# Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient

# Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient:

## *A Comparison of Female and Male Values Volume 2*

By

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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.

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# 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.

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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 |

# CHAPTER SIX

# FROM FESTIVALS TO FERTILITY CULT AND WOMEN

A comparison between the modern and ancient religious festivals demonstrates that the official festivals reflect critical passages during the agricultural cycle and the most important life-cycle rituals within the human lifespan. This emerges from an analytical investigation of modern and ancient value-systems, based on the relationship between official and popular religion, where traditional values linked with the fertility cult, death cult, and healing are important components.

Festivals were as important in ancient Greece as they are today, and the festivals that have been described in the two previous chapters follow the agricultural cycle, even though some of them seem to be less obviously related to agriculture than others. It is natural to take the connection between the agricultural cycle and fertility as a starting point, because this is one of the cults that one can study comprehensively in the festivals. As the present research will investigate the significance of fertility rituals for official ideologies, the fertility cult that relates to the agricultural cycle will be discussed first. Rituals and values in a more comprehensive comparative context will then be considered because a wider consequence is the relationship of the fertility cult to gender and sexuality, the female and the male, and therefore the significance of the female sphere versus the male sphere and the relationship between different value-systems.

Several of the festivals not usually considered to be agricultural are often connected with rites of passage marking important phases in individual women's lives or an important passage in the life cycle of a deceased mediator. Moreover they have been adapted or in some other way added to meanings related to the cycle of the agricultural year. This is apparent throughout the festivals, both 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.

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 festival. 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 time in 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.

The fertility and death cults as well as processes of healing are connected with women and the female domains. From this follows the connection between the three cults; they become analytical tools with which to uncover the real meaning of the deeper-lying principles within the all-inclusive "ideological entirety" that generally constitutes a festival, such as on Tinos. The aim in deconstructing the festival and eliciting the meaning of each individual component is to obtain a clearer picture of the festival and its importance as well as the reason for its significance.

This analysis deals with rituals and symbols through a comparison between the modern "case studies" that have been presented and the ancient festivals; we thus come to an understanding of how people's different value-systems find expression through the festivals. Even though eager informants may maintain that the Babo festival and the ancient Haloa festival are one and the same, there is a clear difference in that the modern festival is officially dedicated to the Christian saint, Agia Domnikē, whether or not the festival participants are familiar with her. When one comes across similar aspects of fertility in the ancient Panathenaia festival and the modern festival dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia on Tinos, it does not mean that the modern festival is a copy of the ancient one either; the picture is much more complex than that. We encounter many elements in each of the modern festivals relevant to the attempt to illuminate ancient society. For instance, modern rituals such as the dance of the Anastenarides may perhaps shed new light on the Haloa festival. To claim that one festival is a direct copy of another would therefore weaken the analysis.

## Agricultural Calendar and Agricultural Cycle

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. This is still valid, although other forms of income are

developing very fast, and despite a gap of two millennia between the ancient and modern societies and many associated changes in addition to emigration and immigration in the Dark Ages, in Hellenistic times, and more recently.

Even if the elements of risk inherent in life today are quite different from the risks faced by the peoples of antiquity, when famine was the result of failed crops, this is a reality that could still be experienced in the twentieth century, and not just during the Greek Civil War of the 1940s. Only relatively recently has Greece been able to turn the provisions of the European Union to practical use, as they did after the flood diasters of recent years, which followed periods of severe drought. Most of my older informants who are in their sixties or older have not forgotten the scarcities of their childhood and are therefore very keen to talk about all the food connected with the festivals. Even with the aforementioned provisions in reserve, it is an important emotional experience for the peasant to see his entire crop being lost. The Greeks' dependence on obtaining food from abroad is not a new phenomenon. The vital grain import from the Black Sea region is a recurring theme in classical Athenian literature, and on Teos, on the coast of Asia Minor, it was a capital offence to disrupt it.

The agricultural cycle, and thereby the agricultural calendars, are similar today and in 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 are still firmly attached to the land. The same staple food products are still grown, and the important activities of the agricultural year relate to ploughing, sowing, the sprouting of the grain, harvesting and threshing. Integrated with this schedule are the cultivation of the other central crops, vines and olives, and stockbreeding activities.

By the end of October, when it is time for ploughing and sowing, the animals are brought in from the pastures where they have been since the end of April. Hesiod advises bringing the ox into the stable "to feed your horned oxen in the byre", when the winter rains or "the season of rainy winter" begins. Then the sowing season starts. He refers to autumn sowing as *arotos*;[1] that is, ploughing, since the two activities took place at the same time. A preliminary ploughing was often undertaken to get rid of weeds and to spread manure and moisture.[2] Both in antiquity and today we find a combination of peasant and shepherd cultures in one and the same

[1] Hes. *Op.*: 450, cf. 384, 616. Sowing begins: *Op.* 448 ff. See also LSJ s.v. ἄροτος re Hes. *Op*. 450; i.e., the time of sowing.
[2] Cf. Brumfield 1981: 20.

community, for in Greece the soil is so poor that the farmer must have several means of sustenance.

The olive harvest starts in November and lasts for two months, and the trees are grafted at the same time. The mature olives are pressed immediately after harvesting, but the olives that are for eating are soaked in brine for four months.[3] In autumn the vineyards are made ready for the winter. From the middle of October to the middle of November the ground is dug and the vines are grafted and pruned from mid-December/January to February. They must be ready before the budding in March, whereas according to Hesiod,[4] one can carry on with digging and ploughing till the middle of May. The new wine is ready for drinking by the end of October, after about forty days, when the fermentation is complete, but it improves if allowed to sit for longer, until the end of February, for example.

Both agricultural machinery and fertilisers have been introduced in Greece as in other places, but apart from this the technological level of farming is very similar in practice to that of ancient times. The hoe is still the most used agricultural tool, along with the ard or scratch plough, a simple wooden plough with a hoe-like blade, which does not invert the soil. The main products are still grain, wine and olives, and the technique is still mainly dry farming, which is appropriate to a climatic region with poor soil, plenty of autumn rains, cold winters and a burning summer sun, where it is necessary to conserve the soil moisture by all possible means. Both the ancient agricultural writers and the agricultural manuals of today give the farmer the same advice for obtaining a good harvest under these conditions.[5]

The grain harvest in Greece takes place earlier than in northern Europe. Today, as in antiquity, the grain ripens at different times, and the best time for harvesting can therefore vary within a period of up to two months. In northern Greece, for example, the grain harvest is nowadays around the summer solstice, and even though in northern Greece, one can both sow

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[3] Brumfield 1981: 26-28, cf. Foxhall 1995, see also Ch. 5 supra.

[4] Hes. *Op.* 571 f.

[5] See Brumfield 1981: Ch. 2, for the advices given by the ancient agricultural writers (Hes. *Op.*; Theophr. *HP.*; Xen. *Oec*. are used together with the Latin Varro, *Res Rusticae*; Columella, *Res Rustica*. The Latin writers are used with care, however, due to the climatic differences between Italy and Greece), Byzantine excerpts and modern agricultural manuals. See Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 232 for a picture of ploughing in modern times with oxen and ard (scratch plough) and cf. with duBois 1988: Fig. 5 re the ancient version. See Sanders 1962: photographs 6-8. Cf. moreover Ch. 5 supra re discussion about artificial irrigation, though little is known about it, cf. Isager/Skydsgaard 1992: 112.

and harvest one month later than in the south, we nevertheless encounter the same agricultural cycle. May is generally the month for the barley harvest, while wheat is harvested in June. Hesiod places the harvest at the time of the helical rising of the Pleiades,[6] around 21 May, which is suitable for people living on the plains, near the sea or in fertile areas inland. Nowadays in mountain areas the grain harvest can take place as late as August.[7] Nevertheless, harvesting generally takes place in June and sowing in November. In modern Attica the sowing of wheat, barley and oats extends from the middle of October to the end of December, depending on the rains. According to Hesiod, one should plough and sow when the Pleiades set, when the shriek of the cranes announces the rainy winter,[8] around 14 November. He also uses the setting of the Hyades and Orion on 25 and 20 November, respectively as indicators for the time of sowing.[9] The sowing must in any event be completed before the winter solstice. Hesiod advises spring ploughing, but fallow ground can also be broken in summer.[10] The month of June has many names in today's popular speech; it is most commonly "reaper" or "harvester" (*Theristēs*, cf. M.G./A.G. *theros*: summer, reaping). People today claim that from June to the olive harvest (November to January) one is without rest, and according to Hesiod, who does not, however, mention olive cultivation, it is generally continuous from the pruning of the grape vines—which starts early in spring and which he thinks should be completed before the arrival of the swallow; that is, at the beginning of March—to the "August break" by which time the grain has been harvested.[11] Then there is further hard work from the grape harvest till sowing time, as the grapes should be harvested when Orion and Seirios (the Dog Star) are at their highest in the

[6] Hes. *Op*. 571-575, cf. 383 f.

[7] Brumfield 1981: 40, 147, see also 51 f.n.114 for a discussion of the theory that the ancient wheat varieties like those in use before 1940, ripened later than those that were introduced after 1945; i.e., 20-25 June. She concludes that it is not possible to give such a precise dating, since there have been many different varieties of wheat since antiquity, and the grain ripens at different times. She asserts that the Pleiades rise around 19 May, while Petropoulos 1994: 19n.1 states it is 16 May, following West 1978. According to Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 132, they rise on 21 May and set on 14 November, cf. Hart 1992: 230. Moreover, see Nilsson 1961: 26.

[8] Hes. *Op*. 448-451, 458-460, the Pleiades set: *Op.* 383 f.

[9] Hes. *Op.* 615 f. Cf. Brumfield 1981: 21 (also for further references), vs. the commentary in the Loeb edition (*Op*.) 49n.2, which maintains that Orion sets by the end of October. See also n.7 supra for the Pleiades.

[10] Hes. *Op.* 462, sowing must be completed: *Op.* 479.

[11] Hes. *Op*. 570-608, arrival of the swallow: *Op*. 568 f.

firmament, "are come into midheaven, and rosy-fingered Eos [Dawn] sees Arcturus", in September.[12] When the grapes have lain under the sun for ten days and nights, and then lain under cover for five, they should be scooped into vessels, once it is time for ploughing and sowing again.[13] Plutarch also tells us of planting grapes around the spring equinox and picking them in autumn, and the sowing of wheat when the Pleiades set and harvesting when they rise.[14] Barley and some other crops are harvested in May. Theophrastus distinguishes between the barley harvest, which starts in May and lasts into June (that is, the seventh and most of the eighth month after sowing early the previous November) and the wheat harvest that comes later. According to Pliny, barley is "cut" (harvested) in the seventh month in Hellas and on the Peloponnese Peninsula, and wheat even later.[15] The barley harvest can therefore vary, but wheat is always harvested in June. Millet sown in summer ripens during the dog days, when Seirios "scorches the flesh". July is generally the threshing month,[16] and is therefore called *Alōnarēs* in modern popular speech. And just as in antiquity, so too today the grain must be ready for storage by the end of July or the beginning of August, before the northeastern winds called Meltemi—the ancient Etesian (*Etesiai*, annual) winds—set in fully.[17] According to Hesiod, it is warm until the rains of autumn come and Seirios wanes;[18] this is also the situation today.

The modern and ancient festivals are selected, *inter alia*, on the basis of their respective positions within this agricultural cycle. Of course, the festivals, thus belong to the agricultural calendar as well, and regular sacrifices are still made in connection with important activities within the

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[12] Hes. *Op*. 609 ff.

[13] Hes. *Op*. 615-617, "shown to the sun"/covered/scooped into vessels: *Op.* 609-614.

[14] Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 757e15 and 496e.

[15] Plin. *HN*. 18.10,60; Theophr. *HP*. 8.2,7.

[16] Hes. *Op.* 597-599. Seirios "scorches the flesh": Hes. *Sc.* 393-400.

[17] Etesian winds: Ap. Rhod. 2.520-527. Cf. Petropoulos 1994: 28, see also Ch. 2 f.; Triomphe 1989: 69 ff.; Loukatos 1981: 87-90, 96-98; Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 127, 136-140, 145 ff. For the unpredictable August weather, see n.28 Ch. 4 supra. See Foxhall 1995: 98 f. for agricultural jobs in August. The most important jobs in July/August (Hekatombaion) are the threshing and processing of crops for storage, and the watering of young trees and vines, followed by the fig harvest, while Brumfield 1981: 43, is concerned with the preservation of milk by making *trachanas*, dried and cooked coarse grain and milk, a means of preserving milk in evaporated form. Cf. also Hes. *Op.* 582-596 for a possible parallel, *maza amolgaiē gala* (590, milk/wheat porridge or bread kneaded with milk).

[18] Hes. *Op.* 414-419.

agricultural year. The stockbreeding activities run parallel. The selection of festivals from modern Greece and ancient Athens is not just coincidental, and the point of presenting the festivals from the cyclical perspective of the agricultural calendar is to show how the seasonal rituals of the agricultural year constitute the focal point to which many other aspects have been linked.[19] Even though the research does not exclude other aspects of the festivals, I accepted my informants' own evaluations that when "the year was good or not", it meant that "the harvest was good or not", in other words that the yield is either good or poor. My fieldwork taught me the significance of the cycle of the agricultural year, and of everything that people do to secure the food supply.

Peasants and fertility are therefore prominent in the modern festivals. As all of these festivals express fertility rituals, I have chosen to see them first and foremost as essentially fertility festivals. We are dealing with agricultural societies where people are concerned with securing their food supply. People collectively celebrate festivals to ensure its availability, and we find the same cults manifested through the same rituals and symbols and with the same purpose, though new meanings have been added. The communication aspect of festivals is important, because the festival is a means of communication at both the inter-human level and between humans and the stronger powers.

When dealing with the various modern festivals, one encounters close parallels with the ancient festivals. Hesiod (*Op*.) and the modern annual production cycles of agricultural work demonstrate the fundamental importance of the domestic economy (A.G. *oikos* and M.G. *oikia*) for the popular calendar, which again is the foundation on which the official festival calendar is based. The modern farmer performs the same ceremonies at the same time of the 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 central act of the festival is the blood sacrifice or a bloodless offering, such as corn cakes—the gift to the Gods or the dead—to assure that they will be generous and return the gift in the future. The agricultural cycle is observed with sowing

[19] Cf. also Table 2 f. Appendix 1 infra for their position. For the calendars, see, e.g., Deubner 1932 ancient Attica, cf. n.1 Ch. 5 supra. See e.g., Megas 1992, for the modern, cf. n.3 Ch. 4 supra. See also Abbott 1903: 11-94. Foxhall 1995, gives a schematic overview of agricultural jobs and festivals in ancient Attica, cf. Brumfield 1981. See also Ch. 1 esp. n.38 and Ch. 5 esp. n.725 supra, and the following analysis.

festivals every autumn and harvest festivals in the spring or early summer. The customs and beliefs attached to passages within the agricultural year are similar as well. As one encounters the same official "patriarchal family system[,] and a polytheistic-polydaemonistic religion," one may assume that the two societies "show strong similarities in culture, social organisation and folk religion," especially since the religion is related to the economic base of the community, agriculture.[20] Moreover, we encounter several layers or levels within the cyclical agricultural calendar.

We encounter 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 ideology was. The festivals were previously connected to a Goddess or a God, a deceased hero or heroine; today they are connected with a deceased saint. 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. There is general agreement about this among scholars of antiquity, anthropologists and folklorists.[21] So, considered as a whole, the modern ritual year is the product of an amalgamation of a many-sided non-Christian ritual history, a popular social and economic calendar, and a Christian *kērgyma* (preaching/message). As stated in the summary of the ancient festivals, with regard to the socio-economic content that was integrated with the narratives of the Goddesses and Gods that were

[20] Brumfield 1981, esp. 3 for citations, cf. Ch. 2 supra. In practice, one usually does not distinguish between different forms of religious belief and experience in modern Greece. This worldview still encompasses elements from the ancient pantheon and it does not represent any cognitive problems, since people are less interested in theology than practical problems. The natural and supernatural are still mostly united in a holistic cosmos, connected with a simple universal determinism, according to Stewart 1991: 115. See also Blum/Blum 1970; Alexiou 1974. Cf. Rehm 1994 and Hart 1992 re *οἶκος* (household, house, home) before and *οικία* (*οίκος*) now. One may perhaps maintain that the comparison is not valid, since in antiquity after ca. 400 BCE one encounters the deification of living persons (the ruler cult), not found in contemporary society. There is, however, no space here to discuss this cult of living persons, which moreover has many similarities with both the death cult and the personality cult one traditionally encounters in the Eastern Mediterranean. See Håland 1993a.

[21] Papamichael 1975; Megas 1992; Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991. Anthropologists: Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986; Hart 1992: Ch. 8. Scholars of antiquity: Romaios 1949; Nilsson 1961; Brumfield 1981; Petropoulos 1994. Cf. also Ch. 5 supra.

dedicated festivals, the same principles pertain to the socio-economic content integrated with the Christian pantheon and narratives.[22]

The modern popular calendar reflects the Christian culture's hegemony in Greece, but it also brings both eclectic and divergent practice under the Christian banner, as was pointed out during the assessment of the Kalogeros festival in Chapter 4 in particular, but one comes to the same realisation when examining the main festival of the Anastenarides throughout history. As stated in Chapter 5, there was in antiquity an abundance of informal gatherings that went mainly unrecorded, paralleling 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.[23]

All calendars are based on a series of selected "natural" contrasts, and according to Edmund Leach, the annual cycle constitutes a series of oscillations between poles.[24] Solar and astronomical contrasts (zenith and lowest point), the beginning and termination of economical tasks, the weather's polarities (light and dark, calm and rough, dry and wet, cold and hot), and periodic natural events (like the return of the swallow) stipulate sensible contrasting elements that are shaped into a common calendar.[25] This material has been used in the structuring of the Orthodox calendar, so that the year is divided into different kinds of holy spaces. The main festivals, Christmas and Easter, rotate around Christ, identified as the "light", and are connected with its appearance and increase, while summer and autumn are connected with saints' festivals and the Panagia.

What is striking in the festival pattern is how the ecclesiastical year is organised around the increase of the sun.[26] Four feasts dedicated to Christ and John the Baptist mark the beginnings of the four seasons, where the celebrations of their births are at opposite points of the "Calendrical

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[22] See Ch. 5 supra, and cf. Hart 1992: 228; Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986, see also Loukatos 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988. There is thus a mutual adaptation in the integration between earlier rituals and the Christian calendar. Machin's (1983:121) claim that the Easter ritual of the Orthodox Church denies the natural fact of death may therefore be connected with the Church's adaptation of the popular cult's dependence on the natural cycle, cf. Hart 1992: Ch. 8. See Megas 1992 for the annual ritual cycle in the countryside, whereas Ware 1991: 304-310 deals with the liturgical/official calendar of the Orthodox Church.

[23] See also Appendix 1 n.12 infra for elaboration. See furthermore Papamichael 1975.

[24] Leach 1961.

[25] Hart 1992: 229, the following draws especially on Ch. 8 in Hart and Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986.

[26] Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986.

Compass" mentioned in Chapter 4, as are also the celebrations of their conceptions, within the general structure of the Orthodox year. Within this "Calendrical Compass", the increase and decrease of the light, the equinoxes, ploughing, sowing and harvest are central:[27] The time of John's conception is celebrated around the autumn equinox. Later ploughing and sowing take place, followed by the winter solstice with the birth of Christ, Christmas and the increasing light, the carnival season, and the Lenten fast. Then comes the concurrence between the spring equinox and the Annunciation, followed by Easter and the birth of John around the summer solstice, when the grain is harvested, and after which the light decreases. Therefore the festival is called "John (*tou liotropou*) of the turning of the sun" in popular speech, and he is often related to the Panagia in the cult.[28] Today, Orthodoxy is mainly "learned through the calendar and through biography" or the life cycles of divine persons, and the liturgical year is established through the Panagia's biography, as it is illustrated through the festivals to be discussed later in this chapter.[29]

The polarity between Jesus and John is only one of the many polarities connecting aspects of everyday life and cosmology. Also important is the rising and setting of the stars, especially the Pleiades, whose helical rising is around 21 May; that is, the day one celebrates the Anastenaria in honour of Agios Kōnstantinos and Agia Elenē, while their setting is attached to Agios Philoppos' day on 14 November. Furthermore, each village, region or occupational group divides the year into seasonal segments by means of special feast days. For the shepherds the two poles of the year are defined by the festivals of Agios Geōrgios on 23 April and Agios Dēmētrios on 26 October, respectively, which are the approximate dates of transmigration to and from summer pastures. For fishermen and sailors, the periods of bad weather and rough seas are delimited through the two celebrations of the Cross. The divine persons have gradually become connected to the season when he or she is celebrated, and one often associates the name, biography and season with an activity, which might be expressed with an adage; Agios Mēnas, for instance, may send (*mēnaei*) rain, on his festival on 11 November. Moreover, it is customary that saints have taken over the cult

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[27] See Ch. 4 supra for Hart 1992: 230 f. Fig. 9, in extension of Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 76, see also 148.

[28] See n.27 supra, cf. also Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 129 and Bourdieu 1980: 354 (338 ff.) with Scott-Billmann 1987: 91 (the four elements of Empedokles), see also 138. See Plut. *Mor*. 377c for a parallel, though he is nevertheless critical of the popular cult.

[29] See Megas 1992: 247, 33, 240, 145, 187, 231, 240, for the festivals dedicated to the "Mother of God"; i.e., *Mētēr Theotokou*. Cf. Hart 1992, esp. 233 for citation.

of nature that earlier was attributed to various pre-Christian Goddesses or Gods, as the Prophet Ēlias has taken over rain and sun from Zeus and Helios.[30] Plutarch tells us about similar circumstances from the ancient context when he draws attention to the close connection between agriculture and religious rituals, though he is very critical of the popular cult[31] in the same manner as many later representatives of the official church.

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, as already mentioned, 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.[32] Although

[30] See Ch. 1 supra, cf. Loukatos 1981: 95. See also e.g., Megas 1992; Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986.

[31] Plut. *Mor*. 377.65, the close connection between agriculture and religious rituals: *Mor*. 378.69.

[32] See Ch. 4 supra and esp. n.157 and infra. Cf. Blum/Blum 1970: 141 f.; Hart 1992: 230, 246. The festival of Agios Dēmētrios is furthermore related to the "Όχι Day" (the Anniversary of the No/rejection of Mussolini's ultimatum in 1940), on 28 October. Greece is different from the description provided by Jacobson-Widding/van Beek 1990b: 28, from Africa, where spirits of ancestors do not belong together with shepherds. In Greece one encounters both views, earlier and nowadays; i.e., divine powers above and below, localised in nature that has not been laid under the plough, and ancestors. Based on the logic that Jacobson-Widding/van Beek deals with, it might be because the Greeks are residents, although they have not conquered all "the wild nature". Variants from antiquity are the Spartans' conquests of Messenia and the Athenian expansion in Attica, although other people were already living there, cf. n.244 Ch. 7 infra re the relation to the Pelasgians. From antiquity until recently, both agricultural and shepherd cultures have co-existed simultaneously, as re the transhumance of the Sarakatsani. A "rest" is found in Flambouro (one half of the village being composed of gypsies and the other half of resident Sarakatsani). The claim of Jacobson-Widding/van Beek that regeneration by recycling is as unfamiliar to the true shepherd's ideology as agriculture itself used to be, may therefore be difficult to use on the Greek cultural area in which one encounters several "layers" or "mixings" of both religious conceptions and "types of societies". It might, of course, be due to the fact that the sources represent different societies both with regard to "ancient spaces" and during the course of history. But if one compares the ancient and modern peasant and shepherd societies with each other, one learns that today as in earlier times, both societies are found in the geographical area of Greece, where

one generally thinks that the winter starts by the end of October when the rain sets in in earnest and Agios Dēmētrios is celebrated and there is also a marked change of temperature, in popular speech it is generally declared that the summer starts in March and the winter in August, and during the festival dedicated to the Dormition of the Panagia people wish each other a "happy winter".[33] August is also called *allazomēnas* (the weather changes), and since the weather is very changeable at the beginning of the month, during the first six days of August people usually predict the weather for the season that is generally believed to start at that time. If, for example, the weather signs on 3 August are favourable, the third month after August; that is, the "sowing month", will have nice weather. The migratory birds leave and predict the arrival of autumn.[34] As stated, similar polarities are attested from antiquity. Moreover, the Athenian calendar marked the new political year in the middle of the summer, by the end of the first month of the year the Panathenaia was also celebrated, and in March the first "swallow, appears to men when spring is just beginning", followed by the cuckoo around the spring equinox, while the sailing season was opened with the Great Dionysia.[35]

The dog days run from 23 (24) July through 23 (24) August, according to the "Western" or Gregorian calendar. On Tinos the "Ninth day's ritual of the Panagia" is celebrated on 23 August, and therefore ends the dog days and the "15 August cycle" which according to Loukatos marks a "turning point towards autumn". Today the Prophet Ēlias is celebrated on 20 July; that is, around the time when the dog days begin. Based on the seasonal view, Loukatos has claimed that the festival dedicated to the

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the soil was and is so poor that the peasant must compensate agriculture with additional tasks. More particularly, today one encounters a mixing of three to four layers or ideologies on one and the same day, when at the time of ploughing and sowing one also goes from pasture, celebrates both a national holiday and the saint feast of Agios Dēmētrios. This does not exclude the problem that the sources from antiquity represent several societies. Something similar is found today, perhaps not one society, but rather many mixed into one.

[33] See Ch. 4 supra, and e.g., n.36. Cf. Herzfeld 1977: 34; Molinos 1993: 98 f.; Megas 1992: 238 for March/August. It may nonetheless be snowing in Athens in the middle of March. Cf. Bourdieu 1980: 338 for similar conditions among the Kabyles.

[34] I.e., the storks. Later the swallows also depart, Loukatos 1981: 130. Megas 1992: 237-240, cf. Molinos 1993: 98 f. for predictions. Brumfield 1981: 90.

[35] Cuckoo: Arist. *HA*. 633a11 ff.; Ael. *NA*. 3.30; Plin. *HN*. 10.11,26, around the spring equinox: 18.66. Swallow: Hes. *Op*. 568 f. See Ch. 5 supra. Cf. Tsotakou-Karbelē 1991: 61-65 and Herzfeld 1977: 29-50, who takes Ath. 8.360b-d as his starting point. See also Weill 1966: 687 f.

Prophet Ēlias, which is celebrated in the hottest time, thus marks the transition from the highest temperature (the dog days) to the lowest (midwinter). The festival announces the autumnal prediction of August, and he characterises the festival as a contest between dry and wet.[36] In reality August is the driest month of the year. This might however be the reason that people conceive of the month as decisive within the annual cycle, since they are so concerned with pointing out that the "weather turns" by the end of the month, at the end of the dog days. In September there are approximately ten millimetres of rainfall, but the rain does not set in in earnest until just before the time of sowing in November.[37] As with other weather signs that have been mentioned, it seems that the point is what is announced, when the meteorological imbalance between dry and wet is in progress during the dog days. The drought and the cooling northerly winds intensify around 19 July and last around forty days, when the sea is rough. Today this is marked with the Meltemi, which intensifies after the festival dedicated to Prophet Ēlias. Ancient sources tell about the same meteorological conditions. As mentioned during the discussion of the festival dedicated to Adonis, one finds many references to the rising of Seirios at the hot burning season, for instance in Hesiod and Alkaios.[38] Hesiod does not employ the term "dog days". He mentions, however, both the burning Seirios (the Dog) and Orion, which first appears when one is about to thresh the grain in July,[39] in other words, before the dog days set in with the arrival of Seirios, the Dog Star.[40] Hippocrates writes about the weather during the Dog Star: "But if the weather be northerly and dry, with no rain…during the Dog Star (*kyna*)". Neither do Homer and Apollonius Rhodius employ the term "dog days".[41] They use the terms Seirios/the Dog Star and tell about the weather, or the conditions during

[36] Loukatos 1981: 88 f., cf. 113-128 for the 15 August cycle. See also Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 105.

[37] According to the annual statistics for the period 1998-2001: http://www.chi.civil.ntua.gr/meteo/english/contents.html (last accessed 29.04.02), there are ca. 2 millimetres of rainfall in August, ca. 10 millimetres in September, and ca. 65 millimetres in the "rain month" November. The statistic starts in October. August has the same relative humidity as July, ca. 42 %, while June has a little lower atmospheric humidity. It is 60 % in September and 70 % in November. For climate, cf. Brumfield 1981. Cf. n.47 infra on corresponding rainfall conditions among the Kabyles.

[38] Alc. 347a and b, 352; Hes. *Op*. 587 f., *Sc.* 393-400.

[39] Hes. *Op*. 598 f., burning Seirios (the Dog): *Op.* 587, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 376a, 372d.

[40] Cf. *Il*. 22.29 κύν' Ὠρίωνος; i.e., "Orion' Dog" (=Seirios); Hp. *Aër.* 10.84 *kyna* ("the Dog Star").

[41] Ap. Rhod. 2.516-527, cf. n.40 supra on *Il*. 22.29; Hp. *Aër.* 10, cf. n.84 infra.

what we call the dog days. In an extension of the work of M. L. West, J. C. B. Petropoulos has provided a systematic and convincing commentary to Hesiod's description of the cicadas sitting in the trees, which he couples with an adage in Aristotle indicating a totally deserted terrain; the insect is associated with the summer heat and does not sing (and multiply) below a certain temperature. Cicadas do not exist where there are no trees, nor where it is cold.[42] We are now at the end of July and the beginning of August, definitely the hottest time of the year in Greece. Apollonius Rhodius tells us that when "Seirios was scorching" the worst, "from the sky, and the people could find no permanent cure", "the Etesian Winds" were sent by Zeus, as a counterbalance "to refresh the earth for forty days".[43] In *Opera* Hesiod also states that Zephyr is refreshing, and later in the same poem it is stated that "fifty days after the [summer] solstice, when the season of wearisome heat is come to an end [starts to terminate] is the right time…to go sailing"; that is, fifty days after ca. 25 June, which is ca. 15 August.[44] In the Athenian calendar, Hekatombaion is now terminating, and during this month both the festival of Adonis and the Panathenaia are celebrated, the first during the dog days, which marks the hottest time, the rising of Seirios, while the latter festival, the Panathenaia, was celebrated around the end of the month.

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[42] Arist. *HA*. 556a22-25 ff. Hes. *Op*. 582 f. coupled with Arist. *Rh*. 2.1394b-1395a. For the commentary on Hes. *Op*. 582-596, cf. Petropoulos 1994: 83-87 and West 1978. The cited and following references can be supplied with the diagrams that are presented in Detienne 1989, which are parallels to those in Bourdieu 1980: Ch. 3, and also are taken up by Petropoulos 1994 for antiquity and modern times re the dog days. See 103 f. for the Tables, cf. 83 f. for commentary to Hes. *Op*. 582 f. Petropoulos' comparative description of astronomical, meteorological, botanical, agricultural, physiological-medical conditions in today's and ancient Greece, are linked with sexuality and social religious relations to shed light on Hes. *Op*. 582-596. See Ch. 7 infra for elaboration. Orion comes before Seirios. Orion chased the Pleiades and was himself followed by Seirios; i.e., the burning star of the constellation Canis Major, the brightest star in the sky.

[43] Ap. Rhod. 2.516-527. Cf. e.g., Arist. *HA*. 600a3-5 for the rough sea, cf. also Ch. 4 supra. Cf. Triomphe 1989: 69 ff. for Seirios and Zeus. See also 69 for the Etesian Winds of antiquity, the modern Meltemi. See also Ch. 7 infra. In the Greco-Roman-Egyptian culture, people thought that Seirios'; i.e., Isis' star's summer rising marked the beginning of the Nile's inundation (Plut. *Mor*. 366a38) during summer and announced the fertility of the new life. Seirios/Isis was also connected with Athena (*Mor*. 354c, 376a-b, cf. 359d,f, but cf. 372d Osiris).

[44] Hes. *Op*. 663 f., cf. 593 f. for Zephyr. For the following, re the solstices, cf. n.403 Ch. 5 supra. See also n.23 Ch. 5 supra, cf. Table 3 Appendix 1 infra for Hekatombaion. For references to the burning season, see, e.g., also Ch. 5 supra, esp. n.648, infra this chapter and Ch. 7 infra.

According to Loukatos, the year comes to a close on 31 August, in other words the official ecclesiastical year closes roughly at the end of the dog days. People prepare to enter a new agricultural period preceded by a new church year, and the summer half-year also closes at this time when the transitional period towards autumn starts. Since the fourth century, the Byzantine church's liturgical calendar has marked the church's year's beginning on 1 September. So, while the agricultural year begins later, the official ecclesiastical year starts again, at the beginning of September.[45] This is marked especially by the celebration of the Panagia's Birthday on 8 September, when "the grape gatherers arrive". It was also around this time that the ancient grape harvest took place, followed by the Eleusinian ritual that marked the establishment of the time of sowing. 1 September was also the "third New Year's marking" within the Roman Empire, and became fixed as the empire grew and became dependent on taxes from subjects levied after the completion of harvesting. This political cycle that started on 1 September (as opposed to the priestly one, which started in January and the martial one, which started in March), according to, *inter alia*, Alkē Kyriakidou-Nestoros, continued into the Byzantine Empire.[46] One encounters equivalent conditions among the Kabyles, where the informants claim that the year starts in autumn (*lakhrif*). Although there is consensus that the year starts in autumn, informants give varying responses as to when the autumn (lakhrif) actually begins.[47] Whether one

[45] Loukatos 1981: 142. Cf. Brumfield 1981: 102n.87 for a good reasoning re the relation between the start of the Orthodox year and the popular calendar.

[46] Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 40, see 39 ff. for the Roman "New Year's markings", 1.1., 1.3., 1.9. The first was connected with the sun, the second was older and connected with the war God, Mars and the time when people started their warlike activities, but it also marked a crucial period within the agricultural year, and lasted also after Romulus' successor, Numa, according to legend, transferred the start of the year to January. The third was fixed as the empire grew. Cf. the importance of the agricultural cycle and the connection between various value-systems.

[47] Cf. n.4 Appendix 2 infra re the start ca. 1.9., alternatively 15.8., on the "Door of the Year" (*thabburth usugas*), which marks the entrance to the wet period after the dog days. One may ask what the reason is for this. Might it be an increased amount of dew? On this day each Kabyle family also sacrifice a cock and renew the contracts/relations (cf. infra this chapter for Greek conditions). For others the "Door of the Year" is when the ploughing begins, which according to Bourdieu 1980: 338 is more significant. Cf. Fig. 1 where thabburth usugas is placed on 15.8., while *lah'lal Yifer* marks the transition from the dry to the wet part of the year, ca. 1 October, just before they perform the already mentioned (n. 6 Ch. 4 supra) ritual of rain magic. Among the Kabyles the rainy months are in the period from

reckons the annual cycle of the Anastenarides, which starts the year with the festival of Agios Dēmētrios, to terminate with the Dormition of the Panagia (Agia Elenē) or with the purifying dance over the fire around the grain harvest (Langadas), it has strong parallels with the annual cycle of the ancients.

Since the peasant has a cyclical time perspective, the agricultural year in reality does not have any given beginning. One may have more than one "New Year" within the same solar year, since the seasons that are separated in fact overlap, as they do in nature, and when the unity is a season, three or four seasons may produce just as many new years within the same calendar year. Today this fact results in people wishing each other "Chronia Polla" at all festivals. One encounters the same way of thinking in antiquity, when the agricultural population continued to perceive the seasons in the traditional way, though the polis might introduce new calendar rules.[48] 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 is dependent on birth and death in nature, which consequently determines human life. The increase and decline of the light influences life on earth, including the life of the grain, and grain has been the main nourishment from the Stone Age until today. The agricultural work is connected with the cycle of the sun.[49] The natural world becomes decisive for the culture, as is also demonstrated by the festival calendar.[50] As today, the duties of an ancient priest could therefore also be dated by important periods within the agricultural year linked with ploughing and sowing.[51]

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November to April, it is dry from May to October, with the least rain in June and through August, according to Bourdieu 1980: 360 f. Cf. n.37 supra for Greek conditions.

[48] See Brumfield 1981: 90 f. Cf. n.113-115 Ch. 2 supra for time.

[49] Cf. Paus. 2.11,5.

[50] Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 148. Whether or not the deities are created in the image of the humans, there is an interaction, cf. infra this chapter.

[51] Cf. Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1986: 9-13 (see also supra this chapter, esp. n 46); Hart 1992, 90 ff. and *LSCG*. 69. Re 3 f.: ἐπειδὰν χειμὼν παρέλθει, μέχρι ἀρότο ὥρης, this may signify both the beginning of the winter period or its termination, according to Professor Tormod Eide, UiB, to whom I owe thanks for the help he has given me with this source. If the latter is followed with the addition, "until ploughing [and sowing time]", the point is still expressed: the importance of the agricultural cycle. Put in concrete terms, it may then read, "when the winter has passed until the time of ploughing". Then he stays there in the spring/summer period, in other words, from the end of winter until the ploughing and following sowing time; i.e., when the winter returns. If one adds, "until spring ploughing",