog days	Panagia
Presentation of the Honourable Belt of the Panagia	(National)	31 August	Panagia
The Panagia's Birthday	(National) Flambouro	8 September "the grape gatherers arrive" <sup>2</sup>	Panagia (popular festival)
"Leidinos"	Aegina	14 September summer harvest complete/ renewal of agricultural contracts <sup>3</sup>	Leidinos ("Exaltation of the Cross" is the national liturgical feast)
Conception of John the Baptist	(National)	23 September around autumn equinox	John the Baptist
Wine festivals	Katzas, Leonidari and Pallini (Attica) (wine festivals are celebrated all over Greece)	In 1992: last weekend of September and first weekend of October	People themselves and a local winery called Cambas
Agios Dēmētrios	Athens (National)	26 October animals brought in from summer pasture	Agios Dēmētrios ("Lombardiaris", local variant visited in 2011-12)
Agios Philoppos	(National)	14 November around sowing time; the Pleiades set; olive harvest and pressing (alternate years); trenching, manuring, pruning of olive trees <sup>4</sup>	Agios Philoppos

<sup>2</sup> Grape harvest and pressing take place in September/October, cf. Foxhall 1995: 98 re Attica. These tasks are followed by trenching, manuring, and pruning in October/November/December.

<sup>3</sup> Kyriakidou-Nestorou 1986: 113 re 14 September when the summer's work has finished and late summer crops, millet, sesame, watermelons, melons, etc. have been gathered, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6.



<i>"The Panagia's Entry" (the Presentation of the Panagia in the Temple)</i>	<i>Eleusis</i> (National)	<i>21 November</i> around the time of ploughing and sowing; the "new" agricultural year; <sup>5</sup> "female" period. (cf. Figure 71 Ch. 4 supra). The festival marks the presentation or entry (beginning) of winter	<i>Panagia</i> Depending on region, the festival is called " <i>Panagia the-Sowing-Begins</i> "/" <i>Panagia Half-Way-Through-the-Sowing</i> "/" <i>Panagia the-Sowing-is-Over</i> " ( <i>popular festival</i> )
<i>Agia Barbara</i>	<i>Athens</i> (National)	<i>4 December</i>	<i>Agia Barbara</i>
<i>Agios Nikolaos</i>	<i>Athens</i> (National)	<i>6 December</i>	<i>Agios Nikolaos</i>
The Panagia's Conception	(National) Euboea	9 December	Panagia (popular festival)
Birth of Christ	(National)	25 December around winter solstice	Christ
The Gathering of the Panagia	(National)	26 December	Panagia
Epiphany (Twelfth Day)	(National)	6 January Initiation (blessing) of the waters; <i>dōdekaēmero</i> (the twelve days between Christmas Eve and Epiphany) end	Baptism of Christ
John the Baptist	(National)	7 January	John the Baptist

<sup>4</sup> This takes place over an extended period, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 5 f., from October/November-December/January in Attica, Foxhall 1995: 98.

<sup>5</sup> When this "starts" depends, of course, on the region and the rains. In modern Attica, the sowing of wheat, barley and oats extends from mid-October to the end of December, depending on the rains, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6, esp. n.37. In Bourdieu 1980: 338 f. and Fig. 1 the passage from the dry to the wet part of the year (*lah'lal Yifer*) is marked by the turn of the months from September to October, but in Kabylia this also depends on the region and the rains, so here the time of sowing can extend to mid-December or even longer. Re the following, many in Greece, especially the shepherds, also believe that winter starts when the rains begin in earnest and Agios Dēmētrios is celebrated.

<b>Babo festival</b>	<b>Monokklēsia</b>	<b>8 January</b> the first germination	<b>“Babo”</b> (liturgical festival: <b>Agia (Osia) Domnikēs</b> , national)
<i>Agios Athanasios</i>	<i>Agia Elenē</i> (National)	<i>18 January</i>	<i>Agios Athanasios</i>
“Boules” (“janissaries”)	<i>Naoussa</i>	“ <i>Meat Sunday</i> ” (in 1992: 1 March) spring flowering	Part of the <i>carnival</i> (moveable feast)
<b>Kalogeros festival</b>	<b>Melikē</b>	“ <b>Cheese Monday</b> ” (in 1992: 2 March) pruning of the grape vines <sup>6</sup>	<b>Death and resurrection of the Kalogeros</b> . Part of the <i>carnival</i> (moveable)
<i>Kokkeri</i> (also called <i>Baboutzikarios</i> , <i>Bambouyerioi</i> , <i>Babuiros</i> , <i>Babousiarka</i> )	<i>Flambouro</i>	“ <i>Cheese Sunday</i> ” (in 1992: 8 March)	Part of the <i>carnival</i> (moveable)
<b>Mock Wedding</b>	<b>Koimēsē</b>	“ <b>Clean Monday</b> ” (in 1992: 9 March)	Part of the <i>carnival</i> (moveable)
<i>Annunciation of the Panagia</i>	<i>Tinos</i> (National)	<i>25 March</i> around spring equinox	<i>Panagia</i>
<b>Easter festival</b>	<b>Olympos</b> (National)	<b>in 1992: April</b>	<b>Death and Resurrection of Christ</b> (moveable) <i>Panagia</i>
“The Life-Giving Spring”	<i>Atropolis caves</i> (National)	<i>Friday after the “Resurrection”</i>	
<i>Agios Geōrgios</i>	<i>Olympos</i> (National)	23 April (in 1992: 27 April, moved due to the Easter) animals taken to summer pastures, watering of young trees <sup>7</sup>	<i>Agios Geōrgios</i>

<sup>6</sup> Takes place over an extended period of time, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6. See also Foxhall 1995: 98 f. from January/February-March/April in Attica.

<sup>7</sup> According to Foxhall 1995: 99 re Attica, this takes place over an extended period of time from April/May-August/September, also vines from May/June, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 5.

<b>Anastenaria festival</b>	<b>Agia Elenē</b>	<b>21-23 May</b> helical rising of the Pleiades; grain harvest begins “male” period (cf. Figure 71 Ch. 4 supra) flowering of the olive tree May/June	<b>Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē</b> (national liturgical feast dedicated to Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē)
<b>Birth of John the Baptist</b> (“John of the turning of the sun”)	(National)	24 June around summer solstice. Climax of the dry/“male” period (cf. Figure 71 Ch. 4 supra) <sup>8</sup>	<b>John the Baptist</b>
<b>Agios Charalampos festival</b>	<b>Agia Paraskeuē</b>	<b>in 1992: 26-29 June</b> grain harvest	<b>Agios Charalampos</b> (national, liturgical festival 10 February)
The feast of “the Panagia the Sheaf-Burner”	(National)	2 July	Panagia (liturgical feast dedicated to the “tunic of the Panagia”)
<i>Agia Marina</i>	<i>Athens</i> (National)	17 July	<i>Agia Marina</i>
Prophet Ēlias	(National)	20 July start of meteorological imbalance between dry and wet: “fight between dry and wet”, <sup>9</sup> the Meltemi intensifies, dog days	Prophet Ēlias
<i>Agia Paraskeuē</i>	<i>Athens</i> (National)	26 July grain harvest completed, start of period of holiday and leisure	<i>Agia Paraskeuē</i>

<sup>8</sup> Also clearly illustrated by Bourdieu 1980: Fig. 1, cf. 346, 374.

<sup>9</sup> According to Loukatos 1981: 88 f.; Petropoulos 1994, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

**Table 3: Schematic Survey of Selected Festivals within the Attic Festival Calendar:<sup>10</sup>**

This scheme includes two categories of festivals: festivals described in Chapter 1 (bold), and other central festivals within the Attic festival calendar (normal type):

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Time of celebration</i>	<i>Dedication</i>
Synoikia (or Synoikesia)	16 Hekatombaion (around 1 August)	Athena
<b>Panathenaia</b>	<b>21-28 Hekatombaion</b> (around 15 August) period of leisure, grain harvest complete	<b>Athena</b>
Eleusinia festival or “The Eleusinian Games”	<b>Beginning or middle of Metageitnion</b> (August-September)	<b>Demeter and Korē</b>
<b>Eleusinian Mysteries</b>	<b>15-21 Boedromion</b> (around 1 October) establishment of the time of sowing, around the time of first rains <sup>11</sup> harvesting of wine grapes, after autumn equinox	<b>Demeter and Korē</b>
Proerosia; that is, “before plowing-time”	ca. 5 Pyanepsion (ca. 20 October) prior to ploughing and sowing	Demeter
<b>●schophoria</b>	6 or 7 Pyanepsion (ca. 21 or 22 October)	<b>Dionysos, Ariadne and Athena Skiras. The festival was also connected with Theseus</b>
Pyanepsia	7 Pyanepsion	Apollo
Theseia	8 Pyanepsion (ca. 23 October)	Theseus

<sup>10</sup> See Table 1 supra for a survey of the Attic months.

<sup>11</sup> Onset of “first rains” varies according to region, but most often occurs in October, cf. Håland 2017: Ch. 6.

<b>Thesmophoria</b>	<b>11-13 Pyanepsion</b> (end of October) rainy season/before sowing; new agricultural year <sup>12</sup> “female” period	<b>Demeter</b>
Apatouria	Ca. 19-21 or 26-28 Pyanepsion	<i>Zeus Phratrios</i> and <i>Athena Phratia</i> received sacrifice
Chalkeia	30 Pyanepsion (ca. 14 November) Pleiades set; around sowing-time; warp set on the loom; olive harvest and pressing (alternate years); trenching, manuring, pruning of olive trees <sup>13</sup>	Athena (also associated with Hephaestus)
<b>Haloa</b>	<b>25 or 26 Poseideon</b> (around 5 January) first germination following winter solstice	<b>Demeter</b>
<b>Rural Dionysia</b>	<b>Poseideon</b> (beginning of January)	<b>Dionysos</b>
Lenaia	12 Gamelion (end of January) pruning of grape vines commences	<b>Dionysos</b>
Chloaia	early Anthesterion	<b>Demeter</b>
<b>Anthesteria</b>	<b>12-14 Anthesterion</b> (end of February) tasting of new wine	<b>Dionysos</b>
<b>The Lesser Mysteries</b>	<b>mid-Anthesterion</b> (beginning of March) “greening” of the fields	<b>Demeter and Korē</b>
<b>The City Dionysia</b>	<b>9-11 Elaphebolion</b> (end of March) around spring equinox, start of sailing season	<b>Dionysos</b>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. n.5 supra this Appendix.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. n.4 supra this Appendix.



A possible springtime Adonis festival	4 Mounichion (end of April) watering of young trees <sup>14</sup>	Adonis with Aphrodite (in extension of Eros?)
Demeter Chloë  <i>Thargēlia</i>	6 Thargelion (ca. 21 May)  7 Thargelion (ca. 22 May) rising of the Pleiades prior to grain harvest “male” period (cf. Figure 71 Ch. 4 supra)	Demeter (received a goat sacrifice on first day of the Thargēlia)  <i>Apollo</i>
Plynteria	18 Thargelion (or later: 25- 26 Thargelion) (ca. 4 June) flowering of the olive trees May/June	Athena, “Washing festival” (robes and statue of Athena Polias were washed)
Kallynteria	19 Thargelion (or some days later, cf. supra re Plynteria) (ca. 5 June)	Athena, “Adorning festival” (statue of Athena Polias freshly adorned)
<i>Arrephoria</i>	ca. 3 Skirophorion (ca. 18 June)	<i>Athena. Aphrodite</i> also played an important role
Skira	ca. 12 Skirophorion (end of June) around summer solstice, threshing	Demeter and Persephone. Athena also played an important role
Dipolieia	ca. 14 Skirophorion (ca. 29 June)	“Zeus of the City” honoured with the bull sacrifice called Bouphonia; that is, “the slaying of an ox” for “Zeus of the City”
Adōnia	early in Hekatombaion (around 20 July) rising of Seirios: dog days, Etesian winds	Adonis

<sup>14</sup> Cf. n. 7 supra this Appendix.

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