Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient

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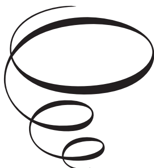
A Comparison of Female and Male Values Volume 1

By

Evy Johanne Håland

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



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This book is dedicated to my Mamma, who taught me to think; encouraged me to ask, reflect, read and travel. It is also dedicated to those I met on my travels, especially my Greek informants because they welcomed me and answered my questions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note on Transliteration xii

List of Tables xiv
Table 1: Schematic Overview of Attic Months

Volume 1

Introduction, Preface to the English Edition and Acknowledgements xv

Chapter One 1
Introduction
The Link between the Ancient and Modern Worlds
Women and the Female Sphere
Comparative Historical Research
Festivals, Fieldwork and Informants
Modern Festivals, some Preliminary Notes
Ancient Festivals, some Preliminary Notes
Ancient Sources

Chapter Two 34
Change and Continuity: The Paradoxes of Comparative Analysis
Survivalists and Pseudo-Survivalists
Anti-Survivalists
Loring M. Danforth
Michael Herzfeld
Summing up the Survivalism/Anti-Survivalism-Debate and some Perspectives
Greece on the Margins of Europe: Between East and West
Employing the Theories of Modern Anthropologists and Sociologists on Ancient Research

Chapter Three 81
The Religious Cosmology of the Greeks: Seen from a Greek Context
Religion
Ideologies and Mentalities
Researcher—Data and the Significance of Fieldwork

Chapter Four.. 114
Fieldwork: Modern Greek Festivals
Case Studies:
15 August, The Dormition of the *Panagia*, the Virgin Mary, on the Aegean Island of Tinos: Summer Festival Wishing a "Happy Winter" (*Kalos Cheimōnas*)
The Sanctuary on Tinos
"A Kilometre On My Knees For Mary"
Tinos, 15 August: the Day the Greeks Combine Religion and Patriotism
A Note on Scholars' Historiographical Assessment of the Celebration of the Panagia on Tinos
Summary
In the Hands of the Women, the Babo Day: Mid-Winter Festival, 8 January in Monokklēsia, Greek Macedonia
The Midwife's Day
The Babo Day in Monokklēsia, 1992
A Note on the Scholars' Historiographical Assessment of the Babo Festival
Summary
Carnival (*Apokreos*) in Greek Macedonia
Kalogeros, "the Old, Good Man": The Rain Magician, Lover of the Earth
Deutera tēs Tyrinēs—Cheese Monday in Melikē, 2 March 1992
A Note on the Scholars' Historiographical Assessment of the Celebration of the Kalogeros and Other Carnival Rituals
Summary
Mock Wedding: Clean Monday in Koimēsē, 9 March 1992
Koimēsē
Katharē Deutera—Clean Monday
Summary and Concluding Reflections on Carnival
The Easter Celebration, the Great Purification and Renewal Festival: Olympos, Karpathos, April 1992
Easter in Olympos
The Great Week

Red Thursday
Great Friday
The Lord’s Burial
The Holy Easter
The White Week
White Tuesday
A Note on Scholars’ Historiographical Assessment of the Easter Celebrations in Olympos
Summary
Greek Macedonian “Fire Dance”: The Anastenaria Festival of Agia Elenē, Greek Macedonia, 21-23 May 1992
Agia Elenē and the Ritual Cycle of the Anastenaria Festival
Anastenaria 1992 for *Agios* Kōnstantinos and *Agia* Elenē
The Great Feast Day: Sacrificial Lamb, Fire Dance and Communal Meal
Touring of the Houses
The Last Day of the Festival: Circuit of the Village, Fire Dance, Redistribution and Communal Meal
A Note on Scholars’ Historiographical Assessment of the Celebration of the Main Ritual of the Anastenarides
Summary
Festival of the Bull: Bull Sacrifice, Summer and Saint Feast on Lesbos: Agia Paraskeuē around the Summer Solstice, 26-29 June, 1992
Touring of the Village with the Bull
Pilgrimage to “Tauros”
Horse Races and Communal Meal
Some Comments on the Historiography of the Festival dedicated to Agios Charalampos
Summary
Summing Up: How Scholars have Assessed the Festivals in the Years they have been Visited and what they have Written about them
Anthropology, Folklore and Ancient Studies
Scholars who have Analysed both Ancient and Modern Festivals
Summarising the Modern Festivals

Chapter Five 295
Ancient Festivals
The Panathenaia
Summary
The Mysteries at Eleusis
Summary

Ancient Women's Festivals
The Thesmophoria
Summary
The Haloa Festival
Summary
The Skira Festival
Summing up the Demetrian Festivals Generally and Especially the Women's Festivals
Dionysos Festivals
The Anthesteria Festival
Summary
The City Dionysia
Summary
Summary of the Dionysian Festivals
The Adonis Festival: *Adōnia*
Summary
Summary of the Ancient Festivals

Sources and Bibliography 461

Index 527

Volume 2

Chapter Six 1
From Festivals to Fertility Cult and Women
Agricultural Calendar and Agricultural Cycle
Life Out of Death
From Death to Fertility: Agricultural Cycle, Life-Cycle Passages of Goddesses, and Fertility Cult
Marriage and Weddings
A Traditional Wedding in Olympos
From Modern Weddings to the Meaning of the Ancient Wedding Ceremony
Hieros Gamos
The Cave: The Maternal Womb, Location of Initiation Rituals
Other Maternal Bosoms for Initiation and Wedlock
The Result of the Marriage: Offspring and Food Promoted and Secured through Sympathetic Magic
Ritual Obscenities
Summary of the Fertility Cult and Perspectives

Chapter Seven 220
Competing Ideologies: Cults, Women, Value-Systems and Power
From Fertility Cult Towards an Alternative Approach to Researching Both Women and Gender
Summary

Chapter Eight 354
Some Concluding Reflections on Festivals, Men and Women

Sources and Bibliography 367

Appendix 1 433
Overview of Festivals
Table 2: Schematic Survey of Selected Modern Greek Festivals
Table 3: Schematic Survey of Selected Festivals within the Attic Festival Calendar

Appendix 2 445
The Annual Calendar of the Kabyles
Table 4: Schematic of Female—Male Division as Connected to the Code of Honour and Shame
Table 5: Synoptic Diagram of Pertinent Oppositions

Appendix 3 451
Photographs
List of Figures

Index 536

A Note on Transliteration

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 these.

Α	α	a
Β	β	b
Γ	γ	g
Δ	δ	d
Ε	ε	e
Ζ	ζ	z
Η	η	ē
Θ	θ	th
Ι	ι	i
Κ	κ	k
Λ	λ	l
Μ	μ	m
Ν	ν	n
Ξ	ξ	x
Ο	ο	o
Π	π	p
Ρ	ρ	r
Σ	σ ς	s
Τ	τ	t
Υ	υ	y
Φ	φ	ph
Χ	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

῾ 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 however purely pragmatic, given how closely related the two systems of orthography are. With a few exceptions I have used the Greek alphabet in the footnotes, first and foremost when quoting ancient Greek citations that have been translated in the main text. When a Greek term is repeated in the notes it is transcribed after the first occurrence. Generally, I have not used the Greek alphabet in the text, but rather only in transliteration, hoping that this will be more accessible to readers who are less accustomed to the Greek language. When a Greek term is first used, it is shown in italics.

List of Tables

1: Schematic Overview of Attic Months xiv
2: Schematic Survey of Selected Modern Greek Festivals 433
3: Schematic Survey of Selected Festivals within
the Attic Festival Calendar 440
4: Schematic of Female—Male Division as Connected to
the Code of Honour and Shame 445
5: Synoptic Diagram of Pertinent Oppositions 446

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

INTRODUCTION, PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The aim of this study is to compare female and male values on the basis of ancient Athenian festivals and a selection of modern Greek festivals, in order to determine whether a comparative analysis of selected modern and ancient religious festivals can shed light on the position of women in ancient and modern Greece. My original aim was to use the modern festivals in order to shed light on the ancient, but during the fieldwork I came to attribute increasingly stronger emphasis on the latter, so that the study in its present state has also become a contribution to our understanding of modern Greece and, not least, the relation between ancient and present-day Greek and Mediterranean societies.

The research upon which this book draws was originally conducted for my PhD dissertation in history under the supervision of Professor Sverre Bagge (University of Bergen, Norway 2004).

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. Working simultaneously on material related to both modern and ancient Greece, has led to my being in contact with various research milieus in both Norway and in Greece, all of which have been very helpful. In addition, I have had numerous instructive conversations with many people who I have encountered in a fieldwork setting, both young and old, men and women, at work and leisure. Only a few of these can be mentioned here.

The work on this research was first and foremost funded by a three year research grant from the Research Council of Norway (NRC, formerly NAVF, the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities). In addition, my many stays in Greece have also been funded by various other institutions. My longest visit, which lasted more than a year (autumn 1991-autumn 1992) was also supported by a Greek State scholarship and travel grants from the Faculty of Arts, University of Bergen; a Nansen grant ("Nansenfondet og de dermed forbundne fond"), The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters; and a travel grant from the Norwegian Institute at Athens. The latter two institutions have respectively furthermore also funded one (the Norwegian Institute at Athens) and several (Nansen foundation) shorter stays in Greece during 1995 and 1996.

I have also received financial support from Inger R. Haldorsen's Grant for the promotion of Scientific Research, and a grant from the Faculty of Arts, University of Bergen.

During the period 1991-1996, I undertook several very profitable visits to the Norwegian Institute at Athens, likewise to the Nordic Library in Athens, in extension of all the use I earlier had the opportunity of making of the library at the Swedish Institute at Athens. In connection with the fieldwork during which I visited modern religious festivals, the late folklorist and sociologist Maria Michaēl-Dede, who had herself visited and published on "my" festivals, was especially helpful. Indeed, Maria put almost her entire private library at my disposal, for which I will always be very grateful. Meanwhile Thomas Thomell, former director of the Swedish House-mansion in Kavalla, Northern Greece, helpfully reminded me of the continuing existence of the Kalogeros ceremony when I presented my work at an invited lecture at a Nordic Seminar at the Swedish Institute at Athens in December 1991. For this, and also for being helpful with transport to the village of Melikē, he deserves warm thanks. As a newly-arrived doctoral student in Athens in autumn 1991 I received much good advice on using modern Greek culture as a source for antiquity, from the philologist Dr David R. Jordan. Following his advice, I contacted the late classicist and historian of religion Professor Michael H. Jameson (deceased 2007), who in turn introduced me to the archaeologist Professor Dora N. Konsola and her husband, the economist Nikos, who originally came from the village of Olympos on the island of Karpathos, and for several years had been a member of the board of the "Karpathos association" in Athens. The Konsolas arranged new contacts and kindly put all their private literature about the island at my disposal, as did the priest of Olympos, Geōrgios Chatzipapa, when I was visiting the village. The folklorist Dr Anna Papamichael-Koutroubas, then director of the Academy of Athens Hellenic Folklore Research Centre, was my official Greek supervisor for the year of my Greek State scholarship. She has also been a useful contact during my subsequent stays in Athens. On the island of Tinos many people have been helpful, first and foremost the late Eirēnē Mēliou (deceased 2010) who worked in the Church of the Annunciation during the 1990s, and also the employee in the administration of the same shrine, Eleutherios Kornaros, who formerly, during the 1990s, also worked as an archivist. In the other villages I have visited I have also been very warmly welcomed, and there is not enough space to personally name all those who deserve my warm thanks.

In this connection I would like to give some additional information about those who presented 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. During the work for my PhD dissertation in Greece I visited one religious festival with Anna Papamichael-Koutroubas, and another with Maria Michaēl-Dede. Moreover, many of my informants are also most often women who I have met in or on so-called women-dominated spaces. This initially afforded me an entrée into female Greek village society, which I might otherwise, perhaps, not have obtained, because I learned the conventions of behaviour at first-hand: how I as the—or one of the—youngest (from being a daughter to being a student) should behave. I especially experienced this, for example, on Tinos and in Olympos.

In Norway, I would like to mention my first—and now late—teacher in ancient Greek culture, Professor Tomas Hägg (deceased 2010) of the University of Bergen, who was very helpful from my first arrival at the then institute of Classical Studies as a young student in 1979. I would also like to mention the historian of religion Professor Dag Øistein Endsjø, University of Bergen who participated in the committee that accepted my PhD dissertation to be defended. Thanks to Professor Gunnstein Akselberg, the then Dean of the then Faculty of Arts, University of Bergen, the book derived from my dissertation was published by the Norwegian Academic Press (Kristiansand) in 2007. I would also like to offer warm thanks to the photographer Magnus Vabø, University of Bergen, who digitised the photographs from my fieldwork that are published here.

The Norwegian version of this book sold very well, and despite being written in Norwegian received many words of praise from the international scholarly community. Professor Alexandra Cuffel (Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany) and others encouraged me to translate the book into English, a necessity I have also felt myself over the years since finishing my PhD when referring to the book in my many subsequent articles and books which have, which a few exceptions, all been written in English. I was therefore delighted when the Cambridge Scholars Publishing accepted my proposal early in 2011, but was obliged to postpone the translation due to other commitments. During these years I have received particular encouragement and support from my colleagues at the SIEF (Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore) Working Group on The Ritual Year, especially its president for the first ten years,

Dr Emily Lyle (United Kingdom), as well as other academic associations of which I am a member. In Greece, I have had support from many colleagues, first and foremost the folklorist Elenē Psychogiou, as well as many of my informants, since, as illustrated by my book on *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece* (2014), I have been continuing my fieldwork up to the present. The research carried out for this book during a Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship, funded by the European Commission 7th framework programme (2011-2013), was the main reason that I had to postpone the translation of my first book into English. I have chosen to translate it directly from the Norwegian edition, both because of time constraints, and in particular to present the fieldwork on modern Greek religious festivals from 1991-1992 as it was conducted for my PhD dissertation, knowing that many young scholars across the disciplinary borders today 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. Thus I have long felt the need to translate the present book and make it available to a wider international readership than the original Norwegian version.

The Greek scholar Dr Nickolas Roubekas deserves a word of thanks for commenting on parts of my manuscript. I would particularly want to thank Professors Carole M. Cusack (University of Sydney), E. J. W. Barber (Occidental College, Los Angeles) and Allaire B. Stallsmith (Towson University, USA), who all gave my manuscript generous readings. A special word of thanks to Dr Helen Frisby (University of the West of England, Bristol) and my colleague from the Working Group on The Ritual Year, PhD student Molly Carter (USA/University of Sheffield, UK), for having proofread the manuscript. Additionally, a special note of thanks to Mrs Christiana Christopoulou, President of Ekdotikē Athēnōn, S.A., for giving me permission to use one of their images on the front page of this publication. Her assistant, Maria Tsoutsi, and likewise Natassa Kastriti at the National Historical Museum of Athens also deserve special mention for their help. My warm thanks to Amanda Millar, Typesetting Manager at CSP for her patience and generous assistance with this as well as my former publications at the CSP.

Last, but not least, I wish to express my enormous gratitude to my parents Judith and Elling Håland, who during the years I worked on this project and beyond have given me all possible practical help, encouragement and support which made me able to devote myself so totally to this project as came to be necessary, since what initially seemed simple, became much more complex and difficult than originally

anticipated. It is not easy to build a bridge across two thousand years, but the following is nonetheless an attempt.

Bergen, September 2016

Evy Johanne Håland

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> I once witnessed one of the most impressive of ancient rituals—the sacrifice of a flower-garlanded bull on the steps of a church. But before I was permitted to participate I had to swear by the Virgin Mary that I would never reveal where it happened nor the name of the officiating priest, for fear of repercussions from the bishop.[1]

> Il faut apprendre à juger une société sur ses bruits, sur son art et sur sa fête plus que sur ses statistiques.[2]

Many who have studied ancient Greek culture, and have visited contemporary Greek peasant communities, will probably have the feeling that the ancient world retains an active presence within modern society. The fertility-promoting sacrifice of a bull on the summit of *Tauros*, the mountain of the Bull, on the Greek island of Mytilini/Lesbos (henceforth Lesbos) after the blessing of the animal by the priest on the steps of the church, can be seen as a modern parallel to the ancient sacrifice of an ox to Zeus, the sky God, which took place at about the same time of year and in about the same location; that is, at the top of a mountain. Both Homer's Odysseus and Hesiod's peasant, as well as today's farmer, their modern equivalent, read signs and warnings from nature in order to foretell the future, or to be reminded of the proper timing of agricultural activities such as sowing or reaping. In today's Greece the prophet Ēlias (Elijah) is worshipped and his chapels are situated at the top of nearly every mountain in the country. According to legend he disappeared in a chariot of fire, and it has been said that he replaced the God Helios and his fiery steeds. Additionally, there is the similarity of the names, since the Greek *Ἠλίας* is Ēlias, and *Ἥλιος* is the Greek for the sun, Helios. A further reason to worship him on mountain tops is that he is the patron saint of

[1] Oikonomides 1964: x.
[2] Jacques Attali. Quotation indebted to Raftis 1987: 7.

rain, wind, thunder and lightning, and thereby possesses the same qualities as the God Zeus of antiquity.[3]

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. Mary, the mother of Christ, is *Madonna* or the Mother Goddess for the Italians. The Greeks call her *Παναγία* (*Panagia*), the "All-Holy One" (*Pan*—All/*Agia*—Holy). She is closely associated with healing, motherhood and fertility, as is the ancient Goddess Artemis. Moreover *'Αγιος* (*Agios*) Nikolaos dominates the sea, is the protector of seamen, and fulfils one of the functions attributed to the ancient God of the sea, Poseidon.[4]

The Link between the Ancient and Modern Worlds

Many years of reading ethnographic material from various parts of the world, but in particular from the Mediterranean, where I have also carried out extended periods of fieldwork, especially in Greece and Italy, have inspired many thoughts and ideas concerning the varied and complex significances of ancient religious rituals and festivals, gender relations,

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[3] For Ēlias/Zeus see Loukatos 1981: 94, cf. 91-95, where he discusses the "saint of the mountains". See also Kings 2:2, 11. The Athenian sacrifice of an ox to the sky God, or more exactly Zeus *Polieus* (Zeus of the City) (cf. Paus. 1.24,4) during the Dipolieia was called Bouphonia, "the slaying of an ox" for "Zeus of the City", Burkert 1983b; Harrison 1977: 143 f. For the other aspects, see Ch. 4-6 infra.

[4] It may be noted that Saint in Greek is *Agios* (m.) or *Agia* (f.); i.e., Holy. Agios/ Agia is abbreviated to Ag. Cf. A.G. *'αγνός*; i.e., pure, chaste, holy, sacred, purifying. On Agios Nikolaos as Poseidon's successor, see Loukatos 1988: 166 f. For sacrifices to Poseidon see *Od.* 3.5 ff. According to Plut. *Mor.* 367c, Poseidon permeates the sea. Nevertheless, several other Gods in antiquity received offerings from seamen, and Poseidon certainly had other aspects, cf. n.749 Ch. 6 infra. Re the sea God's various functions see n.363 and n.449 Ch. 6 infra; see also n.402 Ch. 7 infra, for the point about "malevolent miracles" with reference to the connection in which the argument about Poseidon must be seen. See also Visser 1982: 403-428 for the logic and Scullion 1994: 109 for the need for *apotropaic* (cf. *apotrepein*, to ward off) rites (rites to ward off evil); he also gives a good account of the overlap between Chthonian and Olympian. Incidentally I have seen as many churches dedicated to the Panagia as to Agios Nikolaos because of her special aspect as the protector of seamen (see Ch. 4 infra, Kephallēniadē 1990 and 1991). This is where the point not only about "malevolent magic" belongs, but also the point that both modern saints and ancient deities possessed several often contradictory or paradoxical functions and qualities.

and so on, that are encountered in the sources. The sources tell us nothing about how we should understand what we read.

In the following pages we will therefore see whether ancient festivals can be studied on the basis of modern ones. I have undertaken one longer, and several shorter, periods of fieldwork on religious festivals in contemporary Greece, and compared these with a selection of ancient festivals. The comparison was carried out through an analysis of the fundamental fertility cult which permeates the festivals. In this way I have also arrived at a useful way of assessing the role of women in society, since they are the central performers of the actual cult which maintains the official male ideology, the latter providing the perspective from which the festivals have traditionally been considered. Nevertheless, this study does not posit an unbroken continuity between the ancient world and modern Greek society. That would have required a comprehensive investigation of the rich extant Byzantine material, an endeavour which falls outside the scope of this study. When I embarked on this project my starting point was that through a comparison between modern and ancient festivals, one could possibly uncover new approaches to the religious world of ancient Greek society, and that modern festivals could perhaps shed new light on ancient ones and accordingly on the society in which they were celebrated. This position, however, implies a kind of cultural continuity in this region. Through the method employed, we also learn much about modern society, which is also the reason why fieldwork occupies a central place in this research. This study does not, however, set out to establish a concrete connection between ancient and modern festivals in order to reconstruct the ancient world. A broader notion of cultural continuity in the region can nonetheless illuminate the continuity between ancient and modern popular culture, as it is reflected in a selection of religious festivals, and thereby try to give an insight both into aspects of ancient festivals and areas of society to which little attention has hitherto been paid. The aim of this study is therefore to examine the ancient festivals on the basis of the modern material, foregrounding the relation between the ancient and modern festivals.

Based on extensive fieldwork carried out on modern festivals this research also aims to contribute to the contemporary study of Greece and the Mediterranean, where one does not necessarily encounter the same frame of reference and values as in northern Europe. One aim of this study has therefore been to try to develop a different frame of reference than the northwestern European one, which is generally employed before turning to the ancient sources. I have tried to acquire this frame of reference by personally conducting fieldwork, hence the fundamental role of fieldwork

within this study. This key chapter illustrates in practice *how* one can try to acquire a different frame of understanding before starting work on the ancient sources. Since the description of my own experiences was of such great importance, synchronic description must naturally comprise the focus of the chapter. In carrying out fieldwork and the associated data processing, I have become increasingly aware of the importance of studying modern societies that are different from our own, especially in the present era of globalisation. Therefore the study that I have carried out on modern Greece also seeks to contribute to our understanding of present-day Greek and Mediterranean societies. The potential of fieldwork to improve historians' knowledge and understanding of different societies has nowadays become obvious. Until recently this was perhaps particularly so in relation to African and other non-European histories, but even within Norwegian history it is not unusual to carry out fieldwork.

There are many examples of researchers who, portraying a society exclusively on the basis of material collected and published by others, present a totally different picture from researchers carrying out fieldwork first-hand. I shall therefore highlight the two most important results of my fieldwork: firstly, the central importance of the fertility cult in the modern festivals, which is also a useful reminder that ancient society was first and foremost an agricultural society. Secondly, my realisation that women play a significant and important role in the cult. This opens up further possibilities for new understanding through the adoption of a conscious gender perspective, also when dealing with the ancient component in the same geographical context. I regard the frame of reference that I have established on the basis of the fieldwork and the further processing of the resulting material, as being a very fruitful angle on future studies within the field.

This has illustrated how the fertility cult plays a key role in the modern festivals, and this cult, along with the death cult and healing, is associated with women. From this, it became possible to see a selected number of ancient sources from a new angle. It also becomes possible to try to say something about the practical role of fertility—and therefore women—in selected festivals of the ancient *polis* (city-state), and thus gain a new perspective on the ancient context. A prerequisite for doing this is a conscious choice to examine society from such a perspective, thus employing a different value-system from that which is usual in modern western European societies. Doing so may perhaps reveal that women exercised more power in ancient society than has generally been assumed.

This study will therefore compare a selection of ancient sources with modern data collected during my own fieldwork in order to try to gain a

better understanding of the context in which the ancient sources were produced. The aim is to uncover new approaches to ancient Greek society and to try to gain a new understanding of familiar phenomena. This means that the present study goes beyond the traditional source-criticism associated with the philologically-oriented school, which attempts to uncover a cultural frame of reference through meticulous studies of the written sources, in order to give meaning to the statements in the sources (that is, the details are evaluated on the basis of the whole, which again is a sum of the parts). But why should it be necessary to acquire a different frame of reference before studying the sources, in order to gain a better understanding of the ancient context?

Not only are the ancient written sources products of a culture very different from our own, they are written in a way that reflects their cultural context, which is also very different from ours. Since the past is a foreign country and much more difficult to approach than the majority of other societies or worlds today, one might ask whether we can ever have any hope of gaining a new understanding of the culture in which the sources were produced. To have knowledge of the intimate connection between culture and verbal language is important, but in order to penetrate the local culture we need not only to learn the verbal language, but also the social values it reflects. This necessitates learning the social script. Gestures and other forms of "body language" are particularly important in this part of the world. A comparative analysis on the basis of fieldwork therefore occupies a central place here.

Since World War II a branch of anthropology has emerged that analyses Mediterranean cultures.[5] This "Mediterranean anthropology" has discovered several cultural patterns that are typical for the whole 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. This in no way means that there are not many sub-regional differences, nor that they are only found here. Rather it means that certain cultural patterns can be recognised across the many national boundaries, languages and religious groupings within the area. The variations that are found are generally variations on a theme. *Honour*

[5] In this section I draw on Esler 1994: Ch. 2, who gives a good account of Mediterranean anthropology, even if it is characterised by a lack of fieldwork: this is demonstrated by his heavy use of secondary literature, where the Mediterranean androcentric ideology predominates. Cf. also Horden and Purcell 2008. For discussion see, e.g. n.7 Ch. 7 and Ch. 2 infra.

is the dominant social value;[6] also important is the agonistic or competitive nature of all social interactions, the importance of the social group's acceptance of what one does, the nature of family life, and men's and women's different roles. "Mediterranean anthropology" equips us with a set of models for social comparisons and analysis which have close parallels to the ancient sources that will be examined. This material offers us new questions with which we can interrogate the ancient sources through a comparison between modern and ancient conditions.

Applying an anthropological perspective to historical material adds a broader dimension to the historian's generally time-bound thinking about cause and effect; society is considered both diachronically and synchronically.[7] While historical studies afford a coherent diachronic perspective, anthropologists have privileged access not just to words but to life as lived by contemporary actors; that is, living sources. For historians it is often reports from, for example, law courts that are the primary sources for reconstructing popular belief systems in the past. Such material has several weaknesses because it originates within a context of fear, the purpose of which was the eradication of heretical beliefs, paganism, or beliefs incompatible with the "correct doctrine", the prevailing ideology. On the other hand, the historical anthropologist, who is herself able to undertake fieldwork, is able to ask questions in a relaxed atmosphere. Furthermore she can also choose not to ask questions, but merely to observe the religion as practiced and lived. This provides us with the possibility of achieving a deeper and broader understanding, than one based solely on historical written documents. The two perspectives are thus integrated in a fruitful manner.

The various spheres or phenomena encountered in a society change at different rates, and some appear to be stable. Many who have travelled in the Mediterranean region have encountered great similarities between modern customs and those which ancient authors of sources such as Theophrastus (ca. 370–288/5 BCE) criticised in his characterisation of the "over-religious" or "superstitious" person, Plutarch's (ca. 50–120 CE) treatment of the same, and similar phenomena which various researchers have characterised as "simply superstition".[8] The actual customs seem still to continue. Even if "superstition" is a relative concept, we still see the

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[6] See, for example, Pitt-Rivers 1963; Peristiany 1966a; Gilmore 1987a. Cf. Ch. 2-3 infra. These references should, however be compared with Abu-Lughod 1988 and 1993a; Dubisch 1995. See especially Ch. 7 infra.

[7] Cf. Hastrup 1992c: 104.

[8] Bent 1965: 231; Lawson 1910; Plut. *Mor*. 164e-171f; Theophr. *Char.*16. See Ch. 3 infra for a discussion of the concept of *deisidaimonia*.

same unchanging repetition in much of the behaviour in all strata of society, whether it be the fetching of some holy earth, water, or various other amulets or the need for purification ceremonies, etc. Despite all the material at our disposal, no one has embarked on analysing the relationship between the two periods. Scholars have, for example, studied demonology or magic in antiquity and corresponding phenomena in contemporary popular religion, but have not conducted a comparative analysis.[9] This may be due to the difficulty of distancing oneself from a research tradition which has relegated such unchanging practices as belief in demons, the use of amulets, and various forms of nature cult to the realm of "superstition" from the aforementioned ancient authors to the present day. Such phenomena have thus been represented as either an exotic expression of "Other" people's "superstition" and treated accordingly, or pushed into the shadows, as something that is a dying tradition. However, it is still lurking in the shadows, and the material must therefore be drawn out and discussed in a reasonable fashion if an acceptable history is to be written. According to the anthropologist João de Pina-Cabral, pagan "survivals" flourish all over Europe, and this is nothing new. That is why survivals challenge our understanding of uniform progress. He maintains that it is the metaphors of the elite or the literary-historical genre, not the popular interpretations, which are outdated.[10]

Anthropologists working in the Greek-speaking region have also begun to discover the value of examining societies in which long literary traditions are encountered. Through a comparative understanding of different texts and empirical fieldwork, change and continuity may fruitfully be examined.[11] However, no modern scholars of antiquity have taken up the challenge, since their anthropological method normally involves drawing upon fieldwork results obtained by others.[12] With one exception, which deals with the ritual lament in the Greek tradition, no one

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[9] The possible reasons for this are discussed in Ch. 2 infra. For magic see Ch. 6 infra. Furthermore, cf. Burkert 1983a; Aune 1980; Smith 1979 and 1983; Vikan 1984; Brenk 1986 and Graf 1994 for the ancient and Byzantine material, and see Stewart 1991 for a discussion of contemporary society. See also Bernard 1991: 161 ff. for witches in Homer.

[10] See Pina-Cabral 1992: 45-61.

[11] E.g Alexiou 1974; Stewart 1991; Seremetakis 1991, 1993b and c; Hart 1992. See Ch. 2 f., and 7 infra for discussion.

[12] E.g. Walcot 1970; Esler 1994, cf. n.5 supra; Winkler 1990a, cf. n.14 infra. Brumfield 1981, is partly an exception, as is also Holst-Warhaft's (1992), registration of laments. See Ch. 2, 3 and 7 infra for discussions.

has tried to build a bridge between the two periods.[13]

The relationship between evolutionary theory and the idea of the so-called "primitive" society, which has been central to research into antiquity and the Mediterranean, has created more problems than it has solved. For example, the theory of a movement from a "shame culture" to a "guilt culture", from magic to religion, and from religion to rationality, has been shown to be untenable. We discover that phenomena which are supposed to have disappeared as other "more modern" phenomena supplanted them, live on in the pink of health, which is why evolutionism is a hindrance when it comes to understanding the actual societies.

In earlier scholarship, history was considered to be synonymous with change, but it is now understood that explaining stability is equally important. This means that we must revise the tendency solely to try to identify points of change. The ambition of writing every history as a history of change and development has in all probability led to erroneous conclusions in the study of Mediterranean cultural patterns. Because there are many written sources from the fourth century BCE and the second century CE, researchers who have studied the two periods have written histories of social change, presumably produced by sophists and Christians respectively. It is possible that the debates of the philosophers and the speeches of the moralists say more about the intellectual strata of society to which they belonged—and the competition for ideological hegemony between them—than about society as a whole. They are therefore not well suited to be the only sources of description of the beliefs and practices of the ordinary people.[14] On the other hand one must not dismiss the sources they have produced so long as the above conditions are borne in mind. The philosophers and orators were also products of the society in which they lived and can therefore say a great deal about that society if one reads between the lines, or if one accepts Giambattista Vico's thesis that: "in every language the words that are needed in the cultivated arts and arcane sciences are of peasant origin".[15]

It is important to remember this when trying to write social history. The dominant trend of historical research has been, however, to forget to "read between the lines", and to take notice of the experiences of ordinary people. A male Western elite has written about the ancient male elite with whom they wish to be associated and to regard as their historical predecessors. Accordingly, and quite naturally, the majority of people

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[13]Alexiou 1974. Cf. n.11 supra and Ch. 2 infra.

[14] This section is inspired by Winkler 1990a: 43 f. Cf. Ch. 2 infra for discussion.

[15] Quotation from Vico 2,2,2,1, is from Herzfeld 1992a: 186, and it is just as relevant to ancient as contemporary conditions.

have been excluded. Although female researchers have studied their ancient sisters for many decades, they have not yet managed to close the gap created by the approach described above, because, like their male colleagues they have looked at ancient societies, women included, from the perspective of Western academics. In this way they have contributed to upholding the image that male scholars have created between two types of history: a "male", "linear" one linked to a "Western, androcentric way of thinking", to "rationality", "change", and "progress"; while a cyclical, repetitive "female" history linked to the religious practices of peasant societies, fails to fit the desired narrative of the scholars, and thus remains waiting to be written. All the same, a single society may possess different perspectives of time, as the historian Fernand Braudel has demonstrated, and thus several parallel histories.[16] The crucial thing is that they are of equal importance and complementary, and belong to a common historical whole.

Today there are several more or less new nation-states in the geographical area where ancient Greek culture flourished. It would therefore be necessary to master their various languages in order to write a traditional cultural history of the area, which is not the aim of this work. I have consequently limited myself to a selected region of the ancient Greek cultural environment and the Greek cultural area of today. The neighbouring areas will be included where necessary, and then in translation. This is mainly because it is impossible to set boundaries for *one* culture as the actual geographic area was and is multicultural, just as there are also many common 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.

An aim of this analysis is to try to gain greater understanding of ancient Greek culture. This will be done through a (mutual) comparison between modern and ancient Greek culture, as it may be read from the same linguistic area. This does not mean that I wish to create an exact picture of the past on the basis of detailed investigations of the present, but it does mean that, in an attempt to argue for the importance of changing the usual frame of reference that we use when we interpret the culture of antiquity, I will adopt an anthropological approach, where the focus *inter*

[16] Braudel 1969: 41-83. For female time, see Dubisch 1991, see Ch. 2 infra for discussion.

alia will be on some of the cultural characteristics revealed in the Mediterranean region. This means that we will also learn a great deal about modern Greek culture, and likewise gain an insight into wider Mediterranean culture, since rituals and customs from the region will be included where relevant.

In general we have fewer sources for ancient Greek culture than we have for later societies, and many types of "proofs" must therefore be employed. For the historian of mentality everything may be categorised as source material. The aim is to read literary texts and other sources in a particular way.[17] I intend to examine the relationship between ideology and mentality on the basis of the existence of a number of religious symbols and phenomena in ancient and modern festivals. In this way it is perhaps easier to approach the "solution" to the problems our research confronts regarding the lack of agreement between the written and archaeological material. On the basis of what vase paintings tell us, certain feasts and rites may have been more important than numerous written records maintain. A history based solely upon written sources is indeed therefore limited.[18] As mentioned, the sources are written by the elite, and describe their ideals and worldviews, thus this material cannot automatically be regarded as representative of people in antiquity, because both lower status men and women are excluded. This is also true of later periods of Greek history. How did popular beliefs fit into the official ideological and religious worldview despite Hippocrates', Aristophanes', Plato's or Plutarch's contemptuous attitudes? What can one learn through the voices of others about those, such as women, who have not spoken up? According to the anthropologist Michael Jackson, the historian always discusses his research object on the basis of his own socio-political context. This is true both of ancient authors and later scholars. But as already indicated, one can also find traces of the subject population's "voices" between the lines of the narrative of the one describing it. This goes for both Herodotus in antiquity, and later travel descriptions, which is why one can combine two such seemingly contradictory assertions as: "first and foremost travel descriptions say something about the travellers in that they transfer inverted images of themselves onto the others", as opposed to "historical travel descriptions are a sort of analogies to later anthropology and some travellers have always had a specially observant gaze, which has meant that also what a society took for granted has been

[17] Le Goff 1974: 85 ff.

[18] Cf. Finnegan's criticism of the humanities' implicit conviction that written texts are the most correct object of study (1990: 131), cf. Ch. 3 and 6 infra for discussion.