



Earthly lives and life everlasting:
secular and religious values
in two convents and a village in Western Greece.

Thesis Submitted for Ph.D.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the result of eighteen months fieldwork in western Greece. The study compares the interaction between a village community and two Greek Orthodox convents. This interaction however, is not examined along the lines of economic exchange but along the lines of symbolic interaction. Attention is centered on kinship, commensality, the symbolism of food, and on exchange and hospitality. It is seen that the nuns, by using images, relationships and symbols that have great significance within the secular world in order to create and portray their relationship with the divine, are able to posit their world as both an alternative to and superior from the lay world. The laity thus find themselves on the lowest rung of the religious hierarchy. They have to either reject the nuns' claims to spiritual superiority or accept their subordinate position. Most, as we shall see, do both, in an attempt to reconcile their beliefs as Orthodox and their need to justify their lives and world views. Underlying, then, the distinction between the convent and the lay world are two opposing world views. For the villagers, the supreme purpose of human life is marriage and procreation. It is through the birth of legitimate children that the house, the family and the individual may achieve a type of continuity. In contrast, for the nuns, the main aim in life is the achievement of eternal unity with the divine upon death. By willingly "sacrificing their youth" the nuns believe that salvation and eternal life after death may be assured. It is these two opposing world views which underlie the comparisons drawn and the understanding gained of the village and the convents.

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Map of Greece with location of village

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"If the language of the poem is taken literally, then the world depicted by it is indeed a creation. For that world is achieved not by some simple and uninteresting modification of the actually obtaining state of affairs, but rather by a radical and fundamental departure from that state. The result, we might say, is an "impossible" possible world. Such a world is not simply experienced; it is created." (Levin 1988:131)

Introduction

This thesis is the result of 18 months field research in southern Epirus, a region in western Greece. In it I seek to examine the interaction between a village community and two Greek Orthodox convents. The interaction however, is not examined along the lines of economic exchange, but along the lines of symbolic and metaphoric interrelations. In particular, I will focus on the use, often through metaphor, of secular images, relationships and symbols whereby the nuns' world is explained and portrayed, and their relations with the divine made comprehensible. The use of metaphors based on the secular world, places the nuns' relationship with an inchoate divinity in a domain of objects, actions, and relationships which are more immediate. Thus, the divine becomes understandable and approachable.

This thesis deals with metaphors and symbols. My use of the term symbol follows that of Fernandez (1986:31) who defines symbols as abstracted sign-images; as images replete with felt but unconceptualised meanings, which have lost their direct link with the subjects on which, in specific contexts, they were first predicated. Symbols thereby develop links with many subjects in many contexts. Noting Wheelwright (1962), Fernandez argues that symbols begin as metaphoric statements and can be translated back into metaphor. Thus, many of the symbols discussed here will be analysed as metaphors.

Metaphors can be defined as the relationship between

subject and object whereby the inchoate and abstract are given form and shape by being predicated upon objects that are more easily identifiable, graspable and concrete¹. Metaphors will be seen to mediate between the secular and religious worlds creating an understanding of those worlds. For example, God the Father can be said to be, from a secular point of view, a metaphor likening God to the roles secular fathers should assume in relation to their children. This grants God a divine power beyond human comprehension, a concrete identity that illuminates some aspects² of His relations with humans. Yet, it is also true that for the nuns, God is truly Father, the creator of life³. He is the ideal, a model for secular fathers, in that His love for His children is greater than the love any secular father could have. God then, as Father, may serve in turn as a object of a metaphor. As ideal Father, He should be emulated by secular fathers. What served first as the object of a metaphor, secular fathers, not only illuminated the subject, God, but came in turn to be seen as the subject of a metaphor⁴. The phrase, God the Father, depending on the truth conditions, the premises of those speaking, can be seen as either a metaphor or, as a statement of fact which can offer itself up as a metaphorical object for the secular world.

In this thesis it will be noted that it is the nuns' world which, in large part, is the subject of the metaphors discussed, and not the reverse wherein how the villagers are influenced by the religious and by Orthodox doctrine would be examined. Beyond the problem of space, my primary intention was to make monastic life 'real' and approachable. This process of discovery, of gaining an understanding of the nuns' world was, for me, similar to the process, as described by Levin (op.cit.:131) whereby:

The depicted state of affairs will be incongruous, outlandish, or preternatural compared to the conditions that obtain in the actual world. They will then be "terrestrialized," i.e., construed against one's knowledge of the physical and empirical aspects of the actual world."

Such a process of "terrestrialisation" occurred during my attempt to understand monastic life. Metaphors became the means whereby I was able to enter into the world created and experienced by the nuns. Yet, as the premises of the nuns' world became increasingly comprehensible and, as I took an increasingly active part in their lives, the incongruity and outlandishness of their world diminished. The process was reversed so that I came to accept their world as an "impossible" possible world. Metaphors were the means through which this was achieved. It was a process which entailed an eventual understanding of the context within which the subject of the metaphors, the villagers' world, was situated, as well as an understanding of the premises of the nuns' world. In the thesis I have taken as given the world of the villagers in an attempt to give the reader an insight into the nuns' beliefs and outlooks. Yet, I hope that through the discussion the reality of the nuns' world will become at least as tangible to the reader as it became for me. To give an example, the villagers felt that all people, and especially women, should marry. The nuns also believed in the importance of marriage, and though in the villagers' eyes (and presumably for most secular people) the nuns remain unmarried, celibate and without children, the nuns felt themselves to be married to the most gracious, beautiful, and powerful of all bridegrooms -- Christ. The nuns' marriage, understood first through the 'reality' and importance of marriage in the village, assumes immense symbolic and social power. Yet, in the end, I believe it does so only because it is a reality. The nuns' marriage, and their relations with the divine are important aspects of their 'impossible', possible world.

Approaching the nuns' world through metaphors is justified, I feel, on two counts. Firstly, the images and metaphors discussed here have been part of the Christian Church since its inception and before that, part of the Judaic tradition. The thesis therefore examines not how the nuns today have appropriated secular symbols and metaphors but how these symbols and metaphors used throughout the Church's

history⁵ may be understood by today's nuns; how the intellectual and emotional appeal and power of these symbols and metaphors may be experienced in a contemporary context⁶. Following from this, it should not be forgotten that the nuns were born and raised in lay households, in lay environments. And though their life histories were nearly impossible to obtain, for reasons that will be explained, it became clear that not all the nuns came from highly religious backgrounds and none of them had been raised to assume the religious habit. Thus, the nuns are also influenced directly by the secular world and bring to the convents secular outlooks and beliefs.

Theoretically, it would be fruitful to examine the distinction between Orthodox doctrine and lay understanding and practice of these doctrines. In this manner, we would be able to discern how the nuns blend Orthodox theology with lay beliefs to create their own relationships with the divine. Yet, aside from the difficulty in determining just what defines Orthodox doctrine⁷, it remains that such a study was not my primary aim. I do not, as yet, have the theological expertise to enter into such a debate and, more to the point, my interest was to examine the power as derived from the secular world of symbols such as marriage, food exchange, and hospitality within the convent. Thus, the admittedly interesting and complex question of the relationship between accepted Orthodox doctrine and the actual interpretation and influence of the secular world upon doctrine as used and understood by the nuns has been set aside for another study. Similarly, I do not examine, to any great extent, the use of religious images, relations, and behaviour in the secular world. My study focuses on the convents and not on the Church, though many anthropologists have examined how the Church, its teachings and clergy, influence the symbolic and socio-political world of the laity⁸. Here attention will focus on how the villagers regard the nuns, rather than examining fully their relationship with the divine which occurs primarily through the clergy. Though these areas are closely related to this study, I have chosen here to concentrate only

on one aspect of the relationship between Church, laity, and monastics.

It is not new to symbolic analysis that metaphors are not simply a characteristic of language alone but also characterise thought and action. Metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson (op.cit) succinctly put it, are pervasive in everyday life. For, as the authors note, our conceptual system, which is largely metaphorical, governs both how we think and how we act. By way of explanation, Lakoff and Johnson discuss the concept of argument and the conceptual metaphor that argument is war. This metaphor structures the manner in which arguments are talked about and participated in. Claims are shown to be indefensible; weak points are attacked; arguments are won or lost. Our perceptions shape our actions and relations in certain ways. By changing the conceptual metaphor, by using a metaphor which is not conventional, a new understanding is given to an experience. Similarly, new experiences or ideas can be incorporated into our conceptual systems through metaphors, through relating that which is unknown with that which is understood and known.

The first half of the thesis focuses on the use and creation of space as well as on the use of kinship terms, including images of love, marriage and death. In the second half, metaphors associated with consumption, hospitality, and the symbolism of food and food exchange, particularly within the context of marriage, death and procreation, are discussed. Underlying the discussion are two opposing premises, or world views. It is shown that for the villagers the very purpose of human existence is marriage and procreation. The nuns, by contrast, believe that the purpose of human existence is eternal unity with God through the denial of the material world and above all procreation. They believe that it is through this willing denial of life that salvation and the promise of eternal life after death are assured⁹. The nuns, and the Church, by using, both in the past and today, images, relationships, and symbols which have great power in the secular world to depict their very dif-

ferent world view, are able to reaffirm their belief that their world is an alternative and superior to the lay world. They are able to present themselves as spiritually superior to the laity. The villagers, as Orthodox, cannot fully reject the nuns' claims, for the nuns' lives are indeed based on values which are supported by Church doctrine and Tradition. Yet, as women, the nuns are viewed by many villagers as deviants and social failures since they have not fulfilled their procreative purpose in life. These two opposing views of humanity's aim in life (proorismos¹⁰) portray in the end a hierarchical relationship wherein the villagers find themselves either having to reject the nuns' claims to spiritual superiority or having to accept their subordinate position in the religious hierarchy¹¹.

This tension is enhanced in that the nuns present themselves as religious exemplars (Weber 1977a:285; Hawley 1987). They do not simply proclaim a message but rather a method-- a method of life and living which is by necessity in opposition to that of lay life and, within the religious framework, more highly valued (Edmunds 1986:118). The nuns present themselves, and are perceived, in certain context by the villagers as, in Weber's (op. cit:287) terms, the religiously musical; those more highly gifted than the unmusical masses.

Following from this, the nuns also deny any dependence on the secular world. Their constant affirmation of independence proved most frustrating to me as a researcher for I was unable to gain any information concerning their financial status. I do not know the amount of money the nuns either gave or received from the diocese, nor do I know what they earned from the fields they rented to the local people, or the extent of their landholdings. Also unknown is the income from the agricultural goods they produced and the goods they manufactured, as well as the income they received from lay donations. Any questions concerning these issues were met with silent disapproval or a blunt refusal to answer: such issues should not interest me. This refusal to discuss monetary matters, to discuss exchange with the world "outside", supported the nuns' image of themselves as

religious virtuosi, totally uninterested in material affairs and belonging to a community with complete independence from the mundane world (see Chapters 6 and 7).

This however, does not mean that the nuns, or Orthodox monastics, view themselves as totally divorced from the world. The orphanages, hospitals, schools, printing presses which have been and still are part of the monastic contribution to the greater society attest to this. Yet, Orthodox monasticism has remained closer to the contemplative and mystical traditions of Christianity, than that of many Roman Catholic orders. For this reason I find Weber's (1977b:326) distinctions between the ascetic and mystic somewhat elusive when applied to the Orthodox monastics. The hesychasts tradition¹² corresponds to the mystics' silence; to being in the world only to gain a state of grace in opposition to it; to minimise action and act as a vessel of the divine. And in a sense, the contemplation through which this is achieved is the central element of the nuns lives. Yet, the nuns must also actively work to keep down and overcome their creatural weakness. One may act as a vessel to receive the divine but one is still a person in the eyes of God; a unique creation made in His image. For this reason one must actively seek God and actively participate as a person in a relationship with Him and ultimately with His creation. Many of the nuns' tasks, though secondary to prayer, are none the less important aspects of monastic life and entail work in the fields and hospitality to strangers. To deny, for example, lay entry into the monastic church, to deny a visitor hospitality, is to go against the very precepts of the monastic vocation. The Orthodox monastics seem, therefore, to emphasise the ascetic and the mystical traditions as defined by Weber.

The nuns position as exemplars, as religiously gifted "musical" people, places them as I have noted, in a superior position vis-a-vis the laity. Yet, though the nuns are able, as we shall see, to conceal or transform their social relations making them appear to be part of an on going and never changing religious and ritual process, they find themselves,

in this manner, in a position of dependence upon the supernatural -- a dependence which they cannot nor wish to deny. This dependence is not problematic since the nuns define and interpret their everyday experiences and practices solely in terms of the religious ordering of their lives (e.g. Edmunds 1986; Williams 1975:119). The villagers, by contrast, must accommodate religious doctrine with secular life; they must accommodate different discourses, two different world views.

In this instance, metaphors act as mediating devices. As I hope to show, the ambiguous territories created by the metaphors bridging the nuns' and the villagers' lives, the human and the divine, are ones of possibilities: liminal areas which Durkheim (1965:458) has defined as sacred, as either propitious or unpropitious:

the pure and the impure are not two separate classes, but two variables of the same class, which include all sacred things...The pure is made out of the impure, and reciprocally. It is in the possibility of the transformations that the ambiguity of the sacred consists.

In this liminal state then, the convent will be regarded by the villagers as both a paradise and a place little better than an asylum for social misfits, whereas the nuns regard themselves and their convent as lying somewhere between heaven and earth. The nuns' liminal position is also portrayed by their relations with the laity. They see themselves both as exemplars, living a life closer to divine precepts and yet, unable to know the ways and will of God, the nuns must also engage in a discourse which defines them as part of a larger Orthodox community. Salvation, as the nuns say, is not ultimately, something that can be guaranteed, though it can be worked for.

Continuity, sexuality and fertility

In the introduction of Death and the regeneration of life Bloch and Parry (1982) examine how the symbols of sexuality and fertility are used in mortuary rituals (following Frazer 1890), and the social implications of mortuary rituals; how

these rituals serve to reassert the social order disrupted by death (following Hertz 1960). They note (following Leach 1961) that religious ideology often uses the promise of rebirth to negate the finality and social disruption of death. Cyclical concepts of time serve to deny the irreversibility of birth, life and death, asserting instead that from death a new birth follows.

Given this, it is not surprising that mortuary rituals are often associated with concepts of regeneration in an effort to deny the irreversible and terminal nature of death by proclaiming a new beginning (Chapter 4). Yet, though conception and birth should be obvious symbols for such an assertion, they are not always used. In fact, Bloch and Parry show that sexuality, as the source of human procreation, is often an ambiguous symbol seen as the source of death and opposed to non-human fertility. In other words, the fecundity or productiveness of that resource which is culturally conceived as vital to the social order (Bloch and Parry op.cit.:7), is often set in opposition to human sexuality and reproduction. For example, within the Christian tradition that which is desired is eternal life after death, Paradise. When Adam and Eve disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit they are cast out of Paradise and enter a world of death, turmoil, and childbirth. Celibacy, with its denial of sexuality and childbirth, becomes a means of experiencing and entering Paradise. Celibacy promises divine fertility. It promises both continuity without the death of the individual and a return to humankind's true nature.

This conception of fertility was strongly espoused particularly during the first few centuries after Christ's death when Christians, as part of a millenarian movement, awaited the immanent Second Coming of Christ and sought to prepare themselves physically and spiritually for this event. Such beliefs, as Pagels (1988:11-13) shows, were revolutionary. Before Christ, Genesis, the myth of Adam and Eve, had been invoked by the Jews to support their marriage practices. The myth of the Beginning was read in such a way that procreation, and thus sexuality and marriage, were central to God's

covenant with the Jews. Fertility was associated with procreation. Jesus' teachings challenged this reading of Genesis. Not only did he preach against divorce but against marriage (Matthew 19: 1-12). And twenty years later (Pagels op.cit.:16) Paul took the teachings even further. Though Paul admits that marriage is not a sin, he none the less sees it as a solution for those too weak to battle against their sexual desires (Pagels op.cit.:17)¹³.

A hundred years after Paul, the imminence of the Second Coming had waned. Christians began to protest more rigorously against this radical asceticism (Pagels op.cit.: 21-26). Thus, when Clement of Alexandria spoke against those celibates who boasted they understood the gospel better than anyone else, he spoke for the majority of Christians who were more concerned to accommodate themselves to ordinary social structures than to challenge them. Clement again reinterpreted Genesis, rejecting that Adam and Eve's primary sin was to engage in sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse was part of God's original creation and those who engaged in procreation were co-operating in God's work. Original sin lay not in sexual intercourse, as Augustine was later to argue (see e.g. Sherrard 1976:8-11; Bottomley op.cit.:81-96) but in disobeying God's commandment, a view supported by the Orthodox Church (Ware 1985:227-230). We are not damned by Original Sin; our actions, including intercourse are not in themselves wrong. What is wrong is the manner in which we engage in those actions. Underlying this conception of human existence is the belief that as humans we are responsible for our own actions; that like Adam and Eve we can choose between good and evil. In this fallen condition it is true that the human will is weakened and the intellect clouded, making the path of sin easier to follow. Yet, it is also true that humans can choose good over evil thus once again finding their true nature in God (Chapter 3).

It remained however, that even Clement regarded marriage as second best to celibacy (Sherrard op.cit:6-7). Such a double standard assured that Christianity would attract both those who were married as well as those who sought a renun-

ciation of the secular world (Pagels op.cit.:30-31; Atkinson op.cit.).

It is this double standard established within the first centuries of the Christian Church that underlies, as noted previously, the tension in the relationship between the nuns and the villagers. It is this precarious and irreconcilable double standard which the Christian Church has had to maintain in order to uphold its authority and credibility within the world, and to portray that its power derives from a divine source, from the Kingdom of God as represented on earth by a (for the Eastern Church) predominantly celibate clergy and monastic order-- by representatives who have chosen the "angelic" and higher path to God. As Bloch and Parry note (op.cit.:41):

The difficulty is that the position of real authority cannot be entirely rooted in a pristine ideological order, since ... this removes the actor from the world where his authority is to be exercised. He must at once be part of the ideal world where death is replaced by eternal fertility and part of the world where death and time remain. As a result he has to keep a foot in both camps....The challenge is one of achieving a workable balance between the ideological construction and the reality of death, duration, exchange and power.

How the Church has dealt with its monastics who, through their renunciation of the world challenge the often worldly Church authority will be noted below. It will also be noted that monastics too, often find themselves betwixt and between the human and the divine world, for they too are humans, though they, unlike the laity, seek to attain deification and their true nature in God (e.g. Turner 1985:52). The point I wish to make is simply that the renunciation of human sexuality as a source of fertility was not complete, and could not be, for a Church which wished to survive through time¹⁴. Celibacy was a higher order, but marriage and children were not a curse. Nor was the body despised, as I hope will become clear in the course of this thesis. For here too religious doctrine seeks to maintain a balance between the material and the spiritual; the body and the soul (e.g.

Meyendorff 1987:69-89).

Yet, though the Church does make allowances for different ways of achieving salvation, there is none the less a hierarchy, celibacy being favoured over marriage. For similar reasons, the gender ideology of the Church tends to place women on a lower spiritual rung than men (e.g. Christian op.cit.:153-154).

Historically, though Christian communities had, in the earliest stages, practised equality between the sexes, knowing no male or female in Christ, this rapidly changed. According to Pagels (1982:83) the strongly patriarchal traditions of the Jews, coupled with the fact that Christianity was adopted in greatest measure by the conservative middle class led to the suppression and subordination of women in many of the Christian Churches. Thus, though upper class women in the Late Roman Empire had often been educated, respected members of the community participating in social affairs, and in some areas even taking active part in the ceremonial worship of important deities, this quickly ceased under the auspices of the new Church. Women could no longer preach and perform liturgical functions. They were allowed to participate but only through the channels offered to them by men. For men alone were to form the legitimate body of the Christian Church. Thus, as the bishops were the fathers of the congregation in imitation of the divine order, so too should women obey and submit to the rule of men (Pagels op.cit.:88).

Such views also influenced ideas concerning procreation and fertility. Human procreation, often perceived as polluting, as Bloch and Parry note, is also often associated with women. For example, throughout Greece, it is reported that should a husband come in intimate contact with his wife after childbirth, he is liable to become seriously ill. Moreover, the child is only recognised as truly "born" into the community once it has been baptised by a priest, by the male representatives of the social and religious order. It is men therefore, and not women, who are vital for the creative reproduction, the continued fertility, of the community. Fol-

lowing Bloch and Parry, it can be said that women in this context, as in many others, are more closely associated with sexuality and death, and men with fertility and life¹⁵.

How these gender distinctions effect the relative position of monks and nuns within the Church is not dealt with in this thesis though it should be noted that within Orthodox doctrine there is ideally no man or woman before God. Monks and nuns are to be regarded as equals and they adhere to the same order. Yet, in certain instances, gender distinctions following those of the secular world are made and deeply effect the lives of men and women. Edmunds (op.cit:311) notes that amongst the Spanish nuns she studied, chastity provides a means of action and experience of autonomy. The religious life offers both a means of expressing a religious sense and an alternative to women's' domestic role, as many of the nuns I studied were eager to point out. Yet, because religious life is based on gender distinctions, the nuns' choice of chastity¹⁶ is subverted and made effective not as autonomy but as subordination through being identified solely with a sexuality reduced to virginity. Their autonomy is subverted by the patriarchal relations of domination and subordination within the Church which defines women on the basis of sexuality and thus as subordinate beings. Certainly from the nuns' statements in the two convents I studied, the importance of chastity as both an alternative to conventional domestic life and its association predominantly with sexuality was prevalent. Similarly, their full acceptance, as we shall see, of the male hierarchy within the secular domestic sphere, the Church institutions and finally, within the Kingdom of God supports Edmund's thesis (see also Danforth 1983). Though not central to this thesis, it will be seen how the relations between the nuns, the Church hierarchy and, the divine places the nuns continually in roles of caretakers and passive receptacles of divine grace; a grace primarily mediated through men. Yet, it will also be noted that both nuns and monks can and do identify, in certain circumstances, with either male or female holy persons; that they assume both male and female attributes (see also Wil-

liams op.cit:118-119). Leaving aside further discussion for the chapters to follow, let me now turn my attention to the early development of the Byzantine Church.

The Early Church and Byzantium

Between the third and sixth centuries the Church underwent numerous changes both in its confrontation with invaders in the West and in the development of conflicting beliefs within the Church institution itself. In 313 the Emperor Constantine declared the toleration of Christianity, and in 330 he inaugurated Constantinople as his capital on the site of ancient Byzantium. This movement eastward also heralded the divisions that were to come in the political and social developments in the Latin West and Orthodox East.

In the East, the ecclesiastical organisation became an important part of the administration. The Patriarch of Constantinople ranked next to the Emperor. In matters of basic dogma, of interpretation of the Ecumenical councils (council relating to or representing the whole body of the Church) or patristic writing, the Church reigned supreme. In its organisation and administration however, the Emperor played a decisive role. He was responsible for the gathering of the Ecumenical Councils. He chose the next Patriarch from the three candidates submitted to him by the Holy Synod, a council of all archbishops and metropolitans. He implemented the policies and dictates of the Church. Thus, the secular and religious spheres were deeply intertwined. They created an organic whole--an empire blessed by God, whose representative was the Emperor and whose court was a copy of the Father's court in Heaven¹⁷.

This did not mean that the Emperor had complete control. For though he oversaw the management of the Church hierarchy and its institutions, he did not have power over the content of the faith. Moreover, he was not considered to be a divine being: Christ was the only king (Meyendorff 1982:14). His position and not his person represented God. Upon his coronation by the Patriarch, the Emperor was acclaimed by

representatives of the Senate, the Army and the people. He was an autocrat, the sole interpreter and implementor of the Law, but he too was subject to it. If he was deemed incompetent or immoral he could be overthrown, albeit with difficulty¹⁸.

In the West, the Roman Empire collapsed with the sack of Rome in 410 effecting an almost total breakdown of law, education, trade, banking and communications. The Church, the major institution to survive and thus obvious heir to Rome (Bottomley op.cit:97), was increasingly called upon to act as both spiritual and secular leader. It established a monolithic, highly organised structure with pronounced legalistic tendencies, not only in organisational matters but in definitions of faith. Forced to teach and convert the many people pouring into areas that had once been under Roman jurisdiction, the Church sought to organise and elucidate its doctrines of faith and belief. There was no room for vague, ill-defined mysteries.

In the East, the relative peace of the Roman Empire continued. Invasions never managed to penetrate into the heart of the administrative and religious world of Byzantium. Schools of higher education flourished. The clergy, trained specifically to perform the mysteries of the Church, were discouraged from actively involving themselves in secular affairs, though they often did. Lay intellectuals however, could and did involve themselves in theological debates and issues. The great divide between the laity and the clergy that developed in the West was not as pronounced in the East.

In Byzantium, the five ancient Patriarchal thrones of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were considered equal. No patriarch had authority over his fellows. Though Rome was recognised as first in rank and Constantinople as second, there was no absolute leader. Doctrines of the Orthodox Church could only be decided upon by an Ecumenical council. In the West, the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, saw himself as sole arbitrator of disputes and as the overriding authority on questions of doctrine. He was, after all, the charismatic, apostolic descendent of St.

Peter. In the East no bishop, not even the Pope, could exercise such authority (see e.g. Meyendorff op.cit.:51; Runciman 1971: 14-16).

These historic differences profoundly influenced the philosophical foundations of the Eastern Church. The Orthodox were inclined towards mysticism. Their attitude towards doctrine was apophatic, believing that God cannot be conceived by the human mind. They, and here they were in agreement with the West, believed that deification, as realised by the God-man Christ, is the goal of human existence. Yet, for the Orthodox, deification was recognised as a doctrine that could not be reduced to rational categories but rather had to be experienced.

The Orthodox Church held and still holds that no institution or external authority, including the Church, should stand between a person and God. That is, the authority of the Church did not suppress the authority of the charismatic leaders, the monastics and holy persons, as long as they understood their leadership within the context of the sacramental communion of the Church, a sacrament which could only be granted by a clergyman consecrated by a bishop. For, central to Orthodox theology is the liturgy, and it is only through the liturgy that the prophetic and charismatic role of the Orthodox monastics is ultimately legitimated, ultimately allowed to exist¹⁹. Thus, unlike Western Christianity which affirmed the primacy of grace and the power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Eastern Christianity took the risk of leaving the problem of the relationship between the institutional Church and the charismatic leaders unresolved²⁰. The paradox between institutional and charismatic leadership remained and remains balanced as long as the eucharistic sacrament remains central to monastic theology (Meyendorff op.cit:197-215).

For these reasons, Byzantine theology gave greater credit to saints or prophets as authorities in the field of theology than did the the Latin West. This charismatic mysticism, however, sometimes could lead, in its extreme expression, to a denial of the sacraments and thus, a denial of the institutional Church²¹. The balance between the centrifugal

forces of the State and Church were often countered by the centripetal forces of various mystics in different parts of the Byzantine Empire.

Just as Byzantine theology avoided rationally structured systematisation so to the Byzantine Church never bound itself to an exhaustive code of ecclesiastical laws²². Canonical requirements were seen as absolute reflections of the permanent norms of Christian doctrines and ethics but the Church also recognised the possibility that the norms could be upheld without applying the law but by exercising mercy. This was identified as ikonomia, which was not simply an exception of established rules but an act imitating God's love and implied repentance on the part of the sinner (e.g. Meyendorff op.cit:34-35; Hammond op.cit:21).

Conversely, the Latin Church actively sought positive statements about doctrine. The Latins found Orthodox mysticism imprecise and suspect, which accounts for the Roman Catholic Church's frustration in the 17th century when it tried to obtain a definitive Orthodox doctrine concerning life after death, or the nature of the change in the Elements of the Eucharist. For the Orthodox Church to make positive statements concerning what exists after death, or the workings of the Sacraments, is to delve into an unknowable mystery of God and thus close to sacrilege. No man can know the Divine. Thus, the absence of any definitive dogmas on these and other matters (Runciman op.cit:17).

These basic differences between East and West were to develop slowly over time. In 1054 the contrast in beliefs and doctrine added to social and political tensions between East and West led to what is called the Great Schism. Though attempts were made throughout the remaining years of the Byzantine Empire, the dream of a unified Christendom centered in Constantinople was never to be realised.

It should be noted, however, that it was not only theological and political differences that maintained the schism between East and West. An important factor in the continued anti-western attitudes within the Orthodox Church and often amongst the laity, was the invasion by the Western

Crusaders in 1204²³. The Crusaders instead of fighting the infidels overthrew the Byzantine Emperor and sacked Constantinople. They established a Latin hierarchy, forced the Latin liturgy upon the Orthodox (which, as noted above was at the very center of Orthodoxy) and divided the Imperial territories amongst themselves. In Epirus however, the members of the Angelus dynasty established an Orthodox Despotate. And in Nicaea the son-in-law of the Emperor Alexius III established a capital and proclaimed himself Emperor. In 1261 his descendants drove the Latins from Constantinople. The Byzantine Empire was to last for nearly two more centuries until Constantinople, in 1453, finally succumbed to the Ottoman Turks.

Monasticism in the East

Monasticism both in the East and in the West has its roots in the deserts of Egypt. During the persecutions of the third century many Christians, men and women, sought refuge in the wilderness, places of solitude and safety. When the persecutions stopped and Christianity triumphantly became the Empire's official religion, places of solitude and safety were still sought as refuges from worldly pleasures and concerns which mislead the soul. Martyrdom was no longer possible as a means of achieving grace but the subjection of the body and mind to the harsh demands of ascetic discipline offered an alternative. The vow of celibacy that monastics and ecclesiastics take has its roots in the disciplines of the body and emotions which the third century ascetics inflicted upon themselves. Celibacy was equated with purity and spirituality²⁴, a notion which the Christian fathers upheld and promulgated. The sole aim of ascetic life was salvation of the soul. Anchorites did not seek to save their fellow man through prayer and good works. They had no use for other men, seeing them rather as impediments to the disciplining and purification of body and spirit. The eremitical life stressed self-reliance, self-understanding, and the unity of the soul with God.

Monasticism has taken three chief forms²⁵. There are the hermits, people leading solitary lives in huts or caves, their historic model being Saint Antony of Egypt (251-356). Secondly, there is the community life wherein the monastics live together under a common rule. Saint Pachomius of Egypt (286-346) pioneered this form of monasticism, and was the author of a rule used by Saint Benedict in the West. St. Pachomius established the first coenobia, monastic community, which was to be a type of school, a training ground to guide and discipline its members towards the greater spiritual life of the hermit.

Conversely, Saint Basil (c.329-379), regarded solitary withdrawal as spiritually narrowing and selfish since it could not put into practice the Christian teachings of brotherly love. A man cannot suffer with his fellow nor can he rejoice with him when he lives in solitude. Moreover, "no man is sufficient to receive all spiritual gifts, but according to the proportion of the faith that is in each man the supply of the spirit is given; consequently, in the common life the private gift of each man becomes the common property of his fellows" (Sherrard 1960:36, St Basil). Christians to be truly such, must live together. Thus, the coenobitic life which required that men practice the virtues of patience, humility, and pity was for him the highest form of ritual life. Each coenobium was to be an autonomous self-sufficient community. The religious were to resign all responsibility to the superior of the monastery obeying him in matters concerning both their spiritual and material life. Saint Basil also placed great emphasis of the social aspect of monasticism urging monasteries to maintain hospitals, orphanages, and schools. Yet, this social concern has not been as central to Eastern monastic life as it has been for Western Christian monasticism. An Orthodox monastic's primary task is the life of prayer and not more active work in or for the wider society. As a bishop explained to me:

The monastery is like a forest. A forest does not actively do anything for humans. Yet, its existence, its very life, gives human's life. The forest purifies our

air; it offers us a place to go when our troubles are too great; it provides a place of peace. The monastery through the prayer of the monastics provides a place of peace and respite. It also provides a place of prayer, like a breath of pure air; a place where God is glorified and where the divine is closer to the human world.

By their constant striving for perfection monastics enhanced the Christian life of the laity, and especially in the past were regarded as "the highest and most essential expression of Christianity" (Cambridge Medieval History :184).

Finally, there is the idiorrhythmic (one who follows his own rhythm) system which appeared late in the 14th century. In this system there is no abbot but two or three commissioners elected annually. Monks cook and eat in their cells either alone or in small groups--not communally. They also retain use of their private property. Idiorrhythmic institutions have fallen into disfavour over the past decades and many former idiorrhythmic monasteries have become coenobitic.

These types of monasticism have never served as a point of contention with the monastic tradition. Whether the individual's search for God takes place in solitude or through the subordination of self to the monastic community is of no great importance. Often these forms of monastic life are seen as complementary (Nicol 1963:24).

Furthermore, in Orthodox monasticism, there are no orders as there are in Western Christianity. A monastic is simply a member of one great community which includes all monks and nuns²⁶. Moreover, there should be no distinction made between nuns and monks. Indeed, in Greek there is no word for convent, all religious houses being called monasteries. However, for the sake of clarity I will refer to female monastic institutions as convents or nunneries while the term monastic I will use to refer to both monks and nuns. It should also be noted that there is no founding father of Eastern monasticism though various monastics and Fathers of the Church²⁷ have been influential. Each institution establishes its own rules, Typikon (monastic charter), according to its function and to the needs of its members. Thus,

though there are certain precepts that monastics should follow there is also room for interpretation and adjustment within the system.

As the monastic movement grew from the third century onwards, so too did the influence of the religious in society (see Brown 1973; Cambridge Medieval History op.cit.). Measures had to be taken to circumscribe the movement within the boundaries of diocesan authority. The Council of Chalcedon in 431 (the fourth Ecumenical Council) decreed that monks should devote themselves to prayer and fasting and should not seek to intervene in ecclesiastical or political affairs. Unless permission was obtained from the bishop they were not permitted to leave the monastery where they had taken their vows. Though solitaries were beyond direct imperial control, limits were set to their numbers and their movements restricted by placing them under the control of a parent monastery. Episcopal consent, dedication and blessing was decreed necessary for the founding of a new monastery. Once founded it could not be converted to secular use nor could its endowments be alienated. All monasteries in a given see were placed under the jurisdiction of the bishops of that see unless they were under direct Patriarchal or Imperial control. Some, very few, as for example Mount Athos, were granted autonomy, though they still owed allegiance to the Emperor.

The link between the Church ecclesiastics and the monasteries was provided by the Hegumenos (Abbot). In Eastern Orthodoxy few monks were or are ordained. Those that are become in essence priest-monks, Hieromonachi, and often the Hegumenos and Hieromonachos are the same combining in one person the role of high monk and consecrated priest. These men are needed in a monastery to perform the Eucharist and other sacraments. Yet, unless ordained, the monks, like their female counterparts, are not part of the Church hierarchy. In their dependence upon the clergy the monastics closely resemble the laity. Yet, monks have the potential to become part of the Church hierarchy, and indeed throughout Byzantine history, bishops were often recruited from monas-

teries. As bishops however, they could not remain monks for they were, by the nature of their position, forced to act in the world. Their dedication to God took another, more worldly, aspect.

Despite attempts to forge links between the monasteries and the Church, control of monastic institutions remained problematic throughout the Middle Ages. Various Imperial decrees concerning monastic administration attest to this. None the less, large endowments of land made to monasteries often remained uncultivated. And as monastic wealth and power increased, government revenues dwindled, leading eventually to several political and theological rifts within the Empire.

One of the earliest clashes between monasteries and the established Church and State was the Iconoclastic Controversy (c.711-843). At stake was the power of the holy man and the closely associated veneration of icons. Also at stake was the survival of the Empire itself.

Icons, as will have been noted by any who enter an Eastern Christian Church, are an important element of worship, as are the saints they often depict. Like holy persons, icons offer a tangible means of communication with the divine. They are a link in the chain between the material and the transcendental order:

An icon is made of substances derived from all parts of the created world, from animal, vegetable, and mineral resources. The prohibition on mixing and blending colors prevents the blurring of their individuality, and each substance makes a contribution to the whole in itself and through its relationship with the rest.... The icon is a microcosm of the relationship between the material world, human beings, and the divine power believed to have created them all (Kenna 1985:348).

In the past, as today, holy persons and icons were closely identified with the community in which they resided and were venerated as divine patrons of that community. In 711 this localised veneration proved to be a dangerous centrifugal force counteracting the centralisation sought for by the established Church and State. For at this time, the Byzantine

state was a highly decentralised "commonwealth of cities" (Brown op.cit.:18), whose boundaries were being eroded by Arab attacks. In order to survive, the Empire had to be consolidated. The people had to give their first loyalty to the Emperor and his Church. The centrifugal forces of iconodulism had to be suppressed. Icons were destroyed; monks were persecuted. The controversy ended in 843 when the disarticulated city-states had finally been unified under a strong central government and the Arabs repulsed. It was only then that the veneration of icons as part of the orthodoxy of the Eastern Christian Church was reinstated. Iconodulism, like the Byzantium, triumphed and monastics were once again revered as holy men.

To summarise, both the icon and the holy person--monastic or recluse--for all their recognised divine power remained closely linked with the life of the average Byzantine. Unconsecrated and outside the vested hierarchy of the Church, both the holy person and the icon could (and can) still provide an individualised rapport with the divine, something which the Eastern Church as an institution could not offer²⁸. In the East, though the Church was and is interested in maintaining centralised control over its followers, it has not, in the end, discredited the ability of people to find God for themselves²⁹.

Convents:

Researchers studying monasticism have assumed along with the Orthodox that male and female monastic traditions and practices are the same. They have concentrated their efforts on examining the monasteries, ignoring the convents almost entirely. There are, of course, reasons for this oversight. Most of the records from Byzantine convents were destroyed during the Ottoman invasions of the 14th and 15th centuries. Convents were often located in cities and attached to a diocean church. As the invading Ottomans directed their attacks on the cities, these convents along with the churches were destroyed. Monasteries were not only held in greater

esteem by the invading Muslims but as they were often located in rural areas they escaped immediate devastation³⁰. The destruction of these convents is a great hindrance to researchers. Yet, convents were built after the fall of Constantinople, and many survived, especially those on the mainland of Greece. It seems that beyond the loss of information there is also a lack of interest amongst scholars. It is true that women monastics have not played as prominent a role in the social life of Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire, or in the establishment of the Greek nation state. Whether this is due to a bias of the historians or a bias of the record keepers and the societies of the past is not clear. I would presume both. As one bishop with whom I spoke remarked:

Monks are modelled on the image of the revolutionary Christ while nuns are modelled on Christ the Lamb of God. This is why so little has been written about them. They have gone about God's work quietly.

This lack of information and research however, does not reflect the appeal that monastic life has had for a small but increasing number of people, particularly women, over the past century. The convents in modern Greece that have been established or re-established on old sites within the past one hundred years attest to this. Yet, despite this increase one finds that many lay people still maintain an ambiguous attitude vis-a-vis nuns and to a lesser degree monks. Unlike many Catholics who regard the vocation of nun for a young woman as one to be rejoiced in (e.g. Campbell-Jones 1979:75,79-80), many Greeks see it as a sign of failure. The convent for many is a place where women go who have 'failed in love', or in obtaining a spouse.

This attitude may in part be attributed to a general anti-ecclesiastical feeling prevalent in Greece. Both convents and monasteries are often regarded with contempt. A man however, who has become a monk may redeem himself in the eyes of the wider community if he becomes, through his studies, a recognised scholar and moves up in the Church hierarchy. A woman who becomes a nun can never enter the

Church hierarchy and her success as a theologian is difficult though no longer impossible. Why such anti-clerical, anti-monastic, feelings exist may perhaps be explained by examining the Church after the fall of Constantinople³¹.

The Church during Ottoman Rule and after Independence³²

The Ottomans practised an indirect rule system of government whereby the Orthodox Church constituted the main link between the Sultan and his Greek subjects. The Church thus assumed a high degree of autonomy in religious and cultural matters and also acquired a large number of political functions. The Patriarch was not simply a spiritual leader but the enthroned of the Greek nation. Yet the Patriarch was not above corruption. The Sultanate auctioned off the high clerical positions necessitating financial backing for promotion through the ecclesiastical eschalon of power. This backing came from Orthodox Phanariote Greeks who sought to exploit and protect their economic and political interests in Constantinople through the Orthodox Church's spiritual and political influence.

The corruption was not contained within the echelons of the Patriarchate. Local bishops, priests and monks, distant from the secular and religious seats of power, were able to obtain high fees from the peasants for their services. Moreover, though in the first centuries of the Ottoman Rule the laity with their local priests sought out the local monasteries as places of learning and prayer, in the latter centuries these monasteries became little better than communal farms. The libraries, that by law all monasteries possessed, were ignored both because of a lack of funds and due to a deep distrust of the growing western influences amongst the wealthy Orthodox in Constantinople. The monks, like the local clergy soon lost, as Runciman (1968) puts it, the taste for learning³³. The monastics sought to maintain the purity of their religion against what they perceived to be the onslaught of change and corruption from Constantinople. This conservatism has remained a legacy of the

Church though there are trends seeking change, as for example dialogue with the West.

For many Greeks during Ottoman Rule, a major commercial interest was trade. Yet, with the industrial Revolution in England in the 19th century, the textile and shipbuilding industries, which had grown with the expansion in trade in the 18th century, began to suffer. The artisans and merchants, along with the peasants who were under the yoke of local landlords, began to seek a change from their increasingly difficult economic position. Western-trained intelligensia gave this impetus for change a nationalistic direction. They propagated western ideas to a culture which had been dominated by the anti-western orientation of the Orthodox Church. In 1821 the war for independence broke out.

The Church, the Phanariotes, and the great landowners were ambivalent concerning this revolution. Particularly, the Church and the high clergy were hostile to the idea of over-throwing Ottoman rule as they had occupied such a privileged positions within the Empire. The fragmentation of the Ottoman rule would clearly also fragment the rule of the Patriarchate. It was only when it became evident that the movement towards independence was irreversible that the Church officially and openly joined the revolutionaries.

Mouzelis (op.cit: 189 (36)) suggests that the weak role taken by the high clergy coupled with the anti-clerical views of the western influenced intelligensia account for the relative ease with which the political elite of the new nation-state were able to establish the autonomy of the autochthonos Greek Church vis-a-vis its traditional head, the Patriarch of Constantinople. In this manner, the religious authorities were placed under the direct control of the State, a subordinate position within which the Church still finds itself today. This may account, in part, for the Church's often tacit, sometimes explicit, support of various oppressive regimes, which in turn, has only reinforced the anti-clerical feelings of many Greeks³⁴. Yet, it remains true that despite the corruption and exploitation by and within the Church, the Church is recognised as having supported the Greek language,

culture and national identity throughout the "four hundred years" of Ottoman Rule. As such, for many Greeks, religion and nationalism are inextricably linked. To be Greek is, for many, to be Orthodox³⁵.

The Village and the Convents

I visited the village of Peta for the first time Easter 1983 as the guest of a Greek friend, George, who was later to become my husband. In 1985, as I pondered over possible locations for fieldwork, George suggested that I go to Peta. His parents lived there all year round and there were three convents nearby. Moreover, as his "fiancee", I would find myself immediately situated within a kinship structure and, with his mother to introduce me, I would have easy access to a number of related households in the village as well as to the households in the immediate neighbourhood.

It was an excellent suggestion. My in-laws were extremely helpful and welcoming, and the villagers generous with their time and patience. My other great advantage was my proficiency in spoken Greek. Though born and raised in the United States, Greek was spoken in our house and I had spent many summers with relatives there. Of course, I could not always understand the dialect of the region, spoken mostly by the older people, but with my mother-in-law as translator and guide this problem was easily overcome.

My contact with the convents proved to be more difficult. I had been forewarned that monastics, and nuns in particular, tend to be reticent and very wary of outsiders. As a researcher I had an advantage of being a baptised Greek Orthodox though I was not raised in a religious environment. Thus, in religious terms I was an insider, while my upbringing in the States justified my ignorance. Despite this, the nuns, particularly in the convent of T., were wary of me as an outsider, suspecting all researchers as potential defamers of the convent and monastic life in general. I quickly understood that my research had to take on a more personal quality. I could not simply ask about their lives and

beliefs. I had to learn from them what they felt they could/should teach me.

I chose to concentrate my attentions on the two large convents, T. and P., leaving the smaller convent close to the village aside as it was not considered as influential and important by the villagers. What struck me almost immediately was the difference between the two convents; a difference which seemed to arise from the convents' histories and their location in relation to secular communities.

T. is located a few kilometers from the town, situated just above a main artery. It was built in the late thirteenth century by the Empress Theodora, who was later canonised. For these reasons, it has to deal almost daily during the summer, with bus loads of tourists, usually Greeks but also foreigners who come to see the historic buildings and get a glimpse of the nuns. The visitors, it must be said, can be rude; disregarding dress codes³⁶; taking pictures of the nuns or the church without first asking permission, and often coming only to buy the rugs and blankets made by the nuns. Also, being close to the town the nuns are not only informed of local events and gossip, but must also deal with people who come to collect votes for local elections (though the nuns do not vote) or, to get alms or free meals. This, I believe, has made the nuns and the Hegumeni quite wary of visitors and has accentuated their need to maintain, through the way they interact with lay people, the distinction between insiders and outsiders³⁷.

In T. therefore, the Hegumeni (Abbess) was less willing, in the beginning, to give me access into the convent community. Later, once it had been established that my purpose was not to undermine the community and its standing in the wider society, I was given greater freedom. I could speak with the nuns more openly and when one of the nuns was confined to her bed I was allowed to visit, though whether this showed greater trust in me or was permitted in order to give pleasure to the nun who was ill, I cannot tell. Perhaps a little of both. However, I was never shown the historic treasures that some townspeople and villagers said were at T.

A respected doctor in town, who cared for the nuns, was said to have seen these treasures but I was never able to speak with him personally. My freedom in T. was circumscribed and though I was liked, I always remained an outsider, especially when the Hegumeni was there.

The convent of P. by contrast, lies high in the Rathovizia mountains to the east of the village and is inaccessible except by car or tractor during the summer months. It was first established approximately 500 years ago as a monastery. Today, however none of the original buildings remain. An earthquake in 1976 destroyed what little was left of the original structures. Only the thaumaturgical icon of the Panayia (Virgin Mary) was saved. Because of these events and its location P. does not attract tourists. Instead, it is inundated in the summer by people who come on pilgrimages³⁸ to pay their respects or petition the icon of the Panayia, who is known to have cured and excoriated many, or simply to experience mass in a convent. Though pilgrims can and are often disrespectful in the nuns' eyes: bringing and eating their own food on the premises at odd hours; talking in church; not attending all of the services; the pilgrims on the whole are there to visit the convent as religious visitors and not as tourists.

This might account for the fact that at P. I was immediately and wholeheartedly welcomed and though they were aware of my study, the emphasis was always to introduce me to Orthodoxy and to make me comfortable in the convent. Being distant geographically from the town seemed to enable the nuns to maintain a sense of social distance from the secular world and its concerns. They were therefore at greater liberty to presume that those who came to the convent did so in order to experience convent life.

Yet, it is also true that in P. a number of the nuns who at first sought to teach me to love the "bridegroom" Christ as they loved him, ceased when it became evident that I did not have a calling. No longer regarded as a possible novice, they told me that their conversations would be directed towards aspects which would enlighten me in my eventual life

as a married woman. In reply to my questions I was often, pointedly, told: "It is not necessary for you to know such things. These are things that only nuns do (or need to know)."

Lewis (1988:166) notes that secrecy is a means of favouring one group or person over another. It is a means of defining one group within a larger group³⁹. Such clearly was the case with the nuns, for when the Hegumeni of P. understood that I was seeking to compare the monastic life with that of the village community, she remarked: "You will never be able to understand the life of a monastic. This place here is the city of God while you live in the city of humans. You can never know what our life is like here unless you yourself become a nun."

And yet, a few nuns did speak of their lives in the convent. And through their attempts to give me to understand the utter beauty and grandeur of God I believe I did get a glimpse, no matter how inadequate they may deem it, of their lives.

For example, when I first left for the field one of my underlying quests was to discover the social motivations that compelled women to join monastic communities. In the villages I was provided with a number of answers. The women, some villagers said, were obviously victims of love affairs gone wrong, or were physically or psychologically handicapped and thus unable to function normally in society. Yet, as I grew to know the nuns as women, and some as friends and teachers, as I learned to regard not only the habits that they wore but the persons, I became aware that there was a powerful emotional and intellectual force which governed these women's lives.

To suggest that the nuns, as women, have simply optimised the best out of a bad situation by choosing the convent over a life of hard work or loneliness is to lose sight of their lives as vocations. To suggest that these women are simply weak or socially inept is to greatly minimise the difficulties that are encountered and must be overcome when twenty or so people live continually together within the con-

finer of a few acres. Such a suggestion disregards the strict precepts that must be followed and which often conflict with the simple desires a particular woman may have at any one time. It is not that I deny the possibility in the above suggestions but rather I feel that they may at times obscure the very real emotions, passions, and intellect that are encountered behind the walls of these cloistered communities.

In the introduction to the book Saints and Virtues the editor John S. Hawley (op.cit.) notes that in the West our notion of both religion and morality tends towards the didactic. Religious persons are seen to have internalised a "system of beliefs", of rules, precepts and principles. Religions however, as Hawley points out, have not attracted and fired the imagination of people throughout the centuries through rules alone but also through a large body of tradition which emphasises not codes but stories, not precepts but personalities (e.g. Christian op.cit:179-180; Campbell-Jones op.cit.:76). This I would suggest is a means through which one may gain an insight into the two convent communities described here.

The nuns live in a world which is brilliantly animated by the stories and personages that inhere in the tradition of Christianity. For them the saints are as alive and active now as they were in the past. It was with enthusiasm that they sought to introduce me, as best they could in the time I spent with them, to this world as they experienced it. From the first night I spent in P. I was given to read the lives of the saints who were celebrating that month. Many of the rules concerning eating habits or dress code were explained to me through stories or images that "made sense" of the rules, imbuing them with necessity and purpose.

The importance of stories and personalities was illustrated by the life story of three nuns who were, as they said, "pneumatikes adhelpes ke kosmikes adhelpes" (spiritual sisters and secular sisters). Two of these nuns are in the convent of P., while the third sister is in T. I was given the life story by the two sisters in P. on separate occa-

sions. Here I will paraphrase only the one:

We were five sisters. Two of us are here and our older sister is at T.. The other two are married. When I was young my older sisters used to read the lives of the saints. They were so beautiful. I started to read them too and we used to read and talk about how great their lives were, and what wonderful sacrifices they made. We decided that when we grew up we would become nuns. We made a secret vow. Then my sister came here. Our older sister stayed at home because of our parents. Even though it was difficult for our parents, I wanted to go so badly to the convent, and my sister said how wonderful it was that I too finally came. In the end, my sister too left to become a nun but she went to T. [the nun would not elaborate as to whether her sister joined T. from personal choice or whether the decision had been forced upon her by the bishop or the Abbot].

The importance of narratives describing saints' lives or miraculous occurrences for the nuns is evident here as it will be throughout the thesis for I have by necessity as well as by choice, presented much of the nuns lives through metaphors, or anecdotes. It could be said that the nuns enclosed within the convent have minimised to a large extent their lived experiences. What they know of the outside world consists of news they obtain from relatives or visitors, from some newspaper articles read to them by their Superior, or from the few experiences of visits to hospitals, other convents or pilgrim sites. Otherwise they are confined within the space of the convent and a highly repetitive daily, weekly and yearly routine. However, with the knowledge that the saints, that God's divine kingdom exists, the nuns remain unhindered by the earthly confines of time or space, but communicate with those blessed by God, those who are of "another world". It is through their anecdotes and the relation of miraculous events that I learned and often communicated with the nuns. And it is through these that I will try to communicate their world as best I can in the pages to follow.

From January 1986 until May of 1987 I lived in the village of Peta in the southern region of Epirus in western Greece, and visited, as often as possible, the convents of T. and P..

Peta is a village with a permanent population of 2057 according to the 1981 census. A further 689 people are registered as residents though they may work or study elsewhere for the greater part of the year. These absent Petanites, the majority of whom live in Athens are called "the Athenians" by the villagers, a term many of "the Athenians" find offensive, as it implies that they do not truly belong to the village. "The Athenians" are said by the permanent residents of the village, to consider themselves superior to the villagers and indeed many do try to impose or introduce what they would consider better conditions in the village, though they are not necessarily economically better off than their village relatives. Never the less, their sojourn in Athens or beyond implies that their view of the world is wider (pio evri); that they are at a higher level of development (pio psilo epipedho)⁴⁰. This relationship with the "Athenians" exhibits possibly greater tension in Peta than in other poorer villages since the village, being relatively prosperous, did not experience the emigration of its men and families to Germany, Australia, or the United States, during the 1930's and 1950's. Emigration from the village occurred in the early 1960's, most people leaving for Athens⁴¹. Over-simplifying, it may be said that those living permanently in Peta find themselves in the awkward position of welcoming their "Athenian" relatives and yet feeling somewhat backwards and unsophisticated in relation to them (e.g. Friedl op.cit.:118). "The Athenians" on the other hand feel both that they belong to the village and at times embarrassed by what they would consider the villagers' uncouth habits and unsophisticated outlooks. It is not therefore clear how to define a member of the village; how they define themselves; how they define their kin, and how they conceive of their community. Here I have chosen to define the villagers as those people living in the village for the greater part of the year. It must be kept in mind however, that the village and the people in it are in constant contact with Athens through their relatives whom they visit and who often come to the village, particularly in the summer.

The village of Peta is situated some four kilometers to the east of the main commercial town of the area which boasts a population of about 30,000. The village climbs gently up the side of the foot of the Tzoumerka mountain range its highest point only 180 meters above sea level. Yet from this vantage point the plain of the Arta valley to the West lies open to view and on clear days in the distance to the south-west the deep blue of the Amvrakikos gulf can be discerned. To the north and east beyond the plains, the Tzoumerka range continues. The mountains directly east of the village are known as the Rathovizia. The Arachthos river runs north south-west, curving along the western edge of the village. In 1976 the Pournari dam was built, flooding the valley to the north and west of the village and bringing money as compensation to those whose fields were flooded. Though the compensation was good, some of the villagers note that the dam took their most fertile fields and some even claim that the climate has become damper. Whatever the changes wrought by the dam they do not seem to have effected life in the village drastically. Instead, it has become a major point of attraction and all visitors are taken to gaze admiringly upon this relatively new lake.

The villagers today are predominantly agriculturalists though some work as civil servants or as skilled craftsmen in the town and the surrounding region. All households have at least a few fields where they plant olives and citrus fruits, mainly oranges, which are also the main commercial crops⁴². Out of the approximately 780 working households in the village between 30 to 50 households are also involved in the selling of vegetable produce in the open air market in the town. About ten of these households have large hot houses; the others cultivate large garden plots. Some villagers also raise and sell citrus trees to citrus cultivators predominantly in northern Epirus-- a lucrative endeavour.

The systematic cultivation of the olive began in 1922. Before that, tobacco had been the major cash crop, its cultivation supervised by the government. But by the 1940's it was phased out in favour of olive and citrus fruits. Wheat

and corn were also grown for home consumption up until the 1950's when, with the end of the Civil War, it cheaper to buy flour with the money raised from olives.

Up until the beginning of the twentieth century most of the land in the area belonged to a large landowner, a tsiflikas, from whom the peasants either rented land for a percentage of their produce or worked for him as day labourers. The three convents in the area, which at that time were monasteries, also owned a great deal of land, called vakoufia, worked by peasants day-labourers. By the early 1920's the large landowners were forced to sell their land to the government which in turn sold it to the peasants with favourable terms. In 1928 the vakoufia were, in turn, also divided and given to the peasants⁴³. Today, the villagers have no economic contact with the three nearby convents, though people remember trading as well as working for the monasteries. The convent closest to the village, it is true, still owns land rented by the villagers but it is negligible to what the villagers now own.

The two convents dealt with in this study are accessible to the village by car. T. boasts eighteen nuns whose ages range from the mid-thirties to the seventies. Like the other convents it was a monastery until the present Abbess took the dilapidated and all but abandoned site in the 1950's. There she established her convent and an orphanage and a school where she taught weaving. The orphanage has ceased to function but the nuns still produce beautiful rugs and blankets which they sell. The nuns also have a flock of sheep and a few goats and they cultivate various vegetables and fruits amongst which are oranges and olives. Though the landholdings of the convent are much reduced from what they were before 1928, they are still extensive and revenue must be adequate, but I am unable to say if they are subsidised by the wider Church.

The convent of P. is, as noted above, high in the mountains. There are fourteen nuns there whose ages range from the mid-twenties to the seventies. The Hegumenos (Abbot) and Hegumeni who live there are brother and sister. Together

they took over the old monastery that had been abandoned and established, with the grudging consent of the local Bishop, yet another convent in the region in the early 1960's. The convent has much land which is rented or cultivated with the assistance of the villagers who live in the valley below. As with the nuns of T., P. has a flock of sheep and goats, a few chickens and a large vegetable garden which the nuns cultivate and which produces an abundance of produce for the nuns' use.

The nuns of P. do not sell religious trinkets to visitors nor do they make blankets or rugs. They seem to depend entirely on the revenue gathered from renting the fields, selling the animals and donations. In both cases however, the convents seem to be well-off. The nuns were well-clothed; the food was abundant and no expenses seemed to be spared concerning the nuns' health. A few of the nuns of P. and T. for example, often visited the town or Athens for specialised treatments. Moreover, the nuns of T. had been taken by the Hegumeni on a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands some ten years ago. Both communities were also in the process of building new dormitories and in P. the bare walls of the new church, built after the 1976 earthquake, were slowly being painted with icons by specialists. This religious art form had inspired some of the nuns who, with the consent of their Superiors, had begun to learn the art from these iconographers.

Life in the convents therefore though it was closely bound to a religious routine was varied and interesting. It was not static, simply encased within a religious structure but one which was, and should be seen, as an on-going process of transformation and adaptation. It was a community created and recreated by its members who, though they adhered to a religious schedule, were also learning within these religious parameters, travelling, and adapting to the vicissitudes brought on by various visitors, environmental occurrences, and individual tensions between the nuns.

The natural, the social and the spiritual

In an article by Bloch and Bloch (1980) it is suggested that instead of attempting to match our notions of the concepts of nature with those of other cultures we should instead seek "the ideological polemic which uses this type of notion" (op. cit.:39). The concept of nature in European society, takes its meaning from that to which it is opposed, namely culture or the social order. Thus, by appealing to a pre-existing source of order, in this case nature, the existing social system is challenged. The relationship between nature and culture is one of tension; regarded as a play of power and control as the one seeks to incorporate the other.

In the following chapters it will be noted that the nuns and the villagers are constantly caught between notions of the social, the natural, and the spiritual in their attempts to define their communities, themselves, and each other. They will often appeal to a pre-existing "natural" order, in each case defined differently, in attempts to distinguish themselves from the others. Broadly speaking, the villagers seem to hold that the nuns in closing themselves off from the secular world have denied their natures. Not only are the "natural drives" of sex and child-bearing suppressed but the human as a "naturally" social animal (kinoniko zo) is denied. Thus, the often strict demands of the Church concerning sexual practices, fasting, or proper behaviour (which in extreme expressions ban dancing, singing, secular celebrations) are rejected as being unnatural or inhuman (dhen ine fisioloyika; dhen ine anthropina pramata afta).

In contrast, the nuns regard the secular world as one of the major sources of temptation and sin⁴⁴. Though bearing children and raising them within Orthodox Christianity assures salvation, just as surely as taking the vows, married life is difficult in that "society" makes demands and introduces temptations which even the best of Christians find difficult to avoid. Sadly, society is often shaped by the baser instinctual desires and needs of humans which do not express humanity's true nature. Since the Fall humanity has been

caught in a battle between these needs and drives and the call of the spirit. In this manner, humans can be said to be in disharmony with their true and godly nature; society is a manifestation of this disharmony. In both instances by appealing to a pre-existing natural order the two groups stake their claim against one another.

It becomes evident from this that a brief explanation must be made of what may be meant by the terms nature, social, and spiritual; how these terms may be understood and used. The description which follows however, is in no way complete but serves only as an outline within which the rest of the thesis may be situated.

In the village and the convent there is no one clear concept of nature (fisi). One understanding is that nature simply exists, a passive entity, in contrast to those things which humans have modified or created. It is a universal order created by God which may include humans, plants, animals, but always includes the environment.

Yet, plants and animals, like humans, though recognised as part of the natural world, are distinguished from all other elements, in that they are alive. They grow, reproduce, and die. Animals and humans are further distinguished from plants in that they are capable of movement⁴⁵. Moreover, both animals and humans have sensory perceptions, sentiments and natural drives which must be fulfilled. These sentiments and drives are often described as instinctual and are felt to be inbred. They cannot/should not be ignored. They must be satisfied to assure that humans and animals maintain a well-balanced healthy existence. In the village, sexual needs are defined as natural. If not fulfilled, nervous illnesses (nevrikes asthenies-- a euphemism for mental illness) are likely to occur. In this instance nature is not passive but a force whose momentum or demand must be met in order to assure survival.

All animals however, are distinguished from humans. Some villagers and all the nuns I spoke with said that that humans unlike animals have a soul. When a person dies the soul leave the body. The distinction between animals and

humans is implicit in the following. The body of a dead human is referred to as a ptoma (corpse)⁴⁶. A dead animal however, is usually referred to as a psofimi (carcass) a word which recalls the smell of decay⁴⁷. Moreover, animals when they die are said to psofan whereas humans pethenoun. The distinction grants greater dignity to human death and I presume, may allow for the possibility of a future in memory or in an after life. The word psofan implies simply the cessation of life⁴⁸.

Though everyone agrees that humans have a soul, some villagers felt that animals too have souls, that they too go to heaven. The animals they referred to in these cases were domesticated mammals. Villagers explained their views saying that when a dog or a horse looks at you it expresses its feelings through its eyes. It expresses love for its owner, or grief and sorrow at his/her death. Such sentiments are felt to go beyond natural instincts or feelings. They express comprehension and the creation of long-term, binding relationships. It is these sentiments which are seen as essential for the creation of social relations and thus of society. These sentiments provide the link, for some, between animals and humans.

What animals do not have, and all are agreed on this, is a language which arises from a developed ability to understand and reason. This ability has been cited in many ethnographies and in religious texts as 'intellect' (nous). This capacity is natural or innate in humans. They are born with it. Humans' intellect enables them to modify and shape their world. Through their ability to reason they are able to harness or control their 'natural desires'-- including sexual drives, the instinct to kill, the instinct to survive-- and thus form relationships and create societies. Through their intellect humans are able to progress through time and history⁴⁹.

The concept that humans are both part of the social and natural worlds is expressed by the phrase "o anthropos ine kinoniko zo" (humans are social animals). It is natural for humans to seek out and create a community while still being

subject to their own (animal) instincts. Yet, it is because humans are social animals that they should not satisfy their needs at the expense of others for that shows an unreasoning person, a person who does not use his/her intellect and thus is closer to animals, and by extension to nature, than to humans and society.

Developmental cycles and the spiritual:

These views further inform the manner in which the developmental cycles of a human being and the history of human society are envisioned. Upon birth an infant is said to be in a natural state. Though it has the capacity to develop its intellect, this potential has not yet been realised. The child must be moulded and guided by its parents in order to achieve full human status. An infant seeks food, warmth and care. It is said to naturally cling to its mother. As it grows older, it begins to recognise the world around it and gradually learns to speak, to communicate and thus, to form relationships with others. It slowly acquires knowledge of the world, both the "natural" and the "social". As it grows, its intellectual potential is realised. The child ceases to be only "like a little animal" and develops into a complete and responsible human being. Various rituals such as baptism, communion and finally marriage mark the child's progress to full adulthood, placing him/her increasingly within the web of particular social relationships.

The conception of a child whose nature must be moulded may be associated with the view of the development of human society (e.g. Blum and Blum op.cit.:231-234) such that history is seen as a progression through different "levels" (epipedha) from a state of nature to a state of higher culture. The historic progression is viewed as a movement from innocence but also barbarity, to one of knowledge, sophistication, but also of decadence.

The contradicting views of the past and present demand an explication of knowledge and its relationship with what will be called the spiritual. In one discourse, knowledge in conjunction with the spiritual, that is a moral order (whether

defined by the Church, 'Christian' ethics, or society) may lead to a society which incorporates and is in part energised by nature without being subject to it and its barbarity. This leads to a progression from innocence through knowledge, guided by the spiritual to the rediscovery of a type of innocence which comes by way of knowledge, and in the case of the nuns, a self-knowledge⁵⁰. However, knowledge which takes as its object the natural, i.e. in this instance often identified as the sexual, and ignores the spiritual, leads away from innocence to a socially and personally destructive knowledge, one may say decadence. This decadence is often associated with the social by the nuns while the villagers may more often associate it simply with present society⁵¹.

I should note that when the villagers divide time between past and present, World War II often serves as the demarcating line. This is not surprising. As Boissevain (op.cit.:29) notes for Malta, the period after WWII was marked by the rapid improvement of educational facilities, the increase in employment opportunities and the expansion of the public transport system, reducing the social distance between town and country. WWII marks a social milestone, the dividing line between the past dependence on agriculture and the present opportunities to engage in wage labour, a position particularly desirable if it is within the civil service. Thus, "in the past" (palia) usually refers to the time before WWII while "today" or "now" (simera or tora) refers to the period from the 1950's onwards⁵². In the thesis I have chosen to use the villagers' dating methods because greater accuracy does not greatly effect the argument and because more accurate information was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. The village was burnt to the ground twice by the Germans during WWII. No official records before 1950 exist.

There is finally yet another discourse in the village, often used by older women. In this discourse, it is felt that the balance between the spiritual, the social and the natural should be maintained. Many older people, particularly women, said that:

"As we have found things [meaning religion or the community] so should we leave them. We are simply travellers passing through life."

"Etsi opos ta vrikame, etsi prepi na t 'afisoume. Imaste mono dhiavates s'afti tin zoe."

In this instance nature, society and the spiritual seem to be objectified and made other; they become a back-drop to humans' passage through life. There is no history or social progression implied in the relationship between nature and society as expressed above. Rather, all should remain unchanged. The "back-drop" should be maintained as it is, to be passed on to the next generation.

Whether development is regarded positively or negatively, the idea that the social is created through the containment of natural instincts by harnessing the spiritual is what predominantly informs much of village life. In contrast, the nuns feel that the social is, in general, the root of all evil, leading humans away from the spiritual and God, wherein lie their true nature.

This however, offers too simplistic a comparison between convent and village. The nuns are in fact caught between two discourses. The one holds that all humans, and in particular all Orthodox, are equally part of God's creation. The nuns cannot deny that marriage is a sacrament, blessed by God. After all, most Orthodox parish priests are married, and in the village, work as farmers. Moreover, though the nuns may deny secular society in order to live within the convent walls where a person is "truly free to follow God's laws", much of their world is structured and informed by social institutions. And, revenue, recruits, and lay support, are important to a monastery or convent, whether the nuns acknowledge this or not.

The second discourse however, as discussed in previous sections, denies marriage as a true alternative by placing celibacy higher on the religious scale. The denial of "natural" bodily needs, the denial of procreativity, of sexuality and marriage, reflects the denial of the social.

In this manner the nuns, and monastics in general, hope to modify and transform their human nature through close contact and participation in the spiritual and divine. Through this contact they have been able to come at least closer to humanity's true and spiritually elevated nature which exists in communion with God. As Meyendorff (1987: 115-117) notes:

Nature stops being really "natural" if it abandons its own destiny, which is to communicate with God and to rise ever higher in the knowledge of the Unknowable.

The villagers on the other hand, regard such views with suspicion. The nuns, by denying the social have denied an aspect of their humanity becoming in effect perversely natural. This, in part, may account for the attributions of perverse sexual drives to monastics and clergymen.

Yet, many of the villagers, particularly women go on pilgrimages to monasteries and convents throughout Greece. These pilgrimages are not simply solemn affairs but combine sight-seeing and shopping as well as attendance at the pilgrim sites⁵³. The pilgrims bring back blessed water, oil or icons along with the shopping and photographs. And they will comment on the hospitality offered at the monastic institutions, on the piety of the monastics and on the sense of peace and tranquillity experienced there: "It was just like paradise" (san ton paradhiso itan). When attending a service in a convent or monastery the villagers will say that "you feel the religion" (esthanese tin threiskia) unlike in the village church. Thus, the villagers expect and harness the greater religious sentiment felt to exist in the monastic institutions⁵⁴. Nuns and monks closer to God are, as we shall see, often treated with great respect almost like the icons in a church. They cease to be individual women who have chosen to leave the secular world; they are seen only in the context of their habit and convent. The villagers may believe on the one hand that women become nuns because they are socially inept but on the other, there are many who seek the monastic institution as places of great divine power which they can, as humans, tap in order to maintain the

balance between the social and the natural⁵⁵.

The villagers and the nuns seem to have views concerning nature, society and history much akin to what have been described as "western" views. This is not surprising. None the less it is important to make explicit how the terms are used to justify and explain social and symbolic roles by both the villagers and the nuns. As I hope to have shown, the social and the natural may be, in relation to one another, either creative subject or passive finished object. They may be involved in a developmental process through history. They may also be in a balanced relationship with one another. It is humans who either provoke imbalances and disharmony which must be redressed, or instigate progress. The role of the spiritual in maintaining harmony and/or assisting in the development of human history is, as we have seen, crucial. In the following chapters how nature, society and the spiritual are defined and used to create the village and the convent communities will be examined as well as notions concerning gender and human's relationship with the divine. What in the end does it mean to be human according to the nuns and the villagers? How is humanity's purpose, or destiny (proorismos) in life to be understood?

Notes for Chapter 1

1. See e.g. Fernandez op.cit.; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Black:1988; Turner 1987:51.
2. See e.g. Turner op.cit.:25; Lakoff and Johnson op.cit:10 who note that metaphors also obscure other aspects of the subject; in this instance, God as King, or God as Shepherd.
3. Black op.cit: 21-22. This also suggests as Searle (1988) has noted that a metaphor concerns not only the relations between word and sentence but also the speaker's intention, to what truth conditions the speaker is referring.
4. Yet as Levin (op.cit.:128-129) notes in some metaphors such as "Sally is a block of ice" the subject, Sally, though modified by its object, ice, has not in turn modified the object. However, in many metaphors it is possible for the terms of comparison to modify one another, such that subject modifies the object and vice versa.
5. See e.g. Atkinson 1987; Bynum 1982, 1987; Brown 1981; Feeley-Harnik 1981; Lewis 1987; Christian 1989:172-173; Loizos 1981:38-39.
6. Williams (1975: 105-106) makes a similar point when she notes the difficulty entailed in describing the Carmelite nuns' cosmology and the necessity of 'translating' certain English terms in order to do so.
7. Stirrat (1984) notes that scholars seeking to explicate the diversity that exists within the world religions often distinguish between the religion of the elite and the religion of the masses. Related to this assumption is that the masses have simply absorbed in a simplistic manner the abstract teachings of the religious institutions. This view has been contested by Brown (op.cit.) who argues that within the Christian tradition the principles of the early Church were created and shaped by political situations in which the masses were not passive recipients but active participants. Thus, distinctions between the elite and the masses may in the end inhibit rather than further our understanding.
8. See e.g. Danforth 1982; Dubisch 1986; du Boulay 1984; Hirschon 1989; Rushton 1982; Boissevain 1965 for Malta; Christian op.cit for Spain; Douglass 1969 for the Basque.
9. For a certain category of ascetics Obeyesekere 1968; Weber 1977a and b.
10. Proorismos entails the sense of predestination but a destiny that a person can, in certain ways, choose to fulfil or to defy (though if difficulties arise they may be attributed to such a defiance).
11. Dumont (1987:95, 103) defines this as the relativisation of life. He suggests that the seeming ambivalent relation with life

in the world wherein life is both an impediment of salvation and a condition of it can best be described in terms of hierarchy. In this manner the religious encompasses the secular in terms of absolute values while subordinating itself to the secular in mundane matters. "Priests are superior, for they are inferior only on an inferior level" (op.cit.:108). This is an approach which will be examined in the final chapters.

12. The term hesychast comes from the Greek en isichia meaning in silence, and in religious contexts referred to those who lived a strict hermitical life in holy silence. Special techniques including solitude, retirement, and the repetition of the Jesus prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me") were used in order, ultimately, to gain a vision of the Divine Light. Central to hesychast teachings was (and is) the belief in the possibility of bridging the gap between this world and the next, something which is central to the Iconoclastic Controversy to be discussed below. In the fourteenth century a controversy concerning the mystical teachings of the hesychasts flared up, becoming part also, of the civil war shaking the Byzantine Empire at that time. Hesychasm was eventually accepted and the civil war resolved. It should also be noted that the hesychast teaching was strongly rejected by Rome. See e.g. Ostrogorsky 1969:511-14, 520; Meyendorff 1983.

13. Bottomley (1979:1-3) however, suggests that such teachings may have been in reaction to the Roman world which increasingly emphasised the division of the body and the soul. Christianity was influenced by the Judaic thought which though it distinguished between the soul and the body did not separate them. Together body and soul constituted the image of God. Thus, though Paul did preach celibacy, he did not preach against the body (Bottomley op.cit.: 43). After all the Eucharist and the Incarnation, the enfleshing of God were central to the Christian doctrines. It was only during the Renaissance when attention was diverted from the social body to the individual, that the body was divorced from the spirit and became an object of contemplation (Bottomley op.cit:163).

14. Stirrat (op.cit.) also makes a similar point when comparing Eliadian notions of the timeless sacred and the Durkheimian notion of the sacred as society. He suggests that in Christianity both models exist such that saints are called upon to act in certain social contexts whereas God is perceived as beyond space and time. Saints however derive their power from this timeless divinity, portraying in this manner the dependence of the time bound model on the timeless model. Similarly, religious centers are also caught between these two orders of the sacred. Yet these religious center with their holy persons may also threaten the secular authority of the Church. For they may claim to have direct contact with the timeless eternity offering thereby alternatives to the established social order. Also note Meyendorff 1982:197-215.

15. This bears similarity to Lewis's (op.cit.) discussion concerning leprosy, uncleanness and death which stand in opposition to the priest, the holy and life. This opposition came to

be increasingly associated with sin as opposed to a sinless or redeemed state brought about by a priest; a state known as grace.

16. Chastity, as we shall see (Chapter 4), implies amongst other things purity of intention; an understanding of self and self-motivation; a release from exclusive relationships and a total giving of self to God.

17. See e.g. Ostrogorsky op.cit.; Meyendorff 1982; Runciman 1971.

18. Characteristic of this was the rise of many low class army officers and scholars to the throne. Even stable boys and peasants (Ostrogorsky op.cit:286-287, regarding Michael IV 1034-41) were not despised as long as they proved capable and the political circumstances remained in their favour. Dynastic rule was common but usurpers if capable were followed regardless of their class background. See also Runciman 1987:46.

19. See e.g. Meyendorff op.cit.:122-123; Hammond 1956:51-65; and Dumont op.cit.:99 wherein the notions of the individual within a brotherhood are discussed. See also Weber 1977a:282 concerning the nature of hierocracy.

20. This is, due to lack of space, an over-simplification. For example, Bynum (1982:130-131) notes that the affective piety of the High Middle Ages is based on a sense of humankind's creation in the likeness of God and on the humanity of Christ as an affirmation of humanity's divine nature. Thus, creation and incarnation, that is the Eucharist, are increasingly stressed over the ideas of atonement and judgement, a point noted as particularly Orthodox. The West, however, also maintained as a central image Christ's suffering in the Passions, and humanity's participation in that suffering whereas in the East it is the image of the Ascension which is emphasised. See Ware op.cit.:230-234.

21. See Meyendorff op.cit:33, 197-215. For a discussion of the attempt to overcome regionalism through religious idioms see e.g. Riegelhaupt 1973:848; Cultileiro 1971:265-269 for Portugal.

22. Meyendorff (op.cit:217-233) relates this to the regionalism of the Orthodox Church and the more pronounced hierarchy of Western Christianity, namely Roman Catholicism. Runciman (op.cit:17) points out that there is no wholly accepted encyclopaedia of Orthodox doctrine apart from St. John of Damascus's "Foundation of Wisdom" written in the eighth century and which leaves aside many issues. On the whole Orthodox feel that many doctrines are better left a mystery.

23. Arnakis (1952:236) quotes the well-known dictum of Lucas Notaras, the chief council of the last Byzantine Emperor: "It is preferable for us to see the Turkish turban in the midst of the City rather than the tiara of the Latin Cardinal", a statement which foretold the events to come all too accurately.

24. Yet, as noted above celibacy increasingly became identified with virginity and thus with the denial of sexuality, e.g. Warner 1985:50-69; Pagels 1988:78.

25. Much of this discussion relies upon Ware op.cit.: 45-48. See also Cambridge Medieval History vol. IV Part II, "The Byzantine Empire" pp. 165-184; Hammond op.cit.:79-90.

26. Meyendorff 1982: 205 "No religious orders exempt from that jurisdiction [the jurisdiction of local bishops] ever developed in the East, as they did in the medieval West. The thought of St. Basil, with its insistence on the unity of the Church, certainly contributed to that vision of monasticism as part of the general body of Christians."

27. The Orthodox Church has never attempted to define exactly who the Fathers are still less to classify them in order of importance though special reverence is paid to the fourth century writers and particularly to the "Three Great Hierarchs": Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom. Yet, the many later writers are also considered Fathers, even contemporary writers, since to say that there are no more Fathers would be to say that the Holy Spirit which inspires their writings has deserted the Church. See Ware op.cit.:212.

28. Many of the changes witnessed within the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II portray a similar struggle to define the balance between obedience to the (male) Church hierarchy and the charismatic and autonomous nature that the monastic vocation can offer (Edmunds op.cit.).

29. Dumont op.cit.:111-112 notes that after the eighth century the western Church assumed political power becoming increasingly more worldly. Conversely, the political realm was made to participate in absolute, universalist values. As such, the two once separate realms were merged as they were not in the East. This may suggest a possible reason for the rise of the in-the-world ascetics of the West, whereas in the east, the Tradition has strongly maintained an outworldly ascetic view.

30. From personal discussion with Dr. D.M. Nicol of King's College, University of London.

31. This anti-ecclesiastical expression or the decrease in attendance does not necessarily mean that religious sentiment is diminishing (see e.g. Brandes 1980:178;1976). Often the Church and the clerics through their actions may influence religious behaviour in an adverse fashion(see e.g. Blum and Blum 1970:53-54, 80; Freeman 1968; Ott 1981:89; Riegelhaupt 1973), but not necessarily religious sentiment. Anticlericalism in Peta is best defined as Pina-Cabral (1986:210) has defined it for northern Portugal. He describes it as "an aversion to either the person of a particular priest or to all priests as a group. It does not usually imply a disbelief in the power of priests as a whole, but is rather an expression of the perceived ineptitude of the individual priests to fulfil the tasks which they are given". Anticlericalism may also be expressed by educated persons attached, in the case of Peta, to left-wing political movements. It rarely takes the form of militant atheism or confrontation with the Church.

32. My main source here is Mouzelis 1978. For the relations between the Byzantine East and the Latin West after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 see Geanakoplos 1966.

33. Hammond (op.cit.:142) notes that even by 1920 only 805 (married) parish priests out of 4,500 had received any education beyond that of elementary school.

34. It should be noted however, that it was Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras who, in defiance of the Patriarch of Constantinople, raised the standard of revolt in the monastery of Aya Lavra on the 25th of March 1821. Also, during the 1967 dictatorship, a number of bishops were unceremoniously and in breach of canonical law, dismissed for opposing the regime. The regime then identified itself with the Church, making the Church, and thus Orthodoxy, once again an instrument of oppression.

35. Gearing (1968:69-71) suggests that the universalistic principles of Orthodox Christianity are de-emphasised or ignored in the village he studied. Instead, Church rituals are associated with 'Greek history' and Greek identity. For Cyprus, Loizos op.cit:35.

36. The proper attire for a woman is a long-sleeved top, a mid-length skirt, or dress, stocking and shoes without too high a heel. A man should wear trousers and a long-sleeved shirt.

37. Towards the end of my stay, they were in the process of building a new hostel that would be separate from the courtyard of the convent thus allowing for greater physical space and privacy from secular visitors. See Chapters 2 and 3 for discussion pertaining to insiders and outsiders.

38. The pilgrimage enhances the liminal quality of the convent, its divine power as does the thaumaturgical icon (e.g. Christian op.cit:122; Dubisch 1988:123). As Turner and Turner (1978:6) point out miracles are essential for many if not for all shrines since they serve as places uniting heaven and earth; bridging the gap between the spiritual and the mundane world. Icons and relics are the material objects through which this linkage is made. The more worldly T. has no thaumaturgical objects which are permanently on display but its very buildings are associated with a divine historic past. As one nun explained to me: "Sometimes it comes to me that I am walking on the same flagstones that St. Theodora trod."

39. Pitt-Rivers 1968:19-20 associates the unknown with the sacred and divine in relation to hospitality -- the stranger who might be God. The secrecy of the nuns' similarly maintained their other-worldly character.

40. Note Friedl 1963:116-117 on similar point. See also Lison-Tolosana 1983:16-17 for Portugal.

41. By the 1960's the Greek economy was expanding rapidly. Bennett (1988:217) quoting statistics notes that from the 1950's to 1971 the gross national product grew at an average of 6.7% a year

compared to 3.0% for the U.S. and 5.6% for Spain. And the center of that growth was Athens. Moreover as Bennett (op.cit.:236) notes, most people who do not have enough land to sustain themselves prefer urban jobs to agricultural labour since not only do they have better job security and (now even better) pensions, but particularly for the men, not directly dependent on their fellow villagers for their livelihood, they are able to keep up the ideal of independence and self-sufficiency.

42. For a breakdown of crops produced and sold see Appendix 1. It should also be noted that all the numbers given in the text unless otherwise stated come from the Secretary of Peta, Mr. Pesli. Though access to the records themselves was limited he, along with his assistant, Mr. Mousaveres did provide and assist me and took an active interest in the study. I am most grateful to them both.

43. Cavounidis (1983:323) notes that since then Greek agriculture has been dominated by simple commodity producing units, generally family units both in terms of land ownership and labour.

44. Matthopoulou (1957:80): the four enemies of humanity are the body, the society, the devil, and death.

45. This seems to imply volition, but as will be seen it is not held by all villagers that animals act through will or resolve nor do they take decisions after due consideration or deliberation. See volition in Shorter OED.

46. Sometimes the deceased's body may be referred to as soma. Soma generally refers to the body of a living animal or human, and is a gentler expression than ptoma since it calls attention only to the body and not the death.

47. Psofimi may also be used to denigrate someone who is lifeless, without will, useless. Someone to be disregarded.

48. e.g. Herzfeld 1985:95. Loizos points out (in a personal communication) that in Cyprus humans psosan but only when death is untimely or brutal. In the village the word psosan was sometimes used for those who died en mass due to famine for example. In these instances humans are likened to flies "psosan san tis miyes" which implies in great numbers and not in a human way. A person may also be said to psosifi when he/she is said to have no soul or to be very wicked. Generally, however, the term psosan is used for animals alone.

49. This point has often been noted in structural analyses which use the nature/culture dichotomy. For an overview and discussion see for example MacCormack 1980. Discussions and differences in outlook within the Christian Churches as to humanity's place and relation to nature do exist. See e.g. Pagels (1988: 127-150) and Ware op.cit: 226-230.

50. Ware (op.cit.:228) points out that Orthodox hold a less-exalted view of humanity's state before the Fall than does the West. In the West Adam fell from the great height of knowledge

and perfection while in the East, Adam is seen to have been in a state of undeveloped innocence and simplicity and thus, should not be judged too harshly. Thus, unlike Augustine and in a mitigated fashion the Roman Catholic Church today, the Orthodox do not see humans as depraved and guilty by default but rather as capable of exercising their free will for good and thereby achieving grace.

51. That the past and the present are portrayed in this manner may or may not be a contemporary phenomenon. It may be that rapid changes evident since the 1960's have led to a reification of the past and its 'traditions' presenting it as a time of innocence, simplicity, and morality as compared with the present. However, it is not inconceivable that such views of the past and the present have always been part of the village and convent discourse. People do often reify the past. See for example Herzfeld (1983). For discussions concerning different definitions and discourses of tradition in the creation and negotiation of present identity see e.g. Cowan 1988; Danforth 1984; Herzfeld 1982.

52. Similarly note Zonabend 1984:2; Pina-Cabral 1987.

53. Calling into question once again the boundary between the profane and the sacred. See e.g. Christian op.cit.; Hirschon 1983:121; McKevitt 1988.

54. Herzfeld (1985:243) notes that to be effective mediators, spiritual authority should be removed for the immediacy of social pressures, thus existing both in practice and psychologically in neutral territories. See also Christian op.cit:60,75,77,222.

55. Seminal research concerning these contradictory sets of values has been conducted. How people seek to balance their views and how this effects gender relations, village morality and behaviour, relations between people in terms of gossip, social reputation and honour, has been discussed. See e.g. du Boulay 1976; Campbell 1979; Christian op.cit.:129,157 and Lison-Tolosana op.cit.: 278-283,312 for Spain.

CHAPTER 2

Shifting Boundaries

Introduction

In this chapter I wish to discuss and compare certain spatial divisions within the village and the convents. Created over time spatial divisions provide a framework within which social actions and values are re-enacted and interpreted. Yet, spatial boundaries are not given, though often they may be construed as such. They are the products of history and human interactions. Over time boundaries are crossed; new ones are created. Interactions and relationships are continually being reinterpreted and re-negotiated. Like metaphors, new meanings are created by predicating new inchoate ideas, actions, and relationships on old, well-known frameworks allowing for transformations as well as inhibiting and constraining actions¹. Spatial divisions, in other words, are not simply the product of the past, but are continually being re-created within specific contexts allowing for the negotiation of identity and interaction between people.

This chapter has two aims. The first is an attempt to examine how the construction of space is achieved through the interaction of people within it. Many who have conducted research in Greece have noted that spatial divisions are often strictly defined by gender: men being associated with the public domain of the square and women with the more private domain of the house and neighbourhood. And, though this strict dichotomy has been contested as an analytical model, as will be noted further on, it never the less does express a discourse which remains in force in the village. Yet, though spatial divisions are informed by past use and by the values associated with them, they also provide, for just this reason, symbolic contexts within which social relationships may be contested, displayed, and/or transformed.

Secondly, this chapter aims to compare the construction of space in the village with that in the convents. Spatial order in the village discussed in the first half of the chapter, is associated with concepts of kinship and gender. Spatial order in the convent, discussed in the second half of the chapter, though it resembles that of the village, ultimately rests on a different world view: the achievement of eternal life after death. Thus, though the spatial symbolism in the convent portrays a strict gender division, this division is secondary to the division between lay and religious (Ardener 1981:13-14).

Outside in the Village Square (I Platia)

Spatially the village center is conceived of as the square². Extending out from it in a seemingly haphazard fashion are the houses. Beyond them lie some vegetable gardens and the fields. The further out from the square one's house is, the more distant from the village community and village events one is. On the outskirts of the village are the most recently built houses of those people who could not build within the village due to lack of space or economic reasons. There also are the houses of those people newest to the village as for example settled itinerants in the past or people from mountain villages in search of an easier life and work in the town.

The square³ of the village lies some 150m above sea level. The main road into the village feeds into the square at one end and continues towards the upper reaches of the village from the other. During the day the village cars and trucks pass through the square and the hourly bus between the village and the town also stops and turns there.

Rising above the square and marking its eastern boundary, is the church. Built in nineteenth century it is an elegant structure of stone and wood. A covered, wooden balcony girdles it. Stone steps lead up from the square, first to a wide open level and then up again to the church. To the right of the church rising from the square is the bell tower

where the pelicans nest yearly. A little used play ground, a bid for modernity built by the "Athenians", takes up the left side of the first level while all along this level during festive events the yiayiadhes (sing. yiayia; lit. grandmothers, a term of reference for all old women) place themselves to watch the kinisi (traffic, or movement) in the square. Dressed in black and said to have sharp eyes and tongues they are called, perhaps unkindly, korakia (ravens) by some.

Across the square from the church are a number of large plane trees (ta platania) which give a welcome shade during summer days. These plane trees mark the site of one of the most important springs where women until the 1950's used to go for water. Now the spring has been paved over, but stories of the fights for positions in line to get this precious commodity are still recounted.

The road leading to the square contains a number of shops: a bakery, two butchers, four general stores which sell anything from detergent to cheese; and two taverns, one of which is frequented by young married and unmarried people, and on week-ends and during festive occasions by people from the town as well⁴. Since public transportation to the town is frequent--a bus leaves the village hourly--the village has no bank, pharmacy or permanent doctor as do other large villages in the region which are more distant from the town. In this sense Peta has lost its prominence as a trading center, a position it once held vis-a-vis the mountain villages to the east. Yet, it is still considered a relatively wealthy village, its inhabitants owning a great deal of land near the national highway that passes through the town.

Circling the village square are 10 kafenias, 15 in the village altogether, (sing. kafenio, loosely translated as coffeehouse) which serve, to their predominantly male clientele, coffee, beer, soft drinks, ouzo or tsipouro (strong, clear alcohols made from distilled grapes. Ouzo contains aniseed flavouring and may be diluted with water). During the winter, particularly in the afternoons and evenings, one sees most of the men of the village in their preferred kafenia

drinking, playing cards or backgammon, reading newspapers, watching television, discussing or simply sitting quietly on their own. Their choice of kafenio they say, depends on kinship relations and political affiliation⁵. Groups of friends, known as parees (sing. parea), tend to frequent the same kafenio. In this way a man is always assured of running into a friend at some point in the evening⁶.

I never saw a woman on these winter evenings in any one of the kafenia unless she had come to find a relative or worked in store itself. And though I was assured that there was no reason why women should not go into the kafenia I always felt uncomfortable and my entrance was always noted and remarked upon. The kafenia are simply not places where women go to sit to pass the time.

However, in the summer, between the months of May and October, but particularly June, July and August, the character of the square is transformed. Tables and chairs are placed outside each kafenio. By day, as in the winter, the kafenia are frequented by those men who do not have work for that day. Too hot to do much else they sit inside avoiding the sun, chatting quietly. A general sleepiness prevails. At mid-day the square and its kafenia are empty but come the early evening, around six, they fill with men playing cards or discussing local (gossip as some say), national or international events.

As it gets dark, at around nine, many of the younger men (in particular those in their late thirties or early forties), may be joined by their wives and children (e.g. Hirschon 1978; Cowan op.cit.). With family friends or in family groups they will sit at the tables placed outside the kafenia enjoying a few drinks and chatting until well past midnight. Some of the kafenia, doubling as psistaries (grills), serve roast meat, fried potatoes and simple salads. The square which has been blocked off to cars is filled with children of all ages and strolling groups of people, who parade up and down for hours. Dogs and cats cautiously scavenge for tit-bits accidentally dropped avoiding the occasional kicks from adults and children. During these summer

evenings, and particularly Saturdays and Sundays when people from the town drive up to the village to enjoy the cool breeze, the square and the kafenia are places for everyone, men and women, girls and boys. Thus, the nature of the square changes during the summer evenings from a place where, as has been noted by many anthropologists⁷ male identity is created, male reputations are negotiated and social relationships outside the home are established, to a social space where the household, as a corporate entity, is displayed and interactions takes place not between individual men but between these corporate groups. Thus the ambience and the social meaning of the square varies according to its use, the participants within it, and the time of day (e.g. Ardener op.cit.:15-16). The shift occurs particularly as the men move from inside the kafenia to the tables placed outside.

The platia however is not a place where the young people (i nei, see Christian 1989:23-26 on the mocedad in Spain) wish to spend their time. The young are usually defined as those people in their mid-teens to late twenties who are not as yet married. They avoid the square and what they consider the critical eyes and gossiping tongues of their elders and go to "the monument" (to mnimio). This area marks the highest point in the village at 180m. above sea level. There are two kafenia there both with televisions and one with a video. Again patronage is said to be established along political lines though I suspect it has more to do, as with the patronage of the kafenia in the square, with social and personal relations⁸. One of the kafenia is named O Vrachos ("the crag") and is defined as an eksochikon kentro (a country gathering place, in the sense of excursion-place) which well expresses the sense that these kafenia are situated outside⁹. That is, they are outside the central area of the village, the square, which in this context is defined as inside. The point is that the young people do not feel comfortable or want to be a part of the village community as it is defined by their parents in the square:

In the square you can't sit at your ease. There you have to do what is expected. All the gossips are there. They

look to see what you are doing, who you are sitting with, what you are drinking.... They come here (to the *mnimio*) too to see what you are doing but they are not here all the time.

Criticism and gossip concerning the way they act, who their friends are and with whom, possibly, they may be having a serious relationship are inevitable but by avoiding the square the young people feel that they gain some distance both spatially and psychologically.

From this it is clear that the relations within the square are informed by notions concerning gender and age. Women, young people, and children visit the square only in the company of their husbands, fiances, or fathers during the summer months or on festive occasions. For the remainder of the time, the village square and *kafenias* are places identified with men¹⁰. Moreover, it is in the square that the villagers generally present themselves as a community to outsiders, *ksenous* (strangers, non-villagers) and it is to the square that outsiders come to participate in events sponsored by the village. It is the men in the village who seek and for the most part, are expected to represent the village in this capacity. For, it is the men who control the community's relations with the state and local officials. They sponsor events through the church and elected offices. They are seen to create the accepted public discourse of the village community¹¹.

The centrality of the square in this capacity is evident in that the church and offices of the village officials are located there. The major positions, i.e. priest, president, treasurer, secretary, etc. are all filled by men in their forties and older and though some women feel themselves qualified most would not dare to put their names on an electoral ballot. To do so would be to usurp their husbands' position as household head. Most women feel that to place themselves on public display in this manner would expose them and their husbands' to ridicule, particularly if they openly disagreed with them¹². Ideally, the household should portray itself as a united entity. The household representative is,

in different contexts, clearly defined and open disagreements should be reserved for the privacy of the home. Moreover, many women said that they did not desire to involve themselves publicly in community politics: "these were matters for men". Obviously such statements only reinforce the division of labour and the suppression of women's' voices in community issues. Though it may be that these statements express genuine sentiments since it is not only rules but sentiments and practice which inform action (e.g. Bourdieu 1977:95), it may also be that married women in particular, feel that they ought to express such sentiments in order to comply with the conventional image of what it is to be a "woman", what it is to be a good wife and mother (Ardener 1978:19,28-30, 1981:16;Cowan op.cit.).

However, a few women in their twenties did take an active interest, and the husbands of one or two often said that they did not feel threatened by this as long as their wives fulfilled their household duties¹³. One young, unmarried woman went so far as to have her name placed on a ballot during the local elections. Though regarded with pride by her father, she was considered by many too young to know anything about running the village. The whole affair was deemed somewhat silly. In general, it may be said that young women who involve themselves openly in politics will often be regarded with benevolent tolerance rather than as serious candidates for office; an attitude which is prompted both by their age and their gender.

There is a place however where young men and women can speak and hold positions of relative public prominence--the youth groups¹⁴. There are two in the village, the most powerful one, MSNP, led by the left, was well known outside the village for its traditional dance group, theatre, and carnival (Apokries) celebrations, as well as for sponsoring events in which speakers came to discuss health issues, politics, or the media. Its office is in the square. The location of the right wing group's office is to the side of the square thereby emphasising the square's importance vis-a-vis village power relations. In 1986, when the right-wing

village officials attempted to evict the MSNP from the premises saying that the space was needed for community affairs (though rumour had it they were going to eventually hand over the premises to the right-wing youth group), the support raised by the MSNP to keep their office was strong enough for the village officials to back down. I would suggest that had the officials regained the premises, it would have indicated that the MSNP had lost its political power and social standing in the village.

A few of the young women who were part of the MSNP tried, on a number of occasions, to organise a women's group but failed. The last attempt, made in 1986, was attended by only three women, one of whom was me. When, through the youth group, the same women had earlier organised a meeting in the square to discuss birth control and abortion it was, they said, largely attended by men. Later they asked some women why they had not attended and were told that they could see no reason for going out (ekso) as their husbands were already in the square and could tell them what had occurred.

None the less, the prominence of the youth groups and of the women within them does show that the young and women can and do have a voice and a public presence in the village. They can define publicly accepted representation of the village, though it must be remembered that the youth groups rely to some extent on contributions of time, labour, and money made by the young people's parents, as well as relying generally on social approval as the example above illustrates. In this sense, the groups may be said to be supervised by the older members of the community. They must conform to conventional rules of behaviour, otherwise they will cease to exist. What are enduring are the publicly elected offices always held by men. Their authority is portrayed by the identification of the public space, the square and the kafenia, as being essentially adult male space. It may not always be so but it is often expressed as if it is so. And if this is being questioned, especially in the summer when women easily sit within the square, it might have to do with the influx of "Athenians" during the summer, the few but ever in-

creasing numbers of educated women now holding civil servant positions or highly skilled jobs, and the general sense amongst the people in their thirties and early forties that women now have a personality (prosopikotita). How this affects the villagers and their ideas concerning gender relations and what new discourses are being used and by whom is the concern of another thesis. Suffice it to say here that despite changes for most men and women, men are still the ones said to be truly interested in ta kinotika (the community matters).

Inside the House and Household

Ikoyenia (family) is created by the words ikos meaning house and yenia meaning generation or lineage. In its most restricted sense the term refers to a nuclear family who should live under one roof, share meals cooked by the wife, and the food and money brought into the house by the working members of the household.

Following Netting et al.(1984) however, in discussing the household, the distinctions between physical location, shared activities, and kinship must be kept in mind though it is often the case that these categories in the village do overlap. Thus, we begin by noting that in disentangling the concepts of kinship and residence in the definition of the household, the term ikoyenia though most often associated with those people residing in the same house, may also be expanded to encompass all those defined as kin or, restricted to the conjugal pair and their children, as will be seen in Chapter 3. Here I will use the term ikoyenia to define the household members, leaving aside its other meanings¹⁵.

Moreover, I would agree with Yanagisako (1979,1984) that to gain an understanding of the household it is not enough to take into account the structure, or the activities associated with the it. The household is a conceptual unit as well as a structural one. Thus, people may have culturally and historically specific and possibly divergent meanings and motives behind seemingly similar residential patterns,(a point which

applies equally well to the study of religious metaphors and symbols in this thesis). It is therefore important to examine how people regard their households as well as examining the household structure and composition. In this chapter I restrict the discussion to a synchronic examination of the household as a symbolic structure informed by gender and kinship relations.

Following from this, though co-operation between households in the completion of various tasks is noted by the villagers, household autonomy and self-sufficiency is one of the fundamental conceptions people have concerning the household¹⁶. Thus, though I would agree that the conceptual separateness of the house or of the conjugal pair masks the very real interdependence between households (e.g. Segalen op.cit.:53, 1984), my concern here will be with the household as a conceptually bounded unit; a unit made up of co-resident household members who work together, pool their earnings and labour, share their domestic world symbolised by the hearth or kitchen, eat together and exchange intimate feelings and secrets¹⁷.

In the past the dominant household configuration was the patrilocal extended family. Primogeniture was the preferred practised whereby the eldest son inherited the father's house. Younger brothers upon marriage, were usually provided with land and the means of establishing a new dwelling or, if the resources were scarce, the father's house was divided to provide separate living quarters for the married brothers (e.g. Friedl 1962:60-63¹⁸). Today, some couples in the village live neolocally and some, especially those who have lived and studied away from the village, prefer a neolocal residence. However, the majority of the new couples will live, at least for a time, with the husband's parents and his unmarried siblings.

Though it is considered that both the mother's kin and the father's kin are also the child's kin, the emphasis was and is on the patrilineal line and the desired child was and is a boy (though it is not considered as essential as it was in the past). It is through the boy that the father's

ikoyenia is continued¹⁹. Girls give up the name 'of the house' upon marriage, acquiring the name of their husband's ikoyenia²⁰. In bearing children, they create a new ikoyenia foreign in name and house to that of their natal ikoyenia. In this sense, married women are caught between houses: no longer members of their natal household in terms of residence but still part of these households in terms of kinship²¹.

Since ideally all brothers should be provided with a separate and equally valued dwelling, the village as a structural and social entity is made up of houses which are owned by the men and are transmitted through the male line. And though houses may be sold, exchanged, or lost to a generation thus finding their way into another ikoyenia, it is the notion of the house and the patronym as expressions of the present ikoyenia that is of paramount importance²².

Yet, a household is not considered such unless there is at least one person who can cook and feed him/herself. Two households may exist within one house if there are two separate kitchens²³ a point noted by the Secretary of the village. This however, is a rare occurrence. Usually there is only one kitchen and if there is more than one woman in the house, the women will define their status and the use of the kitchen accordingly. Thus households in the village are often referred to as tzakia (hearths or fireplaces, now replaced by kitchens). It is at the tzakia or in the kitchens where the most important functions of the household take place. There the women cook, the household members gather, eat, and occasionally sleep. It is there that the children of the household were born²⁴. In all these functions the tzakia/kitchens come to symbolise the centrality, sustenance and continuation of the household. And it is women who are considered vital in the fulfilment of these tasks²⁵. They transform raw food products into nourishing, often cooked, food sustenance; mediate between the material and spiritual world praying for their families, going to church, keeping the fasts, and Name Days²⁶ and caring for the household graves. Even the children they bear are the good and so-

cially acceptable products of natural sexual desires (see Chapters 1 and 3)²⁷.

The land around the village is continually changing hands through the women and their dowries²⁸. All the villagers agree that, particularly in the past, women got the best and the greater share of the land holdings of their natal house along with household goods and money which made up the dowries. Their brothers inherited whatever remained²⁹. It was and is the women who provide the land which they work along with their husbands and which in the past, to a large extent, sustained the household economy. The house though it defines male identity and represents the link with former generations, relies on women who, like the land they bring with them upon marriage, vitalise it and provide the means through which it may continue. The house serves to define, though in different ways, both men and women. And it is only with the establishment of the ikoyenia that men and particularly women become fully recognised members of the community.

Description³⁰:

Each house has a front yard--avli or mantra (the space where the herd animals were kept in the past) is either laid with flagstone or in accordance with the 1960's, 1970's style, cement. This front yard is decorated with potted or planted flowering shrubs and often has a number of grapevines trained onto a terrace above to give shade in the summer and provide fruit in the early autumn. Side and/or back gardens have lemon and orange trees and occasionally other fruit trees such as fig, almond, apple or plum. A large area is also left open to provide a vegetable garden and a chicken coop. All this area around the house, the garden and yard, is enclosed by a high iron fence with a large double iron door which opens onto the front yard from the street. Often in raised letters on the iron door are the initials of the man of the house.

In the past the surrounding wall was made of stone in Ottoman style which prevented passers-by from seeing into the

yard. As the people generally lived on the first floor, the ground floor being used as a stable and storage area, they could watch the street from their balcony relatively safe from the scrutiny of the neighbours. Now few people have many animals and the ground floor has been converted into living areas. The low stone wall with the iron fence on top of it which surrounds the house allows both those within to observe those who pass and those from without to gaze in³¹.

There are a number of houses, particularly those near the center of the village, as defined by the square, which lack a vegetable garden having plots on the outskirts of the village instead. Some houses also lack a front yard but they are numbered. They are usually contemporary structures, built on small plots of land near the center of the village. The inhabitants generally use as much space for the building as possible. In these cases a balcony may substitute for the front yard.

From the spring until mid-autumn much of the peoples' time is spent in the yard. This is so particularly for the women of the household. During the mornings they may be busy with the household tasks--preparing food, cleaning and airing the house, caring for children or grandchildren and going to the fields or to work in the town. In the afternoon after a brief visit to the garden plots and the caring of any animals they may have, they will take up their handiwork--knitting, embroidery, crochet-- and will sit in their front yards to drink coffee and chat over the fence with their next door neighbour. Or, they may leave their home to go to a neighbour's house just down the road. There, anywhere from two to ten women will gather to discuss village affairs, gossip, solve problems, air their feelings and drink coffee and nibble on sweets if any are offered as kerasma (treat) by the hostess-- this of course if they have decided not to meet their husbands in the square. These neighbourhood gatherings are always in the yard and may last well into the night when the men start coming home from the kafenion--up until 11:00 or 12:00 a.m. It is women who visit houses casually, men paying visits to houses only on formal occasions such as Name

Day celebrations, baptisms, marriages and funerals.

As the weather starts getting colder and the days shorten it becomes unpleasant to sit outside. The impromptu gatherings cease. Women tend to stay at home near the warmth of the iron stove heaters in their kitchens. Occasionally next door neighbours will visit one another or a sister or sister-in-law will stop to spend the evening. These visits tend to be sporadic and brief. Most men and women will be home by 9:00 p.m. It is too cold and dark to be about much later.

The visitors when they do come will generally sit in the kitchen with the hostess. Kitchens tend to serve as common sitting rooms in the winter and may even be used as a bedroom by an old parent of the household--usually the husband's mother. The front room where the best furniture, embroidered doilies and bibelot of the household are displayed is never opened on these occasions. It is only opened at special events such as Easter, Christmas, Name Day celebrations or on family reunions, a situation noted by all researchers. These are occasions when the household is celebrating formally and the house is then anichto (open) to all visitors. It is on public display and friends, neighbours, distant relatives or acquaintances are apt to drop by and are encouraged to do so.

The front room is also opened to a guest who is a complete stranger and unknown to the village. Neighbours and friends are rarely given such formal treatment. It would be viewed as highly inappropriate and somewhat insulting for it would imply great social distance and mark the visitor as outside the informal and close relations with the household and its members. It would deny the codes of friendship, neighbourliness, and familiarity³².

The winter's cold and early darkness means that the roads and pathways are empty and dark. Many times on returning from a visit to a friend after dark I would be repeatedly asked if I was afraid. Coming from Chicago and London the question seemed absurd. But the night holds fear of attack from unknown men and from wicked spirits. Both Apokries (the time of carnival just before the beginning of

Lent) and the twelve nights between Christmas and the Epiphany were seen, particularly before WWII, as dangerous³³. During Carnival men disguised in costume can approach a lone woman and bother her without her knowing who it is. During the twelve nights after Christmas the kalikantzari (described to be little dirty imps with long tails--see Blum and Blum 1970:119-122) are about playing pranks and committing all sorts of mischief. But even if it is not a ritual time, the night holds mysteries³⁴. One yiayia described how she sometimes heard voices of supernatural beings, ischiomata (shadows), that would call her name at night. She would not answer however, because if she did her voice would be stolen³⁵. And she was not alone in this belief. The night and darkness are a dangerous times, particularly in the winter when the streets are empty and there is no one about but ischiomata or strangers.

Because winter effectively severs ties between women and leaves them isolated in their homes, spring and summer are longed for and often talked about as a time when the village "comes alive" (zontanevi). The women look forward to the time when they can once again gather in parees and enjoy each others company.

These gatherings of female neighbours and relatives takes place in the yard--a space which is neither fully in the house nor outside in the street, a liminal space which allows the strangers to the household to enter into the defined space of the household but not into the area where household members conduct their private affairs.

Only close relatives or very good friends have access to the kitchen of the household during the summer. That is, they can enter into the kitchen with some degree of freedom and ease. No one outside the household should enter a bedroom uninvited, that is, if the bedroom is separate from the kitchen and common sitting room. If not, then its function as a bedroom is ignored. In the presence of visitors it is used as either a kitchen or a sitting room portraying again the sense that space is defined by use rather than simply determining it. The bedroom of the household's head

couple is especially marked off. In the past, when houses consisted of either one or two rooms, the bedroom was defined by the iconostasi, the household shrine (e.g. Dubisch 1983:190-191; Hirschon 1981: 83,1983:117). The shrine was usually set high in a corner near the ceiling above the bed and contained icons and an oil lamp. Now a days an iconostasi may not exist but wedding pictures of the couple are placed in a prominent area above the bed and a special shelf on the wall will contain the couple's wedding crowns³⁶. There may also but not necessarily be either an embroidered or bought icon depicting the Panayia and the child Christ, or the crucifix hung over the bed. Icons and a small lamp if found in the house are usually placed in the kitchen or very occasionally in the formal room. The icons are placed there so that "everyone can see them" or "because in the kitchen one remembers to light the lamp."

The shifting emphasis from the iconostasi to the wedding may be the result of changing notions of what constitutes a household. Pina-Cabral (op.cit: 142-144) notes that in Alto Minho such changes may be seen as the penetration of bourgeois attitudes into rural areas. The household, with all its members, is no longer the most significant elementary social unit (see also Segalen op.cit.:179). Instead, greater emphasis is being placed on the married couple and their children as the basic unit of society. The household shrines encompassed all the people within the household. They contained holy water; icons that had been "read" in church for forty days; basil from the blessed crucifix. They served in each household as a miniature church uniting metaphorically the household with the church. The emphasis now is increasingly shifting from the household as a closed unit belonging to the husband and his ikoyenia to the nuclear family, evident in the growing preference for neolocal residence.

Yet, despite transformations occurring in the dynamics of household relations due in part to changing social and economic conditions, the value placed on fertility and the continuation of the family line through children remains³⁷. Thus, the head couple will generally relinquish their bed or

bedroom only to their visiting married children and their spouses; when they feel that the married son and his wife are now the established and productive unit in the household; or when one of the spouses dies. The eldest married son usually inherits the house and the best bedroom (if the preferred practice of primogeniture is followed). The bedroom serves to define its occupants as the leaders of the household. More specifically, the bed itself symbolise the fertility of the marriage for it is there that the very meaning of marriage is created--the reproduction of the family; the creation of children³⁸. It is noted that most people--young and old--when asked why they marry will say that they do so in order to have children. It is only very recently and among a very few young couples who do not live in the village that the notion of marrying someone because you want to share your life with him/her is becoming a stated reason for marriage.

Finally, a note should be made concerning toilets and bathrooms. Many people today have flush toilets and bathtubs and those who do not are highly apologetic. Yet, my mother-in-law who was one of the first to install an indoor kitchen in the house in the 1950's, was teased by a kinsmen who commented ironically that soon she would even install an indoor toilet and bath. Before the fifties and well into the sixties people cooked and excreted in out-door facilities built for those purposes. Some did not have outdoor toilets and would simply go to a nearby field, or in back of the house.

Today, the toilet is a place which by necessity must permit outsiders into a private area of the household. Toilets are marginalised. Guests will ask in a lowered voice and with apology whether they can use the meros (the place). It is often not even named. And for a guest to wash his/her hands in the kitchen is not appropriate. Dirt from outside should not enter the place where food is being prepared (see Chapter 3; Dubisch 1986).

It is the separation of space within the household which expresses certain functions and peoples' notions of areas considered to be increasingly private, intimate and un-

suitable to be viewed or displayed to those outside the household. The expression dhikos/ki mas (the person/persons who belongs to us; who is one with us) places members of the group in opposition to another group. It is a contextual term for one who is a member of a group, as insider, in one instance, is in another context an outsider³⁹. Thus, close neighbours and relatives though often excluded from bedrooms, may enter freely into the kitchen whereas more distant neighbours are entertained in the yard or on the porch and those even more distant are entertained formally in the front room, maintaining through this formal ritual social distance (Douglas 1973:15-16). As one becomes increasingly seen as a member of the tightly knit household group, increasingly dhikos mas, one is able to enter, informally, spaces which are considered intimate household space (Ardener 1981:22).

This intimacy seems to arise from a sense that the house as a symbolic structure is in a liminal position containing within it the processes which transform the natural into the social. Eating to sustain the body, sex, the bearing of children, and sleep should all take place within the house. When they occur outside the house, they are either associated more closely with the social, especially when sanctioned by religious or secular events, or with the natural when they are not. For example, eating with people not of the household occurs in the semi-public area of the best room or yard, or in the square or tavern. In these instances eating is defined as a highly social activity eliminating the physical boundaries of the household walls and more importantly individually defined kitchens, joining groups of households together at a common table, and exposing the household as a group to the scrutiny of the community. A large part of the community is brought together, so that to outsiders and in part to the members of the village itself, there is a sense of unity and identity⁴⁰. If however, a neighbour is visiting, it is unthinkable for any household member to sit down to the table to eat. Nor is it polite to take a snack outside to the porch if a guest is present. Food, in the house, should be eaten inside, away from the eyes of the community

unless it is shared or given as *kerasma* (treat).

Similarly, sex when it takes place outside of marriage or other socially recognised engagements, occurs in private secluded areas away from anything that might suggest the social. Thus, fields, abandoned houses or motels on the main road leading to Athens are favourite haunts. Such acts are believed to be motivated or compelled by sexual drives, which are natural, but which have not been adequately contained by the intellect. In many instances the couple may be said to be behaving like animals (san zoa, see Chapter 1; Pina-Cabral op.cit:82,98,104).

It will have become evident that the terms "inside" (mesa) and "outside" (ekso) are important to an understanding of how space is used, defined and how it also serves to create identity, a view not new to Greek ethnography⁴¹. In village ideology it may be said that the house is in opposition to the square. Though men are associated with their houses since their *ikoyenia* is embodied in the house, the inside of the house is associated with domestic functions, private discourse and women. The outside as associated with the square, and with public discourses and functions, is what men often regard as identifying them. Men are said not to be able to remain "inside" the house. They must go "out" to the square. Yet, women also go "out" of their houses to visit neighbours, or to patronise *kafeterias* (coffeeshops patronised predominantly by women and young people--Cowan forthcoming) in town, thereby creating social ties outside the household. Though they might not be recognised as such, their interactions form social networks which link houses and neighbourhoods within the village and beyond (e.g. Hirschon 1983:114).

Outside in the Neighbourhoods and Kafeterias

The village may be said to be loosely divided into neighbourhoods (yitonies) which consist of anywhere from five to twenty households depending on the notion of neighbourhood to be used at any one time. For example, one might define the

neighbourhood as the houses immediately adjacent to one's own or include all the houses that are easily accessible from one's own house, echoing again the notion that spatial divisions are determined as much by context as well as by convention⁴².

Since houses are predominantly passed down from father to son, the neighbourhoods in the village have a high percentage of male kin clusters. Thus, for example in my immediate neighbourhood, two brothers and a first cousin lived adjacently. Across from them another first cousin resided and in the plot above them another group of brothers with a first cousin had their households. Thus, though not all the households were related to one another, often immediate neighbours were related through the men of the household.

One male informant (appr. 40 yrs.) described the house, the neighbourhood and the village in the following manner:

The smallest community (kinotita) is the neighbourhood is made up of cells -- that is the ikoyenia (households). One needs a number of cells to form the first community. Then the neighbourhoods of the neighbourhoods form groups of neighbourhoods and these in turn form another community and these groups finally together form the village. The community, the village is the whole (to sinolo). It is like being part of a group.

The informant then drew a diagram of ever increasing concentric circles the house being at the center and the village community being the largest all-encompassing unit. In this model, the house seems to be the significant elementary social unit of the village community and personal identity⁴³. But how are these houses and neighbourhoods interrelated to form a community?

Houses, as noted above, are passed down through the male line with women marrying in. A married woman's neighbourhood is made up of people she may not know well at first. She is obliged to create ties with women who are from other neighbourhoods or from outside the village for neighbours are seen

as vital to the survival of the house⁴⁴:

If I am sick my neighbour is the nearest person who will help me. (A female informant appr. 25 yrs.)

Don't we say: God and neighbour (Theos ke yitonia)? This means that neighbours are always around and about you like God. You go to them for help. (A female informant appr. 60 yrs.)

In the end, neighbours, like close kin, may be relied upon in moments of crisis as well as in moments of joy. It is the neighbourhood visits between women described above which to a great extent allow for the creation of such ties. They create a network upon which a woman can rely on for assistance in shopping, minding a child, exchanging information and advice, or preparing for major household events such as marriage. In fact one's neighbours must be invited to one's household weddings and baptisms as they must attend neighbour's funerals. Finally, neighbourhood ties facilitate in asking assistance for agricultural work, especially if the husbands are related.

Yet, these relations of reciprocity facilitated by proximity can also lead to friction, antagonism, and quarrels. Neighbours may often have knowledge of one another's household affairs, knowledge which a particular household does not necessarily wish to share. Household privacy is virtually unobtainable since houses often share common walls; neighbours' yards can be observed from the road or from one's balcony; visitors seen and arguments overheard. The boundaries between insiders and outsiders are blurred and it is not surprising that, as Campbell (1979:38) notes, the notion of dhikos mas exists alongside a distrust of those considered other, as outsiders⁴⁵:

Ean ise filas na charis	If you're a friend may you be happy
ean ise echthros na skasis	If you're an enemy may you burst
K'ean ise kako yitonas	And if you're a bad neighbour
Na pesis na pethanis	May you lay down and die

or

O kakos o chronos pernai A bad year moves on
O kakos o yitonas dhen pernai A bad neighbour does not

Together the positive and negative sentiments expressed make explicit the ambiguous views people hold concerning neighbours. On the one hand the household is felt to be a closed unit whose members seek to promote its symferon (self interest; e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:169-170) vis-a-vis the rest of the community. On the other hand, there is the equally strong notion that the yitonia is an area of exchange, co-operation, and sociability. Thus, despite the tense relations that may sometimes exist, it remains that neighbours play an important part in the running of the household and in the creation of social relations, especially between women⁴⁶.

These social relations however, particularly as manifested in afternoon visits can be seen as extensions of household tasks. Women rarely visit without bringing their handiwork. "A woman's hands should never lie idle" it is said. The handiwork supports the notion of work continued masking the social nature of the visit⁴⁷. Similarly, young married and unmarried women when shopping or visiting in town will now arrange these excursions to include a stop at a kafeteria (something combining a coffeeshop, a pastry shop, and a bar--similar to a Parisian cafe; for seminal discussion see Cowan op.cit) for coffee and sweets. In town, married women in particular, can treat each other (kerasma) without the sense of obligation that is entailed in offerings made in the home by a hostess. No judgement effecting the women can be made on the skill required in making the coffee or the sweet or on the cleanliness of the house or yard. The women in the kafeterias are in neutral territory simply enjoying each others company and participating in the exchange of treats (kerasmata). These gatherings and exchanges are sometimes seen to be similar to those experienced by men in the village kafenio (see below) and symbolise for some women their emancipation from a more oppressive past when they were often prohibited from moving freely, unaccompanied by men in

public places, such as taverns, or kafenia⁴⁸.

Yet, though these excursions take place in the kafeterias outside the village, they may still be seen as extensions of women's gatherings in the village, modelled on neighbourhood gatherings. Unknown men are strictly avoided. No married or unmarried woman would be seen going alone to drink coffee in public as it would be interpreted as an invitation for any man to join her. Finally, the visits to the kafeterias take place when the women are in town on business. They are, in a sense, stolen delights, masked by household tasks, much like the handiwork masks the neighborhood visits. In this sense the household ideology in which the household is seen as a bounded unit which encompasses women within its confines has simply encompassed these excursions in town as well.

Defining women as being simply inside the private and domestic is problematic⁴⁹. Women in fulfilling household duties are often taken outside the home. As chief caretakers of the dead they visit the graveyard which lies outside the village. They work on the fields beyond the village; tend animals; visit shrines; visit neighbours or their parents or children who may well live outside their neighborhood or village. They will go to doctors in town; sell vegetables there; buy household goods. Moreover, neighborhood and kafeteria visits though possibly extensions of the household and often regarded as such, are also actions which take women to public areas beyond the boundaries of the house, the neighborhood and the village and assist in creating social networks which bind households and neighbourhoods together. None the less, it is the case that though women might go beyond the village, even outside it, to complete chores or visit, they very rarely, except for church services, official business at the village office, or in the company of their husbands in the summer months, go outside to the village's very center, the square and kafenia.

Inside the Kafenia

To be in the square is, as we have seen, to be at the very core of what defines the public, the community identity; of what defines male space. As one male informant (appr. 40 yrs.) put it:

In the square there is greater freedom. There men meet other men, join friends, look for workers or work. For women the community lies elsewhere--in the neighborhood.

Women's community is circumscribed, often considered secondary to the village community associated with men. There is however, another aspect of the kafenia which does not have to do with a public village discourse but more particularly with male identity, with notions of freedom and friendship (see e.g. Papataxiarchis 1983:1; 1988:65; Herzfeld 1985:152-155). It is what takes place, it seems, inside the kafenia; in what might be called the private domains of the square⁵⁰.

There is no space here to fully discuss this notion of freedom. Suffice it to say that in the village it entails both the ability to speak one's own mind (as noted below) and the freedom from the chores and duties that are entailed in the running of a household and marriage (e.g. Papataxiarchis op.cit.:65; Brandes op.cit.:231,235). Yet, though marriage was seen by many men to curb their freedom, the importance of the house and its continuity for male identity as explained above, means that the men in the village also have another discourse which values marriage as a means of realising their identity. Here, we shall briefly note some aspects of male relations within the kafenia.

The kafenia as social institutions shelter the all male pareas of the village. A parea is made up of male friends who are roughly the same age. The creation of the parea and of even closer friendships within it are made and often maintained through kerasma. The act of kerasma is one which implies subsequent reciprocity. He who is treated acknowledges the man who treated him by lifting his glass and toasting his sponsor while the sponsor simultaneously acknowledges by

reciprocating the toast. These actions portray an image of social symmetry, of equality between the sponsor and sponsored⁵¹.

None the less, the sponsored is now placed in a position of indebtedness (e.g. Herzfeld 1985:155; Pitt-Rivers 1968:21). The initial kerasma has created a relationship of inequality but an inequality that can and should be rectified by a kerasma from the sponsored to the initial sponsor. To reciprocate immediately however, is to deny the initiation of a relationship. It serves to cancel the debt and thus to cancel the interaction. To reciprocate at a later date is to mask the relations of indebtedness transforming them into relations of friendship, exchange, and equality, similar to the performative act of acknowledgement.

Kerasma can take place between pareas or between individuals but young men cannot reciprocate the treat of older men nor should newly formed pareas of young men exchange kerasma with the pareas of older men. For example, a young man of eighteen was criticised by a number of older people for insisting to treat those who were ten years older than him. Having no work, living with his parents, and having still to complete his military service, his right to exchange on an equal basis with men was not recognised. He was not yet considered an independent, working member of the community but still very much a member of a household whose social representative was his father. It was only acceptable for him to exchange drinks with members of his own age, with those who were his social equals. Thus, when an older man treats an (uninitiated) young man the kerasma relationship is not one of reciprocity but one of dependence. The young men cannot give kerasma in return for receiving it. Only when he acquires full adult male status can he return the kerasma; can he move from a position of dependence to one of exchange within the male community of the kafenio⁵².

Similarly, the refusal of a reciprocating kerasma by a man for example of high social standing in the village to a man of low social standing entails an insult. It implies both the dependence of the latter on the former and the latter's

exclusion from the former's social network of pareas.

Within this world of exchange and pareas, a network of male relationships based on notions of symmetry and equality which overlook social distinctions is created. Kerasma helps to create male friendship and interaction, linking the individual to the group and assisting thereby in the creation of a public discourse, through the exchange of ideas and opinions (e.g. Papataxiarchis op.cit. 218-219). According to one male informant (appr. 35 yrs.):

The kafenio is the closest thing to democracy. There you can speak and think freely. Most discussions in the kafenio are centered on politics. No where else in the village are opinions and beliefs so freely voiced without fear of reprisal.

It is from within the pareas that public discourse arises and public opinion is created as views from individuals are expressed, rejected, and supported from within the parea and projected outwards to the kafenio and the square.

It may be said then that as women move from within the house outside to the neighbourhoods creating ties between houses and neighbourhoods, so too do men move from within their parea and kafenio outward to the square. The contrast lies in the perceived and sometimes real differences entailed in relationships created by women and men which in part have to do with kinship and gender relations. These relations in turn both create and are informed by the constitution of space in the village.

Space, Kinship and Gender

We have seen that both men and women generally hold that men are more interested in issues concerning the community (ta kinotika). Men are said to be more socially minded than women who are considered to be, at one level closer to nature since they are closer to the household and its related tasks. Women are associated with raising and socialising children. They do not go daily as do most men to one of the numerous kafenia that ring the central square, nor do they stand for

office in local elections. Rather, unless some household duty takes them to the square or the nearby town, women stay in the neighborhood around their homes.

The neighborhood limits the choice of people with whom a woman can interact. Men however, in the square, choose both their pareas and their kafenia and the ties they create are not limited by kinship or proximity, but are said to arise from the free self-expression of their identity and with shared experiences that often date back into childhood. Women do not have this luxury. As many women pointed out, the structure of the society is such that women have to remain home to care for the children. They cannot meet their girlhood friends as often after they marry making these friendship difficult to maintain. As a male informant (appr. 30 yrs.) said:

Friendship between men is strong because they are often together--every night in the square. Ideologically, I believe that men and women can be friends but it is difficult here in the village because women do not have the freedom to come out every night to meet their friends. It is also important in friendship to get on together, to agree and so be able to have discussions. And it is also important to be at the same stage in life, to be the same age; to live in the same circumstances, and go through the same experiences. In this way you understand each other and can even discuss personal problems.

Given these views it seems that friendship serves as a criterion of the social person. It is not governed by natural needs or desires but by the sharing of ideas, experiences, loyalty, and mutual reciprocity. It is the binding tie between one human being and another formed not of necessity or compulsion but through choice (e.g. Gilmore op.cit.:197-199). It is not surprising then that for most people friendship between the two sexes is considered impossible. It cannot last not only because women cannot go out, but also because of the natural attraction between the sexes (e.g. Cowan op.cit.), an attraction which is seen to compel and underlie the friendship.

For similar reasons, moreover, it is thought that men rather than women are better able to form and maintain

friendships. It is considered that men on the whole are more trusting, naive (ayathis) and that they adhere more strictly to their principles; they are statheri (steady; not easily swayed). They have a greater sense of loyalty than do women. Yet, because of these attributes men are often thought to be less capable of coping with the vicissitudes of life. Women are often said to be clever and sly (ponires); they are like Eve, temptresses and seductresses. Yet because of this, they are not as trusting as men and thus less likely to be disillusioned or cheated. Women too are said to place their family's symferon⁵³ (interest; one's benefit or advantage) above all else. In this sense, women seek to satisfy their natural instincts, drives and emotions. They are said to look first to the survival and protection of their children and household. And this is as it should be; it is natural. But it also means that they cannot form friendships, since they will eventually break their trust with a friend in the interest of the household. However, it may be argued that by masking to some extent women's relationships formed through neighborhood visits or excursions in town as simply extensions of their household duties, the friendships that are so created are socially denied (see also Kennedy 1986).

Men who are seen by many to have a stronger intellect, to be more logical, and thus in greater control over their emotions are able to maintain their social ideals (e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.:90; du Boulay 1979:100-120). They are able to maintain a balance between their household's needs and demands and the community's welfare. Pares created between men are created and maintained in the village center thus exhibiting and recreating the sense that men are the holders of the community's identity.

It should be remembered however, that though conversations which considered male and female stereotypes usually coincided with the concepts, quite often particular men or women were named who contradicted the norms. A few men and women of varying ages felt that women could indeed form long-lasting friendships. It was as much "in their nature" as it was in men's nature to make and maintain friends, though they

were socially inhibited from doing so.

To summarise, the first half of this chapter has attempted to sketch the spatial setting of the village. Kinship and gender relations were seen to inform the use of space, to reproduce in spatial representations the inter-relationships of people in terms of age, sex and kinship. These representations furthermore appear natural. The constitution of the square and the kafenio for example is a product of gender and kinship relations which define women as naturally associated with the household and men as intrinsically social. We have seen however, that not only is such a division problematic, but that the square, like public discourse, is an area which is being contested by youth groups and women, those people often denied a public voice. The transformations of relations within the house, in kinship relations and in public space are transformations which echo changing socio-economic conditions, as alluded to above. Here, I wish to turn my attention to the constitution of space within the convent. Based on a different ethos, the nuns are not concerned with the distinction between the public and the household as it is expressed in the village. Rather, they seek to maintain the sanctity and purity of the convent and to distinguish it from the world which lies beyond its walls. Thus, though similar terms are used, they express different sentiments and social relations.

The Convent: The first visit

My first visit to a monastic community was on a rainy February afternoon just before vespers at the convent of T.. I had gone with my mother-in-law and a woman, Chrysoula, from the village, who had regular contact with the nuns of T. and indeed, with the monastic communities throughout the region. A tall, thin nun with glasses, whom I was later to recognise as a sweet and discreet friend, ushered us into a large, dark, oblong room at the center of which stood a massive wooden dining room table. The four walls were lined with chairs of various styles. Paintings and prints of saints and

the Christ in both Western and Byzantine style hung on the walls. In a corner a large gas heater burned noisily occasionally exploding with a bang that made us jump. We seated ourselves primly on the edge of our chairs, not too near the exploding heater and waited for the arrival of the Gerontissa⁵⁴ (Abbess) who, we were told by the nun, would not be too long. Saying that, she glided into the small kitchen on one side of the room to prepare the kerasma--coffee, water and a sweet. We sat quietly not speaking above a whisper. I was uncomfortable, cold, and dreading the first interview.

When she came, she swept in, a large mass of black flowing robes. The Gerontissa filled the room with her presence. We rose. I watched as Chrysoula bent low and kissed the outstretched hand of the Gerontissa. My mother-in-law followed suit, then I. The Gerontissa pulled a chair away from the table, placed it in front of the gas stove, seated herself, and invited us to be seated. We did so daintily; hands folded in our laps, knees and ankles close together but not crossed. I was to learn later that crossing one's legs or even ankles is regarded as a sign of disrespect. Particularly for women, it is a practice strictly forbidden in the convent churches and frowned upon within monastic walls.

We felt ourselves in the presence of a highly religious woman, in the house she ran for God's glory in accordance with His laws; laws which had been established by the Church and the Church Fathers. History, belief, respect, and tradition not to mention the damp, dark day outside and the black robed woman weighed heavily on the spirit. This place was totally foreign.

I was introduced by Chrysoula and taking my cue, I quietly made my bid to visit the monastic community both as a researcher and as a baptised Orthodox who wished to come in contact with a faith that I had not been raised in. The Gerontissa fiddled with her ear. She had not heard me. Could I speak up as she was slightly deaf and used a hearing aid. I made my bid again in what I hoped was a louder voice. The Gerontissa seemed sceptical, somewhat defensive. My mother-in-law and Chrysoula came to my aid. They could vouch

for my character. I was not like those people, reporters and such, who sought to disparage the monastic communities. I was not seeking to tell lies about concealed abortions or stolen property. I wished only to learn about Orthodoxy and where better than in a convent?

The Gerontissa said that my motives seemed commendable but she remained skeptical. I was given permission to visit and attend services; a prerogative of any guest to the convent. The Gerontissa, would help me by giving me books to read on the subject of Orthodoxy. As she spoke she studied me. I was on trial and understandably so for the convent and the Gerontissa are not regarded in favourable terms by many in the town. Court battles over the use and ownership of land between townspeople and the convent abound. Possibly because of these often tense relations between the townspeople and the nuns, stories abound of the nuns which span from the unchristian-like practices of taking people to court over boundary disputes to midnight rendezvous with men. However, by the end of the discussion the Gerontissa seemed assured that my intentions were not bad. She said that she could see by my eyes, by my face, that I was a truthful, not a deceitful person; a person, in fact, of God.

I didn't dare ask for more. Interviews with the nuns or a tour of the premises seemed beyond reach at the moment. None the less my request had not been rejected completely. I sat back relieved and drank my coffee and ate the large walnut in sweet sugar and cinnamon syrup that I had been served.

The bell rang for Vespers. We rose and walked to the church; a cold, damp thirteenth century building whose interior is covered in frescos which have, over time, been almost obliterated by the damp and by the black smoke of the votive candles. We added to the destruction by lighting our candles. We made the sign of the cross, kissed the icons and stood at the back to await the service.

The nuns drifted in on silent feet, their dark robes rustling, only their faces visible, pale and luminescent, in the dim, wet light of the afternoon. Lighting candles, and kissing icons they made their way to the wooden partition

which stood at the front right-hand side of the church. This partition hid them from the inquisitive eyes of the kosmiki (secular people). The first to arrive began the vesper hymns. Others slowly drifted in joining their voices to the solemn psalms. Darkness seemed to abound. Death and the other world seemed frightfully near.

Vespers thankfully is short and we left after the service for the village, for home where there was always plenty of light and where I understood my role.

On all my subsequent visits this feeling of death was to be always present during the first few hours. Yet, as I would again become accustomed to the surroundings, this feeling would be replaced by one of life, joy and light. And this is, I believe, one of the aims of the monastic community. Overcoming the sense of death, or as it were death itself, can only be achieved by looking within, seeing with the eyes of the nuns (or better yet your own) the belief in the life eternal. The stern eyes of the Christ gaze down from icons in the church, the dining room, the cells. They assure you that the sins you have committed will not go unpunished. Yet the tender and loving gaze of the Virgin and child reassures that there is also a kind and loving Father who offers salvation. The morning liturgy contains within it a funeral march. Christ is crucified and once again humanity is confronted with its sins. Yet, the liturgy is also a celebration of Christ's resurrection, a moment of solemn joy and, if one is privileged to receive communion, a moment of blissful union with the beloved God. Thus, both death and life exist in the convent if one is willing to accept the faith and the belief. The life offered however, is not one to be found in this world. It is promised for the next; for the world that lies beyond death and beyond the black robes of the nuns.

Many of the themes such as life and death, the liturgy and communion, will be dealt with in the chapters to follow. Here I will confine the discussion to an examination of spatial construction within the convent and between the convent and the secular world, and examine how the use of space creates the sense that the convent is another world, distinct

from secular society, a place between heaven and earth.

Distance in space and time

In the previous chapter it was noted that the convents' histories and locations seem to influence, to an extent, the nuns' relationship with their lay visitors and conversely, determine who those visitors will be. But it is not only lay visitors that the convents welcome. The convents of T. and P. for example, will occasionally exchange visits. Indeed, the nuns seem to belong to a religious network and often describe themselves as part of one large monastic community. They will call each other sister (adhelfi) regardless of whether they belong to different convents. The Gerontissa of one convent will be addressed as Gerontissa by nuns of another convent. "All monastics belong to one large community in God", as the Geronta of P. often says.

Yet, when one of my visits to P. coincided with a visit by the Gerontissa of T. and some of her nuns, I was given a very different impression. There was much excitement at finding me there and a lot of giggling and chattering. The nuns of T. were asked to sing the psalms for Vespers as a sign of hospitality and to pay them honour. After Vespers and coffee the nuns of P. took the nuns of T. for a tour of the premises. I went along and as we explored I was taken aside by some of the nuns of P. who remarked that though the sisters of T. are very sweet they do not sing the psalms very well. Did I not agree? I mumbled something non-committal and escaped only to be grabbed by a few nuns from T. who remarked that T. was a much more beautiful convent. Did I not agree? I felt trapped. From one group to another the nuns of T. and P. happily compared their respective convents, the buildings, the services, their religious leaders often asking me to take sides. The atmosphere was not hostile, but it was highly competitive.

Two opposing discourses then seem to exist in the convent. The one expresses to outsiders that all convents and monasteries are one; that they belong to one tradition, one

belief. The other discourse, more evident in practice, highlights a sense of competition and antagonism between communities. In this sense the convents' interaction within the wider social setting may be likened to the house within the village. It was noted above, that the village may be regarded as the whole (to sinolo). It is an all-encompassing unit providing identity to those members of the community, particularly in opposition to outsiders (kseni). Yet, within the village, households compete. People seek to show their household as better. Women compete on the cleanliness of the house; food; children. Men compete in terms of household goods; children; success in work. The nuns too despite an ideology which stresses membership within a larger monastic community, support their convent against those of their sisters.

The Convent as Household

Let us now turn our attention to the particular convents and the spatial divisions within them. The convents of T. and P. are both surrounded by high stone walls with large gates which admit visitors inside the convent compound (e.g. Edmunds 1986:119-123; Campbell-Jones op.cit.:181-182). From outside it is impossible to look within but from inside, windows and balconies give visual access to the world beyond much like the traditional houses of the village.

In P. upon entering the gate one is in a large courtyard shaded by an old, grand plane tree. Directly in front is the south wall of the church. To the right and behind one, are the the hostel buildings and the dining room for visitors. To the left is the office, the formal sitting room for visitors and some cells (note Diagram 1). In a building to the far right with a separate staircase from the hostel is the residence of the Geronta (Elder) including a study, a chapel, and a cell. Above his apartment is the apartment reserved for visiting bishops.

Most visitors come to the convent for Sunday mass from Spring well into late Autumn. That is, as long as the dirt

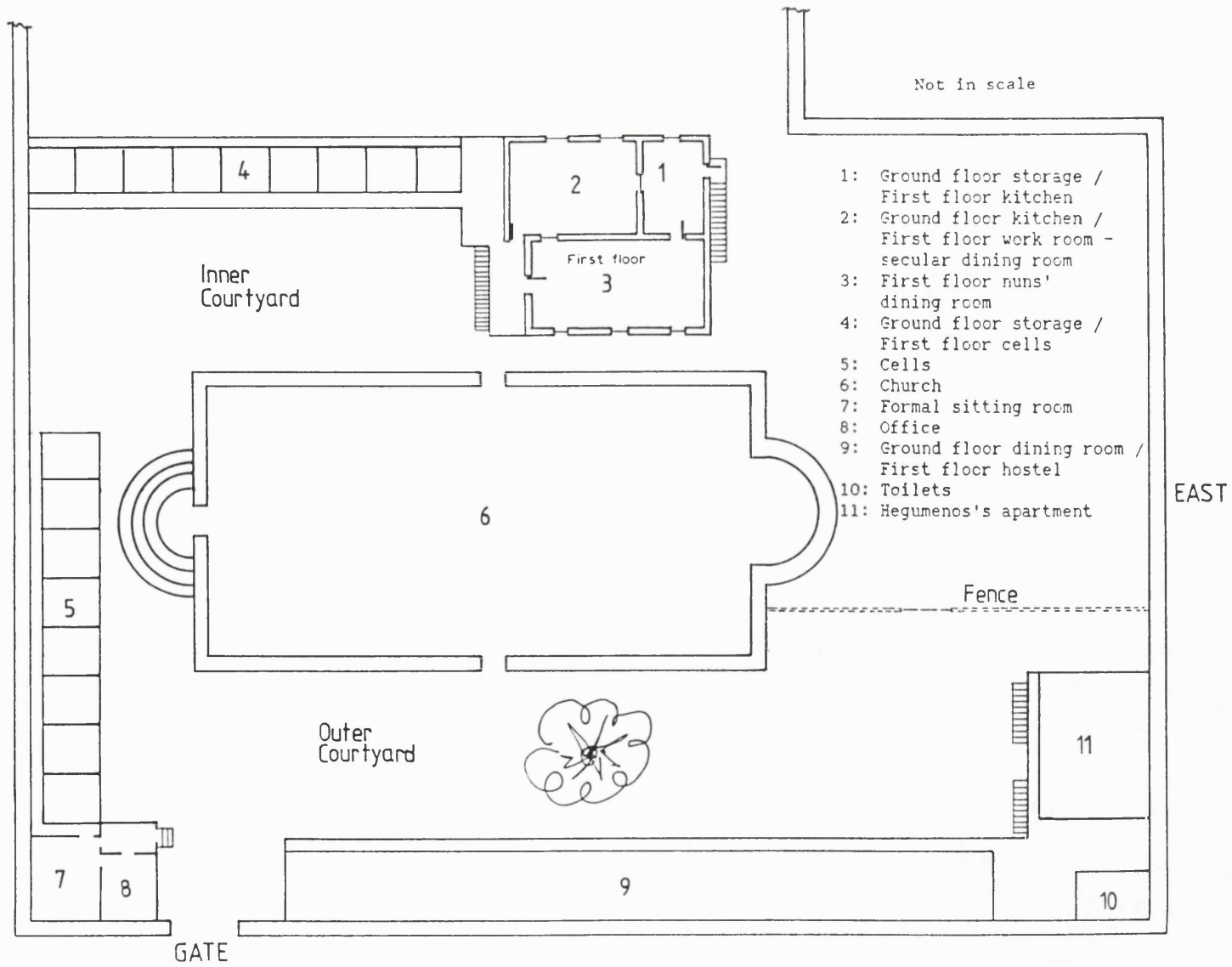


Diagram 1: General Outlay of Convent P.

road which winds up through the mountains to the convent and is reopened every year by bulldozers, is still clear and in relatively good condition. After mass the visitors go into the dining room where coffee, bread, and olives have been laid out by the nuns just before the end of mass. They sit under the plane tree in the courtyard and talk amongst themselves or with the Gerontissa or Geronta. Most of the nuns avoid contact with outsiders and so are rarely seen when visitors are about.

Sometimes visitors come in large groups from distant villages or towns. They may spend Saturday evening in the convent going to confession and attending Vespers and wake early for Sunday mass. If this is the case, they eat in the dining room and sleep in the large rooms of the hostel located in the outer courtyard. Men and women, even if married, often eat at different tables and certainly sleep in different rooms.

The inner courtyard is not easily accessible to the laity. A gate and wall running east-west, interrupted by the church, separate it from the outer courtyard. Those who wander in from the northern door of the church are often gently herded back into the outer courtyard.

As one becomes increasingly well-known to the nuns however--that is more dhikos mas--one is encouraged to come into the inner courtyard; to leave the kseni (the strangers). A second dining room adjacent to the one used by the nuns is now open to this person. This second dining room in the inner courtyard is open to all who come to stay in the convent for a while; to those who are known by the nuns and seen to be respectful of the convent and its ways. There the morning meal after the Sunday mass and away from the strangers is taken by this honoured guest. Often the nuns will keep this guest company during the morning meal. They will not eat with their visitor but they will be constantly poking their heads in or coming to sit down for a chat.

This second dining room also functions as the nuns' work room. A large wood-burning stove stands in the middle to provide heat. During the winter months rugs are laid out on

the floor around the stove for the nuns to sit on and there they gather during the day to read, work and pray.

Adjacent to this work station/kosmiko (secular) dining room is the kitchen which communicates with the work station through a window. From there the nuns on kitchen duty can pass the food to the kosmiki or the nun setting the table for guests. It also prevents lay visitors from entering the kitchen when they clear their dishes after a meal. The kitchen only opens onto the enclosed back yard of the convent and the nuns' dining room, a place also prohibited to kosmiki. Another window in the kosmiko dining room however, connects it with the nuns' dining room. There during the major meals of the day, lunch and dinner, when the offices of the Blessing of the Table are read, a nun will sit, reading from the lives of the saints or some other, often instructive, religious book. The nuns and their guests will eat in silence and only after everyone has finished will the nun stop reading to ask for the blessing, signalling the end of the meal. Though not shared in the sense that all sit at a common table, the meal is still in some ways commensal, the nuns and the kosmiki connected by the readings and the open window.

As one becomes more familiar with the nuns one is allowed to help with certain chores and may even be invited to sit with them in their dining room after the evening meal to hear the priest read or speak. One is rarely allowed into the kitchens, though there is no sense that one has polluted or defiled the kitchen if one enters as I once did. In that instance, the nun simply became somewhat agitated and gently shooed and clucked me out.

The cells are also prohibited to the kosmiki. Most of the cells are located in the new wing of the convent on the second floor of the building in the inner courtyard, though some of the nuns are still housed in the long, one story building which runs north-south along the western wall of the convent. The cells are private places for the nuns where they can be alone with themselves and the Divine. As one nun put it:

In the winter we have more time to spend in our cells to pray. Church is wonderful but when praying in the cell you can be very personal. There you can say the prayer you wish to say.

In P. I was never invited into a cell though the first night that I spent there they put me into one of the new cells in the inner courtyard which had not as yet been used by a nun. This was done so that I would not be afraid during the night--alone and in a new place. I was, in other words, placed well within the confines of the convent community in order that I might feel secure.

This insistence on security and enclosure was to arise often in my contact with the nuns and in the beginning baffled me. The nuns would make sure to show me how to lock my door before going to bed; the convent gates were bolted at night; the church was often locked when not in use; in T. a dog was let loose in the courtyard at night and my car was brought into the convent during my one overnight stay. I was often asked if I was afraid to be alone at night. To me it seemed strange since the convent was supposedly the house of God and so protected by Him. In accordance with the logic of the nuns, it seemed unfitting that I should feel more vulnerable in the convent than at home in the village. The nuns seemed pleased when I pointed this out but, they said, one never knows how the devil works and there are bad people outside who would delight in doing harm. This wariness of the dark is strikingly similar to the sentiments expressed in the village by women I knew (see above and Chapters 4 and 6). It seems that the nuns in enclosing themselves in ever smaller and more private spaces during the night create physical barriers between the outside world and their most intimate self, as it is expressed in the cell. Within the cell, the nun is vulnerable since she is completely absorbed in her search to become one with God⁵⁵. Moreover, during the night, as well as during the afternoon rest period, the gates are locked, possibly because during sleep, one is not on guard to protect oneself from dangers, physical or spiritual. Thus, the con-

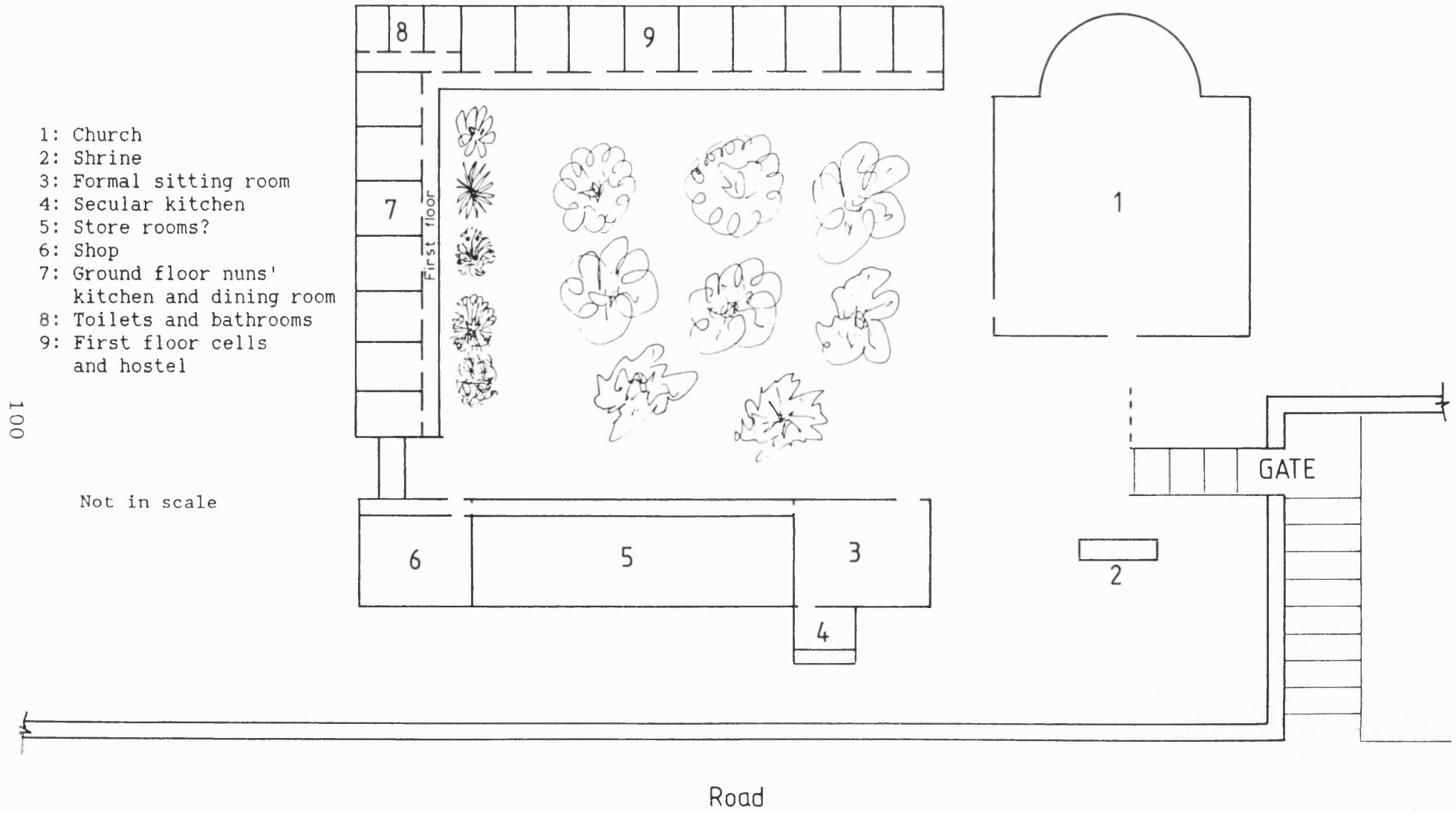
vent must be physically well barred and closed to the outside world during the times when it is spiritually and consciously less protected by watchful and vigilant nuns. The convent might then be likened to the nuns' bodies which are considered vulnerable and open to violation and penetration by evil forces that lay without⁵⁶.

As I became a frequent guest and it was seen that I was not afraid, I was given rooms in the hostel, in the outer courtyard but oddly never the same room. I might even be moved from one room to another during a single day. I did not dare to ask why as I felt it would be impolite but it seemed to me that I was being moved in order not to grow attached to any one place within the convent; not to feel a sense of possessiveness with a particular location in the convent. And after all, I was not a member of the community but simply a visitor.

Finally, beyond the walls of the convent lie the grazing fields of the animals; the vegetable gardens; and the wheat and corn fields which the nuns cultivate with the help of workers. As in the village, the fields and often the vegetable gardens lie beyond the confines of the house.

In T. the situation is similar with only slight variations (note Diagram 2). A broad stone laid path leads from the gate to the only courtyard. Upon entering it, to the right is the church. To the left is the dining room/formal sitting room for visitors. The hostel is to the left of the church located on the second floor of the two storey building and is adjacent to some of the nuns' cells. Across from the entrance is another two storey building. On the ground floor of this building are the kitchens and the nuns' dining room. A long covered porch runs the length of the building. Above are cells shaded by a long closed-in balcony which runs the length of the cells and unites them with the hostel at the other end. To the back of this building on the second floor is a large sunny room filled with looms. There the nuns weave the beautiful rugs and blankets which they either sell or use.

Generally, people do not stay at the convent over night



- 1: Church
- 2: Shrine
- 3: Formal sitting room
- 4: Secular kitchen
- 5: Store rooms?
- 6: Shop
- 7: Ground floor nuns' kitchen and dining room
- 8: Toilets and bathrooms
- 9: First floor cells and hostel

Diagram 2: General Outlay of Convent T.

for it is close to the town and hotel accommodations can be sought there. The villagers who visit live close by and the convent is on a main artery and so easily accessible by car.

When one comes into the convent one is ushered into the formal sitting room if it is winter or seated just outside it in the courtyard under the shade of the lemon trees that grow there to await the arrival of the Gerontissa. An indication that one is a more trusted friend is that one begins to meet more and more of the nuns.

On rare occasions a lay person will be invited to sit on the low porch outside the nuns' dining room. This area is generally reserved for the nuns and is screened from view by tall flowering bushes. As one becomes better acquainted with the nuns however, one may be asked to undertake small chores or to join a nun who is making coffee for visitors in the small kitchen behind the formal front room. This again singles one out as a special person; not a stranger but dhikos mas. If one spends the night one may be allowed to join the nuns on the second story balcony to await Complines, the evening prayers before bed. One is now, more than ever, dhikos mas for one is seated by the cells with the nuns.

The cells, as in P., are private areas. Each nun has a key to her own cell and carefully locks her door each time she leaves. I was particularly privileged to be allowed to enter one nun's cell. The Gerontissa was away from T. and this nun was appointed to care for visitors. We had become, through time, friends and she invited me into her cell to show me her belongings. I was offered a biscuit and we talked. It was an intimate moment for the cell is her special place. I had been offered the hospitality not of the convent but of the nun.

The cells are small (appr. 3x4 meters). The walls are usually covered with store bought printed icons. A bed, night table, closet, chair and maybe another table make up the sum total of the room. Rugs may also be laid to minimise the damp and cold during the winter months as there is no central heating in either of the two convents. The nuns have a few religious books; maybe a few biscuits or some fruit;

their clothes; and a small collection of religious items (icons, koboskinia, which are like rosaries, key chains with crosses or icons attached to them) which they either make or obtain through friends or their superiors and which they give out to "special people" -- those they fell closest to. This giving of gifts is done semi-secretly for one should not make special attachments to people in this life.

Considering then, that I was able to enter a cell; that female relatives of the nuns in T. could enter the kitchen, and that occasionally guests were given the privilege of entering the nuns' dining room after the evening meal at P., it would seem that it is not so much the spaces that are sacred but certain acts which takes place within them. As will be discussed further on, private prayer, eating, and cooking are the key activities which must be shielded from those outside--as in the village. These are times when the nuns feel themselves most vulnerable and open to Temptation (the devil). It is therefore, not the dining rooms or cells as sacred rooms but the use made of them during particular times in the day which grant them their importance. They must assure that these spaces, both physically and spiritually, inhibit penetration from outside.

The first impression when examining the convent is that an analogy may be drawn between the usage of space within the monastic walls and the village house. Guests are either entertained in the courtyard or formal front room in an area exclusively established for this purpose. As guests become better known they are allowed greater access to the more intimate areas within the household or convent: kitchens in the households; the balcony or inner courtyard in the convents. Being truly dhikos mas however, implies access into the most private and intimate areas: the bedroom in the household; the cell and kitchen in the convent. These areas are ideally reserved for members only.

Yet, unlike the household whose members may accept or deny interaction with and entrance to outsiders, the convent is engaged in a continual struggle to maintain its identity vis-a-vis the secular world which is forever penetrating its

walls, entering within its confines. This secular world challenges by its very presence the sense of distinction and other worldliness that the nuns wish to maintain. The convent, at times referred to as the "house of God", exists in opposition to the secular world. Yet, this "house of God" must and should admit those kosmiki who come to pray and pay their respects.

At the Center of the Convent

At the very center of any monastic community lies the church, for this place, truly the "house of God", defines the monastics' existence (e.g. Campbell-Jones 1980:92; Eliade 1989:16-17). Moreover, it is only in the church that the laity, the clergy and the monastics may be joined in one common enterprise. Within the very heart of the convent they are united in God, forming a community in God.

In many convents the church is located at the center of the convent compound, just as symbolically, it lies at the center of the nuns' lives (see Diagram 3). It is there that the liturgy takes place. The main church entrance is always located to the west while the sanctuary lies at the opposite end to the east. The east symbolises light, goodness, truth while the west symbolises darkness and sin. In this way, one enters the church from sin and progresses towards grace and light, towards God⁵⁷.

The church however, though the most central area of the convent where lay and religious are together under a single roof, is not a place where people interact in a "social" way. In the village to be social implies the interaction between people, whereas in the church, men and women, religious and lay together create a community while also interacting personally with God through the mediation of the priest⁵⁸. It is, in a sense, like the meals in P. whereby secular people eat with the nuns but in a separate dining room, everyone in silence, listening to the words being read.

And in fact, the nuns are separated from the laity in the church. In T. as noted above the nuns stand behind a

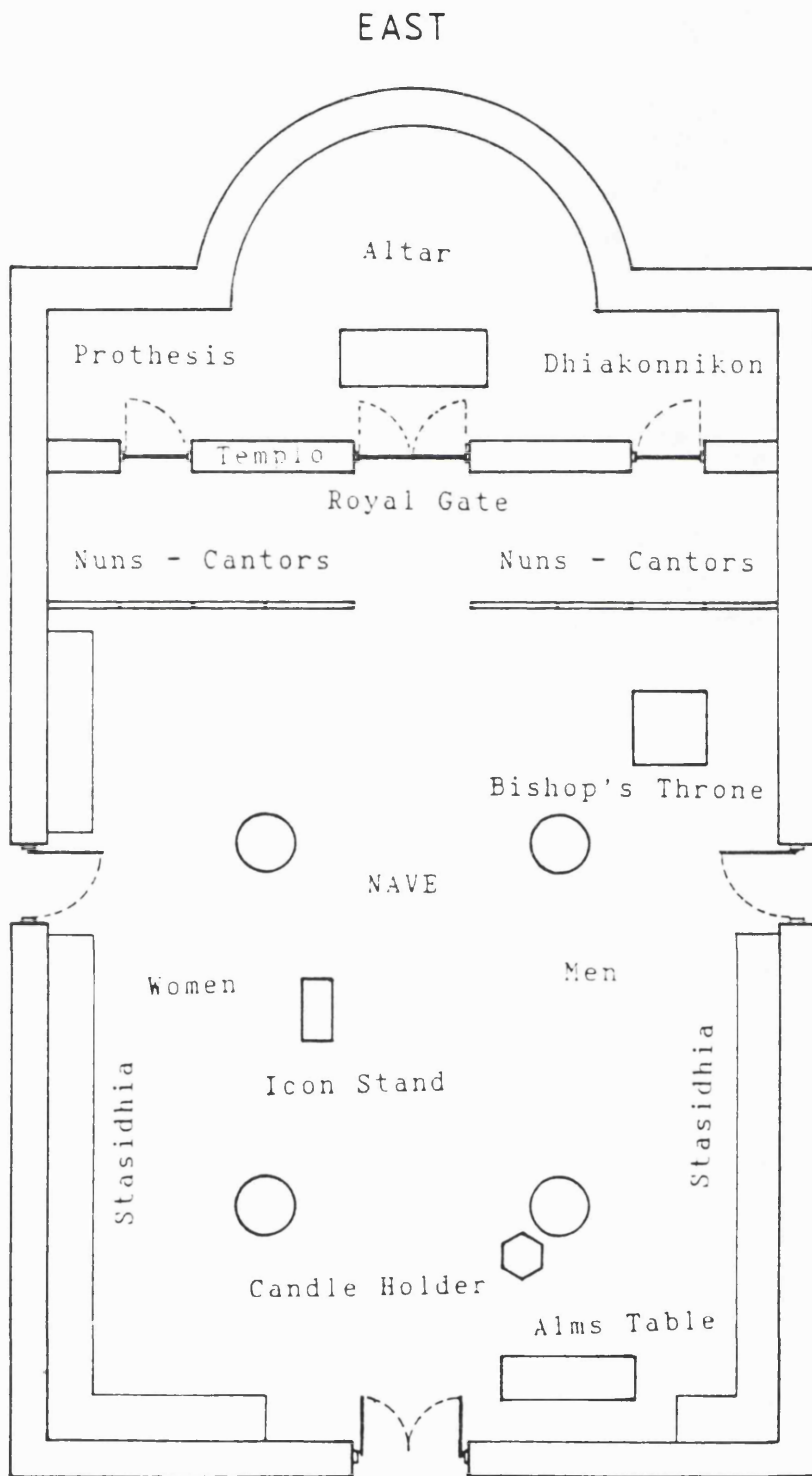


Diagram 3: General Plan of Church (not in scale)

wooden screen which blocks them from sight. In P. a low, wooden, carved partition separates the psaltes (cantors) from the nave. It is in this liminal area, between the nave and the sanctuary that the nuns stand⁵⁹. They can be seen but they are separated from the laity by this partition. A lay person however, may be asked to join the nuns as a cantor, effectively becoming an honorary "nun" for the duration of the service.

The most impressive and important partition in the church is the templo (or iconostasi--image stand) which separates the sanctuary from the nave. The templo is decorated with icons or sacred images prohibiting one to observe the priest performing the sacraments within.

The templo has three entrances. The central entrance is called the Royal or Holy Gates; the door to the left, when facing the templo, is the northern door; the door to the right is the southern door. These latter two doors display images of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel respectively.

The icons on the templo vary in different churches but there is always an icon of Christ to the right of the Royal Gates and next to it an icon representing the saint or the event to which the church is dedicated. To the left of the Royal Gates is an icon of the Panayia (Virgin Mary), and next to this, an icon of John the Baptist.

Behind the northern door of the templo is the prothesis (credence table). Here the offerings for the divine service are received and the vessels used in the liturgy are placed. Behind the southern door is the diakonikon (vestry) where the vessels, books and vestments used in the different services of the church are kept. Finally behind the Royal Gates is the sanctuary proper. In the sanctuary is a table, the altar. It is from here that the people are offered the sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and the blood of Christ. On the altar are kept a cross, the New Testament, and a vessel which contains preserved within it the Holy Gifts, that is consecrated bread soaked in wine which has been dried. These Holy Gifts are reserved for those too ill to attend a church service, or for the Communion service held during

periods of mourning such as Lent.

Men and boys can enter the sanctuary; women and girls are generally forbidden entrance. However in the convents, those nuns designated to assist the priest in the services did enter. I was told that this was allowed for all nuns, except when menstruating, since they are not like secular women. Though I was told it was not correct Orthodox practice, I have seen in village churches old women, past menopause, assisting the priest behind the templo. One can infer from this that it is only women who cannot reproduce or have forsaken reproduction who are able to step behind the templo into the sacred area of the church. This is reinforced by the strict prohibition on women in the convent to enter even the nave when menstruating. I was told that it is not a sin to enter the church while menstruating nor is menstruation itself sinful. But while menstruating one is not clean (dhen ise kathari) and it would be a sign of disrespect to God to enter His house in an unclean state.

It may be that menstruation is a reminder of women's ability to reproduce, a function associated with the Fall from Paradise and Original Sin; a sin which is often seen to have been instigated by Eve and to which Adam was simply the foolish and passive participant (e.g. Topper 1983: 14-15). Reproduction itself is not sinful but the consequence of humanity's first and in a sense greatest disobedience to God. Menstruation then, though not a sin is a reminder and symbol of people's fallen state. To enter the church while in this state is to enter the church as a symbol of that first disobedience, and as such as a challenge to God.

Related to this, is the point made by many others writing on gender, politics, and religion (e.g. Bloch and Parry 1982; Callaway 1981:172-175) who note the perceived incompatibility between procreative abilities and the "public" world of politics or religion. For this reason, women in public life tend to be those who are not yet, or have ceased to be child-bearing. In this sense, they may be seen as honorary males (e.g. Rodgers 1981:58-60). Should they combine child-bearing and politics however, hostility and/or embar-

rassment follow (e.g. Rodgers op.cit.:60-62). Similarly, as noted above, it was in the youth groups where women were most likely to express their public voice. In that context, in other words, where a woman could be classified as not yet fully adult and thus by definition not involved in the role of mother and wife. Otherwise, her role as public spokesperson and social representative coupled with her procreative abilities would be felt as threatening and labelled both unseemly and ineffectual (though, as noted, there were a few exceptions)⁶⁰.

The distinction drawn between reproduction and the sacred is reiterated in that men and women stand separately in the church⁶¹. Though this cannot always be enforced in T. particularly during Easter or the Assumption when the church is crowded, in P. it is a rule strictly adhered to. Men stand on the right facing the templo and women on the left. Thus, though men and women, nuns and laity are together in the church, they are separated, each within the special category which defines them. And these categories are the ones which are most important in the two worlds. Monastics are defined in opposition to the secular, the nave being partitioned to provide the nuns with a special position next to the templo. Women are separated from men, the nave divided between left and right.

The spatial division then seems to portray in Douglas's terms the purity of that which is sacred. Categories cannot and should not be mixed. The divisions also portray aspects of hierarchy and power. Men stand to the right, to the good and correct side of the church. They receive Holy Communion before women and children. But men and women stand equally in the procession towards the eastern end of the church. Before them are the nuns who are spiritually closer to God and behind the templo is the priest, a man who has been consecrated by a bishop and so follows a long line of priests whose origins lie with the Apostles consecrated by Christ.

Yet, though this may be the general structure, there is, as we have seen, room for interpretation and transformation. The nuns having forsaken reproduction are thereby allowed to

enter the sanctuary but are still forbidden to enter the church when menstruating. If the church is crowded the people stand wherever they find room often forsaking the ideal distinctions between the genders. Finally, lay people (often men) may be asked to join the nuns as cantors thereby not only uniting men and women but the religious and the secular. The categories are not fixed. Rather, they are reaffirmed and transformed each time people come together because, each time it is people's interaction, their use of the spatial symbols as well as practical considerations which allows for the reinterpretation and redefinition of their relationships.

Conclusion:

To summarise, this chapter has sought to compare the construction of space in the village with that in the convent. It was seen that notions of inside and outside were ambiguous since it was defined by the interaction between people rather than simply by the physical spatial boundaries. Spatial divisions, in other words, though defined by use through time are not static unchanging boundaries separating people. Though part of a learned culture which structures people's behaviour and interaction, they also serve as elements of communication. As such they are subject to transformation. Spatial constructs act as metaphors of communication. Thus, it can be said that women and young people act like men taking part in what is defined as male discourse in male space; or that men act like nuns standing alongside them in the church as cantors. By crossing conventional boundaries, recognition, if not always acceptance, of new relations within the context of the old relations are made. Spatial boundaries inform the transformations while allowing for the creation of new interactions and interrelations.

In this chapter similarities were drawn between the household and the convent and it was seen that certain functions such as sleeping and eating were stressed. Yet, while in the village kinship and gender relations predominantly in-

form the spatial order, in the convent it is the dichotomy between the religious and the secular (kosmikos) that is paramount. This has to do with the different orientations the nuns and the villagers have towards life and death; different world views which underlie their communities as will become evident in the following chapter.

Notes for Chapter Two

1. See e.g. Ingersoll et. al. 1987:8; Moore 1986; Bourdieu 1973; Fernandez 1986; Cowan (forthcoming).
2. The village as a community is defined in the first instance geographically since the houses that make up the village of Peta are tightly packed around the central square. Though there are off-shoot villages attached administratively to Peta, they are considered separate social entities. The village of Peta, as such, owns land, has its own administration, and shares a common sub-culture i.e. the people express that they have their own ways of doing things; have a church and their priests; share common body of gossip, stories, scandals and jokes. Finally, loyalty to the village is expressed in the face of those deemed as outsiders in any given situation. See Boissevain 1965: 32-33; also Herzfeld 1985, for a seminal account of village identity in a Cretan village.
3. Though there are other "squares" in the village they are not used as gathering points or for social events. They are simply open plots, "squares" in the official plans of the village and nothing more. Thus when people spoke of "the square" (i platia) they always referred to the one large square used in the village. In the thesis I will adopt village practice.
4. This was the situation in the village in the summer of 1987. Since then three cafe-bars have been built along with a large tavern which lies on the outskirts of the village overlooking the dam. How these new places have been incorporated into the village is the subject of another paper.
5. Though the balance between kinship and politics is important in the definition of male identity and practice in the village, there is no space here to discuss the matter in detail. For seminal accounts on male identity see e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.; Papataxiarchis 1988.
6. Of interest is the existence of one kafenio on the outskirts of the square which is usually frequented by the young men in the village. They jokingly said that in this kafenio young men slowly form their parees and developed their political views. Later they move on to the kafenia more central to the village square. Though they were teasing, there was an element of truth for, as they pointed out, the men in this kafenio belonged to many different political parties and parees and were predominantly young (in their late teens to early thirties). Older men may also stop in at this kafenio as it provides a place where they can gather information about those who do not frequent their kafenio. This again depicts the distinction made between inside/outside. See below.
7. See e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.; Papataxiarchis 1983; Cowan op.cit..
8. I presume this to be the case for on a more recent visit, I was told that most nei now went to the other kafenio, the one

that had been considered right-wing while I was doing my field-work. It seems some difference of opinion concerning the use of the first shop had occurred and the *parea* I had known had decided that the second shop was not really right-wing. This implies that political distinctions may be used as idioms to describe one's relationships with others.

9. Papataxiarchis 1988:206,210 also notes the distinction between the *kafenio* and the *ikoyeniako* or *eksochiko* (the family or country) *kafenio*. The latter is a place where a man can take his family and it is often the case in the village that young men and their families will go to the "moment" to watch the sunset and have some soft drinks. At night however, it is predominantly the place for the young people.

10. See e.g. Friedl 1962:12; Herzfeld op.cit.:149; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:205-207.

11. See e.g. Friedl 1986:49; Herzfeld op.cit.:49; Loizos 1981:25; Lison-Tolosana 1983:144 for Spain.

12. See e.g. Campbell 1979:150-154; Danforth 1983:206-207; Segalen 1983:45,155-157 for rural France; Christian op.cit:34 and Lison-Tolosana op.cit.:144 for Spain.

13. Despite the again gendered nature of the reply, there did seem amongst these men and women an effort being made to create new roles and relationships between them. But this is an issue beyond the scope of this study.

14. Full membership in the youth groups which includes the right to run for office extends from the ages of eighteen to thirty-five.

15. It should be noted that there are no servants in the households nor were there many emigrants until the 1960's, who left behind wives or husbands, and children to work abroad or in Athens. Young, unmarried people who leave the village to work or study are considered members of a village household as are those who leave spouses or children behind. The latter is a rare occurrence. For our purposes here students or emigrant workers away from home, though part of the household, will not be discussed.

16. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:37; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:45; Loizos 1975:508-9; Hirschon 1983:312; Dubisch 1986:205; Kenna 1976b:348-350; du Boulay 1976:391.

17. See e.g. du Boulay 1979:18; Gilmore 1980:155; Pina-Cabral 1986:37.

18. If a brother was provided with a higher education and obtained a job in the city, his claim to an equal inheritance in the village could be and often was contested. Note e.g. Friedl op.cit.:38,49,51.

19. The importance of the father or son is evident in the ritual laments in which they are referred to as the "pillars of the

house" (Alexiou 1974:194-195). See also e.g. Campbell op.cit.:56; Mandel 1983:178; Denich 1974:258; du Boulay 1979: 138, 1983:251-253.

20. Legally, since 1983, women in Greece keep their names upon marriage. In practice however, in the village, they are still known by their husband's surname.

21. Campbell 1963:89-90 rightly notes that men too are caught between conflicting loyalties to their natal household and their own household. Yet, unlike women, their household of marriage is a continuation of their natal household, mitigating somewhat the tension between the two since assistance to one can be more easily masked as promoting the interest of the other.

22. Thus the house here differs considerably from Basque households (Otts 1981:42; Segalen op.cit.:69-70; Douglass 1969:6-7,87-90) where it is the house which retains the name whether it is sold or passed on to another family. The house defines the people and not the other way around. It is therefore understandable why in Peta it is considered degrading for a husband to go and live with his wife's parents. He is an isoyambros (lit. inside husband). It is a public statement and display of the his ikoyenia's poverty and inability to sustain a wife without her ikoyenia's full financial support. Moreover, it means that the husband and not the wife is ksenos (foreign or strange) to the household. Particularly in the past it was felt that the husband would be under the jurisdiction of his mother-in-law. The two women, mother and daughter, pernane koumando (literally: 'took command'). They would be the ones who would make the decisions in the household. He would have no say as a ksenos for it was not his house. And in having no voice in the house he had no personality: "Dhen echi foni sto spiti tis yinekias tou. O isoyambros dhen echi prosopikotita" (He does not have a voice in his wife's house. The isoyambros does not have a personality).e.g. Friedl 1986:49-50; du Boulay op.cit.:126-128; Segalen op.cit.:70-71 for France.

23. See e.g. Hirschon 1981:77; Pina-Cabral op.cit:41 for Spain; Goddard 1987:187 for Italy.

24. Now almost all children are born in clinics in the nearby town.

25. See e.g. Friedl 1962:42;du Boulay 1974:132; Dubisch 1986:195-214; Hirschon 1978:66-88, 1981:72-88; Rushton 1983:57-70; Christian op.cit.:35 and Lison-Tolosana p.cit.:146,309 for Spain; Segalen op.cit.:92, 113-123 for France; Paul 1974:285 for Guatemala; Cuti 19leiro71:105-106,272,279 for Portugal. Loizos op.cit.:176-177 also makes this point in relation to the plight of Cypriot refugees. He suggests that the loss of homes with the invasion and subsequent division of the island most affected women emphasising their attachment to the house. Their identification with the house was even more pronounced as houses were given as dowries.

26. Name Day celebrations refer to the day when a particular

saint whose name you share is being honoured. On this day you too celebrate. People visit to wish you well and snacks and sweets are served. In the past only men celebrated their Name Day. Men and women visited the house separately, the men coming in the morning after the Church service in honour of the saint and the women coming in the afternoon. Now, men, women, and children are honoured on their Name Day's, and men and women pay their visits together.

27. Given this it is understandable that widows with children often remain unmarried. Since they must remain with the children and the children are of their husband's household to marry elsewhere would entail split in loyalties which would be unacceptable. Widowers on the other hand should remarry since their children should be provided with a mother. The new woman will be of the household as will her children and step-children. See e.g. Friedl 1986:49; Christian op.cit.:136 for Spain.

28. Such practices have changed somewhat over the last ten to fifteen years. Parents now tend to divide land and money equally between their children. It is still the preferred practice to give a son a home in the village if it is possible and preferably the home of the ikoyenia of his father.

29. Du Boulay (1983:246-249) notes however, that though people often said that a girl's dowry was more expensive than the expense entailed in marrying off a boy, often girls were given less of their equal share while it took often more than the equivalent share to marry off a boy since he had to provide and support a household. Moreover, as she notes elsewhere (du Boulay 1986:159) though the land did give women the power of legacy but this did not necessarily bear significantly on the disposition of power in the house. Generally, husbands were given full use-rights and only had to ask a wife's permission to sell. In the case where land did make a difference see Friedl 1962:106-108; Denich 1974:258.

30. Similarities in the division of space are noted elsewhere. See e.g. du Boulay 1979:22-27; Hirschon 1981; Friedl op.cit.: 39-42.

31. As Hirschon notes (1989:189) the passers-by present an image of a theatre for those seated (much like those parading in the square do for those seated at the tables). The same is true for those passing by the houses who gaze within.

32. See e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.:36.135; Segalen op.cit.:179 for France; Ardener 1981:22.

33. These are liminal periods. For example, the twelve nights before the Epiphany may be likened to the liminal period after birth and before baptism, a point which must be set aside for another discussion. Yet, see also Eliade 1989:62-69.

34. See Blum and Blum op.cit.:54. The authors also quote Hesiod (op.cit.:341): "For the Night belongs to the Blessed Ones"--a euphemism that this is the time when the demons are about.

Stewart (1985:224) notes that the female nymphes (neiradhes) appear at times when people should be asleep or resting. Herzfeld (1979:294ff) also notes these as times when clandestine lovers meet.

35. See e.g. Blum and Blum op.cit.:20; Stewart op.cit.:225; Campbell 1974:161.

36. The crowns are wreaths joined by a ribbon and made from fresh or fabricated flowers which are used during the marriage ceremony. According to the nuns, they symbolise the victory of the couple over their passions and serve to honour them for the chastity of their lives before the marriage. They also remind the couple that they must guard the purity of their lives in marriage (e.g. du Boulay 1979:91).

37. The tensions that may arise between persisting underlying principles governing the household and changing household structures will be briefly examined in the following chapter. For the moment we are only concerned with the persisting underlying principles.

38. Hirschon (1989:138) notes that the bed represents procreation, conjugal unity, and has sacramental significance through the marriage ceremony.

39. See e.g. Herzfeld 1983; Mandel op.cit.:175. The distrust of outsiders and the sense of the household as a corporate unit see e.g. Rheubottom 1980:222; Campbell 1979:38; 204-205; du Boulay op.cit.:21-22, 149-153; Gilmore 1980:157 in Spain. Also Pitt-Rivers (1977:114-119) presents an argument whereby stranger: male:: guest: female, such that a stranger is deemed a hostile adversary whereas a guest, especially one who seeks sanctuary, is not only cared for and protected but renounces his power and authority until he leaves.

40. Eating in public also occurs when married couples go for a meal, or when young people, men and women in their late teens or early twenties, go to a tavern to dance and drink. These are recent changes and point to transforming views concerning both gender and household relations.

41. A point noted by many anthropologists. See e.g. Beopoulou 1986; Herzfeld 1985:16, 36-37; Danforth 1983; Hirschon 1983 who discusses these terms in relation to notions of the public and the private.

42. See e.g. Beopoulou op.cit.; Hirschon 1989:169; du Boulay op.cit.:215-218.

43. This contrasts with the spatial plan of the village as described in the beginning. The former image may be said to describe village community in time--the oldest houses and ikoyenies being closer to the village center, that is more truly members of the village since they have been there longer, though this, strictly speaking, may not be true in practice. It also reiterates the concept that to be in the community is to be at

the very center of the village, a center ideally reserved for men. This model provides one image of the village for the people. The other model, given here, places the house at the center and seems to describe personal identity, in that a person is first identified with the house, then the neighbourhood, and finally the village (see Herzfeld op.cit.; Boissevain op.cit.:31 for Malta).

44. Similar stress on the importance of neighbours (in the non-Greek instances, to the point sometimes of minimising kin relations) is noted in many different contexts: e.g. du Boulay op.cit.: 215-218; Beopoulou op.cit.; Herzfeld op.cit.: 63; Douglass op.cit.:151-157,201-205 and Ott 1981:61-62 for the Basque; Pina-Cabral 1986: 73, 154-155 and Cutileiro op.cit.:137 for Portugal; Gilmore 1980:192 for Spain; Segalen op.cit.:53 for France.

45. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:217; Dubisch 1986:208-210; Papataxiarchis 1988:174-179 notes the same for the matrifocal neighbourhoods in Lesbos.

46. See e.g. Hirschon 1989:170; Cutileiro op.cit.:139 for Portugal; Davis 1973:71-2; Segalen op.cit.:90-91 for France.

47. See e.g. Hirschon 1978: 84; Paul op.cit.: 283,290 for Guatemala; Brandes 1985:217 for Spain; Segalen op.cit.:138-141; Ardener 1978:16-18.

48. In the past, before WWII, women could not even go into the village square except to get water at the spring or to attend Church, or the occasional village festival.

49. See e.g. Hirschon 1983; Danforth 1983; Segalen op.cit.:97-106 for France; Cutileiro op.cit.:107 for Portugal.

50. I was rarely present inside and am therefore forced to rely on what men chose to share with me.

51. See e.g. Papataxiarchis op.cit.:222-224; Herzfeld op.cit.:151-152; Damer 1988:300; Gilmore op.cit.:189-192,205-206 for Spain.

52. This shift in a young man's status usually occurs in the village when the young man is perceived to be the head of his own household (usually after marriage and the birth of the first child). If a young man's father has died and, as the eldest son, he is working to support his mother and younger siblings he may be also considered the head of his household, particularly if he has completed his compulsory military service.

53. Du Boulay (1976:392-393) discusses the contradiction and the tensions which arise between this self-interest and the ideal values espoused by the Church and exemplified by Christ. Often one justifies one's actions in terms of self-interest and the protection of the household while simultaneously judging others in accordance with Christian ideals.

54. Gerontissa (masc. Geronta) is the feminine term of address

meaning Elder. These men or women are called Elders not because they are the oldest in the community but because of their perceived spiritual wisdom and maturity.

55. Another point to bear in mind is that the nuns are not always fully clothed in their habits when in their cells. This again leaves them feeling exposed as will become evident in Chapter 4.

56. My thanks to J. Parry for pointing this out. See e.g. Campbell-Jones op. cit.:47, 195. A similar association is made by Dubisch (1986:211) who draws the parallel between the kitchen and the vagina. Both are important entryways for the maintenance of the family, offering sustenance and protection. But both are also vulnerable to pollution. Care must be taken not to pollute either the body or the kitchen through either dirt or dishonour. Thus, it may be said that like the nuns who seek to transform, within the convent, the human world into the spiritual, so too women and their kitchens transform raw products into socially vital, fertile entities. Both secular women and the religious stand at the interstices of different orders where they may feel, or be perceived, as more vulnerable and in need of protection.

57. The east/west symbolism is found again in graveyards where the corpse is placed with its head to the west so that "it will look east". Alexiou (1974:187) notes that light since ancient Greece has been identified as a sacred source of life, warmth and knowledge and as a means of scattering the darkness of death and ignorance. To see light was to understand and thus light and sight were used synonymously from Homer onwards. Herzfeld (op.cit.:63-65) also notes spatial ordering within churches.

58. Mother Mary and Ware (1969: 22): "The two aspects of Christian existence--personal and corporate--are linked together inseparably. One is saved only in the community, and yet salvation is mediated always through personal faith and obedience....The basic duality of Christian existence is conspicuously reflected in the realm of worship. Christian worship is at once personal and corporate, although these two aspects may be at times in tension." See also Chapter 1 on Monasticism.

59. There are a few nuns who stand at the back of the church either to assist lay visitors or in the case of one nun, as an act of humility.

60. I do not wish however, to minimise the transformations in the spatial divisions, for as noted, previous to WWII women avoided the square, and unmarried women even avoided going to church least they and their families be accused of attempting to display the girl for marriage, thereby compromising her chances.

61. In most Orthodox churches there are some wooden stands with high arm rests and narrow seats that are placed usually along the walls and called stasidhia. The seats are often too few and reserved for the elderly. Everyone else stands throughout the often lengthy services.

CHAPTER 3

Metaphors of kinship: body and spirit

And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:34-36)

Introduction

In the previous chapter the usage of space in the village was discussed in terms of gender and kinship and was compared with the usage of space in the convents. In this chapter I wish to further explore the construction of kinship in the village. As will be seen, the overriding emphasis in the village is the recreation of the ikoyenia (loosely translated as family) through the birth of children. It is this ethos which will be contrasted in the second half of the chapter with the use of kinship terms in the convent. To say that the nuns have simply modelled their social relations on kinship roles found in the secular community is, I believe, to miss the point of the relationships. For though the terms may be the same as in adhelfi (sister) or mitera (mother) there is a shift in emphasis from the material world and life as a recreative continuity extending into the future, a view strongly held in the village, to an emphasis on the spiritual world towards which each soul strives or should strive in order to achieve lasting grace and unity with God upon death: a view stressed in the convents. It is the distinction drawn between the kosmikos anthropos (secular human) and the pneumatikos anthropos (spiritual human). It is this shift which fundamentally alters how the kinship terms are understood and used.

To explicate the shift in meaning I will be taking up the concepts of 'substance' and 'codes of conduct' as first introduced by Schneider (1980). The villagers' belief in

blood as the defining substance of kinship, unaffected by one's conduct towards one's kin, though adhered to by the nuns at one level is at another level subsumed by the belief that through conduct one can transform one's 'natural' substance. In the convent it is held that with the guidance of Christ and one's father confessor and through careful vigilance of one's conduct one may upon death assume one's place as an angel in the tenth tayma (corps) of God. The human substance of this world is transformed into something divine. Conduct determines substance¹.

Kinship in the village

Ikoyenia, as noted in the previous chapter, is a term related to the English word family. The first question asked of any unknown person is: "Piounou ise?" (Whose are you?). A question which asks you to identify yourself with a particular household in the village. Personhood and identity are closely linked with the notion of the ikoyenia as household, while ikoyenia is also defined by those notions which constitute kinship.

The most restricted use of the term ikoyenia refers to the nuclear family. If either spouse dies the living members are no longer seen as truly constituting an ikoyenia. This is evident in the pity children receive who have lost either one of their parents. Such children are regarded as orphans (orfana) though the one parent may still be living².

At the very crux of this ikoyenia is the ceremony of marriage for it serves to unite a man and a woman under the watching eyes of the community³. It is the only socially sanctioned relationship within which sexual intercourse is allowed and in fact insisted upon. It is only through intercourse that children are reproduced. And it is only through socially sanctioned intercourse that socially legitimate children are born to the couple and a new ikoyenia is formed. Young people urged to marry are told: "Ine keros na pandhreftis, na dhimiouryisis dhiki sou ikoyenia". (It is time you married and created your own family). Marriage sig-

nifies the creation of a new ikoyenia through the birth of children⁴.

It is the use of the word create that is of interest for it recalls God's creation of humans and the world. The core of the ikoyenia that is the husband, the wife, and the children must continually be recreated through marriage and the birth of children. For with ageing and death, the ikoyenia is destroyed. Without birth and children there is no renewal, no continuation, and no life. Thus, it is said that people's proorismos (destiny, aim in life), the reason for their existence, is marriage and children.

Childless couples are not regarded as constituting a 'true' ikoyenia. They are pitied if they desire but cannot have children⁵ and viewed with unease and distress if they wilfully decide (as only a very few couples who live away from the village do) not to have children.

In the village sexual needs and desires are said to exist and manifest themselves in both men and women. Sex is a natural drive and if not fulfilled can lead to various diseases, and even to mental derangement (trella). Similarly, a woman who has not born children is thought not to have completed the necessary, 'natural' functions that her body needs and demands. As with sex, she may be prone to mental disorders if this 'natural' function has not been catered to.

Bearing this in mind, it is evident that to have sex out of marriage is to have sex only for pleasure and in this sense is considered selfish. It is placing one's own gratification above the needs and desires of the ikoyenia for it jeopardises the unity of the ikoyenia⁶. Not only is there always the serious risk of pregnancy and the birth of an illegitimate child, but the honour of the ikoyenia as self-contained unit is jeopardised. In short, it is seen as an act of grave irresponsibility.

A childless marriage out of choice also portrays a type of selfishness and immaturity. The couple are regarded as unwilling to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, seeking only to fulfil their own individual whims⁷. Moreover, it is generally held that if the couple do not have common con-

cerns and responsibilities which arise from the creation of an ikoyenia, their marriage will eventually dissolve; an event which is a cause of shame to both the couple and their respective parents. With divorce, parents often feel that they have failed to marry their child "well", and thus failed in their responsibility to settle the child in life. The divorced couple break the "natural cycle of life" for they are seen to insist on their own personal desires and not those of the ikoyenia and its continuation through time as a constantly recreated entity.

The perceived physical necessity of child-bearing and the unease with sex solely as an act of pleasure which does not eventually bear fruit is well supported by the Church which accepts the sexual act as a natural drive as well as a necessity for the continuation of humankind. However, this natural drive only achieves its sublime purpose when it has been sanctified by the Church; blessed only if it takes place among a married couple and with the aim of procreation (Frangopoulos 1985:230).

Arising from notions concerning procreation and marriage is the concept of relatedness or sinyenia (from the prefix syn meaning with or together and yenia-- of common birth, generation or lineage). Sinyenia is used to define relations through blood and marriage ties though its primary definition implies blood relations (eks ematos) as they are considered closer than relatives by marriage (eks anchisteias). Both relatives by marriage and blood are referred to as one's ikoyenia in certain contexts, and people do trace their connections to a particular ikoyenia through either/or both, marriage and blood.

Blood is said to be transmitted equally to the child through both its parents, mother and father⁸. Since the child and parent share blood, the ties between the child and its parents are said to be the 'strongest'. Siblings are also said to have 'strong' ties between them because they have the same blood. They are said to understand one another and their close relationship should ideally be maintained throughout their lives⁹.

Blood relations (*sinyenia*) in the village taking ego as a point of departure ascend generations up to and including great grandparents and outwards to include collateral relations including second and sometimes third cousins¹⁰. Up to this point there is a strict prohibition on sexual intercourse and so of course on marriage. These people are related because they share to the some given degree¹¹ (*vathmo*) the substance of blood; they are of a common lineage or generation. In sharing this substance, they also share to some extent a common identity. People say that looks and even personality can be transmitted through blood (see e.g. Campbell op.cit.:166; Cutileiro op.cit.:114 for Portugal).

Beyond second cousins marriage is permitted. Though the blood relationship, *sinyenia*, can be and is traced beyond this point, it is said that the relations are not close. It may be understood that the "original" blood had intermingled with so much new blood through marriage that it has been diluted. The relationship therefore is not very "strong"; there is only a bit of relatedness (*mikri/liyi sinyenia*).

Du Boulay (1984) points out that the collateral relationship is often reckoned by looking up the lines of descent to the original sibling group, the original progenitors thus being assumed. This is the case also in Peta. For example, I often was told: "Oh, we are *sinyenis*. My mother and her mother were first cousins. That is, that my grandfather and her grandmother were siblings." In this sense then *sinyenia* is traced through shared blood to common progenitors.

This is not to say that the villagers are unaware that these progenitors also had parents. They simply do not "know them" and are uninterested in them. However, they may note that their *ikoyenia*, identified by the surname, has been "heard" (*akouyete*) in the village for a long time. But, this is a separate issue distinguishable from the close link between *ikoyenia* and household, as described in the previous chapter, and from the link between *ikoyenia* and *sinyenia* described here. It refers to a vague historic past which may prove one's long term membership to the village. It thus may

have more to do with community identity than with family identity.

Blood can also be used in terms of soi which du Boulay (op.cit.) points out means stock¹². It is not 'natural' (fisiko) to mix the same stock of blood, to inbreed as the animals do. It is not human. The combining of the same blood in the children born of such a liason, is likely to produce defective children both mentally and physically. This mirrors the sense in which marriage is the joining of two separate and different beings--distinguished not only by gender but by blood as well, that is by material substance.

Blood relationships arise from the combining of blood through sexual intercourse, a natural act, and the bearing of children, a natural outcome of intercourse: blood relations are thus seen as natural and immutable in themselves. That is one cannot change one's genitor or genitrix as one cannot change one's blood. Blood relationships cannot be severed. Blood relations are sinyenis, of common stock, par excellence.

Relatives by marriage are those relatives married to one's blood relatives. This may be expanded to include those relatives related to one's spouse through blood and through marriage, for it is said that when one marries one enters (beni) the ikoyenia of one's spouse. Ego's ikoyenia does not, strictly speaking, acquire sinyenia with ego's spouse's ikoyenia. They are said instead to be simpetheri (affines). The relationship between husband and wife, a relationship made by marriage but often regarded as a blood tie, was expressed through the words of the marriage ceremony often quoted to me: "and the two shall become one flesh"¹³. The unease which this quasi-blood tie creates is evident in that the kinship term for the in-coming woman is always, for her husband's ikoyenia, nimphi (bride¹⁴) while the husband for his wife's family is yambros (groom). They are always identified as outsiders for the ikoyenia of their spouse. Moreover, the marriage was not and is not seen as truly complete until a child is born to the couple. Many newly married couples complained of the harassment they experienced from

parents and other well-wishing older people who were constantly asking if the wife was pregnant. The marriage ceremony may state that the husband and the wife "become one flesh" but it is only with the birth of the children that they are truly seen to be united in the one flesh--the flesh and blood of their children.

It is evident then, that relations by marriage are not regarded to be as 'strong' as relations through blood. This is because blood relatives are said to be given in nature while relatives by marriage depend solely upon the relationship between people; relationships which can break down. It is clearly stated that they are not relatives based on a common substance, that is blood. None-the-less, one's relatives by marriage and one's relatives by blood may be defined as one's ikoyenia in certain contexts, and people sometimes traced personal ties to particular ikoyenies through either or both marriage and blood. Moreover, it should also be noted that there is a prohibition on two siblings marrying two other siblings unless the weddings take place simultaneously. If they do not, the second marriage is said to be between sinyenis. The first marriage is said to link the sets of siblings in sinyenia, something which contradicts the definition of affinity but which reinforces the notion that siblings are "of the same blood", that is of similar substance. Equally important was the concern that the children of these two marriages would be more than first cousins. They would be like siblings because they would have "the same blood" thereby conflating two distinct kinship relations. Nor can this concern be alleviated with the simultaneous ceremony between the two sets of siblings. The point is that whatever, or because of, the contradictions, marriages between two sets of siblings is seen as highly problematic¹⁵, for marriage serves not only to assure continuity but to extend kinship ties.

Codes of Conduct

The term 'codes of conduct' is taken from Schneider (op.cit.)

and I use it here to refer to ways a person in a particular relationship is expected to behave. As a sinyenis, a person is expected to stand by the ikoyenia (ikoyenia is here used in its broadest sense) in times of trouble and celebration. S/he is expected to lend assistance financially or emotionally in all matters as for example in voting for a sinyenis in local or national elections or helping in marriage or funeral ceremonies. Ikoyenia, in its broadest usage, means all those upon whom one can depend for enduring, unconditional loyalty and support (Campbell 1963:78).

This informs the manner by which people are included or excluded as sinyenis. For example, I was told by one woman: "We don't have much contact with them and so the sinyenia has left, has grown less. You can't really count them as sinyenis even though they are second cousins." Or, another woman told me: "They are my first cousins but they are more like brothers and sisters to me". Thus, whether a particular person is regarded as a true sinyenis or not depends in part on how that person acts and what sort of relationship one wishes to elicit at any particular moment (e.g. Campbell 1979:138, 107-108). Thus, though the blood tie cannot be severed, it can be ignored. The relationship is negotiable. The terms ikoyenia and sinyenia may be used to identify oneself and those one considers one's own (dhiki sou) in contrast to those defined as outsiders. An example is the statement: "We are all sinyenis here", which serves to identify the village community as a bounded and unified entity¹⁶.

This however, does not contradict the normative definition of sinyenia defined by blood and marriage. If asked to name one's sinyenis, it is admitted that no matter how a person behaves, a sinyenis is always a sinyenis. The substance of sinyenia does not alter through conduct.

None the less, within the household and particularly between those who share the same blood, grandparents/parents/children/siblings, emotional bonds are expected and the lack of appropriate conduct can lead to social stigmatisation. This is most evident in the idealisation of the relationship between a mother and her children.

The greatest expression of love in the village emerges from the conception of shared 'substance' and 'nature': the mother's body. It is agreed amongst all the villagers that there is no love like that of a mother for her child¹⁷. It is a love born from the fact that she carries the child within her for nine months. She gave birth to the child, suffering in order to give it life: "Skistike i kilia tis na to yenisi" (her belly was ripped in order to give it birth). She held the child to her breast to feed and nourish it. The child is part of her body, born, nourished and sustained by her¹⁸. Should she reject the child, she will be regarded as unnatural; often either deranged or possessed depending on a person's particular perspective. As has been noted elsewhere (e.g. Papataxiarchis op.cit.:146) a woman who abandons her child is banned from the moral community.

As the child grows the mother's love is expressed in terms of dependency and need. "Whatever children want, they go to their mothers," it is said. This applies not only to young children but to adults as well. The relationship is a hierarchical one: the mother is the all-giving, comforting, and understanding figure while the child is dependent on her love and acceptance.

Fathers too are also said to love their children but their love is generally not considered to be as deep (vathia) or as great (meyali) as the mothers. "Anyway", say some of the women "what did they do for the child? They did not carry it for nine months nor give birth to it. Their only contribution was a moment's pleasure" (e.g. Segalen 1983:109 in France). This is not to say that fathers do not love their children. I have often seen men with their small children being immensely patient and tender. It remains however, that fathers are said to be more objective and logical in their love. They often serve as the final arbitrators, naughty children being threatened that their father will be told if they do not stop misbehaving.

Similarly, though love should arise between the married couple, it is recognised, particularly amongst those in their mid-forties and older, that it is not essential. Rather,

common goals and aims in life are what constitute a marriage. It is recognised that even if you do not love your spouse it should not deter you from fulfilling your roles as a parent and spouse, from fulfilling your aims in life. Thus it remains that the truest love, defining a non-negotiable relationship, is the love born from the body and nourished by it: a mother's love.

Motherhood then is natural, part of women's destiny or aim (fisikos proorismos) in life. In the village as elsewhere in Greece, women achieve adulthood only upon marriage and the bearing of a child. Motherhood ultimately defines female identity¹⁹. It is only through marriage and the acquisition of husband and home that a woman can realise her physical and social destiny.

As mothers, women seem to serve as intermediaries between the natural, the social and the spiritual worlds as defined by the Church or its opposite, Pirasmos (Temptation, euphemism for the devil or things associated with the devil). This is exemplified by the activities of cleaning and washing, indications of both the physical and moral cleanliness of the household²⁰.

Should you take a walk through the village on a fine sunny morning you are bound to see windows thrown open to let in the fresh air and bed clothes hung outside in the sun. Women will be busy sweeping; washing clothes in the yard or, for those with washing machines, hanging the clean, wet clothes to dry. Cleaning, and in particular the washing of clothes are central tasks for women of the household. Men left on their own, due either to the absence of their wife on a trip or to her illness are thought capable of cooking prochera fayita (foods that can be cooked easily and quickly); of washing dishes; of keeping the house tidy; and even of doing a bit of necessary sewing. These tasks are not seen as demeaning, and though men would not boast of doing them, their wives were often amused and proud of their husbands' household abilities²¹. There are two tasks, however, that men avoid doing alone: thoroughly cleaning a house and washing clothes. One man in my neighbourhood was

forced to wash the clothes when his wife fell ill. He resorted to doing the task at night and hanging the clothes on the line when no one could see him. Or, so said the women who told me of this incident in hushed tones. The man, on the contrary, said that this had been the only time he had been free to wash. Moreover, both he and his wife were proud not to have asked kseñi (strangers) to do the household's cleaning.

The significance of this was made clear by a bizarre story told to me by two women in the village. The one was a yiayia (old woman) and the other a woman in her late thirties who had heard it from another yiayia. No one else I asked had heard the story though the yiayia told me that many of the palies (the old ones--fem. term) used to tell it:

In the very distant past, way before Christianity, men were the ones who menstruated. But they had a difficult time of it because they had no where to put their soiled garments. And so they carried them on their backs. They could not wash them because only women could wash clothes. God saw that things were not going well and so he changed things around. Women began to menstruate and since they could clean the soiled clothes, everything was made fine and good.

It would seem that women are the only ones capable of cleaning both the physical dirt and the moral "uncleanliness" here portrayed by menstruation (see Chapter 2). Men would have been condemned "to carry on their backs" the stigma of their moral transgressions had their transgressions not been transferred to women; to those who were capable of transforming this transgression into something clean and good. Again, the children women bear and raise are just such transformations, arising from nature and becoming through women's actions socially and spiritually complete human beings.

Women's position as intermediaries between nature, society and the spiritual also reflects upon their symbolic balance between Eve and Panayia. Du Boulay (1986) has argued that the association of woman's nature with Eve²², which makes her vulnerable to the devil and sin, allows ultimately for the conception of woman's ability to achieve her

destiny as the Panayia. The Panayia she points out (op.cit.:165) is not often associated with virginity as in Catholic Europe but with the image of Theotokos--Mother of God (though see Lison-Tolosana op.cit.:307-308). It is her motherhood that is central to her symbolic position.

In the village women often say that all women are Eves, referring to the prototype of women as quarrelsome, gossips and fickle. Particularly in matters of sex, women were often depicted as seductresses and young men would confide that it was married women who were the worse since they had gotten bored with their husbands and wanted to try something new²³.

It is held in the village and in the convent that men physically need to have sex. Denied it they may become ill. One male informant (age appr. 50) graphically described the semen travelling up the spinal cord to the brain eventually causing nevrikes asthenies (nervous diseases--a euphemism for mental disorders). The tension caused by men's natural sexual drives can only be released by ejaculation, preferably through sexual intercourse with women²⁴. Women on the other hand are thought to be relieved of much of their sexual tension during menstruation²⁵. They are therefore, less in need of sex.

Given this, their responsibility in an illicit affair is often regarded as greater since their part in the liason was due to a fickle and weak character rather than to a physical need. With men, sexual misdemeanours, as long as they do not affect the men's relations with and duties towards the household, are not thought to necessarily effect their emotions or to reflect on their character. They are often simply attributed to a bodily function. In women it stems from a flaw inherent in their character²⁶.

However, as du Boulay argues, through time women transform this inherent flaw. By remaining loyal to their husbands and conducting themselves in the socially approved manners they may achieve their destiny as Panayia, the respected and powerful mother of a household. A woman realises her destiny as Panayia by redeeming her Eve-like nature.

I would agree with du Boulay that the association of

women with Eve places them in a structurally inferior position vis-a-vis men though not in a position lacking grace. I would also argue however, that in Peta the image is not so much that of a transformation through time from Eve to Panayia but more the image in which the characteristics of Eve are used or harnessed to benefit the household thereby allowing women to realise their position as mothers. As indicated in the previous chapter, it through their sly and clever ways; because they look to their own interests and not to the community's interest; and because they are less trusting, that women can maintain the household despite the difficulties often encountered in day to day living. In the village, the women were not particularly attached to the Panayia, nor did they often liken themselves as mothers with Panayia. And though the image of the Panayia was predominantly that of mother, as du Boulay notes, it also held connotations of piety, sanctity and purity. To be too good and trusting, to be too pious was not always seen in a favorable manner. Such women were said to be either mentally unbalanced, or that by such displays of goodness, they had some terrible sin to hide (e.g. Christian op.cit.:76 in Spain). In fact, this was often what the nuns were accused of. Thus, just as a balance had to be maintained between the natural, social, and spiritual worlds, a balance between the images of the Panayia and of Eve also had to be maintained to live in the world, to assure the survival of the household and children.

To summarise, kinship is defined primarily by the sharing of blood. This bond, beyond the household, allows for the negotiation of relationships through the recognition or denial of those ties at any given interaction. Within the household however, there is less scope for the manipulation of the codes of conduct and of *sinyenia*. There, the continuity of the *ikoyenia* is dependent upon the conjugal unity of two different persons, both in terms of gender and in terms of blood, who are united by blood symbolically in the ritual of marriage and physically through the birth of children. These children are socially recognised as belonging

to the father's household and bearing his name but bound to the mother by what is seen as the greatest expression of love: the sharing of common substance and the continuity of that bond supported by feeding, cleaning and washing, and maintaining the rituals. With the creation of an ikoyenia men and particularly women are finally recognised as full adult members of the community.

Koubaria

The link between the 'physical' and 'natural' ties that create kinship in Greece, expressed most vividly in terms of shared blood are found again in the relationship of koubaria (spiritual kinship). For though koubaria is created by the church ceremonies of marriage and baptism²⁷ in explicit denial of physiological links, certain prohibitions found both in the Cannon Laws and in the practices and beliefs of the villagers imply a 'blood-linked' relationship thereby triggering the moral relations or codes of conduct associated and expected of kin.

Koubaria is established between two families when a person is either a sponsor of a marriage or a baptism. In both cases the koubaro must not be a parent of either the bride, groom or the child to be baptised. Generally, the koubaro of a marriage is also called upon to baptise the first child of the couple and in the past he/she baptised all the children unless he/she gave permission otherwise. The god-parent completes his/her duties to the family by acting as the sponsor to the marriages of all his/her male god-children.

With the death of the koubaro the obligation to have him/her as a sponsor ends and the relation of koubaria between the two ikoyenies finishes. It can however be kept going if the children of the original sponsor act as koubari.

The koubaro/a at the wedding is responsible for the spiritual and binding union of the couple. At baptism as has been observed elsewhere, the god-parent serves as the spiritual parent to the child and is responsible to guide the child through life. The distinction made between the

spiritual parent and the natural parent serves to distinguish between natural and social birth. A christian name is given to the child and it is understood by all involved that the child in baptism is being received into the Christian community. Only after baptism can the child be saved, enter into matrimony, take communion, and be buried as a Christian²⁸. Baptism may be said to mark the beginning of the social personality of the individual apart from his membership to the household. And it is the child's spiritual parents who create him as a individual social being.

In the village, this emphasis on the spiritual link however, is not free from the notions of *sinyenia* and the sharing of 'common substance'. According both to Cannon Law and to the villagers, it is prohibited for children baptised by the same god-parent to marry; nor is it proper for children to marry the god-children of their parents. In both instances they are regarded as siblings. Moreover, in the village it is held that a spouse may not baptise any siblings of the other spouse's god-child. If this were to happen the husband and wife would have *koubaria*. "And so," it is said, "they would have *sinyenia*." The prescription that marriage should be between two different and separate people would be broken. Finally, a god-son who does not seek his god-father's permission to marry will not have a fruitful marriage. His children will die²⁹. By ignoring the spiritual link physiological retributions are inevitable. Thus the act of baptism seems to link the god-parents in a physical as well as spiritual bond with the god-child.

Koubaria then is not simply a case of natural versus social and spiritual birth (see e.g. Bloch and Guggenheim 1981), though this is certainly explicit. Nor is the analogy between ritual and literal kinship simply a "technique of exorcism, of eliminating from the consciousness of the participants the conflict of aims inherent in the opposition between literal and ritual parent" (Pitt-Rivers 1976: 321), wherein the parent seeks to maintain the household, and the spiritual parent in guiding the child through various life-stage rituals finalised with marriage, is responsible for the

break-up of the parental household. The literal parent is socially responsible for the marriage of the child, and the desire for grand-children and continuity through them evident, as has been noted.

The point, I feel, is that the villagers are continually seeking to integrate their views of the spiritual and religious with their views on the natural cycle of birth, life, and death; the passage of time; and the continuity of life in this world. Thus, though it is held that the god-parent should choose the name of the child--as if enlightened by God--it is common practice to almost force the hand of the god-parent (if necessary) to name the child after the parents of the child's father, subsequent children being named after the father's dead siblings or after the mother's parents. Thus, the individual's name is not simply a matter of personal identity for though the names are often drawn from the Saints of the Church, the emphasis is on repeating the first names of alternating generations so that the "name will be heard again" (via na akousti to onoma). In this manner the person "lives again through his children's children." "The circle is finished". The generations continue. "For, the only immortality", as one woman (appr. 60) told me, "exists in the children who live after one's death." Thus, as Kenna (1976b) notes, through the house and land inherited, through the children and their names, and through the death rituals which, as noted, are carried out by living members of the household, an explicit notion of replacement and continuity is created and maintained.

Thus, the giving of a Christian name which may be seen as creating an individual, social being is over-shadowed by the notion of the child as a product of its fore-bearers. Its membership and identity within the Christian community is derived from its membership within a particular ikoyenia.

Death and Time

'Substance', blood, with time or in "degrees" is thought to become diluted. This view necessitates a conception of time

as a continuous process, a flow of events that can never be repeated. Substance cannot remain in its first "pure" form as it was given by the first progenitors. Substance, however, as a means of identifying one's kin, one's ikoyenia is considered immutable. One's first cousins are always one's first cousins³⁰.

In taking genealogical charts I was often referred to older women who "could remember further back". Any further back than three generations led to a single anonymous couple who were considered the beginning of the ikoyenia (e.g. Campbell 1963:91). Beyond that was beyond memory: "Who remembers that far back. I didn't remember them" (Pios thimate? Ego dhen tous thimithika) which implies: "I did not know them."

It is the living people's memory of the relationships they had with those who have died that keeps the dead "alive". Death serves to sever kinship links because it severs relationships³¹. This provides an understanding of the confusion expressed by parents concerning whether or not to mention young people who have died when reciting genealogies. Infants are said to exist in a liminal state between this world and the "other world" from where they came. As such they cannot fully participate in a relationship with others. Young people who die before they have children though they have been in relationships with parents and siblings, "leave no one behind to remember them" (meaning children). Moreover, the 'natural' "cycle of life" (kyklos tis zoes) in which the old give birth to new life and die is reversed with the death of a young, unmarried person³². In this instance only the parents and siblings may include the young person in the genealogical charts, particularly if the death has been recent.

The importance of remembered relationships is also supported by the practice of second burial which, though is not strictly speaking Orthodox practice, used to occur three, five or seven years after the first burial in the ikoyenia's plot and was supervised by the priest (e.g. Danforth 1982:20-21; Alexiou op.cit.:47-48). The corpse after the first

period of interment would be disinterred and incorporated into a common ossuary. The individuality of the dead person and the link with the ikoyenia would eventually be erased from living memory. The dead would become part of the linear time of history, distinct from the regenerating time of the ikoyenia.

Beginning in the late fifties, the practice of a specific ritual of disinterment began to die out. This was accompanied by an increasing emphasis being placed on the elaboration of the burial plots. Marble slabs and grave stones began to replace the simple white-washed stones that had defined plot boundaries. Today the bones of the dead are removed only when a newly deceased household member is to be buried. They are cleaned and placed at the foot of the new coffin and buried along with it in the ikoyeniako (household) plot. The bones are jumbled together, no attempt is made to keep bones belonging to different individuals separate and distinct.

The stress now placed on the ikoyenia and its continuity after death as portrayed by the large marble tomb stones, coincides with transformations in the concept of the village and belonging (e.g. Pina-Cabral op.cit.:224 for Portugal). With the exodus, primarily to Athens, in the late fifties and onward, by those seeking better jobs and education, the notion of the village as a geographically and socially bounded unit was questioned. The "Athenians" see themselves as villagers and desire to be buried in the village in their own ikoyeniako plot. Those living in the village find this as annoying as what they call the meddling of the "Athenians" in the village affairs. The "Athenians" do not live in the village nor do they share in the day to day problems that arise. They therefore have no legitimate claims. On the other hand, many resident villagers note that many "Athenians" were born and raised in the village and to deny them a burial plot seems equally wrong. The village no longer identifiable simply as a geographically bounded community must accommodate different definitions of belonging. It might be argued that the ikoyenia, as both household and sinyenia, now best

serve as the defining units. Thus, the bones are no longer tossed into a communal ossuary for who one is depends both upon one's residence as well as one's past ikoyenia ties. While the ikoyenia (as sinyenia) assures identification as a descendent of the village, the household defines who one was during one's life-time and allows for a distinction to be maintained between those who resided in the village and those who did not. It should also be noted that for the people living in the village, the values and practices of the city were/are often highly valued and the idea of a marble tomb as a sign of wealth and progress is appealing. These marble tombs have become prestige items. In the end however, it remains that in the burial practices of the village, both past and present, the dead are incorporated into a larger unit, be that the community or the ikoyenia, and their individuality is erased as they pass out of living memory.

The concept of the ikoyenia then as a particular entity within the community is maintained by the redefinition of the original progenitors. By repressing the memory of ascendant generations attention is focused on the children to come. It is through them that kinship is defined. As the Geertz's (1975:162) put it for the rather different context of Bali, the catalogue of identifiable ancestors is short-circuited in "a continuous celebration of regensis."

Thus it may be said that it is not memory and death that create kinship in the village; it is blood. Blood is the vitalising, life-giving force in the society. Passed on from parents to children, from generation to generation, it assures continuity. In this sense, to live beyond one's time is to live beyond the meaning of kinship. This was poignantly expressed by an old woman, said to be 105 years old, whose constant and bitter complaint was: "Is it right for a mother to bury all her children? Why didn't he (Charos the personification of death) take me as well?". The old woman's children had died and, as was pointed out to me, should her grandchildren become grandparents these great, great grandchildren who would constitute her ikoyenia, could easily inter-marry. Not only had she reversed the natural course of

events in burying her children but she was in danger of living beyond the time of kinship relations.

Convent

When a woman leaves her secular (kosmiki) ikoyenia to enter the convent, she may be said to adopt a new ikoyenia, one created by the Church and the convent which will serve to define her as a person. In the secular community personal identity is embodied within kinship as shown above. Blood is said to be the strongest substance binding people together. In the convent these blood ties, though recognised, are subsumed by spiritual bonds which serve not only unite the members of a particular monastic community or all Orthodox monastics, but all human beings with the divine, with God. However, and in this lies the paradox, the nuns use the notion of shared substance to support their claim that as humans we are all the descendants of Adam and Eve and also of Christ, Son of Man. In this sense, the 'shared substance' is not diluted or weakened over time but equally strong now as it was in the past. On the other hand, it is believed that through one's conduct in life one's material substance (not just blood but the body as a whole) is transformed and one is able to achieve eternal life in the Divine community. The paradox of 'material substance' then is that though it can be transformed in this life, it serves as the link between humans and the Divine, in the past, present and future.

Entering the convent, the young woman is now entering the 'home' which she will have for the remainder of her life. Nuns may not leave the convent in which they took their vows. Only with great difficulty may they transfer to a new convent; nor may they renounce their vows. Renunciation can lead to excommunication and the eternal damnation of the former monastic's soul; for the nuns a true eternal death. Having set the scene let us examine more closely the convent community.

Kinship³³: Spirit or Substance?

In the convent of P. and T., the nuns address each other by name or as 'sister' despite obvious age differences or differences of social positions occupied in their 'former' lives. And though a hierarchy seems to exist amongst the nuns within the convent, it is down-played and particularly difficult for outsiders to detect. Ideally the nuns amongst themselves should be equal. As in the village, where a child should not be singled out from amongst its siblings by its parents since "all have the same blood and come from the same womb", so too in the convent should all the nuns be "one in Christ."

The term 'sister' creates a metaphor which likens the relationship between nuns to that between 'real' or secular sisters. Like all good metaphors this one points out the differences as well as the similarities between the two entities³⁴. Both the nuns and the secular people recognise that the nuns are not "real sisters". Yet, by using the formal term of address 'sister', a term rarely used amongst secular sisters, the nuns mark their relationship. They emphasise their common, spiritual unity in God, an indissoluble unity which secular sisters share by blood, while simultaneously the nuns emphasise an aspect of the codes of conduct expected of secular sisters but demanded of them.

It is not only the notion of sisterhood however which parallels secular kinship. The Hegumenos and Hegumeni (Abbot and Abbess respectively) are said to fulfil roles similar to those of parents³⁵. In the convent the hierarchy is strictly maintained. Obedience and the subjection of one's will to others are virtues which the nuns struggle to cultivate³⁶. The Hegumenos or Hegumeni are said to speak with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Their blessing is required for each action taken. Permission to work at a certain task; to be relieved of work due to illness; to ask a favour from an outsider or another nun must be given by the Hegumenos/i and is couched in the words: "Ean evloyite" (If it is blessed...).

The Hegumenos/i must be obeyed regardless of the seeming irrationality of the command. As the Hegumeni of T. explained:

If I tell a nun to fill a bucket of water from the river below; haul it up to the convent and then empty it out on the ground and repeat the task she must not question me. It may be a test of her ability to overcome her own will and to bow her head in obedience. It is a trial; in a small way like the trials of Christ and his obedience to his Father, God.

Punishment too is regarded as an integral part of life in the convent since it is done for the salvation of the soul. A nun may be punished by the Hegumenos/i of the convent in any way he/she sees fit as for example fasting, prayer, penance, work. This punishment cannot be recalled by anyone other than the Hegumenos/i. As the Hegumeni of T. related to me:

There was once a nun who was punished by her Hegumeni. She was told to eat only bread and water. Within a week the Hegumeni died without absolving the nun and, as no one, not even the bishop, could grant her absolution the nun soon died of starvation. She had to keep her fast as her Hegumeni had ordained.

In telling this story the Hegumeni was commenting on the tremendous power that a Superior commands and the great scope for abuse that this may entail. She herself was careful to absolve the nuns every evening before laying down to sleep, "for with sleep may come death. One never knows what the night may bring" (see Chapter 4).

The commands and the occasional punishments of the Hegumenos/i are not meant to break or disillusion the nuns but to help them achieve the salvation they seek. And, powerful as their authority is, so too is their ability to forgive and to guide those who come to them. The Hegumeni is Mitera (mother) and like a mother she cares both for the material and spiritual well-being of her "children", the nuns. She must maintain order but she must also help those nuns with spiritual anxieties and needs. She is responsible for the financial management of the convent. And if a nun should

fall sick she must attend to her needs in the form of doctors, medicines, hospitalisation and also prayer. The nuns in resigning their will and spirit to the Hegumenos/i also resign responsibility over their material well-being to the divine and more immediately to the hands of their superior.

The Hegumenos is the Patera (father) and in P., his role as confessor, as well as priest, monk, and Hegumenos, allows him to bestow absolution and grace in the name of Christ. As such he ranks higher in the Church institution than the Hegumeni for it is through him that the soul is cleansed and receives the "second baptism" of the confession and the gift of communion.

Here, particular aspects of the secular roles of father and mother are stressed while pointing equally to the differences between the secular and monastic worlds. By addressing the Hegumenos by the formal term of father, rarely used in the village, the role is marked as different to that of a blood-related father. It is not simply the case that the Hegumenos is like a father or takes the place of the father as an adopted father would. Rather, he is better than a father, in a sense more a father than a secular father could ever be. This is well expressed by the definition of 'love'. In the convent the greatest human 'love' is that between one's spiritual Father, one's confessor (pneumatikos), who is always a man, and the penitent, addressed as "my child" by the spiritual Father. The nuns explained:

The husband loves the wife more than her parents can, for the husband has chosen³⁷ to marry and live and have children with her. The spiritual Father loves his spiritual 'child' more than a husband can for he cares for her soul. He prays for her and with the confession takes on the burden of her sins as well. His love is the greatest of all loves.

In other words, the parent loves the child because the child is a product of the parents' flesh and blood. The husband should love his wife in the spiritual sense as well as in the carnal sense. The spiritual Father however loves, above all the spirit and soul of the person. His task is to help

his spiritual child find Christ who is within. Thus, his love is said to be greatest.

The nuns' views in this instance seem to reverse those in the village. Emphasis in the village is placed on the maternal, 'material' bond made through shared substance³⁸; in the convent emphasis is placed on the fatherly, spiritual bond. This shift is not only related to the elevated position of the priest and confessor, necessarily male, in the Church hierarchy. It reflects the symbolic construction of gender. Thus, the Hegumeni of P. often said that for her nuns she was like Christ. As a wife owes obedience to her husband so to do the nuns owe obedience to their Superior, male or female. The Hegumeni as the nuns' caretaker not only assumes the female image of mother, but at times the male image of Christ, the husband. The Hegumenos of P., on the other hand, was said to suffer whenever his "children" committed as sin. As Pennington (1979:42) notes, the Father superior:

must stand before God for his son pouring out prayers for him, making good for all his son's sins, bringing him forth in pain and suffering. He best teaches him the way of prayer by his own love of prayer, evoking in him a desire to pray without ceasing. By obedience to the Spiritual Father, the son learns to be in submission to God and to humble himself.

Thus, just as secular mothers suffer in bringing forth their children into the world so too does a Father Superior suffer to bring his "children" into the world of God. Yet, despite this conflation of gender symbols within the roles of Father and Mother Superior³⁹, the supreme expression of love in the convent remains that which is most akin with "male" sentiment.

The ideology in the village as we saw above, describes men as better able to maintain a balance between their emotional ties with the house and the community; they are better able to create and maintain relations based on voluntary, willed acts. It is this "male" emotional tie which is considered the most significant in the convent. It is the voluntary act of love rather than the obligation, or compulsion

to love due to a material bond which is stressed. This highlights the notion of free will, a notion central to the nuns relationship with the divine. For obedience and subjection of oneself can only have meaning if given freely, with a full understanding of the sacrifices involved and with an open heart⁴⁰. One cannot be forced to obey and love God. As the nuns often said: "God only knocks at the heart's door. You decide if you will let Him in or not."

The roles of the spiritual father and mother also point to another contradiction in convent ideology. Since all are one in Christ, equal in the sight of God, how is it that there is a spiritual father or mother who must be obeyed? This contradiction was explained to me by the Hegumenos of P. in terms of the light and shadows which played in the courtyard of P.:

God loves all people equally. But some are stronger than others, better able to receive Him. In death all will stand in the courtyard of Heaven but some will stand in the warmth and light and others in the shadows. Yet all will be equally in His presence.

Some people, in other words, are capable of receiving more of God's grace than others. It would follow then that in this world the stronger, those who have responded to the call must assist those who "stand in the shadows".

The metaphor of parents and children is also apt in describing the relationship between the newly tonsured nun and the convent community. A newly tonsured nun is considered to be less trained, less capable of following God. It might be said that like a child who must be initiated and socialised into the secular community, so too must the nun be weaned from the secular expectations and ties that bind her in order to more fully participate in the spiritual community of God which the convent ideally represents. A brotherhood is not enough. There must be an ikoyenia with mothers and fathers able to "raise their children in God".

In the convent the use of formal kinship terms and their related roles which arise from notions of blood and sinyenia found in the village, coupled with the fact that there are no

'natural' links binding the monastics serve to highlight the idiosyncrasies of the monastic relationships. The metaphor forcefully calls attention to spiritual unity as the binding element of relatedness placing it by necessity above shared substance as a truer or higher form of "kinship" (e.g. Zizoulas 1985:55-59).

Yet the use of kinship terms is not that straightforward. The story of Original Sin and the subsequent sacrifice of Christ was vividly related to me by the Hegumenos of P.. This is as close a rendering of his narration as is possible:

There were once ten corps (taymata) of angels in Heaven who served God. But the leader of the tenth tayma chose to defy God and sought to equal Him so he was cast down along with his followers. This was how the devil came to be and the devil is God's greatest enemy.

God then created Man to take the place of the lost tenth battalion. He created him in His own image and He loved him very much. But man through Eve rejected God and God's love. For God in His great wisdom had forbidden Adam and Eve only one thing: that they must not eat from the tree of knowledge. Everything else was theirs. Eve like a deceitful child preferred to listen to God's worst enemy, the Devil, rather than to heed the words of her most loving Father.

In defying God, Adam and Eve were punished and cast out of Paradise. They were forced to live and suffer on earth in exile where they must toil and where women must bear children in pain. This was the retribution demanded by Divine Justice.

Yet God in His infinite love for humans despite their rejection of Him through their disobedience, sent to Earth His only Son and allowed that Son to suffer and be killed. It was the sacrifice of Christ, the God-man⁴¹ a sacrifice that no human could ever match that gave humans a second chance.

Thus, it is our duty not to deny God and His love a second time but to try to abide as closely as we can to His laws and in this manner become worthy to finally take our rightful place as angels in the tenth battalion."

In the convent, this story besides showing God's love for humans, was also evidence that all humans are the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, the original progenitors⁴². This belief, though accepted by many of the villagers if asked to comment on it, is never volunteered by them in discussions on kinship or on religion. In the convent, however, it formed

the basis of much of the nuns' thinking and of their discussions. Whereas in the secular community 'substance' serves to create separate, distinct ikoyenies, in the convent it serves to unite all humans through their original progenitors. As the nuns often stated: "We are all descendants from the same seed"⁴³. Thus, the living nuns trace their human ancestry to the first humans and through them to Christ and to God the Creator. This leads to an ambiguity. Here it is as if humans are the children of God and related to Christ, Son of Man, since they are "all of one seed". And yet, at other times their relationship with the Divine seems to stress the spiritual. For example, the Panayia (Virgin Mary; the word Panayia means all sainted or the most sainted of saints) is the Mother of all humans for in giving birth to Christ she gave birth to humankind's salvation, to a spiritually reborn humanity. She is the divine intercessor. As Mother of God (Theotokos) she is seen to be closest to God the Father. And as spiritual mother of Christians she acts to mediate for them in their supplications to God. Thus, just as a child knows it will be fed and cared for by its mother, so too do Christians know they can depend on the Panayia for all their needs. It is simply a matter of having faith. This dependence on the Panayia echoes and usurps the relationship with the secular mother. By placing one's faith in the care and support of the Panayia, a divine and eternal mother, the importance of the secular household and implicitly of secular motherhood is diminished, something the nuns do not openly state but again something which is implicit in their vocation (see Chapter 4).

The relationships, then, describing God as Father and Judge of the Second Coming; Panayia as mother, the caring and forgiving figure in the Holy Family (see also Warner 1985) and Christ as Son of God, part of the Trinity, and Judge and Punisher of sinful men makes use of kinship terms to explicate how God, Panayia, and Christ act in their roles as as Father, Mother, and Son of God. Or rather, the terms mark the relationships as being more potent than their human counterparts while also serving in the nuns' eyes as examples

towards which humans should strive in their own secular relationships⁴⁴. In one discourse, humans are all of one seed-- the creations and children of God-- in another they are spiritually united to Panayia and the Holy Trinity.

This becomes somewhat more complicated when one examines a statement by the Hegumenos of P. in which he described the Panayia as "people's gift to God so that He could become man." Could the Panayia be regarded as the new element added to the divine 'line' allowing for Christ's embodiment on earth and the redemption of humankind? It is through Panayia that people could once again achieve grace and the possibility of eternal life. She is said to be the bridge between Heaven and earth⁴⁵. She links through childbirth the ikoyenia of humans with the ikoyenia of the Divine. Through Panayia humans are, so to speak, in an affinal relationship with the Divine. As in the village where the woman is the 'outside', 'foreign' element which is respected and adored as Mother but who never completely enters into the ikoyenia, so too the Panayia is placed exceedingly high, but as a human, never part of the Trinity. She can only intercede, plead and give assistance. But she is the most glorious of humans having achieved the highest sanctity, having become a member of the divine male ikoyenia through the birth of Christ.

Like Panayia the nuns too seek to renounce their secular bonds and betroth Christ. Christ is spoken of as the "Eternal Bridegroom" and death is the summons from Christ to the pure and humble bride to enter into the promised and long-awaited for unity with the Beloved (See Chapter 4). They, like the Panayia, in giving themselves to God, seek to act like a bridge between this world and the next.

Because of the association with the Panayia, who is both a divine female mother and caretaker, as well as an image to emulate, the nuns say that they feel particularly close to her. Yet, they continue, it is wrong to say that they love her more than Christ or God. All are loved equally. Could it be that to love the Panayia more is to love the mother; to recreate that bond which exemplifies most clearly the close material and emotional unity between two human beings? This

love as shown above must be overcome. One must love God, Christ, the Panayia equally, with that perfect voluntary act of spiritual love which does not arise from the care or sustenance they offer.

Humans then may be said to be both in an affinal relationship with the Divine, that is different but still members, and in a consubstantial relationship, that is having some of the Divine within them, being after all sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. Monastics however are also married to the divine achieving a unity not only of affinity and sinyenia but one which unites the male and the female, the spirit and the body, the divine and the material, within them.

To summarise, the kinship terms used amongst the monastics imply one ikoyenia with "fathers", "mothers" and "siblings". The convent members thereby mark themselves as a distinct group, spiritually bound, seeking eternal life. And since within this ikoyenia some are at different stages in achieving salvation the use of the hierarchical model is apt. Also relevant is the use of the term ikoyenia when speaking of the Divine Family, the Father, Christ, and Panayia, in a spiritual relation to humans. Yet, God the Father through His Son, Christ, who was born to a human woman is related to humans both in terms of affinity, through the Panayia, and sinyenia, through both Christ, and Adam and Eve, the original progenitors.

The Indestructibility of Sanctity

Though humans may trace their descent to God, it is understood that this sinyenia may be lost through sin in this life. Humans may be caste from the sight of God into Eternal Damnation as Adam and Eve were, but this time there will be no redemption. Divine sinyenia in other words, is transformable through one's conduct in this life. Each person must strive to maintain the bond he/she has regained with God through Christ in order to achieve a true and lasting

sinyenia; a sinyenia based on spiritual unity and on material unity.

For the nuns then, material and spiritual sinyenia seems to be linked through the notion of the codes of conduct. We may start by noting that the material maintains its sanctity over time once it has been transformed spiritually. A simple example is given by a flask of holy water or oil. As the oil or water is used for blessings or cures, it can be replaced by tap water or cooking oil without diluting the sanctity of the substance. Only a drop of holy water or oil is needed to make the profane substance pure and blessed.

It seems then that a distinction may be drawn between sanctified substance and earthly substance. For humans however, this distinction is blurred. Humans are both earthly and divine in spirit and in substance. Moreover, humans are differentiated from the rest of creation, in that they are said to have a will and intelligence enabling them to make choices; something oil cannot do.

Implicit in this notion of the human condition, as it is understood by the nuns, is the notion of sinyenia with the Divine and the mutability of this tie during one's life. Christ, Son of Man, is believed to have shed His blood for the salvation of humankind and this sacrifice is repeated weekly in the liturgy. The act of communion is the partaking of the body and the blood of Christ. It is the mingling, the embodiment of the body and spirit of Christ within those of the communer. With communion you have become literally one with Christ. Your substance is transformed⁴⁶. This oneness with Christ however, is said to last only for a short while, a day no more, for as humans we cannot avoid sin. Inevitably, we make the wrong choice in seeking to follow our own will rather than that of God's and thereby lose our unity with God (e.g. Ware 1985:237).

However, there are those people in the past who have been able to obtain this lasting sinyenia with the divine. They have overcome their human passions and wills and achieved eternal grace. It was said by the Hegumenos and often mentioned by the nuns that when a person enters the

Church he sees before him icons which make him feel "at home" (san to spiti tou). He is surrounded by familiar persons. God as an Entity cannot be easily grasped but the saints were once human and have human form. The sinner feeling frightened and wary of God seeks out the saints, who like the Panayia, serve as "middle men" (mesazon⁴⁷):

It is similar to a man who must see the mayor for a particular reason. The man cannot go straight into the mayor's office. But if he has friends or relatives who know the mayor he can approach the mayor through them. It is easier. That is what it is like with the saints. They are like people's *sinyenis*. They are an *ikoyenia* who will help you to approach God.

The saints are similar though less powerful versions of the Panayia, their place in the hierarchy lying somewhere between the human and the divine. They are also the holier image of the nuns. They reach out to humans from the eternal world beyond death while the nuns strive to achieve salvation and contact with the divine from this earthly life.

For the nuns, the saints serve as examples of people who through their actions in life and belief in God achieved salvation. Though few humans are able to attain such glory it is not a task beyond human potential. The nuns say that there is a "chain" of sanctity running from the earth to Heaven. As one moves up the chain there is a decrease in emphasis on material substance and an increase on spiritual unity with the divine. The more able your spirit is in transcending material limitations, the more able you are to give yourself fully to God, and the greater will be the joy experienced in the eternal life; the less will you be burdened by the material and the more filled with divine enlightenment.

The villagers, particularly women, also believe that the saints are present and may be called upon for guidance and assistance. For most the saints were exceptional humans who lived in the distant past when people were better and more ayathi (loosely glossed as morally good, naive and sometimes innocent) than today (see Chapter 1). In contrast to the

nuns' belief however, it is widely held that there can be no saints now and of those recently canonised most assume a cynical attitude to their claim to sanctity.

For some villagers the saints are not considered quite human, and sightings of saints are discussed alongside sightings of neiradhes (fairies) and beings associated with Piras-mos (translated as 'temptation', and meaning the devil). The general term for such 'other worldly' images is ischiomata (shadows). It is said that only a few people have ever seen an ischioma--saint or otherwise. Usually older women claim to have seen saints when they "were still ayathi, young, and single". It is said that:

Once you are married you take on responsibilities and can no longer be innocent. You will fight with your mother-in-law; you will get mad at your husband; you will not be able to keep the fasts properly.

In short it is said that "you enter more into life" (benis sti zoe). Your social relations develop and social expectations insist upon your assuming responsibilities in the recreation of the ikoyenia, in the recreation of the human world. You become unable to 'see' the shadows of the other world. The villagers recognise that being less involved in this world, less involved in secular interests can make you more holy in the manner of the saints⁴⁸. They deny this however, as an option in 'today's world' and stress the blessedness of marriage and its social importance⁴⁹. Thus, nuns are not likened to contemporary saints; they are not super human. They are more often regarded as deficient human beings. Unlike saints who existed in the distant past, beyond the realm of the 'remembered' or 'known', nuns are living humans who have opted out of society. For the villagers the notion that the achievement of divine grace depends ideally upon a rejection of secular society and of the continuity of life through the birth of children is an anathema. Rather, the divine complements and completes the secular. Just as marriage is a sacrament (see Appendix 2) and blessed by God so too is Holy Communion a blessing given to

all Orthodox. "Like medicine", it is said to cure the body of ills and calms the overly active child. The communion heals and revitalises the body and socialises the soul. It is, simply put, a "good thing to do".

For the nuns however, Communion is subtly just the opposite. It spiritualises the mundane, lifting the society and people towards God. Prone as people are to sever themselves from Christ as they once severed themselves from Paradise and God, they must continually strive to renew their spiritual and material purity; a task of constant and untiring vigilance. It is only upon death and only if one is judged and accepted by God that one can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, becoming truly and forever 'one in Christ'. In this instance substance, blood and flesh, is permanently transformed by obediently following the codes of conduct. It loses its earthly inherited sinfulness and acquires everlasting grace. You become an angel, a saint.

The Body

The dichotomy then between the body and the soul, the material and the spiritual, is as we have seen not straightforward. The body and its desires are given in nature, part of humans' destiny after the Fall but are not sinful in and of themselves. Moreover the body is a creation of God. It was within the body of a man that Christ was incarnated. What is sinful then, say the nuns, is not the body but the complete abandonment of oneself to the desires and needs of the body. If one abides by all the codes of conduct as laid out by the Church in God's name, then salvation and eternal life may be achieved. One will become an angel. If however, one does not abide by these codes one is damned. One's soul will be lost and one's body will be tormented by the devil.

Yet, though both body and spirit are involved in the process of redemption or damnation, the body often best serves to express these states of transformation⁵⁰. For example, one of the signs of salvation or damnation is lack of

putrefaction of the body after death. It is recognised both by the nuns and by the villagers that a vrikolakas (loosely translated as vampire) is someone who in life was very sinful and whose punishment now is to roam the earth having a body but no soul; a being of pure substance without spirit⁵¹. In this instance the body is a terrifying sight and has an unpleasant smell, signalling spiritual damnation and arousing fear. Yet, there are many instances as well in which humans were proven to be saints when, upon exhumation, their body was found intact and "a sweet aroma permeated the air for miles around", a clear sign of spiritual grace. In both instances the body is a sign of the dead person's spiritual state (e.g. Pina-Cabral op.cit.:231 for Portugal). Substance has been transformed into something other worldly.

It may be said then that the nun who renounces her vows and returns to the secular world, acquires 'more substance', losing the spirituality she had obtained through her vows. She steps down into the earthly world of material concerns from the "social death" and spiritual life she had acquired. Now, excommunicated, her body, her substance, is alive but her soul is dead. Like the vrikolakas so too the excommunicated nun may be said to become one of the 'living-dead'⁵².

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to raise three points. Used metaphorically in the convent, kinship terms highlight the similarity between the way people who are "mothers", "fathers", and "sisters" should act in the village and are expected to act in the convent. The Panayia and the Hegumeni like mothers are expected to be loving, affectionate, caring, nurturing and protective. God and the Hegumenos like fathers are expected to maintain a loving discipline and order over their children. Nuns like siblings should be treated equally and should care equally for one another.

The differences highlighted by the metaphorical use of these terms in the convent center around the creation of "true kinship". In the village this kinship is created by

blood whereas in the convent it is held to be spiritual unity. Spiritual fathers it will be recalled are better, more truly fathers, than secular fathers could ever be. Thus, what is from a secular view point a metaphorical use of the term father, in the convent comes to be, the primary referent of father, the example of how secular fathers should act.

A paradox arises with the use of these kinship terms because spiritual unity is made intelligible by the use of the ideas of 'common substance' and shared blood, as expressed by the Holy Communion, or the notion of descent from a "common seed". Yet, in the convent *sinyenia* no longer circumscribed by death extends to encompass all humans both living and dead. This, in turn, unites the *ikoyenia* of God with the *ikoyenia* of humankind through the *Panayia*, Christ, and ultimately the first progenitors, Adam and Eve. The fact of being human links us through kinship, the sharing of common substance, of "one seed", with the Divine. Yet, in contrast to the village notions of kinship, this link may be severed by sinful actions in life. Humans can lose their kinship with God to suffer eternal damnation. In the convent 'substance' no longer bound by death or the 'natural' world is regarded as transformable, able to achieve lasting divinity, a material as well as spiritual, eternal "kinship" with Christ.

Notes for Chapter 3

1. Though the nuns never referred me to this text, it never the less supports their views as I was given to understand them: "Those who direct their minds towards God and devote their soul to desire of the Divine, even their flesh, being transformed, rises up with them and takes part in Divine Communion." Quoted from Gregory Palamas, On the blessed Hesychasts, trans. by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer, Early Fathers from the Philokalia (London 1954:403,407). Not a full quotation from D.M.Nicol, 1963: 42.

2. If the living spouse remarries however the new spouse can and does serve to complete the ikoyenia. Three issues are raised here. The one pertains to how the relationship of the new spouse to the child is regarded. Step-parents are said not to 'love' and care for their step-children as they love the children linked to them biologically. The second is that it is very rare indeed for a widow with children to remarry (see Chapter 2). And the third is the issue of divorce, dealt with below.

3. Up until 1983 the marriage ceremony could take place only in the Church. The socialist government (PASOK) elected in 1981 revised the Greek Civil Code in 1983, introducing far reaching reforms in family law including the institution of civil marriage and divorce. Amongst the villagers, Church weddings are still the preferred form of marriage. The first civil marriage to take place in the village was in the summer of 1987.

4. See e.g. Herzfeld 1983:166, 1985:254; Hirschon 1978:68; du Boulay 1979:135,164; Rushton 1983: 62; Campbell 1979:69,124.

5. See e.g. Friedl 1963:120; Cutileiro 1971:109 for Portugal; Douglass 1969:122 for the Basque.

6. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:113; Campbell op.cit.:186-187; Brandes 1985:223 for Spain.

7. See e.g. Crawford 1985:311,334; du Boulay 1970:113,119; Ott 1981:203 for the Basque.

8. There are several instances of adoption in the village though I know of no recent cases. An adopted child is known as a "soul child" (psychopedhi). It calls its adopted parents mother and father. It was the preferred practice for childless couples to adopt the child from a sibling of either the wife or the husband. In this manner, a blood tie existed. This emphasises both the importance of children for the creation of an ikoyenia and the value placed on blood in the concept of relatedness. Ott (op.cit.:203) notes similar preference amongst the Basques.

9. Yet, as Campbell (op.cit.:174) notes rivalry between brothers concerning inheritance rights can be fierce. Married brothers in the village are said to give their first loyalty to their newly created ikoyenies thereby increasing the chances for competition and quarrels. Interestingly, quarrels between household of re-

lated men are often attributed to the in-marrying wives. This may reflect the fact that women are "outsiders" marrying into the male kin group and so less willing to compromise, but it may also be a way of masking the tensions between brothers which ideally should not exist. See also Kiray 1976:264 for Turkey.

10. Third cousins may or may not be stressed as blood relatives depending upon the circumstances, as for example, when a suitable match between third cousins can be arranged. See e.g. du Boulay 1984b:536-537; Gilmore 1980:156 in Spain.

11. 'Degree' may also be expressed in terms of 'distance' that is how 'near' (kontini) or 'far' (makrini) relatives are to ego. These terms express kinship quantitatively. The terms mark the degree to which people share common substance or, as will be clear further on, the magnitude of claim they have on each other, e.g. Schneider op.cit.:65.

12. Herzfeld 1985:52 finds that soi in Crete generally means patrigroup identity, though it may be used to signify one's closest and most reliable cognatic kin. See also Campbell 1963:77.

13. Rushton (op.cit.:63-64) aptly describes marriage as the lowering of personal boundaries to become part of a greater unity.

14. See e.g. Campbell 1979:70; du Boulay 1979:137; Friedl 1962:71.

15. Meyendorff (1984:104) notes that despite canon 54 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council forbidding the marriage of two brothers to two sisters such a marriage would not today be disputed since it reflects social ideas of another age and "does not involve any permanent value of either divine, or human nature". Interestingly, in the village the prohibition against such a marriage was explained in terms of sinyenia and not in terms of Church doctrine reflecting the complex relations between Church, lay society and history.

16. See e.g. Freeman (1968:42). Pina-Cabral (1986:150-151) explicates this statement as expressing the sense that all villagers are members of one community and are therefore deemed eligible to compete with one another for communally defined goals.

17. See e.g. Papataxiarchis 1988:127; du Boulay 1979:132; Campbell 1979:164-167; Cutileiro op.cit.:110-111 for Portugal; Lison-Tolosana 1983:151 for Spain.

18. The notion of shared substance through eating (i.e. the mother nourishes the child with her body, or through the food she cooks) may be associated with the importance of food and feeding in the village and the convents to be discussed at greater length further on. Atkinson (1987:150) and Bynum (1982) also note the association of imbibing personality and grace through suckling.

19. See e.g. du Boulay 1986:139; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:47. Both Papataxiarchis op.cit.:142 and Herzfeld 1980:345 note that the agent of bad luck is not the outsider but more often a woman who is placed outside her destiny.

20. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.; Rushton op.cit.; Mandel 1983; Dubisch 1986 206; Friedl op.cit.: 42-43; Segalen op.cit.:87 for France.

21. See e.g. Rushton 1983:5; Pina-Cabral op.cit.:83 for Portugal; Goddard 1987:186 for Italy.

22. See e.g. Hirschon op.cit.; du Boulay 1976:339,404; Segalen op.cit.:124-126 for France; Brandes op.cit.:222, Christian 1989: 153-156 for Spain; Pina-Cabral op.cit.:84-87,95 for Portugal. Topping (1983) discusses the history of the conceptualisation of women as Eve within the Christian Church.

23. It is often noted that widows since they do not often remarry are sexually predatory (e.g. du Boulay 1979:123-124,135; Brandes 1980:87 for Spain). Having no husbands to satisfy their needs they seek to seduce the men of other women. This view was not prevalent in the village, though it was recognised.

24. There is no space here to discuss masturbation and homosexuality in the village except to note that should a married man in particular have to resort to either to alleviate his sexual needs, it would be a cause of shame for him while blame would most likely be laid on the wife for not fulfilling her duties. This view also contradicts beliefs in other parts of the world that with ejaculation men experience a loss of life associated with the belief that semen is a limited resource (e.g. Brandes 1980:85). In the village, men held that they were for a time weakened after sex but the act was seen as essential for continued health. See also Pina-Cabral 1986:94 for Portugal.

25. See e.g. Blum and Blum 1970:20, 46; Campbell 1979:31; Brandes op.cit.:85 for Spain.

26. See e.g. Rushton op.cit.:66; Hirschon 1978; Blum and Blum op.cit.:17; Topping op.cit.:10-11; Brandes op.cit.:76 for Spain; Goddard op.cit.:177 for Italy.

27. Many researchers have discussed spiritual kinship. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:218-224; Kenna 1976b: 351-354; du Boulay 1979:163-168; Herzfeld 1985:55-56 who note that spiritual ties serve to reinforce social relations and to allow for the creation of ties with influential persons outside kin relations. Hirschon 1989:186-187 and Papataxiarchis op.cit.:52 report that amongst the people they studied, these spiritual ties were often made between close kin. This was not the case in Peta.

28. The importance of baptism is evident in that infants who might die before the arrival of the priest are baptised "in the air" ; a ceremony done by the parents with someone serving as a god-parent in order that the child "will not be lost but will go to God".

29. A case was related to me in the village in which a young man married without asking his god-father's permission. The consequences were dire. His wife was unable to carry a child to full term. In desperation the couple sought out the god-father who gave his blessing and promised to baptise the first child born to the couple. The woman immediately became pregnant and nine months later bore a son.

30. As Friedl (op.cit.:18) notes, the family is viewed as a lineage which accumulates and transmits wealth from generation to generation renewing and hopefully improving itself.

31. See e.g. du Boulay 1984b:533-556; Rheubottom 1980:222; Eliade 1989:47.

32. Alexiou (1974:180ff56) notes that in funeral laments for those who have died young, the belief that it is wrong for children to die before their parents or before marriage is often expressed.

33. It should be noted that kinship is only one of the metaphors used though it is not a new one but dates to the very first centuries of the Christian Church and serves as the basis of many monastic orders (e.g. Atkinson op.cit.:142; Bottomley 1979:101-102). The nuns also use metaphors of polity and the army (see Chapter 7) to describe their lives and their community.

34. As Sapir states: "A metaphor in a variety of ways places into juxtaposition two terms that are, or can be, thought of as both similar and dissimilar." And he goes on to note in a footnote that "The overlap must not be too great, for if it is the two terms will be considered synonymous (pail and bucket) and the sense of their being simultaneously alike and not alike will be lost." (Sapir 1977:6).

35. The Hegumenos and Hegumeni are addressed by many terms as for example Geronta (fem. Gerontissa) meaning Elder. The Hegumenos may also be addressed as Papouli (little priest or grandfather) as well as by the formal term Patera (Father). The Hegumeni may be addressed formally as Mitera (Mother) or informally as Mana. Though I do not have the space to examine the different implications of these terms, let me simply note that the more informal terms express, I believe, an ease within the community which runs parallel to the deep respect the nuns have for their superiors. This duality also characterises their relationships with the Divine.

36. See Edmunds' (1986) seminal discussion of the opposition between the embracement of the vow of chastity as a means of gaining autonomy and the vow of obedience which served as a means of countering this bid for self-determination and opposition to confining social precepts. See also Campbell-Jones 1979:70-71.

37. Ideally, in Orthodox Christianity a marriage is contracted by two consenting Christians. They must choose freely to marry for they are bound together in the sight of God and made one. See Meyendorff 1984: 48. Yet note the discussion in Chapter 4 con-

cerning arranged marriages.

38. Yet, Alexiou (1983:88) notes folksongs in which a young man confronted by death requests from his parents that they give him a share of their allotted years so that he may live. They refuse. But his wife or beloved volunteers to give up half of hers for him. One woman (appr. 65) in response to the description of love that that the priest had given me, related a similar story, in the form of the ancient Greek myth of Alkestis. No one else I spoke with knew of this myth. Due to lack of space discussion concerning this myth and the discourse of maternal sacrifice (see below), must be put aside for the time being.

39. The application of male and female roles to monastic Superiors is not unusual (see Edmunds 1986:41; Bynum 1982:Chapter 4). Images such as God our Mother so prevalent in contemporary feminist theology was also used extensively in the Middle Ages particularly by the Cisterian monks. Such imagery may be related to broad changes in religious devotion and theology, including an increase in affective spirituality; Cisterian ambivalence concerning authority, as well as changes in the concept of community. As I do not have the space to explore these gendered images here, the discussion must be left for another paper. See e.g. Atkinson 1987:142-143; Pagels 1982:72-81.

40. Firth (1963:21) notes that in sacrifice "the greatest surrogate of all is the sacrifice of mind and heart, the abnegation of individual judgement and desire in favour of devotion to more general moral ends". This well describes the nuns' lives.

41. Established in the fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon 451 A.D. was the doctrine that Christ was consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with humanity; that Christ had two perfect, indivisible but separate natures (Ostrogorsky 1956:55).

42. Depending on the context the nuns either seem to mean all of humanity is related or that all people who are Orthodox are related. In the convent I sometimes got the sense that Catholics, and Protestants were damned because as Christians they should see the truth of Orthodoxy and convert; Jews were damned for having killed Christ; Jehovah's Witnesses were the anti-Christ; and all other religious groups came under the term of "savage" as people who were ignorant of the Truth and thus not responsible for the sins they committed. Also note the comment in Pennington op.cit.:75. "The monks do not have an order depending on the law. Rather, their order and unity come from the realisation, under the light of the eschaton, that they are one body with all the Orthodox of all times."

43. It may be said that this signifies the impossibility of marriage between people since they are related. Possibly the nuns could have argued in this fashion if they had wished but they never did. I believe it was a concept reserved for the realm of the convent and cosmological order, not one they applied when speaking specifically of secular affairs.

44. See e.g. Hirschon 1981:83; Campbell 1979:37,183; du Boulay

1979:57; Dubisch 1983:190; Brandes 1985:217 for Spain note that the lay family members model themselves on the Holy Family. This was not the case in Peta.

45. Edmunds (op.cit.:327) notes that the cult of Mary is based on the earthly dimension of Mary, who as a mother shares the daily experiences, emotions and relations with all humans.

46. "For as the bread of the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly; so also our bodies, partaking of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having hope of eternal resurrection." from Irenaus Adv. haer.IV.xviii 5. Quoted from Bettenson 1967:75.

47. See e.g. Blum and Blum op.cit.:88-94; Campbell 1964:342; Christian op.cit.:174-175 for seminal discussion in Spain; Cutileiro op.cit.:270-272, 283-285 in Portugal. Pina-Cabral op.cit.:163 suggests that one cannot simply liken the relationship between saints and humans with the patron-client relations established in secular contexts. Rather, one must, as Christian does, distinguish the various forms these relations take i.e. co-operative exchange; hierarchical within which there is no exchange; or asymmetrical exchange. Though not discussed here in relation with saints, Chapters 6 and 7 do examine the nature of exchange between the laity and the religious, and between humans and the divine.

48. See e.g. Blum and Blum op.cit.:112-118; Herzfeld 1983:161 and Stewart 1985. Herzfeld suggests that the idealisation of the recent past (see also Chapter 1) asserts one's close proximity to that pristine past while accepting that such cannot be the practice today. Stewart (op.cit:78) notes that traditional accounts of the supernatural are indeed less prevalent amongst rural people while apparently becoming part of urban and professional people's discourse.

49. There is no space to discuss those few unmarried religious women in the village known as theouses. Suffice it to say that these women decline to marry because they desire to dedicate their lives in the secular world to Christ and His works. They are regarded with pity, disdain and a bit of animosity. "Marriage is blessed," the majority of the villagers insist, "so why don't these women fulfil their destiny?" Nuns too are regarded with pity and disdain though they, in renouncing the secular world to live in a convent, seem to pose less of a threat. They are not constant and visible dissenters against the secular concept of social and personal continuity that the theouses seem to be. In the village it is better to marry and to care for your ikoyenia according to the social norms and, whenever possible, in accordance with the religious dictates as well. See e.g. Christian op.cit.:76, 160-161 and Lison-Tolosana op.cit:293 for Spain.

50. Deification is something that involves the body since man is a unity of body and soul. See e.g. Rushton op.cit.:68; Ware op.cit.:237; Sherrard 1976:40-41; Atkinson op.cit.:147-148)

51. In the village no one has seen a vrikolakas and no one admits of knowing anyone who became such a creature. In general they were not terribly interested in the subject though they knew of them. See e.g. Danforth op.cit.:53; Campbell 1974:164; du Boulay 1982.

52. Blum and Blum op.cit.:70-76 in a discussion of vrikolakas cite that if you are cursed or anathematised by a priest you will not decay upon death. Note also that when the novelist Kazantzakis was excommunicated, his response was to send his shoes so that they too might be excommunicated and thus, like his body, never dissolve.

CHAPTER 4

Weddings, elopements, brides, and children

"When you become a nun it is like marrying Christ. He is the Eternal Bridegroom. And, in one way, it is a marriage and in another it is an engagement. For, upon death, the nun goes and fulfils her destiny. She meets the bridegroom. The marriage is completed: Stefanonete¹".

Introduction

In the previous chapter the use of kinship terms to express spiritual unity in the convent was examined. It was seen how the nuns encompassed the idea of shared substance, blood, which defines kinship in the village, within the notion of spiritual unity. Thus, though one may be united to all humans and to the divine, since we are all of one seed, one may transform oneself and one's kinship with the divine through one's conduct. Blood is not ultimately the defining principle but conduct.

In this chapter I wish to further explore the use of secular metaphors in the convent. The contrasts between elopement and marriage, and erota (often associated with passionate, sensual love) and agape (associated more often with routine, orderly forms of love, in keeping with current morality--see Alexiou 1985:172-175), and how these terms are understood and used by the villagers and the nuns highlight the distinctions between the two. Through their "elopement" to the convent the nuns seem to express their passion for Christ and their indifference to and separation from secular society. The tonsuring ceremony marks them as the "brides of Christ", brides in a process of achieving a complete unity with Christ (e.g. Campbell-Jones 1979:73-77,81-85). Different grades in the monastic hierarchy symbolise greater and closer unions with Christ. One becomes increasingly more married, that is more unified with Christ, until one even-

tually is called to join the bridegroom in Heaven². Thus, death for the nuns is the ultimate marriage. It is a unification that is eternal and one towards which they strive throughout their lives.

Marriage in the village

It is considered the duty of any parent to see that his/her children are married off "well" before he/she dies³. For a girl marrying well means marrying a man who has completed his compulsory military service; has an income which is considered adequate to support a wife and children; and an ikoyenia which is well thought of in the village. The boy's parents desire a girl who is well spoken of; who is modest (semni) and a good housekeeper (kali nikokira). In the past, great emphasis was also placed on the dowry the girl was expected to bring with her upon marriage. The parents of the prospective bride and groom would negotiate the terms of the dowry⁴. An unofficial contract (prikosimfono) listing the items and terms of the dowry was drawn up, signed, and given to the groom and his parents. Now dowries are not officially recognised by the State and many young men say that the dowry is unimportant in their choice of a marriage partner. Many of them criticise the giving of the dowries saying that this practice is similar to "buying" your wife instead of marrying her because you love her and desire to live with her⁵.

However, though the importance of the dowry in choosing a marriage partner has decreased, the "dowry" as a form of assistance is still given. Parents feel obliged to provide the new couple with all the necessary household items and financial support required to start a "new life" (kenouria zoe-- see e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:263). It is usually the boy's household who provides the house and the girl's household who provides the furniture, land, and trousseau items. There are instances in which a boy's household may buy the furniture while the girl's provides the house, preferably one that is not in the village⁶. Most children accept and often even expect this form of parental support and parents

will spend a great deal of time and energy collecting and making dowry items, improving their houses and amassing capital to buy land or houses which are eventually given to children at marriage and/or when the parents die.

Marriages in the village before WWII were arranged by the parents of the eligible girl and boy. Some parents took into consideration the child's preferences; others considered that the child was incapable of making a judicious choice, the child's wishes therefore being immaterial. Both sets of parents sought out eligible partners who came from the same income and social group as themselves. Obviously it was a great coup for a poor boy or girl to marry into a well to do ikoyenia but it was not something that was expected or always condoned in the village. Most people, young and old, still hold that a good marriage is founded on the similar socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences of the conjugal pair⁷. Thus, an educated man will be happiest with an educated woman and vice versa. However, though it is still conceivable that an educated man can live with an uneducated woman in matrimonial harmony the opposite is thought to be well nigh impossible. Young and old, men and women feel that the husband should always be able to "command" his household (na kani koumando), to take and implement the important decisions and to represent the household in dealings of a bureaucratic and economic nature. Otherwise he loses his standing as a man who is head of his household, his personality (tin prosopikotita tou) as a man, and any respect he might have held at home and in the community (ton sevasmo ton alon)⁸. A husband must be thought of as, if not cleverer and better educated than his wife, than at least her equal.

Almost all marriages in the past were arranged through a match-maker, man or woman (prokseniti/proksenitria), who was either a friend of the parents or a distant relative. It was usually the girl's household who, through the prokseniti/tria, approached the boy's household. The rare occasion when a girl's hand was asked in marriage always caused a stir and one old yiayia never tired of boasting that it was her husband's ikoyenia who had approached her parents

first. She had not "gone asking" (dhen piya na zitiso)⁹.

The prokseniti would begin by tentatively suggesting a possible marriage alliance between the girl's ikoyenia and the boy's ikoyenia to a close relative of the boy's household or directly to the father. This hopefully would elicit encouragement. If the boy's parents however were uninterested the issue would be discreetly dropped. With the prokseniti neither ikoyenia was directly involved and the matter could remain more or less hidden from the inquisitive eyes and ears of the community, maintaining thereby household honour and distance from a possibly uncomfortable and embarrassing situation.

If the two ikoyenies seemed interested in the match, the fathers of the prospective couple would meet informally to discuss the matter quietly in the kafenion. If the negotiations proceeded favourably the groom's father and the prospective groom would visit the prospective bride's house to discuss the dowry and the arrangements to be made. Here, the prospective groom and bride would meet officially for the first time.

It should be remembered that before WWII, young women were not allowed to attend even church, unless it was to take communion, that is at Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas. Obviously, young women did attend village festivals; they did work in the fields or meet friends of their brothers at home. Yet, these contacts were limited. A brother or male cousin always had to be present and young women were never out of sight. As they had to be home well before sunset, the cover of darkness could provide little assistance for clandestine meetings. Thus, the first meeting between the young people, in which they could speak with one another occurred rather late in the marriage negotiations.

If matters concerning the dowry and the marriage were settled in the meeting, a time for the betrothal and exchange of the wedding rings would be set. Once the betrothal had taken place the marriage was for all practical purposes finalised. To back out now, would entail insulting the bride and shaming her before the community. It would

decrease the marriage prospects of both the groom and the bride because, since it is assumed that usually the groom and his household back out, the bride would have practically been another man's woman, and the groom would be considered unstable and therefore likely to renege on any other promises in the future (e.g. Rheubottom op.cit.:223; Campbell 1979:127-128). As one yiayia put it: "It is sinful to break up an engagement. A monastery that is destroyed will receive help from everyone to rebuild it but an engagement that is destroyed means the girl will never marry." The violation of a monastery does not entail its loss of sanctity and uniqueness, since that sanctity comes from God, but the violation of a girl does. She is now "open" to anyone (e.g. Hirschon 1989:146-149). It is as if during the engagement period she stands between two households, not belonging fully to either. A position she has placed herself in voluntarily. She is displayed publicly as the impending bride of a particular ikoyenia. She has "come out" (vieke) into public view and in having "opened" (aniktike) herself to public discussion and display, like a house is "opened" on festive occasions, she is also presumed to have opened herself to (had sexual relations with) to her fiance. The breaking of the engagement not only strands her in a liminal space, unaffiliated with any household but also as a woman in public without the protection of man. "Opened" but without a home, she remains a lone individual within a household based community. She is unprotected, unassociated, undefined and so exposed, and this with her consent, by choice (e.g. Brandes 1980:181-182).

By associating the monastery and the girl, the saying associates the young girl's body with a consecrated place (see Chapter 2). A broken engagement signals that a girl has chosen not to or been too weak to protect her sanctity. Yet, the monastery though violated from without like the bride, is not a sentient entity. There is no choice involved. Thus, though the building may be ransacked, the consecration received from God through the priest may be restored (see Chapter 3) since in the end His sanctity cannot be violated.

In the distant past, that is up until the 1920's or

30's, the bride was expected to avoid any and all contact with the groom. Many stories are told of prospective brides who in hasty efforts to avoid their betrothed abandoned their large kanstres (clay pots) full of water to scramble into the thick bushes by the side of the road. They did so out of dhropi (often glossed as shame and/or modesty¹⁰). Later, avoidance of the groom was not so drastic, but the prospective couple was never left alone. It was important that the bride prove to be a virgin after her wedding otherwise she might face the shame of an annulled marriage. The practice of hanging a blood stained sheet three days after the wedding, thereby allowing some time for the couple to get to know one another, was a common practice even in the early fifties though couples by this time had begun to refuse to comply with the tradition. By the 1960's many couples actually had consummated their relation before the marriage though only after the betrothal. Today, most young people practice full sexual relations even before a formal betrothal. However, unless the young couple are at least "informally engaged" (anepisima aravoniasmeni), the parents and even the couple themselves will publicly deny any intimacy.

A formal engagement entails a brief ceremony by a priest in which gold wedding bands are exchanged. These bands are worn on the ring-fingers of the left hand and are inscribed: the groom wears one bearing his fiance's Christian name and the bride one with her fiance's Christian name¹¹. Usually the engagement is not a grand affair and only the very close ikoyenies of the couple attend. An informal engagement simply entails that the young man come to eat a meal, preferably lunch which is the main meal of the day, at the house of the young woman. His parents are not invited as it is an informal occasion. This may be regarded as the opening of the girl's house to the boy just as she is opening herself to him, both in the public declaration that she is his fiance and more privately in their intimate relations (e.g. Lison-Tolosana 1983:178 for Spain). This public act is a statement of the couple's intention to marry some time in the future. Though

couples who are informally engaged can and do break up, such an event is said to cause great distress and the two households involved feel shamed before the community.

The point is that now, as in the past, the relationship and/or marriage of young people must be acknowledged and accepted by the parents before it is recognised and accepted by the community. Until this time, the gossip surrounding the young people may seriously damage their reputation in the village, creating problems for themselves, their siblings and their parents. Marriage is an affair which entails the ikoyenia and, ultimately, the community; not just the individuals who are being wed¹². The person, as stated in the previous chapter, cannot be disassociated from his/her ikoyenia, especially in matters involving marriage, reproduction and the continuity of the ikoyenia.

Love and Marriage

In the previous chapter it was seen that love between husband and wife is not considered the most important element in a marriage, though it is desirable. Many older informants said that love in marriage grows with the sharing of life experiences and the responsibilities of raising children (e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:91; Hirschon op.cit.:143-144)). The word love used in these contexts was invariably agape. It signified a deep, abiding, and caring love, which though not precluding sexual love does not necessarily imply it (e.g. Segalen op.cit.:128 for France). Agape is the love God has for humans. The word erota by contrast was more often used to signify a passionate love, often though not always uncontrolled, illogical and associated with sex. Thus for example, one could have agape for one's child but not, strictly speaking, erota (unless used metaphorically). The villagers however, occasionally used the word agape or the verb agapithikane to describe those who loved one another and have had sexual relations, whether married or unmarried¹³.

The importance of erota as a basis for marriage is often minimised by people in their fifties and above. Some even

thought it was risky to marry someone for whom you had erota (erotevmenos--glossed as "being in love") as, after marriage, the chances of disillusionment were greater. One informant (appr. male aged 65) expressed his views as follows:

If you are erotevmenos with someone then you are impatient to be with them and your expectations are very high. After having been married a while you begin to see your partner as the person he or she is and you begin to get bored; the routine sets in and eventually you seek elsewhere for the thrill of agape. But, if you marry logically with a cool head, then you are aware of your responsibilities and you know what to expect from your partner as a person. The children come; you share experiences and the care, respect and agape between you grows.

In this passage the word agape was used in too different contexts. The first was used in the terms of erota as defined above, such that the emotional state was one of high emotions in which the intellect is clouded, and rational and measured decisions were impossible; quite the opposite of the second use of the term agape¹⁴. When you love (agapas) someone you express care and concern for them; you are able to see them as they are and to love (agapas) them despite their faults. You are sensitised to their emotions and needs and you "hurt" or are "in pain" for or with them (tous ponas). With erota you may not consider the consequences of your actions thus bringing harm to you and your partner, and your ikoyenia. The state of erota therefore is sometimes regarded as a selfish condition.

Given these views concerning agape and marriage the stigmatisation of those who "married for love" (pandhreftikan me agape) before WWII is not surprising (e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:94). This usually implied that the couple may have had sexual contact, something which was definitely frowned upon. One old woman describes her illicit love affair and subsequent marriage to her lover with sly amusement--now that the years and the embarrassment have passed. At the time, she says, she felt great shame and it was only the great kindness of her father who did not disown or publicly shame (dhropi) her which saved her honour (timi) in the village. Amongst

the older couples, that is people married before the 1960's it is known who "married for love". Before WWII such couples married in the home of the bride and at night, an interesting reversal of a properly conducted wedding in a church during the day. Such clandestine marriages took place with a minimum of fuss and public announcement. If young children however caught wind of the ceremony, and they invariably did, they would gather outside the house during the ceremony, banging on pots and pans to call attention to the proceedings. All in all, "marriages of love" were embarrassing and best to be avoided.

Today, all young people believe that the young couple should know and love one another before marriage but whether this "love" is described as agape or erota depends on the context and the person speaking. My understanding is that one should be erotevmenos but not blinded to the faults of one's lover. The young people seem to seek a condition between the two forms of love thereby allowing for physical attraction and passion as well as for a sense of caring. Thus, the stress still placed on similar socio-economic and educational backgrounds, greater emphasis being placed on the latter, is not surprising. Many of the older people moreover agree to this formula of marriage though as stated above, they do not always think love necessary. For all the villagers marriage is not something to be entered into lightly. It is a serious business, a commitment for life¹⁵.

The Marriage Ceremony

After the many preparations for the wedding (some of which will be discussed in Chapter 5) have been completed, the day of the ceremony arrives. Most people still get married in a church, preferably on Sunday, though the revised Civil Code of 1983 permits civil marriages¹⁶. Since only one civil wedding has taken place in the village, in the summer of 1987 (a few months after I had left the village), I will limit my discussion to the church ceremony.

The bride is dressed in a white dress symbolic of her

purity, regardless if she is pregnant or not (e.g. Herzfeld 1983:166; Rushton 1983:65). Since she is to be married, the pregnancy is not seen as particularly shameful especially if she was engaged either formally or informally prior to her pregnancy. The important point is that she should not give birth to the child before the wedding.

The bride is assisted by a young unmarried boy of her father's ikoyenia who is not an orphan i.e. both his parents are alive. This possibly signifies the hope of the fruitful outcome of the couples union. Before WWII a type of vine known as vourla was also tied around the bride's waist under her dress. A lock was attached to this vine and one of the bride's close female relatives kept the key. The significance of the vourla was to protect the bride from those who might wish to harm her by casting evil eye upon her and rendering her childless. As with engagement, the bride is in a liminal position, existing between two households. She is "open" to malevolent forces and must be protected by symbolically tying or binding her; the vourla creating an image of closure (e.g. Blum and Blum 1970).

After the wedding, as the bride undressed, this vine was ripped from her waist presumably by her husband. The fate of the key seems to have been of no importance as no one could remember what was done with it. Yet, its insignificance is significant. The necessity of ripping the vourla to undress the bride creates an image of the bride who is taken by force. She is "opened" without the full consent of her ikoyenia or herself. The key is not handed over to the groom and his ikoyenia. It is lost, thereby indicating the reluctance of the bride's ikoyenia to give her to another ikoyenia (a point to which I shall return in Chapter 6). It also seems to indicate that they have not fully renounced her as a member of the ikoyenia for they still hold the key. She is taken, not given away¹⁷. Today the binding with the vourla is omitted though the bride may still have a symbolic lock pinned to her petticoats.

It was not however only the bride who was vulnerable; it was the couple. During the marriage ceremony an older woman

would be placed outside at the back, or eastern end of the church to guard against any ill-wishers who might bewitch the couple, rendering either the groom impotent or the bride infertile. Again, no one could tell me why these women stood at the back of the church except that this was the most vulnerable area since there, no one could see these ill-wishers conducting their spells.

Throughout the preparations the bride has sat quietly, prohibited from commenting or make suggestions. Danforth (1982:75-92; see also Hertz 1960:81) notes that the bride is like a corpse, dressed by others and silent, expressing no will of her own. Though not explicitly stated in the village, this along with other imagery as discussed in Danforth's book, portray the structural similarities between funerals and marriages¹⁸. Here, for example, we note that the bride not only is like a corpse but her departure to the church and to her husband's household is likened to a death for her ikoyenia. The return, likened to the disinterment after the first burial, is signalled by a meal, ta pistroferia (the return), in which the bride and groom "return" to the bride's ikoyenia for a meal. The return is not complete. The bride does not stay. But she is acknowledged as alive, though transformed; a member of another household, her husband's wife. It can be understood then, why even through the 1950's, when some women complained to their parents of maltreatment at the hands of their husband's ikoyenia, they were told to keep quiet and to stand by their husbands. The bride's parents refused to intervene for they no longer had any claim on her. She was of another household.

This is well exemplified in that before WWII women were called by the feminised form of their husband's first name¹⁹. Not only did they lose their ikoyenia's name, they also lost their own baptismal name upon marriage. They were encompassed symbolically both in body and spirit by their husbands. This too may give us an understanding as to why women never celebrated their Name Day's (and why many still do not). Married women are a part of their husbands. In this sense then, they too experience a death. Their names, their per-

sonalities, their entity as single and distinct human beings "dies" with their marriage. They are subsumed by their husbands.

Yet, the likening of marriage with death should not be over-stressed. For the woman's ikoyenia though it meant the loss of a daughter, it also meant the successful accomplishment of the parent's responsibilities. For the bride though it meant leaving her natal household, marriage also signalled the fulfilment of her destiny. While for the groom and his ikoyenia though it meant accepting a foreign member into the bounded household, marriage also was an assurance of the household's continuity.

The bride dressed, awaits the arrival of the groom. He comes with his party and bears with him shoes for the bride. Wearing them she is now said to walk in his path²⁰. The groom and his party leave for the church and the bride follows. She is taken to the door of the yard by her father who then hands her over to her brother or male cousin who will escort her to the church. Again no one could tell me why this occurred. It seemed as if the father was passing on responsibility of his daughter's welfare to the men in generation after him. His responsibility as a father and protector ceases when she passes both physically and metaphorically from his house. Ideally, brothers can intervene somewhat more freely in the affairs of their sisters and, as was seen in the previous chapter, siblings since they are of the same blood can and should care for one another throughout their lives.

At the church door the bride and the groom kiss before entering. The ceremony takes place before the invited guests and kinspeople of the bride and the groom in the sacred and central area of the village.

Despite any changes in the ceremonies and rites that precede and follow the wedding service (see Chapter 5), the importance of the wedding for both the ikoyenia and the individual remains. It is only through the marriage that the destiny of the individual is realised and it is only with the marriage of one's children that parents can finally find peace of mind (na isichasoume) since their responsibilities

to the child have been fulfilled (see e.g. Friedl op.cit.:123; Loizos 1975:514, 1981:27). They are now adults.

Elopement

It is with the understanding of the centrality of marriage and with an understanding of the distinctions drawn between *erota* and *agape*, that elopement should be examined. The verb for elopement, "kleftikan", literally translates as "they stole themselves". To "steal oneself away", "kleftika", seems to imply to steal one's self from the *ikoyenia*²¹. It is a private, secretive act undertaken without the knowledge or consent of one's household or parents. It is, in essence, a betrayal for as we have seen, any relationship or marriage must gain the approval and recognition of one's parents in order to be socially recognised²². Elopement, moreover, is regarded as an act which betrays a lack of rational thinking and emotional control. It is an act of passion and as such generally frowned upon though some are taken by its romantic allure.

In the village I know of only two cases of elopement. The one incident took place just after WWII. A young man and young woman were *erotevmeni*. The parents of the young man were delighted with their son's choice as the girl was all that they could have hoped for in a daughter-in-law²³. The girl's parents however, refused the young man as a prospective groom because his *ikoyenia* was not as economically well off as their own. The young couple were greatly distressed. The young man's parents suggested that the girl elope to their household. They were willing to take her "as she was" (etsi pos itan), that is without a dowry and without the blessing of her parents. Despite their urgings the young woman refused. She could not bring herself to defy her parents and possibly accrue her father's curse.

The other incident occurred while I was in the field. The young man involved was suspected of stealing some money in the village. Before he could be questioned, he left the village taking with him a young girl with whom, it was

rumoured, he had been having an affair. He was caught and the girl returned to the village in deep disgrace. Her prospects of marriage were considered to be quite poor. However, the fact that she was quite young (I believe she was sixteen at the time) minimised somewhat her transgression. She was not considered quite old enough to know better and it was evident that the young man, a number of years her senior, had "seduced her with sweet words"²⁴.

In no instance have I heard of an elopement being considered as an ideal solution though, as the first incident shows, it is sometimes a means of forcing a situation. If the girl had eloped it might have obliged her parents to accept the fait accompli and to give her their blessing. This was a gamble the girl was unwilling to take. For, in stealing herself from the household, she would be relinquishing the ties that bound her to the household. And, if her parent's were unwilling to mend those broken ties, to accept her and her husband, then she would essentially no longer be a member of her natal ikoyenia.

This however, expresses simply what people say might happen. I have yet to come across an incident of a completed elopement. I suspect that the fear of a complete break with one's natal household often deters young people. Moreover, the stigma attached to a household whose member has eloped, coupled with the very strong desire for grandchildren and the sense of continuity, often overrides the initial anger of the parents. Reconciliation probably occurs masking the embarrassing situation. Thus, the incidences of elopement are very rare indeed.

It should be remembered however, that the elopement also has a romantic appeal. The notion of a daring act committed in defiance of the society and in the name of love (agape) is attractive to many people. Stories or songs describing elopements (e.g. Friedl op.cit.:134) usually contain arrogant fathers or step-mothers who have no reason to refuse the marriage except to further their own selfish desires or from sheer wickedness²⁵. In these narratives the young couple assume heroic proportions and either defeat the evil which

stands in their way or die together tragically, to the dismay of the listeners. Should a couple in the village elope however, especially under circumstances that are not auspicious, as in the second incident, the romantic image dissolves and the elopement is judged in rather unfavourable terms.

Nuns and Elopement

Given the connotations of elopement in the village, it was interesting to note that many nuns described their coming to the convent as an elopement: "Kleftika sto monastiri" (I "stole myself", eloped, to the convent). Many of their stories follow a similar pattern. Having been raised in a not particularly religious household, the then young girl none the less feels herself drawn increasingly to a religious life. With friends or sisters she spends many wonderful hours reading the lives of the saints and is inspired by the beauty and the grandeur of those lives. She wishes to dedicate her life to the Panayia or to sweet Christ. Having made up her mind that she has a calling, she asks the consent of her parents and is denied. After pleading her case but to no avail she decides to elope. One day she sneaks out of the house taking only a bit of food or money, and makes her way to the convent. There she becomes a novice ignoring the pleas of her parents to reconsider her act; to think of them. For her this is a difficult time because her parents may very likely speak of and mourn for her as if she were dead, a point to which I shall return. It may be a long time before they are reconciled to her choice and some parents it seems never fully recover from the blow of "having lost a child to the nuns"²⁶.

This elopement, unlike an elopement in the village, cannot be fully mended. The girl's choice to become a nun leads socially nowhere; there will be no children; there will be no continuity of the household. She will not, as a nun, be allowed to attend the marriages, baptism or funerals of any member of her ikoyenia. Even if her parents are ill she will

not be able to tend their needs. The Abbess of T. said that a nun was permitted to visit an ill parent for an hour or so, at weekly or monthly intervals during his/her illness but no more. The nun is now part of her new ikoyenia. Her social ikoyenia should no longer be her concern. Thus, her "elopement" signifies a social death.

The nun's act is considered selfish for she defies her parents' wishes in order to fulfil her own and gives nothing in return. This also applies to young men who become monks or priest. Their parents feel deeply embarrassed and betrayed²⁷. Yet, unlike her male counterparts who may, through the Church hierarchy, achieve positions of social prominence and power²⁸ or become recognised scholars, a nun is always a member within her small community. Though certain convents are now beginning to establish and operate printing presses, while others are attracting highly educated young women--doctors, lawyers and other professionals--the nuns, like lay women, may still, generally, be considered intellectually inferior to men and thus go largely unrecognised. Moreover, their traditional contribution in the production of home crafts such as large woven rugs, as in T., or in the operation of orphanages or schools, again as they functioned in T., has been minimised²⁹. Thus, even socially, the nuns cannot offer the prestige to their ikoyenia that a monk may and often does offer.

Despite the difficulties, the nuns seem to take great pleasure in the romance of the elopement. Some of the stories include suitors who have been abandoned by the girl in her erota for the "Eternal Bridegroom", Christ. The choice was often portrayed as one between a civil servant or agriculturalist who, as one nun said, might be a drunkard or might beat you, and Christ, the Emperor of Heaven (ton Vasilia tou Ouranou). It is little wonder that the nuns choose Christ. Their eyes shine as they speak of their erota for their "bridegroom". For them, He is the most beautiful, purest and most powerful of suitors.

The nuns' love for Christ is often expressed by the use of the word erota which implies passion. In this manner they

express their complete absorption in the divine. They seek to show how they cannot or do not wish to see beyond Christ, for He is life and agape. I have seen them take a printed copy of an icon of Christ and kiss it with a passion usually reserved for the pictures of a lover or a rock idol. Indeed to carry the analogy further, the few cells that I saw were covered in icons of various sizes depicting various saints, usually those the nun particularly favoured, along with countless images of Christ and the Panayia.

This analogy, though wholly mine, does accent the general impression of an absence of direct physical contact with the Beloved, of an unconsummated affair. It should not be construed however, that the nuns experience their passion as a one-sided relationship. They say that Christ, or God, does love (agape) them and can if they are worthy come to them. He directly intervenes in their lives. Yet the emphasis, though it is placed on spiritual love, does not disregard bodily sensations as base or sinful. For the visual and tactile stimulus through the kissing of an icon; the ringing of bells in the church; the smell of incense all contribute to a sensual participation in the divine. Though it may not, to the lay person, be comparable to sexual contact, it is certain that the nuns are neither sensually deprived nor do they see themselves as addressing an uncommunicative non-entity. The divine figures are felt to be actively present and often sensually evident in the nuns' lives (see also Chapters 6 and 7).

The nuns' love, however, is *erota*. It is channelled in only one direction: towards the Divine. They are deaf to the pleas of their *ikoyenia* and the ridicules of society; blind to everything but Christ. Passionately involved in their love for one entity, they are not considered to be thinking rationally, in the social sense. They are therefore regarded as less than human, either more divine or perversely unnatural. This may also account for the very common lewd jokes made about monastics who are often regarded as sexually voracious (see also Chapters 1 and 6).

For the monastics this *erota* for Christ develops into agape for God, who is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The complete absorption of self within God, without paradoxically losing oneself, is defined as an agape of all humankind and creation. For to love God is to love His Creation. Thus, the *erota* for Christ, who is the perfect image of a man, is transformed into agape for God, a genderless, inchoate, divine presence. The nuns' *erota* is not seen as detrimental to the soul or the intellect but rather the greatest of passions and loves, since it teaches agape for all Creation, an agape which is the truest of all loves³⁰.

Beyond this sense of a calling, of *erota*, and of a growing agape for Christ, the elopement for the nuns may also be a means of expressing defiance against social expectations. Women may seek a monastic existence as a way of escaping the inevitability of marriage. It may be a means of avoiding the domesticity and the responsibilities of running a household (e.g. Bynum 1987:221) though the nuns, as shown in Chapter 3 and as will become evident further on, do enter into domestic relations in their care of the convent and its guests. However, this domesticity takes place in the atmosphere of a community of women who are provided for by the Church and through their own works and not on the possibly more volatile relations of household and the secular community.

The use of the term elopement may be also a means of expressing intellectual independence and an assertion of free choice. This was implicit in the life story of one nun who told me that, as a young girl, she had wished to travel either to France or the United States to study psychology. Her parents refused not only the studies abroad but any form of further education. It was not a matter of distance or money. A girl, said her father, does not need to fill her head with all sorts of useless information. Her "mind would take air" (*thaperne aera to mialo tis*), that is, she would conceive of all sorts of foolish ideas³¹. She should stay at home and marry a good Christian. One vocation forbidden, the young woman chooses another and one that her father, as a strict Orthodox, could not refuse. To outside observers the

story seems to portray a young woman who sought the nunnery as a means of achieving intellectual and emotional freedom, something denied to her in the house of her father. It is an clear expression of independence. For the nun however, the story is an example of the way God works. She says she now sees that her wishes to study psychology were indeed absurd and that God protected her and brought her to a greater calling. For despite that fact that all Orthodox can achieve salvation, the nuns' calling is the highest one open to any woman. To be chosen by God compares with no other honour. And how can it? He is the Father and Creator (e.g. Edmunds 1986:132).

The elopement and what it signifies also defines the monastic community as one opposed to society and its often sinful demands. The nuns expect and often seem to desire a negative reaction from society. Even I was often asked if my mother-in-law, or mother forbade me to come to the convent. When I said that I always asked permission and my ikoyenia never seemed to mind, the nuns would look somewhat disappointed while commending me for obeying my parents. The elopement, it seems, should be difficult, a break from the household and its constraints thereby defining the girl's choice as a true one. This is reinforced by a discussion I once had with a nun in P.. I pointed out that in certain parts of the Catholic world parents greet their daughter's decision to become a nun with sadness but also with pride and joy for the girl is considered to have been chosen by God. Why is it then, that in a country like Greece where the true religion thrives, young women are forbidden by their parents and mocked by the society for becoming nuns? Why is there such resistance to the idea of monasticism as a viable vocation for men and women? The nun nodded knowingly and said that in Catholic countries the "true religion"³² is lost. The devil knows that he has won a battle there. But in Greece a young woman's decision to become a nun marks a major victory for God. The devil tries as best he can to make her passage to the convent a difficult one. He tries to dissuade her from her chosen path, to dishearten her. Similarly, the

devil's triumph is the same when a nun commits a sin and when one thousand lay people commit the same sin. Or, if a nun thinks of murder, it is equal to a lay person actually committing murder. The demands made on a nun are greater because her soul is so much stronger, so better able to withstand the devil because it is purer.

It is the difficulties faced and the resistance overcome that are seen as testing and forging the young woman's belief. Should the novice give way to her parents' pleas or to society's mockery her calling is proven to have been false. In this sense the trials a young woman faces in order to come closer to God may be likened to the trials of Christ. One nun assured me that actively and openly declaring one's faith in spite of what people think entails a kind of martyrdom. It is similar to those who died for their beliefs. Though one is not physically tortured one never the less requires strong faith to withstand social pressures³³.

The young woman then though she has eloped to become eventually the bride of Christ is also at the moment of the elopement imitating Christ, being like Him in order to achieve unity with Him. Though she identifies with her physical gender in her "social", outward, relationship with Christ i.e. lover, or bride, inwardly she is like Christ. She "becomes" Christ, a martyr, sacrificing her social relations in order to fulfil God's calling. In this manner, she is both male and female.

From Novice to Nun

Women may take their vows anytime after their eighteenth birthday. They need not be virgins. Thus, women who are widowed are not refused, nor are divorced women as long as they were not responsible for the divorce and did not initiate the proceedings against their former spouse. If a married couple both wish to become monastics they are permitted to do so but a married woman or man cannot simply leave his/her spouse to join a religious community. This emphasises the importance of marriage as commitment for life

made binding by God which cannot be broken³⁴. In P. and in T. the majority of the nuns had been single and virgins when they took their vows. I know of no formerly married woman in the convent though a few women were older than forty when they joined.

The young (or older) woman has now placed herself within the confines of the convent walls. She will be protected from distressed parents, relatives or friends who seek her out, but otherwise she will live the life of a nun. She will work along side the other nuns, sharing their duties and prayers for three years. When the Hegumenos or Hegumeni deems the novice (dhokimi -- one who is tried) ready to accept the life of a nun, a date is set for the ritual of receiving the habit and the tonsure.

The acquisition of the habit and the tonsuring ceremony have many elements which are reminiscent of other Church rituals. For example, the cutting of hair³⁵ and the giving of a new name remind one of a baptism; the wearing of a white gown (chiton) at the ritual seems to imply the material and spiritual purity of the novice likening her to a bride, as she is indeed referred to as the "bride of Christ". The white gown however, is also reminiscent of the shroud (Alexiou op.cit.:27) in which all corpses are dressed before they are clothed in their best outfits for burial. The white shroud is said to symbolise the purity of the soul which lies beneath the worldly aspect of humans. The nuns too are buried in their white chiton, the same gown that they wore on their "wedding day". Moreover, the vows and the donning of the black habit, mark the girl's social death, her denial of the material world. Could it be said that by combining the three most socially weighted rituals in the tonsuring ritual, the novice completes the major secular rites of passage and is thereby able to enter into a "new life"?

This notion is reinforced by the absence of second burial in the convent (see Chapter 3). The nuns say that there is no theological foundation for the second burial and the distress caused by the disinterment is unnecessary. It may mark a renewed period of mourning and sadness something

which is uncalled for and ultimately sinful. We may be sad at the death of a loved one since we are human but we should not mourn the fact that this person has been called away by God. Death should be a time of quiet contemplation and of honouring God (Alexiou op.cit.:34).

From an observer's point of view the first burial for the nun seems to take place at the tonsuring ritual in which she wears her wedding dress/shroud and dies socially. Like the corpse which is embraced by the black earth and the widow who wears black and is socially dead, so too the nun is embraced by the black robes of her habit³⁶.

Yet, the second burial in the village takes place when the flesh has melted leaving only bones. It marks the end of any hope of continued social relations with the deceased. For, after the second burial the deceased as a person will no longer be visited in the graveyard though the rituals for the dead of the ikoyenia will incorporate him/her in a generalised fashion. Thus, the first burial marks a physical death while the second marks the end of all social interaction. The nuns may be said to reverse the process "dying socially" with the tonsuring ritual while their bodily death marks the completion of the process started during the ritual. For the nuns, disinterment would not only be redundant but suggest that they had failed to achieve full social death during their life time³⁷.

In this sense her acceptance of the vows though likened to a marriage with Christ signal for her secular ikoyenia her final death. The nun does not come back to her natal household a week after her marriage for the ritual meal of return. She does not bear children. Nor is she buried in the grave of her ikoyenia. They cannot mourn her when she dies in the manner that they mourn for a member of their ikoyenia. Thus she is dead for her ikoyenia for she is socially absent and there is no hope of return. But, for herself, she is spiritually alive, part of the social world of the convent; wedded to the "Eternal Bridegroom".

The similarities between secular rituals marking life stages and the tonsuring ritual were considered by one bishop

as misrepresenting the nature of the ritual. Baptism and marriage are two of the seven sacraments (see Appendix 2). The tonsuring ritual is not a sacrament and therefore should not be compared to them. It is an humans not deemed necessary for a full Christian life. Moreover, as Behm (1986:28) notes, there is no anointing with oil or water usually associated with baptism nor a wedding ring to symbolise the nun's union with Christ. These are "things of the flesh", according to the nuns she spoke with, and not to be used in the spiritual union that the nuns seek. The spiritual union may be expressed through prayer and conduct but not through objects of this world.

The views of the bishop seem to reflect the views of the Church and the monastics. However, the similarities of the secular rites and the tonsure need not be rejected. Lewis (1988:144-145) points out that the effect of a ritual not only comes from its intrinsic, inward meaning, that is "the choice of the particular elements and their specific arrangement in the context of the work" but from the extrinsic, outward meaning as well. If I understand him correctly, the ritual may be understood or experienced differently when it is viewed within the whole ritual system or even beyond it to certain motifs, patterns, repetitions, associated with the wider knowledge of the world. In this instance, the black habit and the white chiton visually, and the cutting of the hair and the giving of a new name behaviourally contribute to the emotional impact of the tonsuring ritual by recalling rituals found in the secular society. The association with secular rites is further reinforced by the metaphors used by the nuns when describing their relations with the divine: they are either children, as in baptism; brides as in marriage; or dead to the secular world and spiritually alive in Christ as ideally they should be upon death. Though to focus only on these associations would reduce the scope and aim of the tonsuring ritual, its emotional impact none the less seems to arise, at least in part, from its associations with the larger social and ritual complex of Orthodoxy and the secular society.

The Ritual

In T. though there was a novice who was to be tonsured "sometime in the next year" during my fieldwork, she was not. This meant that I was unable to witness the ritual first hand. Also because of the difficulties in asking direct questions, I was only able to hope for some chance discussion on the subject to obtain any clarifications. Such conversations sadly occurred only a few times during my visits. I will therefore present simply a sketch of the ritual.

The two nuns I spoke with at T. concerning the tonsure said that it was the most beautiful moment of their lives. The novice, they said, must fast and pray for a few days before the ritual. During those days she is excused from any chores. She should concentrate on praying, on seeking to achieve communion with the divine. In this manner, her focus is shifted away from the material world and centered entirely upon the spiritual.

The night before the novice is so excited she cannot sleep. She remains awake praying for guidance and strength in the new life she is about to enter. Behm (op.cit.:24) notes that the habit which has either been made by one of the nuns or often, as in T. and P. by the novice herself, is placed behind the templo of the church and a special canon is read which asks God to accept the woman and thanks Him for choosing her from the "sea of humanity". It is a rite which is not attended by the novice.

The morning comes. Gathered in the church are the bishop, the nuns of the community, relatives and friends of the novice, and any interested lay people who wish to attend. Despite any feelings the parents of the novice may express, this day, say the nuns, is the young woman's wedding day. Today she will become the "bride of Christ".

She is dressed in a long white robe (chiton) that covers her arms and comes down to her feet. On the robe are a number of red crosses: one each on the back and the chest, and one on each shoulder. Her hair hangs loose down her back. On her feet she wears white socks. She is taken by the

Abbess from the dining room to the entrance of the church. There she prostrates herself three times. If we recall that for the nun the Abbess is "like Christ", the prostrations may be seen as similar to the kiss exchanged between the bride and groom before entering the church.

The novice enters the church with Abbess performing three series of three prostations: one before the icon of the Panayia (to which the church is dedicated); one before the Bishop's Throne; and one before the bishop who stands in front of the Royal Gates.

Behm (op.cit.: 25) notes that in the convent where she did fieldwork the nun entered the church bearing a candle and a cross, symbols of the religious life. The cross in this instance was said to refer to the passage: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38). The candle refers to the passage: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16)³⁸.

The bishop then asks the novice a series of Questions to which she gives the Answers. These Questions and Answers are established by Church tradition and are the same for all monastics, men and women (see Appendix 3).

This concluded the woman is now a rasoforos (person who has donned the cowl) and will receive her habit and her new name³⁹. In P. and T. the new name is chosen by the bishop who has usually consulted the Hegumenos or Hegumeni of the convent. The new name usually is chosen to reflect the new nun's personality. Though the novice herself may be consulted it is considered "egoistic" to chose for oneself. The new nun should deny all forms of volition, giving herself to God by negating her own will completely. To chose one's own name implies that one is still concerned about one's individual self⁴⁰. Like the bride the nun must obey and accept her new role and personality without dissent. But there is a

marked difference. The nun receives a new name but one that is her own. She belongs to God but she is not lost within Him, she is not symbolically erased as a personality. To be even symbolically one's own person within God is different from being socially encompassed by another human being, though in the end, both the nuns and the married lay women fulfil their social identity through dedication to a male, divine or human.

In P. or T. the names given to the nuns were quite unusual. Unlike the village names which not only tended to repeat themselves every alternating generation but were of well-known saints, the nuns had names which seem to a secular ear to be of remote Byzantine saints. Or, the names were amalgamations of two words describing the nun's relationship with God. The unfamiliarity of the names, like the habit and the nuns' life-style, served to differentiate the nuns from the world outside the convent walls. Thus, for example: Nimfodhora (gift of the bride); Christofora (the one who wears Christ); Akakia (the one who has no wickedness), Makrina (the name of a not so well-known saint).

The bishop now, Behm (op.cit.:26) notes, brings the habit from behind the templo and presents each article of clothing with a prayer and an explanation of what it symbolises. The habit of the rasoforos is composed of a chiton, raso, kalima, triyono, mantili, and shoes⁴¹ which are all black. The chiton is a loose-fitting, long-sleeved, full length, black robe symbolising the "embrace of the saints", though its black colour may also symbolise "the embrace of the black earth" and the nun's burial (see Danforth op.cit.:54-60). The chiton is always black except for the one worn at the tonsuring. The nun's head should be wrapped in a long black mantili leaving only the triangle of the features of her face exposed. The mantili is to protect the nun from having evil thoughts. The nuns at T. said that they also received a small skull cap embroidered with a red cross which is worn under the mantili. The kalima is a black, loose-fitting, sleeveless vest and represents the "care of God" so that when it is worn the nuns say that they are "wrapped in

the thoughts of God". The shoes are simple black shoes similar to men's shoes or loafers and indicate that the nun is "ready to do the will of God", similar to the symbolic connotations of the shoes received by the bride. Finally, the raso and the mantili are worn during Church services, or if the nuns go outside of the convent. The raso is a black, long-sleeved, full-length coat-like garment worn over the habit. The triyono is a black triangular cloth (hence the name) worn over the head and shoulders. Both these items protect the nun at times when she is most vulnerable, in the church and outside the convent. In church her thoughts are turned to prayer and her body is left unattended. When outside she is exposed to the things of the world. Temptation is strong and the addition of an extra item of clothing may serve to add symbolic distance between her and the secular world from which she seeks to separate herself. The nuns at T. and at P. also had in their possession a koboskini (laterally "knot-string"). The koboskini is similar to a rosary but is made of wool. It reminds the nun of her duties and assists her in her prayers. It is likened to her sword for it helps her to fight temptation and to focus her thoughts on God. The koboskini is made up of a number of knots depending on the desired length of the koboskini and each knot is comprised of nine "crosses" or knots symbolising the nine corps of angels (humans, it will be remembered make up the tenth corp).

The rasoforos then is "embraced by saints" and "wrapped in the thoughts of God". Her attention and thoughts are drawn to the Divine and her body protected by the raso and the triyono. The protection is not only against Temptation. The nuns, in certain instances, distinguish between the material, somatic needs and the spirit subordinating the former to the latter. During the very cold, early, winter mornings in the church of P. I was asked a few times if I would like to leave the Liturgy to sit for a while by the fire in the dining room. I declined the kind offer and was later praised by a

nun who said:

I was testing you to see if you would leave the church to make yourself comfortable or stay to obtain spiritual sustenance. You stayed which shows that the Panayia has helped you and you have grace.

For the nuns, the decision to stay in the church despite the cold goes beyond a sense of duty or religious fervour. Once, when I admitted that I was cold, another nun told me: "We are never cold or hot. The raso protects us. We have need of nothing else because we wear the raso." The mundane and very real sensations of heat or cold are said to be overcome with the wearing of the raso. The nun has taken the first step beyond the material world, the first step closer to unity with the Divine.

The ritual may end with the giving of the raso, the nun taking her vows at a later point in time. However in P. and T. I was told that the nuns "do not simply become engaged to Christ but marry Him". I presume that what was meant was that upon donning their raso the nuns also take their vows and undergo the tonsure, however I am not certain that this is indeed the case.

The vows are spoken after the novice has answered the Questions. She professes a vow of chastity which I was given to understand is not simply a vow of celibacy but one in which the woman promises to rid her soul of all earthly and bodily desires; to seek only spiritual unity with Christ. Closely linked to this is the vow of poverty in which the novice renounces all material wealth and places herself in the care of God who will provide for all her needs. Finally, the vow of obedience binds the novice to renounce her will. She must obey, as was seen in Chapter 3, the will of God, her spiritual parents, the Hegumenos and the Hegumeni, the leaders of the Church, and the convent rules as laid out by the convent's constitution.

The profession of the vows is accompanied by the tonsure (koura). Behm (op.cit.:27) notes that hair is linked to the material world and to earthly desires. The cutting of hair

is the cutting or removal of those desires. Cutting the hair three times cross-wise could easily be associated with the cutting of the hair during baptism done to remove the child from the "old" life of Adam and Original Sin, and to welcome it into the new life of Christ.

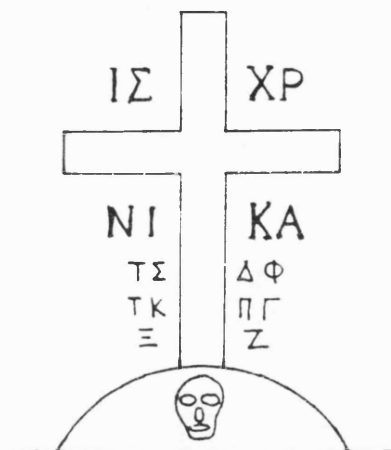
Finally, when the nun has taken her vows she is also given a zoni, a leather belt to wear. The belt made from a dead animal, binds the chiton and the kalima around the nun's waist. It symbolises to the nun that her natural bodily desires are dead. It indicates where she has come from and reminds her towards what direction she should strive.

Higher Grades

The stage after the rasoforos is the microschima (small cloth (eccl.)) followed by meyaloschima (great or large cloth (eccl.)). In P. all the nuns were at least microschim⁴². The microschima nun is defined by the the koukoulion, which replaces the triyono, and a schima. The koukoulion is like a hood which hangs low over the head and flares in a scope shape half way down the back. Behm (op.cit.:35) notes that the koukoulion translates as cocoon and serves as an extra head covering shielding the nun from evil thoughts. In P. where the nuns were fully visible during the liturgy one could see that they wore their koukoulion only when they were to take communion. On the koukoulion above the forehead a cross was embroidered in red, symbolic of the blood of Christ and His suffering on the cross.

The schima is like an apron drawn over the head and secured by being tied at the back. The black cloth covers the front of the torso. It is worn inside the chiton except during the liturgy when is worn over the chiton. It is embroidered with letters running down alongside a cross also in red. The letters read as follows:

Jesus Christ Victorious.
The place of martyrdom is becoming paradise.



The cross stands on the mound of Golgotha. The skull at the base of the cross is the skull of Adam and reminds the nun of her mortal nature, from whence she has come.

Behm (op.cit.:36) notes that the meyaloschima is identified by a larger schima, which in all other aspects is similar to the smaller schima, and by a polistavri. The meyaloschima is worn outside the chiton at all times. I never saw either type of schima actually worn by a nun. However, I know that there were meyaloschimes at the convent of P. because I was shown both a schima and a polistavri. The polistavri (many crosses) is made up of a series of crosses which form a figure 8. The crosses are made from a black cord which has been intricately knotted. The arms pass through either loop of the figure eight. In P. the polistavri was referred to as the wings of the nun, evidence that the nun had come one step closer to God. With the polistavri, with her wings, the nun has achieved angelic attributes, unlike earthbound humans. She is one step closer to becoming the angel-- her rightful place in God's creation. Amongst the nuns with whom Behm (op.cit.: 36) worked the polistavri symbolised not the wings but "the crosses one must bear in life", reminding one of the burdens and trials of Christ.

In P. the nuns who showed me the polistavri were excited and proud. The one who was not as yet a meyaloschima said that one became meyaloschima after menstruation ceased. Another said that it was when one had become spiritually ready to receive the polistavri; after one was ready to become fully married to Christ. Both the schima and the polistavri were referred to as wedding clothes (ta nifika). These three statements taken together seem to indicate that as the nun loses the ability to reproduce and as she becomes increasingly closer to Christ, developing an inner spirituality, her marriage also approaches completion⁴³. She moves from the material to the spiritual world.

What is also evident is the ambiguous gender relations established by the nuns with the divine. As they become more married to Christ, more truly His brides, they acquire symbols of their status which associate their lives with His. The white chiton is embroidered with red crosses; the schima also embroidered in red becomes larger; the polistavri serves to symbolise both the "burdens of Christ and His trials" and the crosses the nuns must bear. In becoming His bride, a female image, the nuns are also becoming more like Him, a male image. Their relations with the Divine are represented in part through secular gender relations. But it is not enough to portray through metaphor the spiritual unity that is sought between humans and the Divine. The nuns must also become one with Christ and to do so they must identify with Him. In Christ there is no male or female, rather there is, in a sense, both.

Interestingly, Behm (op.cit.: 37) notes the closer the nun comes towards God, the more tangible the reminders of her secular nature she acquires. The rasoforo has the belt; the microschima the belt, and the embroidered skull of Adam; the meyaloschima the former items plus the polistavri. The higher the nuns' spiritual state, the more absorbed they are in the spirit, the more vulnerable they leave themselves to temptation. The devil attacks those who are purest. For, the fall of the very pure signifies a great victory and a meyaloschima's fall is a great fall indeed. To prevent such

an event, the nun must be made aware continually of her human nature, of her very real potential for sin.

The differences in the explicit descriptions of the polistavri made by the nuns at P. and the nuns with whom Behm worked also point to the very liminal nature of the nuns. Closer to God in terms of marriage, having acquired their wings, they are none the less still of the earth, still vulnerable to sin. They have not as yet been fully transformed; they still bear the burden, the cross of this life of exile on earth. As does the convent so too do the nuns exist "somewhere between heaven and earth".

Heaven and Earth: Marriage and Betrothal

The image of the "bride of Christ" well portrays the nun's liminal position between this world and the next (e.g. Campbell-Jones 1980:93; Williams op.cit.). A bride, as Maltz (1978) has pointed out, is in a transitional state: no longer the young girl (koritsi) innocent of any relationship nor yet the fully mature woman and wife, that is a married woman with children⁴⁴; a woman who has become one with her husband (See Chapter 3). The nuns too are in a state of transition. Through their betrothal they signal their desire to become "one in Christ". Yet because they are still prone to sin, still "of this world", they must strive to achieve complete unity. As such they must be in a constant state of preparation, ever diligent and ready to respond to the call of their eternal fiance (eonios aravoniastikos):

When I get ready for bed, I say my prayers and then lay myself down in the bed as if I were laying down in my coffin. Christ may call you at any time and you must always be prepared to answer His call (the Hegumeni of T.)⁴⁵.

Similarly the story of the ten virgins was referred to a number of times in discussions concerning the nuns' marriage to Christ. It further highlights the importance of being prepared for the Bridegroom's summons:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto the ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matthew 25:1-13).

It is noteworthy that despite their emphasis on virginity and the need for perpetual vigilance in order to be able to answer the summons of their fiance when he comes, the nuns when comparing their position with that of secular women often said that they were married to Christ. By describing their state in terms of marriage instead of betrothal they appropriate the social identity accorded to married women. They have simply chosen to bind themselves in this world to the Church and the life it dictates⁴⁶. Yet significantly, though they may speak of being married to Christ they never refer to Him as their husband (ton andra mou) but always as their fiance, or bridegroom. And their relationship to Him is always that of a bride, that is in the process of achieving unity.

Spiritual Reproduction

In the village the main aim of marriage and in fact the aim and goal in life is the reproduction of the ikoyenia through the birth of children within a socially sanctioned union. It is predominantly through the children that a sense of continuity and eternity is achieved in life. The notion of individual continuity in Heaven, or in some type of after life

is vague and undefined. "There is no way of knowing. No one has been there and come back to tell us", is a common reply to questions concerning the afterlife. Heaven is often referred to in a semi-joking fashion: "Do you think people work in Heaven? Because if they do I don't want to go. I've worked enough here". Or similarly a younger woman will tell a yiayia: "You should make yourself look nice or else he (meaning death, personified as the male entity, Charos) will not want you. You should look nice for the bridegroom". The old, and only the old should, ideally, "marry death" not the young.

This linking of marriage and death, seen also in the structural similarities of the two rituals, was said by one informant (female, approx. 60) to be due to three reasons. The first is the notion of proorismos, a word which may be glossed as destiny, goal, or aim in life. "For the old, their proorismos is in death; for the young it is marriage. It is only the old who should marry death, not the young." Death and marriage then are equated as the destinies of humankind (e.g. Alexiou 1974:120). This is poignantly portrayed in the burial of those who have never married. They are dressed, especially if they are young, in their wedding clothes and the wedding crowns are placed in their coffins. Young people of marriageable age may be said by the nuns to be marrying Christ but in the village the distressed parents will often say that they have married their child to death or Charos⁴⁷.

Secondly, death may also be referred to as a wedding to avoid speaking the word and thus avoid the possibility of bringing death to oneself and others. "To speak death is to tempt one's fate" (see Chapter 7).

Finally, "in both rituals a person is joined with another, either a person or with death." As in a wedding where the couple leave their respective households and begin a "new life", the deceased is also thought to leave the household and this world, sometimes to enter an unknown afterlife. Death therefore, is like a marriage. "Do we not also say of someone who is very ill and near death that he is

lying down with Charos?" ("playiazi me ton Charo"). "Lying down" is a euphemism for the intimacy of a couple, usually implying sexual relations. It is the unification of the couple in "one flesh", the uniting of two distinct entities: man and woman; death and life.

However, the link between death, Christ, marriage and eternal life made by the nuns is not clearly evident in the village. Though they see death as an entrance possibly to another world, they also hold that death marks an end which may not have a beginning. The concept of an after life is shrouded with ambiguity, doubt and the unknown. Thus, the link between God and Charos is also uneasy as a story I was told portrays. I paraphrase:

Charos was once sent down by God to take a young married man. When Charos got to the house he heard the man's wife and children weeping. They beseeched Charos not to take the man; how would they survive without him? Charos was moved by their cries and in pity left the man, returning to God empty-handed. God then told Charos to go and get a large boulder at the bottom of the sea. Charos went and brought the boulder to God. God told him to smash the boulder. And Charos did. Within the boulder was a small worm. "Who provides for the worm?" asked God. "You do" replied Charos. "Then it is not your place to question my actions" said God. And with that he sounded a thunderclap and Charos was deafened. From then on Charos cannot hear the pleas of people who beg for their loved one's lives⁴⁸.

Though it is recognised that the decision of who is to live and who to die ultimately rests with God, the "marriage" which takes place upon death is a union with Charos and not Christ⁴⁹. Moreover, the story portrays not a concern for the dead or dying but concern for the living. The pleas are not to spare the husband because, for example, he is much loved or young, but because he is vital to the actual survival of the household. When a woman with two young children lost her husband in an accident in the village, the concern and dismay of the villagers was expressed predominantly for her: "How will she live (support) two children, a woman on her own?"

As shall be seen throughout the thesis, for the villagers religion and the relations between humans and the

Divine are centered on life in this world. Religion is part of the make up of everyday life. One calls upon the divine largely to sanction actions, to cure or correct what has gone awry, or to participate with one in this world.

Death too is part of human's sinful nature. It came into the world through the original sin of Adam and Eve. Yet, though it is tragic and disrupting it is none the less an aspect of life. A yiayia told me that God asked Eve what she would prefer: few children and no death or many children and death. Eve chose the latter because children bring life and and laughter into the house. To die is not always y linked with true life after death as it is for the nuns⁵⁰. To die is a necessity allowing for the birth of children, allowing for continuity. Dying in the village means a barren "marriage", a unity with Charos which promises no certainty of continuity for the "bride". It cannot be a marriage with Christ for Christ is associated with life, with life on earth.

Children however, who die before they have grown knowledgeable in the ways of the world and society are said to have an afterlife; they become angels (e.g. Cutileiro 1971:109 for Portugal). Whether they actually marry Christ I do not know. I never heard their deaths described in this way and as they are not of age it would seem incongruent, in village terms, to use a metaphor for a child which expresses conjugal unity and thus a loss of the innocence intrinsic to childhood (see Chapter 1). The notion of children as angels was the only definitive statement that I ever obtained concerning the afterlife and it was one that at least amongst the older women was consistent. It might be said that even if some did not hold, in certain contexts, that children became angels, the sheer horror and distress that a young person's death caused made it possibly all the more important to hold onto the hope of a life after death, a life as an angel.

Moreover, as noted in Chapter 3, death signifies ultimately the end of social relations and interaction. The notion of an afterlife contrasts with the abrupt cessation of relationships which have been established in a person's

lifetime. Children have no extended relations. They have never been fully socialised. Their liminality may be expressed by their continuity as angels who though they have human form are not fully human. For children life has not ceased since it has not even reached the point of commencing.

By contrast, the nuns seek personal continuity in Heaven which comes hopefully with death. To the villagers' understanding this is selfish for the nuns seek to save only themselves. And in a sense this is true. Yet, it is the nuns' abandonment of self in the divine through *erota*, elopement and *agape* which eventually allows them to truly love all Creation and synchronically to find themselves, their personhood eternally through Christ⁵¹. In marrying Christ the nuns transcend and "reproduce" themselves. They become angels. They become once again innocent and eternally alive in Christ. In dying and thereby "consummating" their union as brides, they become the true and ever-lasting "children" of God. They give birth, in a manner of speaking, to their own pure and eternal soul.

For the nuns the most important aim in life is self-knowledge (*autognosia*). Through prayer, silence and work (*diakonia*--see Chapter 6) in the honour and to the glory of God, the nuns come to enlightenment, to a knowledge of themselves in God and thus to love. As I have understood it, *autognosia* is the control of the passions and desires through an understanding of those passions: whence they arise and where they lead. This entails an understanding of one's motivations, desires and aims in thought and action. And it is through an acceptance of God that this is made fully possible (e.g. Williams op.cit.:114).

The analogy between children and nuns implied but not made here, however, seems untenable. Firstly, the nuns may say that children become angels upon death but the villagers will never admit to a nun's angelic state. Children become angels because like the nuns they have no hope of reproducing themselves in this life. But, unlike the nuns, they become angels because they have not fully entered life to begin with; they are still innocent. The villagers cannot recog-

nise the nuns' angelic status for the nuns are grown women able to make choices in their lives and who do or should, have knowledge of the world.

Secondly, the nuns see death as a rebirth. They reproduce themselves if you will, as angels. They regain through the conquering of their passions and the acquisition of self knowledge their innocence. It is this great self-knowledge through God that children lack. They do not "reproduce" themselves but simply pass for one life into another. The nuns become 'children of God' and angels but in a very different sense from children who die too young to have ever gained such self-awareness and knowledge⁵²; to have ever lived in the world.

Conclusion:

Thus it is that the nuns by "eloping to the convent" forsake their secular ikoyenia and seek to renounce the bonds, at least ideally, into which they were born. They say that they become betrothed to Christ, the "eternal Bridegroom" (fiance), and their eventual death is regarded as a summons from Christ to his pure and humble bride to enter into a promised and long awaited unity with Him, the Beloved. In becoming the 'brides of Christ', the nuns enter more closely into the community of God. Like the Panayia (Chapter 3), the nuns in giving themselves to God, act as a bridge between this world and the next. In sacrificing their youth (which the Hegumenos of P. says is the greatest sacrifice humans can offer to God) and submitting their will to God, they take the first and greatest step in overcoming their material body, the human side of their being. As they approach God they gain greater self-knowledge and awareness. Yet, becoming more detached from this life they stand in greater need of protection and of reminders of their still human state of bondage. Focused more intently on the divine their body is open to Temptation and should they fall into sin it would signify a great fall indeed. Eternal unity, eternal kinship, with the divine is only achieved upon death for with death the nuns

are reborn as angels in Heaven, fully married to Christ, fully children of God.

In contrast, the villagers' proorismos in life is marriage and the bearing of children for children are the only assurance of continuity after death. These marriages however, are not solely the affair of the couple involved; they are also binding contracts between two households. It is not only individual continuity which children assure, but the continuity of the ikoyenies involved. Thus, a woman's denial of this process by donning the habit is not just a denial of her own continuity but that of her ikoyenia. She is seen as selfish, seeking to follow her own whimsical desires, rather than to face the duties, and difficulties of life in "this world" as a fully socialised human being, as an adult. Her act is therefore well described by the nuns as an elopement. For, like the elopement of young lovers, which defies both ikoyenies and ends the possibility of a "good" and advantageous settlement, a woman's elopement to the convent is viewed as an act of defiance, which ignores the ikoyenia's wants and needs. It is an act against society and as such, nuns are regarded, in one discourse, as failed humans; as those who act like children but who should, in the end, have known better.

Notes for Chapter 4

1. "Stefanonete", she is crowned, refers to the crowns used for the bride and the groom during the marriage service (see Chapter 2). They symbolise the victory of the couple over their passions. In the convent, the crowns are also associated with laurels received by the victorious athlete. In this instance the nuns are described as athletes who have devoted themselves to developing their spiritual capacities to the best of their ability.
2. The nuns used the term: Eonios Numfios (Eternal Bridegroom) or Yambros (bridegroom, in secular contexts also indicating son-in-law status) to describe Christ in this particular relationship.
3. Often, it is not only the household members who are interested in the proceedings of the marriage but close kin as well. How they feel about the marriage may play a role in the negotiations depending upon their status in the ikoyenia; how persuasive they are and, inevitably, how interested they are.
4. Now, as in the past, the dowry consists of both a trousseau made up of linens, bedding, kitchen utensils, and house decorations often provided by the women of the household, and furniture, money, and land negotiated by the men of the household. Friedl suggests that this perceived division in the providing of the trousseau and dowry (though both together and separately they are known as dowry (prika)) allows for the linking of dowry, a girl's chastity, and male honour. For it is the men who provide both the dowry and assure the girl's chastity. See e.g. Friedl 1963: 133; Herzfeld 1983:163-164; Loizos 1975:512. The cost of educating a girl or boy will also be included in the proportioning of the family wealth. The changing practices surrounding the dowering of girls has been discussed extensively. See e.g. du Boulay 1983; Friedl op.cit.; Loizos op.cit..
5. Though it is the girl's ikoyenia who approaches the boy's ikoyenia, the boy's ikoyenia is the one thought to chose. The boy's household decides which bride is the best available, and most likely candidate; which one has the largest dowry, and is the most worthy; which bride they can afford, in terms of honour. See du Boulay (op.cit.:254) who notes that the essential function of the dowry in the past "was not so much to counter, as to reveal, worth". Or we may turn the argument around as say that from the groom's point of view, he may be said to give his timi (glossed as honour) to the bride and her dowry, in a sense buying her with his honour. See Herzfeld op.cit.:163-164.
6. This relates to the importance of the house as an embodiment and continuity of the male line of the ikoyenia in the village. See Chapter 2.
7. See e.g. Rheubottom 1980:236; Kenna 1976b:349; Papataxiarchis 1988:68.
8. This is similar to the position of the isoyambros who is said

to be controlled by his mother-in-law and wife. See Chapter 3.

9. In discussing the prokseniti, I received the impression that the women were somewhat embarrassed by the practice of having to ask or to look for a marriage partner. It seemed as if they felt that they had had to humble themselves (almost to beg(?)). Considering that women, particularly in the past but even today, are only thought to become fully developed human beings with marriage and children the idea of having to ask for a marriage partner does seem somewhat humiliating. Only if a man's ikoyenia deems you worthy can you become a fully socialised member of the community. Otherwise you will remain forever on the fringes of society.

10. The notion of shame (and honour) in the Mediterranean has been discussed extensively. See e.g. du Boulay 1979:111-112; Friedl 1962:84-87; Campbell op.cit.:270-273. As a male attribute see Herzfeld 1985:233-236. Also note Chapter 7.

11. At the marriage ceremony the rings are placed on the ring-fingers of the right hand of the bride and groom.

12. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:125; du Boulay op.cit.:92; Friedl 1963:121; Loizos 1981:30-31; Segalen 1983:25,37,43 for France.

13. The terms eros and agape have been defined in different ways throughout history. Summarising and simplifying de Rougement's (1983) argument, it could be said that Eros is the loss of self in the other and so the loss of a relationship since all is one. Agape on the other hand, may be seen as love through communion or what he terms marriage, and signifies the continuation of a relationship since the distinction between persons is not lost.

14. It should be noted that the speaker being the uncle of my then husband-to-be and knowing that we had been together for a number of years may have been, with the term agape, trying to make our relationship more acceptable, though still viewed as dangerous.

15. Note Chapter 3 on divorce. Also it should be said that many parents feel it is better if their children choose their marriage partners because "if anything goes wrong, they cannot blame us". This may portray an instance of "sour grapes" on the part of the parents who feel that their children will not listen to them in any case. Yet, it may also be that the parents do feel a lightening of their burden of responsibilities towards the child, since the child seeks its own partner.

16. In what manner, if any, have the changes in the Civil Codes effected the villagers I cannot say. It was not my immediate area of interest nor did the villagers ever bring it up for discussion.

17. Though there is no space here to discuss the dowry it should be noted that when the groom and his ikoyenia come to take the dowry items on the Thursday before the wedding, they must first "pay" the bride's ikoyenia who in the beginning refuse them

entry, though finally concede. The groom's party is then watched because they try to "steal" items from the house that are not part of the dowry. In other words, they take more than what has been agreed to. The bride too seems to be "stolen" from the house since she is locked in and her key is not handed over. She must be broken into. See Campbell op.cit.:132-136 for similar description of antagonism.

18. See e.g. Rushton op.cit.:63; Herzfeld 1981, 185:126; Campbell op.cit.:121; Alexiou 1974:120-122; Segalen op.cit.:28 for France. Alexiou (op.cit.:10-11) notes that the Greek word for funeral kedhia also means alliance and parenthood. The root kedhos means concern and in the plural, funeral rites or family feelings. The verb kedhevo, means to tend (a bride or corpse) or to contract an alliance by marriage. The noun kedhestis means relation-in-law. She attributes these associations to the obligations of kin to protect marriage rights and care for funeral rituals. See also Hertz op.cit.:81.

19. See e.g. Rheubottom op.cit.:233; Campbell op.cit.:70,186; Has-cuck 1954:33 for Albania; Segalen op.cit.:134 for France.

20. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:60. Shoes are symbolically important in many rituals and sayings, usually denoting a life change or the cessation of relations. For example, shoes are given to the bride's godfather denoting the end of the relationship since it is the groom's godfather who acts as marriage sponsor. Or, when someone is told, in no uncertain terms, to leave a house, or that a relationship is over it is said "tou edhose ta papoutsia sto cheri" (s/he handed him his shoes).

21. Though there is no space here to elaborate, it should be noted that within the marriage ceremony and preparation acts symbolising the stealing of the bride are evident calling attention to the reluctance of losing a member of the household. Such symbolic acts however, take place within a ritualised context and between two consenting households and has little to do with the defiance of social norms.

22. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:92-94. Goddard (1987:178-179) notes a similar response to elopement, and suggests that elopement is a means, though limited, through which women can manipulate the honour code to gain what they desire.

23. Rheubottom (op.cit.:237) notes that for a girl to elope to a boy's house will bring prestige to his family whereas a boy eloping to a girl's house will lose prestige. Though this would fit in well with ideas concerning in-marrying men, most of my informants felt that in either situation both households would fare badly.

24. This reaction on the part of many villagers relates to notions concerning knowledge, gender and accountability, in terms of age as discussed in Chapter 1.

25. Though there is no space to discuss the matter fully, I would suggest that because fathers represent authority and societal

restraints, which often repress the full expression of one's self and step-mothers are foreign (ksenes), often having their own children whom they wish to assist to the detriment of their husband's children, these roles well serve as symbolic barriers to the lovers happiness. Step-mothers in particular, represent an "unnatural" situation, a forced relationship of maternity where no bonds of flesh exist (e.g. Segalen op.cit.:66-68 for France).

26. In recent years a number of stories similar to the one above have appeared in national newspapers. Sometimes the stories seem to imply that the girl has been brainwashed by the wily nuns. Abbots are accused of forbidding girls to see their parents who have come to visit them. They are said to fear that the girl will come to "her senses" and leave the noviciate. Some of the nuns I spoke with said that the Abbot might indeed forbid the novice to speak with her relatives in order to spare her the trauma of explaining and comforting highly emotional parents. It is to protect the novice from the parents that this rule is enforced and not because they seek to force the young woman into confinement.

27. For the parents of a monk the embarrassment is enhanced by the fact that it calls into question the masculinity of their son. His celibacy is suspect. It is assumed that he joined the monastery because of his preference for men as sexual partners. He is considered to be, in all likelihood, a poustis, a homosexual (usually passive -- e.g. Brandes 1985:233; Chapter 6). As lesbianism is not truly considered a viable alternative (for reasons which I do not have the space to speculate upon here), one often hears the rather crude joke that all the nuns need is a "good prick" (kalo poutso) to come to their senses.

28. One bishop told me that when he became a priest his mother was dismayed and embarrassed and avoided her friends so as not to have to discuss his vocation. When he was ordained a bishop however, she gave a party and now boasts continually of his success.

29. This has not always been the case. Many prominent women in Byzantine society were or became nuns. Like the monks of their time they were learned, wrote books and achieved sanctity. What happened during the 400 years of Ottoman rule is briefly discussed in Chapter 1.

30. Note de Rougement (op.cit.:153,168) who sees the passage of erota to agape like a passage from the mad desire to love to a self-possession and dis-intoxication wherein the marriage of a soul to God is possible. This is made possible because with agape the essential distinction between creature and Creator is made. This play between unity and distinction will be addressed in Chapters 6 and 7 in terms of hierarchy. Sherrard (1976:46-47) also notes that to love a person in both body and spirit is in the right way of loving God because though it may be possible to love God free from all form for most, it is better and easier to respond to Him through another person. Similarly, the nuns may be said to respond to God through Christ who is both human and divine. Thus, the eros of the nuns though it does not mean

sexual contact, does denote a unity of opposites: the male with the female; the intellect with the soul; the active with the passive; the spirit and the body. See Williams 1975:118-119; Dumont 1987:99.

31. Stewart (1985:229) notes that supernatural spirits are often associated with air (see also Blum and Blum op.cit.) and that possession by such beings entails either the loss of mind, speech, and/or may cause impotency (op.cit.:225). If we also note that these supernatural beings exist at the boundaries of the community, in liminal spaces, the loss of one's right senses through doing something out of the ordinary, something which challenges the conventional definitions of womanhood is perfectly expressed by the notion of one's mind taking air.

32. The "true religion" refers to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The religious schism between East and West in 1054, marked the divide between the two forms of Christianity. Catholicism is regarded by the nuns as having lost the correct path of Christianity. It is regarded as an apostatic tradition.

33. This reinforces the image of a struggle required to achieve the desired goal of unity with the Divine. The metaphor of struggle which likens the nuns to soldiers is discussed in Chapter 7. The dual nature of punishment, "trials", or illness that is, the notion that they are sent by God to test and "forge" his most worthy disciples seems to contrast with the notion that they are punishments for sinners.

34. None the less the Church does allow divorce in cases of adultery or other serious misdemeanours within the marriage. It also allows for up to three marriages, though special compensation must be granted. With the changes in Family Law in 1983, divorce is now granted by the State without necessitating recourse to the Church.

35. The symbolism of hair has been discussed by others. Hallpike 1969 associates the cutting of hair with social control, whereas Leach 1958 associates it with the symbolic subconscious. Lewis 1987 notes that hair cutting does not always mean placement within the social order nor is it always a sign of abstinence from sex. Hair whether cut or allowed to grow long must be understood in context, and the act of cutting may best be understood as a boundary marker. Also Alexiou (1983:87) notes that in folksongs, particularly those concerning brides and their difficult fate, the cutting of hair is associated with mourning and the changes of social and sexual roles (often denial of sexual role). See e.g. Obeyesekere 1984; Firth 1973:Chapter 8; Campbell-Jones op.cit.:175-176.

36. The association of a nun with an old woman is also evident in that old women, often widows, have, as Hirschon (1983) notes, divested themselves, or been divested, of many of the objects of life--adornments, houses, children, husbands. They are thus able to participate more actively in the religious life. In this manner, nuns are indeed 'good old women' as they are called in Greek--kaloyries. But, they are unnaturally so, having divested

themselves of life before ever becoming fully involved in it. Christian (1989:161) sees the black garment as a statement of humility before God, "a statement of intentional purity, as opposed to the intrinsic purity of childhood."

37. A similar state of affairs is recorded by Parry (1982:37) for the Hindu ascetic who is not cremated since cremation would imply that his renunciation of the world had been inadequate.

38. This again seems reminiscent of the idea that martyrdom is lived today through the open avowal of one's love for Christ in spite of social ridicule. And what more open avowal of this love than becoming a nun?

39. Leach (1976: 56) suggests that it is highly standardised and easily recognised clothing which conveys meaningful information. Such certainly is the case with the nuns. See also Edmunds op.cit.:127-131; Campbell-Jones op.cit.:177.

40. It should be noted that in the convent there are no mirrors. To desire to see one's self in a reflection is to show concern over one's personal, outward appearance when all that should concern one is the inner light and purity of the soul. It is said that if the soul is pure its beauty will shine through making the outward characteristics also beautiful. See Conclusion.

41. The symbolisation of the clothes is taken from Behm(op.cit.:33-37) though I did gain some information concerning the habit which coincides with her findings. See also Hammond 1956:170.

42. In T. one could not see the nuns during the services (See Chapter 2) making it difficult to determine the grade to which they belonged. However, the distinction between the sisters was not immediately obvious and even later it seemed that the hierarchy though evident was minimised before outsiders in contrast with the convents described by Edmunds op.cit.:102; Campbell-Jones op.cit..

43. Age seems to be an implicit factor in the scheme possibly because it is linked with the cessation of physical passions and the acquisition of knowledge and experience. However, it does not necessarily determine the spiritual state of the person. Also, it should be noted that not all monastics feel they must acquire these signs or status. Many decline to become microschima or meyaloschima to express humility or because they feel unworthy.

44. The word yineka means woman as opposed to the word koritsi which means young female person. The terms for husband and wife are andras (man) and yineka (woman). The term yineka implies having had sexual contact as opposed to the unmarried koritsi who supposedly has not. Widows and divorcees are thus also considered yinekes. Now, with pre-marital sex the terms are not as clear cut as in the past.

45. Behm (op.cit.: 37) notes that the nuns do not remove the

habit when they go to sleep. "Unlike the layman whose time is divided between work and leisure the nun must always be prepared for her work." The nuns liken their existence to soldiers who must always be ready, who cannot be caught in their pyjamas. Here the call is not to join the bridegroom but rather to battle against evil. In the Hegumeni's account then the "call" may be construed in either manner and I believe that either interpretation would be acceptable to her. In the context of our discussion however, I believe she wished to emphasise that Christ may call his bride at any moment to His side and if she is not prepared she cannot follow. For further discussion on monastics as soldiers see Chapter 7.

46. Edmunds (op.cit.:126) rightly notes that in this manner the choice of chastity in becoming a nun is reduced to the practice of virginity thereby making the woman's choice of autonomy one which is dependent and defined by her non-availability to men. Her identification as a spouse similarly marks her non-availability to men, since it identifies her as belonging to one man. Thus, virginity ceases to be a bid for autonomy becoming simply a means of once again defining women through their sexual and reproductive aspects.

47. See e.g. Alexiou op.cit.:195; Rushton op.cit.:63; Danforth op.cit.:79-82; Herzfeld op.cit.:48. Upon death an unmarried person is not only dressed in full wedding attire but sugared almonds may be distributed at the funeral thereby symbolically completing the social rites associated with life. See e.g. Alexiou op.cit.:5,39,120-121; Herzfeld op.cit.:48.

48. A similar story is noted by Hirschon (1989:209-10) amongst the refugees in Kokkinia, Athens.

49. Alexiou (op.cit.:49-50) describes Charos as a servant of God and it is to him that mourners address themselves. Blum and Blum (op.cit.:105, 223) note that through this personification of death, death is humanised and made familiar. In this guise death and God, an abstract entity, can be addressed and communicated with.

50. Lison-Tolosana (op.cit.:310-311) notes that the sense of personal extinction usually compels people to take the Last Sacrament despite often professed beliefs that there is no personal endurance after death, something noted in the village as well. Note however, Eliade (1989:88,101) who sees in similar statements as the one by the yiayia, that a type of return is felt to occur through life continued by others. In other words, death is felt both by the nuns and the villagers as a necessity for regeneration, though how this regeneration is defined may differ between the two and in different contexts.

51. Edmunds (op.cit.:131) also notes the emotional satisfaction derived through the relationship with the man-God, Christ.

52. Similarly, Christian 1989:156-157 for Spain; Douglass 1969:77-78 for the Basque; Pina-Cabral 1986:219 for Portugal.

CHAPTER 5

Consumption and exchange in the village

Introduction

In the previous chapters the constructions of space, gender relations, and kinship were examined with an attempt to see them as on-going processes of human action and interaction; of processes through which the villagers and the nuns distinguish themselves and create their identities both within their respective communities and vis-a-vis one another.

In this chapter, and those to follow, the focus will continue to be on reproduction, either spiritual or physical. It will be noted that the underlying theme, one which was implicit in the previous chapters and which will be increasingly prominent in the chapters to follow, is the use of bodily images or experiences to express human interaction with the divine or with other persons.

As is often noted¹, the human body is the communicative, interactive, and creative medium through which humans experience their world. Its limitations moreover, demand we deal with and express those events of birth, degeneration, death, pain, pleasure; those events immediately experienced by the body. Yet, these physical limitations or experiences may also provide means whereby we are able to express more abstract notions and concepts. By elaborating upon these primary actions and feelings and associating them with those more inchoate sentiments, thoughts, or actions, understanding and communication may be achieved. Through figurative speech or action that which is less easily defined may be associated with the more concrete thereby creating a new understanding of, or reiterating and reinforcing an already established view of the world.

This chapter and those to follow focus on the act of eating, of consumption and the symbolism of food as metaphors used to describe social interaction, reproduction and iden-

tity. Consumption is the act of incorporating a substance within one's body and is associated analogically by the nuns and the villagers with the incorporation of others within one's sphere of interaction. For example, metaphors of consumption are used in various contexts implying amongst other things: to incorporate, to destroy, to dominate, to seduce, to spend, to waste, to betray...etc. To say to a child: "I will roast you and eat you" (tha to pseiso ke tha to fao) implies love and seems to express the desire to internalise the child, to make it one's own. When you desire something, particularly when you lust after someone, you are said to eat it/them with your eyes (tin etroye me ta matia tou); or, when you are angry and overwrought people will say: "alright calm down, don't eat me" (kale de, mi me tros). I would suggest that consumption may be used to express the destruction of something; the crossing over into another territory, another bounded system; the transformation of the other by self whether in a well-meaning or destructive sense. Consumption then, and by association feeding, are acts imbued with meaning, serving as powerful experiential symbols for metaphors of social interaction in Greece. And this is in part because consuming and feeding are basic or primary physical experiences. They serve as very immediate points of reference.

Given this it is not surprising that foods, those substances in other worlds that are deemed consumable, are differentiated and serve as indicators of social and emotional links between persons, the divine, and the dead. Following the lead of others² it is noted that what is consumed is not simply a factor of supply and demand but part of a system of meaningful relations and this chapter attempts to explore some of those relations.

This however, begs the question why food, feeding and consumption are given such prominence in this thesis. It will be noted that in almost all ethnographies dealing with Greece and with the Mediterranean, feeding is one of the central acts defining motherhood and thus womanhood (see Chapter 3). It is often seen as an extension of women's relations with their children. For as a mother feeds the in-

fant from her body so too does she prepare and feed the household from her kitchen (analogies between the kitchen and women's bodies may be seen in Dubisch's seminal article (1986). Moreover in Greece, as many have noted³, food is intimately related with the family and with a general area of concern and interest in Greek social life. It is part of a general idiom in which social relations are expressed.

An examination of food however, concerns not only matters of its preparation and consumption but also the avoidance of food through fasting and abstinence⁴. From a historic perspective, Bynum (1987) points out that throughout the course of Western history (as in the village, particularly in the past) most political, social, and economic resources were controlled by men. Food however, for Medieval women, and its preparation signalled the control of a vital resource. Women's food distribution and their fasting were culturally acceptable forms of asceticism and self expression since what women did do was prepare and serve food rather than eat it⁵. It is noteworthy that in the village it is accepted practice for the mother of the household to serve herself the least desirable portion of the food, reserving the choicest servings for the men. Bynum notes however, that should a woman's food distribution or food avoidance disrupt their role as food preparers it could and did wreak havoc with social relations. In the village this is equally true, in that a woman who refuses to cook for her ikoyenia because of her desire to abstain from food for religious purposes beyond those deemed socially necessary, will be regarded as a failure in her duties as mother and thus no longer a fully integrated member of the community (e.g. Rushton 1985).

Foods and the partaking or refusal to consume, serve as powerful symbols, particularly in relation to women who are intimately related with food preparation. As this thesis in its discussion of gender relations is skewed towards a women's view point and since its primary concern is the analysis of nuns' lives, food and consumption are inevitably areas of interest.

In this chapter, secular practices in relation to food

and how these portray notions of kinship, gender, and reproduction will be examined. It is only by understanding these secular practices that we are able to understand how those women behind the convent walls use the symbolism of food and the metaphors of consumption to express their relations with the divine and their disassociations from and interactions with the laity.

Food and Meals

The term fayito (food) is often used to refer to that which is cooked and tasty (nostimo) i.e. salty. It refers to food eaten on a plate at the table and ideally in the company of other household members. The classic meal in the household consists of the household members sitting around a table usually in the kitchen⁶. The food is served by one of the women of the household, usually the one responsible for cooking it. Thick slices of bread are placed by each setting. If the household members are practising Orthodox Christians, a blessing may be said by either a parent or grandparent of either sex. If not, then a mother or grandmother may be seen to cross herself before beginning to eat. There is little talk while people are eating, concentration being centered on the task at hand.

After everyone has finished eating fresh fruits are brought to the table. Fruit by itself is not fayito and this is evident in that it is eaten often as a snack between meals and never forms part of the main course. It is eaten to refresh the mouth--"na dhrosisti to stoma sou". Fruits such as apples and pears are always peeled. This serves as a means of preparing or domesticating the fruit⁷. After the fruit is eaten one may again cross oneself though this is rarely done, and the meal is finished.

After a number of meals with my ikoyenia in the village, I noticed that my yiayia (grandmother) would cross herself directly after finishing her fayito and before eating her fruit. This was pointed out as incorrect by my mother-in-law for the sign of the cross should be made when one stops

eating. But it was significant in that the old woman quite clearly distinguished the cooked meal as food from the non-food substance of fruit and associated the act of eating only with fayito. The question: "Efayes?" (Did you eat?) means exactly that: "Have you had food? Have you had a meal?" and demonstrates the relationship between eating and what is defined as food.

It is rude and even morally wrong to leave fayito. For, fayito is considered nourishing and sustaining; a necessity for continued good health and life. The poverty that existed up through the fifties is still well remembered. It is noticed if one leaves some of one's partially eaten slice of bread. This bread is your chapsia -your mouthful- and it is considered your strength. It should be consumed. If you cannot eat it, more often than not a grandmother or mother will, to avoid feeding it to the chickens. This practice concerning bread may also have to do with symbolic position occupied by bread within the house and the community (see below).

As noted above, it is women who are responsible for the day-to-day meals in the home. I have often seen young men refuse to eat unless their mother or sister prepared a plate for them and set it on the table. In the past when women's contribution to field labour was more wide-spread than it is today and the only form of transport between the village and distant fields was by donkey or by foot, the mid-day meal consisted of a packed lunch of bread, maybe a tiny morsel of cheese, and olives. It was only after the women had returned from the fields in the evening that a proper cooked meal could be made for the household members.

Now that many of the women do not contribute full time to agricultural labour and with the ownership of cars or at least a moped by most households in the village, and with good public transportation, the men and those women who do work outside the village are able to come home for a large mid-day meal. Thus, it is the evening meal that is lighter and less emphasised as a time of household commensality.

Despite this fact, when visiting a friend during the evening it is still generally considered polite to leave when

the husband returns from his nightly visit to the kafenion. It is then that the wife will lay the table for the evening meal. The household if they have an evening visitor will not eat until the visitor is gone (See Chapter 2). The frustration I have seen among friends concerning a visitor who refuses to take the hint to leave is great. The household members will often sit politely even until eleven o'clock without eating a bite if a neighbour refuses to budge. Or, if they have a separate kitchen they may slip off discreetly one by one to wolf down their meal and return to the guest.

However, if the household is at the table at any time of the day and someone stops by to deliver a message or ask a favour, the head of the household will immediately ask the person to join them: "Come and eat." (Ela na fame). It is then polite to refuse and to leave as soon as possible despite the urging of the household members. A case in point was cited to me as admirable by a woman with three nephews. The boys, though very young, would leave immediately whenever they saw the slightest hint that their aunt was preparing to serve a meal and this despite sincere urging to sit and join the household at the table.

I have never witnessed a dinner party in the American or English sense of the word (see Cowan op.cit.). One household will not invite another household in the village for dinner. However, meals including married sons and daughters and their children are not uncommon. Name Day celebrations or special Sunday meals may include members outside the immediate household. Or, a married sibling may invite a married brother or sister and their family to a meal if they do not live in the same village.

Two couples who simply wish to get together in the evening usually go to a tavern or to the village square and there share a meal and keep each other company. The house and household meal is for the household members and occasionally for the close relatives, particularly those of the husband's family. Beyond that, meals with friends and relatives are eaten in public.

Large household meals such as those during Easter or occasionally a Name Day meal, which may include close friends as well as relatives and/or neighbours take place in the front stone or cement yard or in the formal sitting room. There a large elaborate meal is planned. Food in great abundance is displayed and consumed including roast meat; cheese and vegetable pies; cheeses; salads; soup; wine and bread. It is important to have variety and quantity otherwise it may prove embarrassing to the household. Such feasts are formal and public displays of wealth and status. They are statements of the abundance of the food substances the household can provide in its hospitality (filoksenia--lit. love of strangers) to outsiders, and its ability to sustain itself⁸.

On a daily basis however, the meal is much more limited in quantity and reserved for the household members only. To serve fayito to a neighbour on an informal occasion is to give away the very substance that nourishes and sustains the ikoyenia. It also leaves the household open to criticism since they cannot, at such short notice, offer the very best. Moreover, to sit down informally to a meal with another ikoyenia may be considered an act of disloyalty, an implicit criticism of the ability of one's own ikoyenia to sustain one, though, as with all behaviour, much depends on the context⁹. It also places one in an inferior position vis-a-vis the host for the guest, like a child, is the recipient of nourishment. As in the kersama relations described above, the guest becomes indebted to the host. The ritualised refusal of food by the guest and the ritualised insistence that it be taken portray the ambiguous emotions and relationship that hospitality engenders.

Commensality then, serves to define the members of the household as a group. It marks their relationship and indicates the closed, or bounded aspect of the household. It is as if the very substance creates a person's being, linking him/her both physically and spiritually, with the household. Care must be taken therefore when allowing outsiders to participate in this act of commensality, however guarded and ritualised it is.

Women insist that the mid-day meal must be a cooked meal¹⁰ and the same meal cannot be served two days running. Freshly cooked meals must be served even along side the left-overs from the previous day. Food should not be wasted or thrown away though occasionally some leftovers will be thrown to the chickens. The women say that they must cook everyday otherwise the men would complain. From what I saw the men were generally easy going about what they ate and would not have made much of a fuss if served the same meal twice. This is not to say that some men might have become annoyed with their wives for such negligence. If it ever got to the point of beating a wife I do not know, though I do know that some women did feel "the heavy hand" (to vari cheri--euphemism for beating) of their husbands from time to time. In general, a woman that did not do her housework properly, which included the cooking of the mid-day meal, was suspected of being either lazy or worse, gallivanting around the neighbourhood. It has been noted by others that it could also signify that a woman was having an illicit affair (e.g. Dubisch op.cit.:200). However, I never heard such negligence being given as proof of illicit behaviour in the village.

It seems then that the need to have a freshly cooked meal on the table each day was a rule upheld more by the women than the men. It was part of their identity as good housewives. In the mornings as women went about their work the question that greeted one's ears was: "What are you having for lunch?" or more precisely: "What will you have for food?" (Ti echete via fayito?). If the opportunity was missed in the morning to ask one's neighbours what was cooking, it was not missed in the afternoon when the women would visit one another bringing with them some handiwork and chatting over coffee or later, on a winter's evening, nipping a sweet liqueur, supposedly behind the backs of their husbands.

Food cooked in the household is considered to be the cleanest (katharo fayito) and most beneficial: "You know what ingredients went into its making." If the ingredients are home produced then the food is thought to be especially clean, good and beneficial. It will protect against illness

and grant health. In this sense life in the city is often compared to life in the village in terms of food and health. Store bought produce are said to have no taste and to lack the freshness and full life-giving properties found in the produce of one's garden. Poor health is said to occur more frequently in the city and, in part, is considered to stem from the lack of fresh, pure food. Thus, villagers will often send close relatives any number of food products which may be cheap and readily available in the city but are not "as good" as those from the village.

To summarise, it is the cooked meal that is defined as food (fayito) in the village. It is the cooked meal, made fresh and preferably from home produce, that is the nourishing, sustaining substance that keeps the members of the household well and alive. The meal also serves to identify and bind the members of the household into a small community. And, as it is a woman's responsibility to reproduce and maintain the household and its members, cooking food is the central, most important aspect of her duties. It symbolises most succinctly her role as a housewife and her identity as a woman.

Bread

In the past, before WWII and even into the sixties, psomi (bread) making was a major task performed by the women of the household. Making bread is expressed in English by the verb "to bake". In the village the making of bread was expressed by the verb "to knead" (zemono). At least twice a week the women in the village would knead bread for the household. Today most women buy the bread at the baker's (e.g. Friedl 1962:22; Loizos 1981:22). However, home-made bread is still highly esteemed, praised as real bread and eaten with great relish. The women who knead it are praised as good homemakers¹¹.

Bread in the past was not exchanged in the same way that samples of cooked food were and are exchanged. The exchange of food is a show of neighbourliness and friendship and the

plate is returned either washed or with a return sampling of cooked food. In the case of bread, leaven is given if a woman's leaven does not rise or if she has run out. Today, those who bake bread at home will offer a sample to a favoured neighbour or friend as they do with food. Generally however, as in the past, bread is given only in an emergency if a housewife has not had time to prepare or buy the needed bread.

Bread is the basic, neutral component in any meal and is eaten at all times throughout the year during both fasts and feasts¹². A meal without bread is inconceivable and people will say that they feel they have not eaten if they have not had bread. Yet alone bread does not constitute a meal. "Mono psomi efayes?" (You've eaten only bread?) they ask in dismay. Bread is necessary to the meal but it is not enough.

Bread is also an expression of unity. Complaints to a relative who lives abroad will take the form: "Oute mia psicha psomi dhen fayame mazi" (Not even a crumb of bread have we eaten together). It is a complaint that expresses the absence of even the most basic of commensal ties: the sharing of the common substance of life.

This commensal and binding aspect of bread is also evident in Orthodox ritual. Bread is one half of the equation expressing unity in Christ through the partaking of the Holy Communion. Without wine, the blood, bread cannot be the true flesh of Christ; it is not complete. This is evident in that if one does not receive the holy sacrament one may still receive a small piece of blessed bread given at the end of the liturgy by the priest which is called antidhoro ("instead of the gift"). It is given as a blessing uniting those who did not receive Holy Communion with those who did while also marking the differences between them. The antidhoro is not the gift of communion. It is blessed but it is not consecrated. In this instance too, bread is essential but not enough.

In the past, prosforo, bread used for the Holy Communion, was made by women at home. It had to be made by

kathares yinekes (clean women), that is women who were not menstruating and who had not had sexual relations with a man for at least a day. For this reason, the task was often left to old widows. Though young virgin girls who were not menstruating met the requirements needed to knead the prosforo they were not as experienced in bread making as were the older women. Today, it is the baker who makes the prosforo for the village church though villagers would not take such prosforo to a monastery or convent. It would be considered unclean by the nuns and thus, disrespectful of the sanctity of the convent¹³. However, though it is not considered "clean" enough for the convent it is still acceptable in the village because: "It is kneaded by machines and not by human hands". The crucial moment in bread-making seems then, to occur when the bread is kneaded, though no one could explain why. There seems, however, to be some similarity with the description given by Pina-Cabral for Portugal (op.cit.:42-45). In bread-making he notes:

the stress is not laid on the baking of the bread but rather on the swelling of the kneaded dough. Once the dough has risen, then it is 'alive' and will be usable as the basis of the household's unity of commensality. Thus the rising of bread and pregnancy are analogically related. (op.cit.:44)¹⁴.

This holds true in the village for, as shown above, to make bread is to knead it. This may be because it is in the kneading of the bread that "life" is imparted to it which allows it to rise. This moreover parallels one of the basic differences between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Catholics use a wafer to symbolise the body of Christ arguing that Christ ate unleavened bread at the Last Supper. The Orthodox on the other hand use leavened bread choosing in this manner to emphasise Christ's Resurrection through the leavened, "risen" bread, the bread of life¹⁵. It was also mentioned by a few women informants that should the dough not have leavening or should it fail for some other reason to rise, the placing of the Holy Cross upon it would induce the dough to rise and allow for the making of bread.

Risen dough is symbolically associated with both spiritual and physical life. Yet, while bread for the household is kneaded by the mother of the household (ideally and often in practice), that is the woman who reproduces the household through the children she bears, the bread made for the Church should be kneaded by women who can no longer reproduce children. The life-giving forces of the ecclesiastical bread (prosforo) should be free from the "unclean" act of sexual reproduction, again emphasising the spiritual renewal of humanity through Christ.

It is not surprising then, that a number of informants insisted that the prosforo was not psomi (bread). It belonged to a separate category. Prosforo was made by widows not by mothers, and it was made for religious purposes not for the household. A direct analogy therefore, between psomi and prosforo might be untenable. Yet, I would argue that though the prosforo is made from the best wheat flour unlike psomi, the mechanical process of making it is similar to that of psomi, and as a substance, it is the same. The villagers' insistence on the difference between psomi and prosforo stems from the different uses and the different requirements that must be followed by those who make the psomi and prosforo. Yet, as similar substances, as breads, the psomi and the prosforo may, as we have seen, refer to and evoke similar as well as contradictory responses and imagery. I would hold that the symbolism of two different breads is created by the interrelationship between them; a relationship of similarity and contrast, much like the relationship between the convent and the secular community¹⁶.

Meat

While bread signifies a basic substance, meat is considered the most strengthening and therefore vitalising, and prestigious of cooked foods. Meat is what the man of the household in the past needed most since it was agreed that he did the heaviest most taxing work in the household¹⁷. He was given the choicest meats from the head of the boiled lamb and

from the innards¹⁸. Today most young ikoyenies tend to feed their youngsters these choice bits of meat "to help them grow". This emphasis on the child, not the man seems to follow the shift in emphasis from manual labour which is considered dirty and degrading to the white collar work that can be obtained through education. It is no longer hard work in the fields that sustains households but the hard work of the brain which is performed by the children. The shift from manual to mental labour has not changed the significance of meat as a vitalising food. It has however inverted the hierarchy within the household¹⁹.

It might be informative to pause for a moment to describe what is meant by meat. I do not have the space here to elaborate on the categories of edible and inedible animals though a brief outline may be helpful. All animals included in the category of pests (i.e. snakes, rats, weasels) are inedible. Most non-predatory wild birds are eaten except for those like the swallow (an auspicious sign, omen of Spring), the stork (and other large water birds which are said to mate for life and thus be like humans) and small birds like sparrows which nest near houses and are therefore possibly seen as semi-domesticated. Owls are considered inauspicious, possibly because they are night animals and are thereby linked with the dangers associated with darkness. Chickens, though birds, are domesticated, kept in yards and feed along with cheap grains, scraps from the table. Their eggs are eaten and either on special occasions or when the birds are old, they are slaughtered and consumed. Dogs, cats and donkeys, mules or horses are never eaten. As Tambiah (1969) points out for the Thai, dogs are domesticated animals living with humans within the walls of the household but not invited into the house. They cannot be consumed, since they are already incorporated within the human realm. Moreover, dogs are considered dirty, carriers of disease. They are said to breed with complete disregard for kin affiliations as for example a bitch mating with her off-spring. Thus, though of the house, they are considered sub-human, a degenerated member of the society. Cats, by contrast, though they are not allowed into

the house are considered clean animals; they wash themselves. They are said not to smell, nor do they seem to take obvious pleasure in rolling in dirt as do dogs. Moreover, they perform the function of keeping the house free from rodents. Donkeys, mules and horses are companions and work mates carrying heavy loads to and from the fields with, what is said to be, amazing fidelity. Stories are told of men, who tired after a long day in the field, would fall asleep astride their animal to awaken at home. Moreover, these animals are said not to breed incestuously like other animals. A few informants said that they follow kinship rules much stricter than those followed by humans.

The most auspicious animals for consumption are sheep and goats²⁰. These animals symbolised up until the recent past, the household's wealth. People semi-jestingly said of one man that he was so much in love with a woman and thought so much of himself that he would have offered 400 head of sheep to have her as his wife. Sheep and goats are tended by the men of the household and are either slaughtered to mark special ritual occasions or sold in market. They are also part of the religious symbolism: the pascal lamb representing the sacrificed Christ.

Tambiah in discussing Douglas's (1979) theory of classificatory anomalies and their relationship to dietary rules notes (op.cit.:452) that it is not enough to draw deductions concerning dietary rules simply from a formalised scheme of animal categories. It is necessary as well to examine the social interests and values of the people who are in the continuing process of creating and ordering their world. From the above very brief examples it may be noted that animal categories follow a pattern that both includes and excludes animals in accordance with marriage practices and spatial ordering. In the following, I will confine my examination of meat defined to be the flesh of goats and sheep, unless otherwise noted. It will be seen that it is the relation between the sheep or goats and men, in terms of the household and exchange, that inform to a large extent the auspicious position occupied by this form of meat.

Meat as festive food:

When asked on Sunday "What do you have for food?" the answer invariably is "kreas me patates" that is meat²¹ and potatoes. Meat is eaten on Sundays after the morning liturgy. It is recognised by many villagers that the days in the week endlessly repeat those days of the week known as Meyali Evdhomadha (Holy Week) which precedes Easter Sunday. Sunday thus may be seen as a little Easter--the day Christ rose from the dead²². To eat meat on Sunday is to partake, in essence, in the pascal lamb. Can it be said that having been purified and vitalised spiritually by partaking of the Holy Communion on Sunday, one may take in the vitalising food of this world--meat? The villagers themselves never said this nor do I believe that they think of the Sunday meal in this manner. Very few villagers attend church regularly. Usually there are a number of older women, a few older men, and only a handful of young men and women. However, many people do say that they eat meat on Sunday because it is the day in the week of Christ's Resurrection. The Sunday meal, like Easter, is the commensal meat-eating meal.

Meat in its most coveted form i.e. a whole animal roasted over coals, is cooked by men in public. The women in the household either boil or oven roast pieces of meat in the kitchens or in their outdoor ovens. They never cook a whole animal. One obvious reason may be the fact that a whole lamb could never fit in the oven let alone be consumed by the household.

This however is not an explanation since women could conceivably roast whole animals in the yard. Yet, by examining the symbolic links between meat, blood and reproduction (kinship), and gender it will become clear that the roasting of whole animals in public is not easily associated with women. For essentially women cook pieces of meat in their homes to sustain the household while men cook whole animals in public area of their yards to represent publicly their household's strength and continuity. Men may also roast meat in public, in the square, either representing their community's strength and unity or simply following the

precept that in public areas it is ideally the men who act. Men should be seen cooking and feeding whole communities, while women cook and feed households. Meat and cooking therefore, reflect gender relationships as well as relationships within the household and the community (e.g. Papataxiarchis 1988:129; Segalen op.cit.:84 for France).

Meat is the feast food par excellence. It is indispensable when entertaining guests in the home on special occasions. Meat up until the 1960's was not a common food for home consumption, thus its consumption on festive occasions served both to mark the importance of the occasion and the importance of the meat as prestigious food. Today it has lost much of its festive appeal especially amongst the young, for as it is relatively cheap and easily obtained it is often served in the home during the main, mid-day meal. However the method of slow roasting a whole suckling lamb or goat on a spit over coals is still reserved for festive occasions, particularly those of Easter and marriages²³. Here we shall explore the marriage celebration leaving the discussion of Easter for a later chapter.

Food and Marriage

When the bride leaves her household to enter her husband's household she is crossing strictly marked and maintained boundaries defined by kinship and household structure. She is uniting two conceptually separate entities. The incorporation of this foreign member is gradual and often accompanied by mistrust and trepidation.

The Week before the Wedding:

Here we shall concentrate on food during the preparations and feasts of the wedding as recalled by the villagers. Most weddings still follow this general pattern though of course variations occurred and occur constantly. Variations however that I witnessed in the weddings I attended will be noted and briefly discussed.

A church wedding always takes place on a Sunday any time after the morning liturgy. On the Tuesday before the wedding the women of both the groom's household and the bride's household would prepare the prozimi, the leavening used to make the circular wedding bread, known as bouyatsa (pl. bouyatses)²⁴. In the groom's household the women would sieve the flour for the bread and then throw it on the groom--"ton alevronoun" (they dust him with flour). With this flour they then make the prozimi. This serves it seems to link the groom with the bread being made. On the Thursday the bouyatses, would be made by the women of the household with the exception of widows²⁵. Their state of mourning prohibits them from participating in this happy event. Associated as they are with death, their participation in these preparations could bring bad luck to the couple. Similarly, the newly wed couple should not attend funerals for up to one year after their marriage. Death is said to burn and destroy the new, fragile bond of life that the new couple represent.

In the center of these round bouyatsa loaves, a large artichoke made of dough would be placed. Four snakes also of dough would converge towards the center their heads resting on the artichoke, their mouths wide open. A dough ribbon wound around the loaf completed the design.

On the Friday the bouyatses of the two households would be exchanged. Along with the exchange of the bouyatsa the bride would give the groom underclothes and a tie which would be worn at the wedding and the groom would in return supply the bride with her wedding undergarments²⁶. Given that the groom's bouyatsa was made with flour thrown on the groom and eaten by the bride and her household, and given that an exchange of undergarments accompanied the exchange of bouyatses, a link might be drawn between the sexual act and the consumption of bread: the consumption and incorporation, in other words, of the each others basic sustaining substance. The exchange of the bouyatsa and the undergarments, was moreover, carried out by the sibling, cousin, or sister-in-law of the bride or groom respectively. This exchange, conducted by those of the same generation as the bride and

groom, foreshadowed the relations to be established by the marriage. Siblings, cousins etc. of both households were now almost relatives, making sexual contact between them, though possible, forbidden and socially condemned, since the sexual contact by the new couple would soon commence. Commensality was created through kinship while circumscribing sexuality.

Thus, just as bread sustains the living ikoyenia, conjugal sex sustains and assures its continuity through the generations. The bouyatsa, bread, symbolises unity just as the grandchildren will. But, though both ikoyenies consume each others bread, the bride and her ikoyenia eat the bread directly linked with the groom. In consuming his substance they may be symbolically more strongly linked with his ikoyenia (note Chapter 3).

To summarise, the two unrelated (or distantly related) households by symbolically dissolving their boundaries to become one (through the exchange of bread), attempt to mitigate the perceived danger inherent when household members are lost or outsiders are incorporated²⁷. The ambivalence inherent in this exchange and dissolving of boundaries is expressed symbolically by the artichoke and snake decorations used by both households, on the bouyatses.

Snakes and Artichokes:

The artichoke is a vegetable grown in household gardens and thus linked to the house. Loizos points out (personal communication) that the artichoke may also serve as an apt symbol for the household in that it creates an image of individuals, as portrayed by the leaves, who are organised around a strong base, as portrayed by the stem, allowing for the conceptualisation of strength in unity; the one and the many.

Artichokes like children, are tended primarily by the women of the household. They make their appearance briefly in the spring around the time of Easter. The artichoke is a highly prized food and is never grown commercially in the village. This combined with its appearance, its prickly leafy exterior which upon peeling yields a delicious, soft

and aromatic interior heart, make it an apt symbol both of women and of the household.

The snake on the other hand is a feared and hated creature which is killed upon sight regardless if it is poisonous or not. Aside from its obvious phallic connotations, the snake is also associated with the devil for it was in the form of a snake that the devil tempted Eve to eat the Apple thereby instigating the expulsion of humanity from the Garden of Eden. Why, however, there should be four snakes my informants could not explain, except to note that they form the sign of a cross. Though not explicitly stated the imagery is evocative in that the snakes represent both the sin that lead to humanity's expulsion from Paradise and with the cross their bodies form, the Redemption that came with the crucifixion.

Given this, could be said that from the groom's ikoyenia's point of view the incoming bride is like the foreign and dangerous snake. Like the snake which threatens the artichoke through consumption so too does the new foreign bride threaten the stability and unity of the household. Women described as Eves, are said to cause disruption and quarrels within the household of their husbands (e.g. Rheubottom op.cit.; Brandes 1980:82 for Spain). Thus, the link between women and the devil in the form of the cunning and dangerous snake is explicit. Yet, this Eve is also a necessary entity for with her comes the possibility of the household's continuity. She is both the disruptive snake and the hope of eternity.

From the bride's household's point of view the symbolism could be reversed. The artichoke may symbolise the young and tender bride, who as a symbol of fertility and renewal is the flower of the household. She, in fact, is consumed by the outsiders, the groom's household and her departure is likened to a death in some instances (see Chapter 4). Moreover, when she leaves her natal household she takes with her household goods, the riches of the ikoyenia, which will be used by another, foreign household to propagate and continue that household through time. The snake, the groom, consumes the

bride's household wealth as well as the young bride herself. But he also is the means whereby she may fulfil her destiny and the destiny of her parents. He makes possible a continuity through procreation. The symbols of the artichoke and the snake are thus aptly ambiguous to suit the event.

Today, undergarments are still exchanged but the bouyatses have been replaced by elaborate store bought cakes. Thus it may be said that the households are not exchanging a substance that is symbolically central to their sustenance and survival. Rather, they exchange items that exhibit both prestige and the ability to spend money. In a sense, they exhibit both publicly and to one another their affluence. Yet, if we note that households are now predominantly based on a cash economy, the exchange of an expensive and frivolous commensable item obtained with money, money which represents a household's sustenance, we see that the cakes are similar to the elaborate and frivolous bread (bouyatsa) exchanged between the households in the past. The contrast lies in the fact that the cakes do not come from within the household, nor is the flour used to make the groom's cake sprinkled upon him first. This would imply that the emphasis on the incorporation of the bride has been minimised²⁸ as well as the emphasis of the household as opposed to the conjugal couple (see above).

On the Saturday the bouyatsa would be cut into small pieces and taken to those households invited to attend the wedding and the wedding feast. There were two feasts held after the wedding; one by the bride's household, the other by the groom's household (e.g. Campbell op.cit.:136; Herzfeld 1983:166). Only the bride would appear at the groom's household feast for she was now a member of the groom's ikoyenia. An aunt or a married cousin from her ikoyenia would also attend the groom's feast to help the bride adjust to her new surroundings. The guests were usually the close relatives and friends of the bride or groom respectively. The pieces of bouyatsa used to invite the guests were taken to the houses by a child of the respective household who would collect some money for his pains. The koubaro (the marriage

sponsor, see Chapter 3), usually the groom's godfather and the one responsible to marry the couple, was, in the past, formally invited with a bouyatsa of his own which did not however, exhibit the elaborate artichoke and snake decorations²⁹.

Those invited to the wedding by the bride's household would make up a basket of food, called a kaniski, consisting of two to three okadhes (2.82 pounds= 1 oka) of meat, a bottle of wine and a large round loaf of bread which was also called a bouyatsa and similarly did not have the symbolic artichoke and snake design. Only the bride's household received a kaniski in return for the invitation "because they are the ones who spend the most on the wedding."

On Sunday after the wedding ceremony the groom accompanied by his guests and relatives and with his new wife in hand would lead the way to his house while the bride's guests would depart to her natal household to feast and celebrate. At the groom's household, the bride would be greeted in the entrance by her mother-in-law. She would kiss her mother-in-law's hand as a sign of respect. Then the celebrations would begin. There would be much dancing and singing along with a great deal of eating and drinking.

The food eaten at the wedding feasts was roasted meat par excellence. There was also bread and plenty of wine along with any other cooked foods the household could provide. Throughout the feasting however the bride was to be subdued, to keep her eyes downcast and to avoid eating very much in public. This showed a sense of dhropi (shame and modesty³⁰) becoming to a new bride. Occasionally her mother-in-law would take her away from the watching eyes of the crowd, and there feed her the best mezedhes³¹ of the meal: the innards and especially the kidneys. The kidneys, situated at the waist, impart strength and vitality (tin kardhamonoun) to the bride's waist which she will need at childbirth, reinforcing the concept that the consumption of offal imparts strength. It also implies that the bride fed by this new mother in this new household is becoming, like a child, a member of the household.

The eating of a whole roast lamb or kid which has been killed and cooked by men in the public area of the house may indicate a sacrificial meal (see Chapter 7). Lambs and kids are of the household. In the recent past, up into the 1950's, many people in the village obtained some part of their livelihood from flock animals, mainly goats. Thus consuming the lamb or kid is consuming the household wealth; that which provides for the household's existence.

Moreover, guarding the livestock was generally a task carried out by the men and boys of the household. The men killed and cooked the meat which came from their own herd and now, as then, they fed their guests³² and ate with them this meat, the strength of the household. They sacrificed, in other words, something of themselves in order to bring together and strengthen the ikoyenia. They marked, through this meal, those who were both members and supporters of the household. This may explain why those who are invited to the marriage feast are, par excellence, the ikoyenia in the broadest sense of the word, and the neighbours. Anyone omitted who may consider herself a member of either one of these categories would be gravely insulted (e.g. Campbell 1979:117; Ott op.cit.:76-79 for the Basque).

By consuming an entity that is associated with the men of the household, the household and its boundaries are re-created; boundaries which were "opened" with the exchange of the bouyatses. By sacrificing one of its living members it welcomes and incorporates a new member within its unity³³.

Viewed from a different angle, it may be said that the lamb represents the bride. Like the flock which belongs to the household, symbolising its wealth and guarded by men, so too the bride now belongs to the household, signifies its continuity through the children she will bear, and is guarded by the men of the household. When the bride is taken from her natal home she is "consumed" or incorporated by another foreign household. In killing, cooking, and eating the lamb, the groom's relatives strengthen and fortify themselves and their household. It is the life force of the meat and of the bride that ensures the household's continuity (e.g. Man-

del 1983). In this sense the meat represents both female and male. It is the unity of the two categories which ensures continuity of life and it is the meat which can represent that unity.

In the bride's household however, the meat eaten is the meat sent by the relatives and neighbours in support of the household which has lost one of its members. They send pieces of raw meat; meat which can be cooked by women³⁴ and served to the guests and relatives of the household. It is a shared meal but one that does not forcefully recreate the household boundaries nor include so directly the notion of gender unity and procreativity. Rather, it stresses loss as well as ikoyenia solidarity and sustenance through the cooking of the meat by women and its donation to the household by related households.

The exchange of bread, in the bouyatses, expressed the new and impending alliance between the households. Yet, the separate marriage feasts served, in the past, to distinguish the two households. Meat publicly roasted by men, seems to recreate, though not completely, the boundaries that were dissolved, though again not completely, with the exchange of the bouyatses. The point is that ambiguous relations between the two sets of in-laws, the two households, can never truly be that of blood; they are always strained. Yet, it is recognised that only by combining two separate and different entities can the continuity of life be ensured, no matter how potentially disruptive such a union may be.

Today, it is common for a joint feast to be held by the groom's and the bride's household again emphasising the new couple as opposed to the households as represented by the parents. Invitations are printed and either given by hand or sent through the post. No bouyatses are made. At the feast, which may be held in a tavern or at the groom's house, roast meat is served and the meal must be lavish. The two households are jointly exhibiting their ability to celebrate and support the union, the beginning of the new ikoyenia. Thus, as there is no need for separate feasts, (nor for the meal of pistroferia, see below), there is no need for

bouyatses. The cakes like the feast must be lavish in support of what is increasingly seen as a new and separate ikoyenia.

Moreover, the meat served though ideally it should be roast lamb or kid, is not always so. Meat still marks a special occasion but as noted above it has lost much of its special qualities since it is now easily obtainable. Few people still keep herd animals and if a household owns one or two animals for milk they are cared for by men and women. Thus, the symbolic link between men and herd animals is diminishing. Never the less, the use and identification of certain practices as part of tradition or custom serves as a means of creating a communal identity, of linking oneself and one's household with a cherished past. Roast animals cooked by men in the yards of their households still holds meaning though this meaning may have transformed with time.

The week after:

At the meal of return, ta pistroferia, given, in the past, by the bride's parents for the new couple on the Sunday after the wedding (e.g. Campbell op.cit.:136), the meat served was chicken. Chicken as meat is in a different though not separate category. It is considered a lighter meat, more easily digested; not as heavy (vari). In a sense, it does not have the power attributed to goat or lamb meat. It is a less emphatic marker for it gives strength but not the strength immediately associated with men. Chickens are cooked by women; they are cared for by women within the confines of the household. When a woman has given birth she is fed chicken (e.g. Pina-Cabral op.cit.:113 for Portugal) by her mother signifying the care the mother must still assume for her daughter's welfare and her responsibility that the bride she gave in marriage will continue to be a healthy and productive member of the husband's household. Boiled chicken, though not the only food served to the ill is considered one of the best foods for someone needing to build up their strength. Finally, the meal of chicken presented to the new couple may serve to signify the link of kinship between the new couple

and the bride's family while at the same time marking it as a weak, "female"³⁵, tie; a tie of chicken and not the strong, "male" bond of meat.

Funerals and the Meal of Pariyoria

In contrast to the commensal meals held at weddings and on Sundays is the meal called pariyoria (consolation) which takes place immediately after a funeral. On the day of the death and the following day of the burial of a household member no cooking is done by any household member. In the past, this prohibition lasted for the full forty days following the burial which correspond to the forty day period when Christ was on earth before ascending eternally to the Heavens. It is as if the dead are not fully dead, are not fully incorporated into the other world until this forty day period is over (e.g Hertz 1960:53-55; Danforth op.cit.:44-45).

Now, as in the past, the relatives of the household and the neighbours will cook the meal of pariyoria which is served in the household after the funeral to the relatives of the deceased and to the close neighbours who have helped out³⁶. This meal consists of fish, bread, and wine and maybe a salad or fruit. Any suggestion of meat on such an occasion elicits cries of disgust: "It would be like eating the flesh of the dead person; eating flesh like our own" (San na tros ton pethamenon; kati san ke mas). The flesh and the blood of meat is associated with the flesh of the deceased since the meal is held in his memory and as the forty day period is not over, in his presence. The white, "light" (elafri), flesh of the fish is free of such associations³⁷.

Meat, as we have seen, is associated with life and strength as well as with household members. Only amongst the living can this substance be sacrificed, shared and consumed. To eat meat at the pariyoria, when the deceased has not yet fully been incorporated into the other world (ton alon kosmo), when he has not yet left the world of the living, is an anathema to the deeply ingrained notion which

views the household and the community, as eternally renewable through its living and legitimately reproducing elements. It suggests the consumption of something which is dead; the unnatural wedding of life and death.

It was noted in Chapter 3 that exhumation used to take place three to seven years after the first burial. During this time the flesh would ideally have melted away leaving only the bones, which would be washed, cleaned, and placed in a common ossuary. If upon exhumation the flesh had not dissolved, the body would be reburied to be exhumed later, a practice still followed today. One should not disturb the dead during this period. It is a liminal time, a time of passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead (Alexiou op.cit.:9,33; Danforth op.cit.:45-55). Given this, it would seem that bones symbolise the eternal, that which is never (or should never) be destroyed, while the flesh is "of this world" and symbolises that which fades³⁸.

This practice coupled with the banning of cremation by the Orthodox Church similarly reinforces this view. For the nuns cremation destroys the deceased's chance for eternal life promised with the Second Coming. As the nuns point out: "With the Second Coming God will restore our bodies down to the finest slivers of bone" (Me tin dhefteri parousia o Theos tha mas dhosi to soma mas ksana, ke to pio mikro kokalaki). Without bones there can be no restoration'; without bones the body and soul can no longer escape their liminal state to become one in eternal life (Danforth op.cit.:67-69). The flesh therefore, associated with life, makes the suggestion of meat at a funeral meal repulsive. Whereas meat is a necessary component at marriage celebration since it is life and its reproduction that is being celebrated, after a funeral it would truly be like "eating the dead".

Yet, it should be noted that it is not skeletons which God resurrects but the body, whole and in tact, like the body of the Panayia. This contradicts the above lay and clerical practice of exhumation, suggesting that two contradictory views of life after death and the body's relation to this process, seem to co-exist.

Now though both men and women may forego eating meat for the forty day period of, women will cook before this period is over. It was also the practice to avoid taking Communion but as the majority of practising villagers receive Communion only three to four times a year, if that often, this prohibition is not greatly emphasised. It is interesting to note however, that both material and spiritual renewal is withheld after a household member's death. Nourishment either through cooking or through the consumption of meat is suspended; communion is foregone. And though sexual contact between household members is not prohibited, my informants pointed out that such a constraint would be unnecessary: Who would want to do anything like that at a time of mourning (pios tha ethele na kani kati tetio se tetia ora)³⁹?

It may be said then that upon death the household members avoid those actions which propagate life; they neither cook, have sex, or take communion. They are frozen in time, static, prohibited or unable to integrate through their actions in life the natural, social and spiritual realms, interrelations which defines living. The house upon death remains symbolically dead and non-reproductive⁴⁰.

Fasting

As the body and its functions can serve as metaphors of social engagement, so too can they serve as metaphors to express a refusal to participate socially. The act of fasting seems to take the non-social, non-reproductive aspect described above one step further. The refusal of food, the refusal to consume, may express a desire to deplete oneself of strength, as well as to temporarily suspend social and physical relations. It is noted that women fast more often than men and that they are the ones responsible for ensuring that the food placed on the table during periods of fasting coincide with the rules of fasting (Note Table 1).

Fasting in the village is a confused affair, people making up their own rules within a loose framework. Moreover, many hold that it is the feeling behind the fast

Table 1: Foods prohibited and allowed during Fasts

Prohibited Foods

- a. No meat (including all animals) -- considered a truly vitalising substance.
- b. No fish ---- except on certain days of celebration which occur during a time of fasting i.e the Sunday before Easter which celebrates the awakening of Lazarus.
- c. No dairy products -- i.e. no eggs, no milk , no cheese.
- d. On certain very important fasting days, no oil is allowed.
- e. No alcohol though in the village this rule was not observed, nor did people mention alcohol when listing the foods that were included in the fast.

Foods Allowed

- a. Bread.
- b. All shellfish, squid, cuttle fish, octopus, etc. but not fish .
- c. All fresh fruits and vegetables; pulses; nuts; olives.
- d. All types of pastas, and grains.
- e. Sweets such as the fruits boiled in syrup and the halva made from sesame seeds.
- f. Coffee.

that is significant and not the rules themselves. For those who do fast, it is felt that one should try as best as one can to abide by the rules of the Church.

One fasts, say the villagers, in order that one may receive the Holy Communion into a clean body. The more pragmatic say that fasting is good for one's health, ridding one of the many toxins that too much meat or oil may produce⁴¹. Finally, a few people point out that the fasts, especially the major fast of Lent occurs during a time when the winter food supplies, in the past, were waning and the spring crops were not yet ripe.

Aside from these reasons it is interesting to note that many fasting foods seem to lie outside the category of food (fayito). Could these items simply not constitute as food? If this is the case, to eat a non-food is to eat a substance that is not sustaining.

There are a number of points to be noted when examining the Table listed above. All the Allowed Foods do not in themselves constitute a full meal⁴² unless cooked with oil. Pulses and vegetables on certain fasting days maybe eaten with oil and are always eaten in this manner on non-fasting days. Occasionally, on a day of fasting the pulses will be accompanied by some tit-bit like olives or fried squid or, on a non-fasting day, by a piece of spinach or cheese pie. In this sense a simple fast may be quite similar to a regular though plain meal now-a-days and certainly was similar to many everyday meals in the past⁴³. It is only with the prohibition of oil that the fast becomes truly "felt" for water boiled pulses are considered boring, not filling and do not constitute a real meal. "They do not fill the belly for long", as many villagers complained and as I can vouch.

As for pasta, rarely will a household serve boiled spaghetti unaccompanied by mounds of cheese and some butter, if not with a meat and tomato sauce. I have never had just plain boiled pasta for a meal. Thus, during fasts pasta is rarely, if ever, eaten.

Seafood, but not fish is considered a fasting food. Its inclusion as a fasting food is probably due to its lack of blood. It may be rooted in the ancient Jewish dietary rules which prohibit the consumption of shellfish, squid etc.. As such, seafood may have been considered a non-food par excellence; a substance consumed that is not even in the category of edible foods.

Fasting foods are contrasted then to fayito, and particularly with meat. They are contrasted to the material nourishment and sustenance of the body. And if one considers that, particularly before WWII, the greater part of the day for most people was spent in cultivating food products for household consumption, and the great amount of physical labour involved, the prohibition particularly of oil, holds an added significance. It is evident moreover, that the addition or omission of oil in many instances defines a strict fast from a proper meal. Oil as a substance can transform a fast into nourishing fayito.

Oil:

Wednesdays and Fridays are regular fasting days, for reasons which will be dealt with in Chapter 6. Suffice it to say that many of the villagers do not always fast on these days but some effort is made by the women in many of the houses to serve meals which do not contain meat or dairy products. Only those people wishing to receive Holy Communion on the Sunday abstain from oil from the preceding Wednesday until after Holy Communion on Sunday. Possibly the avoidance of oil is due to its perceived strengthening qualities. Added to non-foods it transforms them into fayito.

The distinction made by the addition or omission of oil may be associated with the concept that the separation of categories signifies a bounded entity. This may, in certain contexts, define what is holy or sacred as Douglas (op.cit.:53) notes:

Holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused.

Holiness, she continues, means "set apart" and as an attribute of the Godhead requires that all things presented to God be without blemish, be whole and complete (op. cit.: 49-54). Thus, before receiving the Holy Communion one should be whole and complete; one should not have combined within oneself distinct categories through the eating of oil.

This concept is reinforced by the recognition that ideally when one fasts one should not indulge in sexual relations. However, very few villagers now actually fast the full forty day period of Lent and fewer, if any abstained, either in the past or the present, from sexual relations during any of the fasts. They do abstain from sexual relations however, the night before receiving Holy Communion. During one's preparation to communicate and receive the divine it is that category of food which recalls reproduction as well as the combining of separate and different categories which is prohibited: no meat and no sex.

Yet, I would be loath to define the holy in these terms alone, for the holy seems also to be defined in relation to other entities; by the interaction with and within the Divine. According to Orthodox theology, for example, God is understood to be the interaction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; an interaction which creates unity (Zizoulas 1985). The divine is also conceived of as both the One and Eternal, and as existing in historic time and in constant interaction with the mundane, points which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Here we note that within Orthodox rituals categories are often combined in order to portray the unity that exists within diversity. Thus, Rushton (n.d.) points out that the oil applied to the body of the infant being baptised prepares the infant to live a good Christian life. The different parts of the body to which oil is applied serve different purposes : the breast for the health of the

body and soul; the ears to hear the faith etc. With oil, the different parts of the body are brought together to work towards one end. Diversity is expressed within unity and the human and the divine are combined.

A similar process may be noted with the use of oil in the secular context of cooking. It might be said that food cooked in oil is bound into a unity--the different elements melded into fayito. Eating oil strengthens and links one with the mundane. Thus, one avoids oil before receiving Communion in order to achieve separation from the world thereby better combining with the Divine. In other words, with fasting, people express a break with everyday practices and interactions. And, it might be suggested, that since women serve most often as intermediaries in secular life, they are the ones most in need of the fast. They are the ones who shift between categories, transforming what is dangerous into what is social, good, and cooked.

The fast then may be explicated in accordance with Douglas's proposition. Yet, it should be remembered that this break with the secular is accomplished in order to achieve an reintergration with the divine. Just as oil is applied to the baby at baptism signalling its unity with the divine so to does the incorporation of Christ's body and soul and the subsequent meal of meat (both on Sundays and on Easter) signal the integration of the divine with the human. Holiness is achieved in the village first through separation, followed by reintegration. The sacred is not separate from the human world but distinct and ideally, always in interaction with it⁴⁴.

The Fasting from Work:

In certain instances the restrictions on food are echoed by the restrictions placed on cooking. On Good Friday for example, the women avoid "putting the pot on" (na valoun tin katsarola). It is a major day of mourning since it is the day of Christ's burial. Thus, the honour paid to the village dead is also paid to Christ (or should it be the other way around?).

Another task prohibited on major saints' days or feasts, is the washing of clothes (e.g. Segalen op.cit.:124 for France). This task is said to be extremely heavy (varia) and one must not undertake it on a heavy day, that is on a day loaded with religious significance. I would suggest since major feast days should be preceded by fasts and, since one's attention should be turned to the divine, one should not be involved in the task of cleaning the physical as well as the moral dirt from the material world (see Chapter 3). This should be accomplished before the religious celebration just as the fast accomplishes the "cleansing of the body" (katharizi to soma). However, when I tried to elicit a correlation between the ban on washing and the saint's day, the only response given was that washing, particularly in the past, was an extremely difficult and "heavy" task.

The prohibition on carrying out household tasks, tasks which speak of life and its demands, are remembered by older men and women, those in their forties and above, and seem to support the analysis on washing given above. Bread, for example, kneaded on a Sunday is said to become worm infested. Water collected on a Sunday will go off and any agricultural tasks done in the fields on Sunday will either be ineffectual or result in a reduced harvest. It is true however, that many people violated these tenets, even before WWII. Some used Sundays to build or repair their homes; others went to their fields; still others went for water. But many also followed the precepts, particularly in the past, and incidents are related which prove that the violation of these precepts can be serious indeed.

To summarise, the fasting foods seem to exhibit two particularly relevant qualities. The one is that the foods are not meant to be nourishing or sustaining to the flesh, to the material human being. In this sense, they may be said to be non-foods. Oil however may be eaten, in certain circumstances, particularly when a person is not preparing to receive Holy Communion. It is only when physically combining, through Communion, the religious and the secular, that oil must be avoided. One must first integrate the divine and

the human and then the human and the natural. Sex, therefore, is prohibited before Communion because you will be receiving Christ within yourself the following day. The two different types of reproduction should not be mixed.

Secondly, the fast no matter how loosely it is held always excludes meat. It is the one substance that is never eaten during a fast. As at a funeral the fasts prohibit both the nourishment created by women through cooking and the nourishment, meat, that is associated with men, women and fertility.

There are three categories of consumable items however, that have not been discussed and which I believe shed further light on the patterns of consumption within the village. These are sugar, coffee, and alcohol. I shall discuss each one only in terms of how they relate to the argument at hand.

Sugar

Sweets things are not considered as basic or necessary substances for the survival of the household. They are however considered very special and are served to guests and visitors by the woman of the household along with a glass of water and coffee or a liqueur when the guest first arrives. This kerasma (treat) may be conducted at any time of the day as a form of welcome, but is particularly important on more formal occasions such as visits paid to the household by a person who is not well-known (kse nos) or visits occurring in a formal or ritual context (i.e. Name Day celebrations). It is important that this type of hospitality be exhibited and great shame is felt if it is neglected or forgotten.

It is a grave insult to refuse the sweets (cakes, pastries, ice cream or sweet meats) offered during these visits as it indicates that one does not accept or acknowledge the host to have equal social standing as oneself. "Dhen mas katadhechete" means "You do not deign to accept us" and may be the half-jesting complaint made upon the first, almost ritualised refusal of the sweet. For to accept the sweet too eagerly is considered rude. It shows greed and

greater interest in the sweet than in the host and the visit. A balance must be struck between polite refusal, insistence on the part of the host, and finally, acceptance on the part of the guest. Moreover, as noted above, *kerasma* and hospitality creates an uneven balance between the host and the guest which can only be reciprocated by the return visit of the host. Such a reciprocal visit implies a balanced and equal relationship.

Only when one has acquired a highly familiar association with the household is a refusal of a *kerasma* accepted. "Tora ise dhiki mas, se ksero." (Now you are one of us, I know you.) The refusal in this case does not insult the household for it is a close friend, an honorary member who declines the offer and a member who can later on ask for coffee or a sweet without seeming intrusive. Exchanges, particularly in the latter case, are not calculated but rather governed by a "subtle etiquette", emeshed "in an on-going system of continual reciprocations"⁴⁵.

Sweets then, are used as boundary markers. They serve as a bridge bringing together those who are outside the household with those within it. They are also indicators marking the difference between the two groups: a guest is given sweets not the food reserved only for the proper members of the household. This point is further supported in that guests are expected to bring gifts of a bottle of sweet liqueur or a box of sweets when they first visit a home or on special occasions.

Since sweets are not foods which sustain life it follows that they may be eaten during a fast as long as they are not made with any dairy products or, during major fasts, with any oil. That is, as long as certain significant categories of food are kept separate the sweet may be consumed.

This is particularly easy as in the village the pre-eminent sweets made in the household by the women are those "of the spoon" (tou koutaliou). These are fruits boiled for hours in a sugar-water syrup and served in small quantities with a spoon, hence the name. These sweetmeats are usually made from unripe fruits or nuts such as bitter oranges or

walnuts or from the peel of oranges or water-melons, non-foods par excellence. Occasionally, they may be made from ripe apples, tomatoes or even small aubergines. The point is that these sweetmeats fit easily within the category of fasting foods as is exemplified by their place in ritual.

Death:

For a long period⁴⁶ following the death of a relative, and particularly a member of one's household, sweets are not made nor are they offered to visitors. To do so, they say, would tempt Charos to come again for another soul (tha ylikani ton charo ke tha ksanarathi na pari ke ali psychi). The literal translation is "to sweeten Charos", implying that sweets are liked and desired by everyone including Charos. It also implies the open or violated nature of the house.

At the Church after the funeral service a mixture of boiled wheat and bread crumbs, known as kolliva⁴⁷ is served along with loaves of bread which have been ripped into pieces. Would these pieces of bread symbolise the deceased torn violently by death from the life-sustaining enclosure of the household? People accept a spoonful of the kolliva and some bread and wish the deceased forgiveness of his sins. The dead must now pass on. On the fortieth day after the death a ceremony is held in the church after the morning liturgy. Kolliva is again distributed but it now contains other ingredients most conspicuous of which is sugar. Dried fruits and sugar candies covered in silver tinted sugar may also be included. The kolliva is covered in bread crumbs. In the center, designed in white sugar, is a cross surrounded by leaves and/or daisies. This is distributed after the memorial service to all who have attended along with small round loaves of bread. These round loaves contrasting as they do with the ripped pieces of bread at the funeral could indicate the complete incorporation of the dead into the other world. The rift in the household caused by the death is somewhat healed; the loaves are whole and complete. The consumption of meat and sugar, and the acts of cooking and sex can all be resumed.

The symbolic state of the household is also portrayed in the practice of leaving the house open (anichto) during the funeral, just as it is kept open during the marriage ceremony. That is, someone must be present in the house during these ceremonies to receive condolences in the former instance and efchies (trans. as prayer, wish, blessing--here meant as congratulations and best wishes) in the latter, of any chance passer by.

Hirschon (op.cit.:242-244) suggests that the "open" state of the house at death in the refugee district of Kokkinia, Athens may be understood in terms of the religious doctrine which holds that with the Resurrection of Christ death was vanquished. Mortality was overcome (Meyendorff 1974:145). In this light, the rituals surrounding death assert the positive message of salvation, despite the bereavement. And their association with other communal festive ritual events such as Easter, Name Days or marriage, in which the house again is open support the notion that at these times the relations between the house and the community are ones of communality and participation. They are ones which also link the community with the divine by stressing the notion of an undivided body of believers united in Christ.

This argument gives us an insight into the similarities between the usages of certain images in different rituals i.e. the open house; its communality. I would wish however to also stress the disruptive nature of death as against the positive, theologically grounded belief in an eternal life⁴⁸. In the village eternity is often seen to lie with the birth of children and the continuity of the ikoyenia. This eternity is challenged by constant depletion and decay, by death. This sense of disruption seems evident in that only at funerals are there representatives present in the Church from each household in the village. In the other major religious rites of passages, marriage and baptism, the celebration is not village wide but confined to relatives, neighbours, and friends. It would seem that at funerals people come together in recognition of their common fate. Moreover, as the yiayia's (old woman's) story in Chapter 4 portrays, though

death is the result of humanity's transgression (especially Eve's), it is accepted as a necessary exchange for the birth of many children, for continuity in this life. The funeral is a gathering which seeks to support the grieving relatives while also stressing the continuity of life here (e.g. Hertz op.cit.:72). This is best expressed immediately after the funeral service. The close relatives of the deceased sit outside on the left hand side of the church door. The congregation file pass, shaking the hands of the grieving relatives and murmuring either "Silimpitiria" (condolences), or more telling "Zoe se sas" (life to you). This latter statement reiterates the importance of continued life in the face of death.

There is a practice moreover, which further portrays the distinction between marriage and death, thereby distinguishing different meanings and emotions associated with the symbolism of the open house. When one leaves one's house on a journey, the women of the household will refrain from cleaning the house and particularly from sweeping until news reaches them that one has arrived safely at one's destination. For similar reasons, sweeping is also avoided on the day of a marriage. This is done so as not to chase the person out of the house (na min ton dhioksoume apo to spiti), leaving him/her vulnerable to misfortune. The person must be safely ensconced in another group, in another household, before one closes one's doors to him/her. I would therefore follow Danforth's (op.cit.) analysis that like the journey which takes you from one place of residence to another, the open house in marriage signals the transference of the bride from one household to another. Death too, as many researchers have noted, is regarded as a journey (Alexiou op.cit.:189-193; Danforth op.cit.: 90-95), but a journey from which there is no hope of return. Thus, in contrast with marriage, when the coffin with the deceased is removed from the house to be taken to the church, a woman of the house will sweep the yard as the dead departs (see Alexiou op.cit.:16). This serves to symbolically rid the house of death, to erase the presence of decay. The need to separate the dead from the living is also

expressed by the practice in which oil is poured onto the deceased's eyes before the coffin is lowered into the ground. This is done to satiate the deceased (via na chortasi) and prevent him/her from longing for life, from coming back⁴⁹. The happiness of achieved eternal life signalled by the open house is therefore muted. For though it may have a basis in Orthodox understanding the villagers I asked denied the argument. The open house for them indicated the support required by the mourning members of the household who, touched by death, are unable to fully participate in life. Finding themselves vulnerable, the community must enter the open house to lend assistance. Death is something other, something that must be kept separate from the living.

Returning to the usage of sugar, though I cannot substantiate this with any statements, it seems that sweet things are associated with the intangible, with a spiritual communication and interrelation. The avoidance of sugar and meat after a funeral may be an attempt to dissolve both the spiritual and material relationship one had with the newly deceased⁵⁰. For example, it should be noted that women are more often associated with sweet things while men are associated with meat⁵¹. The denial of sugar is the denial of women's interactions which bridge and allow for the interaction of the natural, the spiritual and the social. The denial of meat is the denial of the household and the promise of its continuity and strength. With the ritualised inclusion of sweet food at the end of the forty day period, along with the commencement of meat eating, the reincorporation of the mourners into the normal social order from which they were separated by death is marked. It signals that they can and should now resume their social responsibilities, their life. The inclusion of sugar in the kolliva in the forty day memorial service and in all similar memorial services which continue periodically for as long as the deceased is remembered mark the interrelations, by their nature spiritual, between the living and the dead. Similarly, the sweet boiled wheat (in all ways like kolliva except that this dish has no name and, as it is served on festive occasion it should not,

strictly speaking, be called kolliva) is also used in the Name Day rituals at the church where it is again decorated with white sugar. But, instead of a cross it is designed with flowers, signalling life and the living. In this instance, it is a celebration and commemoration of the saint and the person who bears his/her name and, a symbol of the communion between these two beings: between the spiritual and the human.

Finally, the sugared almonds traditionally given out at a marriage or baptism to the guests also signifies the creation of a spiritual bond. In the marriage, the guests are witness to the spiritual union of the bride and groom before God. In the baptism they are witness to the spiritual union between the child, the god parent, and Christ.

Thus, sugar may be seen as a way of sealing or creating a spiritual bond. It is a means of bridging the chasm between persons of different households or persons who inhabit different states. But, instead of creating unity in the way of meat, it maintains the distinctions in the categories while allowing for interrelations. Thus, it is a food for fasts par excellence since it symbolically links the human and the divine.

Coffee and Alcohol

Coffee and alcohol belong to two contrasting and interrelated symbolic realms. They are best understood therefore when examined side by side. Both can and are drunk by men and women. Children are also often given sips of either drink. As they get older they are slowly initiated into the processes of making, ordering and consuming the drinks for themselves.

Coffee:

When speaking of coffee drinking in the village, I will be referring to coffee made in the "Turkish" fashion rather than the growing practice of drinking Nescafe (instant coffee). Turkish coffee is made in a long-handled, narrow-mouthed, cylindrical metal vessel known as a briki. Water, coffee and

sugar according to taste, are placed in the briki and put over a fire to "roast"⁵² (boil) slowly. The coffee is sipped carefully from small cups so that the fine coffee grounds remain in a thick sediment at the bottom of the cup.

Coffee is often drunk by women in the mornings or in the afternoons when they gather in a neighbour's home. It is also sipped in the village kafenia in the mornings and afternoons by the majority of men in the village. In these instances, coffee drinking is a quiet affair that does not elicit widespread krasma relations since, unlike alcohol, only one cup is drunk at any one particular time (e.g. Papataxiarchis op.cit.:239-245).

Coffee expresses personal taste since it can be made in a variety of ways depending on the amount of sugar, coffee, and water added and the amount of time one boils it. It may be consumed both in public or alone in the home, by men or women, though never by young boys or girls. It is considered inappropriate for young people, something that is not good for them. This may, in fact, point to the individualistic nature of coffee drinking. It is by reading the fine grounds which remain at the bottom of a person's cup after drinking the coffee that those men and women specialised in the art, can foretell the drinker's future (Cowan op.cit.; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:245). Since young people are not considered to be fully involved in life until essentially they have either married, started working, or (now) gone on to higher education, they can have no future. Thus, the drinking of coffee can have no meaning for them since it cannot disclose information of a life which does not yet fully exist. Coffee is the drink of adults.

Coffee associated with the individual and personal destiny of the drinker is the obvious drink after a funeral or after a memorial service, sometimes accompanied by a dry biscuit and cognac. Coffee seems to reflect the inevitable lonely fate of each person who must go to meet his destiny alone. Thus when drinking coffee one never gives the toast: "To your health" (Stin hiyia sou) which is made whenever one drinks anything else in the company of others. One cannot

wish one well or communicate with another's destiny: "What is written at birth cannot be unwritten" (Oti yrafete dhen kseyrafete).

In view of this, it is understandable that coffee is never drunk at any of the ceremonies preceding the wedding as for example, when the dowry items are washed, set on display and later taken to the groom's house. Nor is coffee drunk at a wedding. These are times of celebration, events which unify and join two households and two people. The individual in this instance is subsumed by kinship and community. His/her destiny is interwoven with others and thus the individualising drink of coffee is avoided. Instead alcohol is consumed.

Alcohol:

There are three types of alcohol, beer, wine and ouzo or tsipouro⁵³, the latter two drinks belonging to the same symbolic and social category (see Chapter 2). Here I will use the term ouzo for both. Liqueurs, especially sweet ones are usually consumed only by women and Martinis are drunk by the young people when they have a party. Ouzo considered real alcohol, is associated with men. It is usually drunk in the kafenion in the evenings and it is then that the kerasma relations are at their height for ouzo drunk in small glasses may be consumed in great quantities. Thus the glasses can be refilled often and the kerasma relations between groups or amongst friends can be expanded almost indefinitely. Unlike coffee it is rude and even self-degrading to drink alone. It signals one's loneliness, publicly displays one's personal sorrows and portrays a lack of self-control. To get uncontrollably drunk in public is shameful and if it happens too often prestige is lost.

Ouzo is not associated with women. It is considered too potent for them. Thus, before WWII, most women did not drink ouzo even in the privacy of their own homes. Now some women do drink it occasionally even in public though never alone. They will be either accompanied by a man or will be with a large group of women who have come down to the square for a

special village event.

Beer is drunk both in the homes and in the kafenia. It can be drunk by men and women and even by young people without impunity. Beer may be part of the kersama relations though the kersama is not considered as potent as those that occur with ouzo within the closed male confines of the kafenion.

Wine is generally consumed on festive occasion in the home or in a tavern usually accompanied by a meal (e.g. Damer op.cit.:298). It is rarely, if ever, drunk in the kafenia. Instead, it is the drink which in the past was made by men and which may express now, as then, the household (Pina-Cabral op.cit.:40,122-123 for Portugal) as opposed to the male camaraderie that ouzo drinking elicits.

Wine is also associated with all religious rituals. Like wheat, either in the form of bread or kolliva, and oil, wine is always present. At the funeral it is poured on the ripped pieces of bread; at the grave it is poured on the deceased; at a wedding and in Holy Communion small amounts are consumed; on Name Day's it is part of the ceremony which glorifies the saint and the blesses the living person bearing the saint's name. Thus wine associated with rituals, with the integration of the secular and the sacred is well suited to bless, in a manner, the commensal festive meals of the home.

In general, drinking alcohol is associated with men. Women may drink some wine or beer on festive occasions, or when they go out with the men of the household or their fiances to a tavern. This accounts for the excitement and slightly naughty girl feelings that many grown women express when drinking a liqueur or two in a neighbour's house in the supposed ignorance of their husbands. Such drinking often seems like small acts of defiance against social precepts (Herzfeld op.cit.:48).

To summarise, ouzo is associated with men and the exchange relations established in the kafenia. In this sense, it may be contrasted with wine which though associated with men is linked with festive occasions such as marriages or

Easter, and more importantly, with male identity as defined by the house. It is after all, the men who preside over household events and they who were, in the past, responsible for making the wine.

In contrast, coffee represents the individual. It can foretell the future and it is ritually associated with death. Like ouzo it is not associated with the household and thus with reproduction. But, unlike ouzo, neither does it bind people together but rather reinforces the concept that we each meet with our final destinies alone.

Conclusion

I believe that the theme of reproduction and continuity often expressed through the uniting of different entities or categories allows for insights into the symbolic use of food. The consumption or refusal of certain foods does not simply express the body's physical condition but the social interactions which a person desires or in which he/she must partake. Food, its preparation and consumption, is metaphorically associated with notions of gender and kinship, just as the body and its functions serve as metaphors to express relations between persons through the experiences of consumption and reproduction.

Thus, by either conjoining or keeping separate certain categories of food, either when cooking or during consumption, certain notions concerning secular and religious reproduction are reiterated and reinforced. First, the inter-relationship but not unity between separate groups: the divine and the human; the dead and the living; the host and the guest; is achieved either through fasts or through the use of sugar. Second, the separation of the genders is created, as for example, by the association of ouzo with men. The drinking of ouzo by a woman in public is slightly titillating, implying the drinking of a male related substance and therefore the combining of two separate categories. It may be seen as a quasi-sexual act. Third, the notion of individual fate and death is associated with the drinking of

coffee, a beverage prohibited both during the preparations for and during the marriage since marriage is a ceremony emphasising the unity between different groups. Four, the separate but necessary contributions of both genders to the household is explicit in that bread is associated with women while wine is associated with men. Combined together however these two items become through the Church ritual the living body and soul of Christ (see Chapter 7). Combined together and accompanied by meat or sugar they are the key elements of any secular or ritual festive meal. It is only when different entities are combined, as expressed in the consumption of flesh either in Holy Communion or on festive occasions, that the household can reproduce physically and spiritually. It is only by uniting men and women, symbolically through marriage and food whereby they become "of one flesh", that children can be born and life continued. And, as we shall see in the final Chapter for the nuns, it is only by uniting the divine with the earthly that there is hope for eternal life in the "other" world.

Notes for Chapter Five

1. See e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Fernandez 1986; O' Neill 1985:21; Douglas 1979, 1973; Paul 1974. This is not to say that the biological body and its perceived natural divisions are the same in all cultures or groups.
2. For example: Douglas 1979; Leach 1964; Tambiah 1969; Sahlins 1976; Levi-Strauss 1969.
3. See e.g. Dubisch op.cit.:205; Hirschon 1981:82; Herzfeld 1985:16,36-37; Danforth 1982:102-106. For Italy see Goddard 1987:187.
4. There is also the question of the production of food which though of great interest is too large a topic to elaborate upon here.
5. Women as noted in Chapter 3 spend a good deal of their lives processing raw material. Paul (op.cit.:285ff) suggests that women's competence as processors "has the direct consequence of increasing the value of raw product acquired by men. Therefore, it is not surprising that we find in peasant societies, in particular, a strong appreciation of women's skills in cooking, sewing, weaving and the like".
6. In the past they would sit on the floor around the fireplace, the husband's mother and father in the most advantageous point, leaning against the wall at the side of the fire. The new bride would sit furthest away from the fire. The food was served and eaten from the utensil in which it had been cooked. Now meals are served on individual plates.
7. See e.g. Hirschon op.cit.:78; Dubisch op.cit.:205; Cowan forthcoming.
8. See e.g. Damer 1988:297; du Boulay 1979:38-39; Herzfeld op.cit.:36-37.
9. Note for example the meal eaten by the prospective groom at the bride's house marking the informal engagement. But, as Fernandez (op.cit.:5) notes for the Asturian mountain people: "It is not well formed or well seen to admit to hunger or to accept food, like rats, in any other house other than one's own."
10. See e.g. Dubisch 1979:205; Hirschon op.cit.: 77-78; Salamone and Stanton 1986:114.
11. For a seminal discussion on bread-making see Pina-Cabral 1986:42-45. It should be noted however, that the close association of male and female principles in bread-making noted in Portugal are not evident in Peta.
12. For the centrality of bread in everyday life and ritual throughout the Mediterranean see e.g. Marinau 1981; Balfet 1975; Arnott 1975. Du Boulay (op.cit.:56) notes the importance of bread

for life, its associations with the house and its survival, and its link with the body of God. See also Hirschon 1989: 137.

13. Though this was never given as a reason, it might be that it is considered too easy to buy the bread, as well as too risky. It is better, like an act of penance, and safer, to make one's own bread. Nuns only accept bread from those women they know well and trust absolutely and even then, they prefer to use their own bread.

14. The link between rising bread and pregnancy is also made by Ott (1981:198-199). She also notes that yeast and semen are seen as the active agents and are in this manner conceptually linked though not by an explicit general theory amongst the Basque.

15. From Feeley-Harnik 1981:90-115 who cites Buttrick 1962:74.

16. Herzfeld (1981:49) argues in a similar manner concerning the relationship between miroloyia (laments) and tragoudhia songs, saying that they "are structurally analogous to each other and yet radically different in terms of their presumed emotive associations and actual content".

17. See e.g. Herzfeld 1985:124,134; Segalen 1983:94-96 for France. Bynum (op.cit.:191) also notes that "the history of Western cooking as reflected in cookbooks, documents and memoirs suggest that "heavy" food, especially meat, was seen as more appropriate for men and lighter food for women...".

18. The organs of the animal seem to be considered the more potent forms of meat. This may be because they actually sustain life and are considered to be the seats of the emotions and intellect Sahlins (op.cit.:170-179) notes that Americans though they too associate innards with the essence of the creature, also associate this inner self metonymically with human self and thus avoid eating innards. See below.

19. The transformations in the village and within the household demand a too lengthy discussion to be taken up here. I have limited myself therefore, to making only brief remarks throughout the thesis.

20. For a period in the early fifties a few households owned a few cows but in this area most quadrupeds owned for consumption and commerce are sheep and goats.

21. Though chicken is considered a meat in certain contexts, it is not considered as strong a food nor as heavy a food, though its vitalising properties as a type of meat are recognised as will be seen below. See also Friedl op.cit.:31; Herzfeld op.cit.:130.

22. Hirschon (op.cit.:196) notes that Sunday is not just a day of rest but the Lord's Day--Kiriaki, the day of the Resurrection and so parallel to Easter.

23. Occasionally a lamb will be roasted by the household on a

major Saint's Day during the spring and summer or in the square to celebrate a particular village wide event by those kafenion owners who have the facilities. The two most important occasions for a roast however still remain to be marriages and Easter.

24. A similar argument applies to the bouyatses as it does to the prosforo and psomi distinction.

25. Widows are also prohibited in assisting with the dowry items or making the bridal bed.

26. For similar exchanges see e.g. Rheubottom 1980:224; Beopoulou 1986; Campbell 1979:134; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:91-92.

27. Ek-Nilsson (1981:80) notes that the exchange of buns on Shrove Tuesday is also an expression of social interaction and communal ties in Sweden. Ott (op.cit.: Chapter 7) describes in a seminal account the exchange of what the Basque villagers called "blessed bread" noting that these exchanges served to unite the community.

28. The importance of sweet as opposed to salty or neutral food (cake as opposed to bread) will be examined further on.

29. Much could said about this procedure but due to lack of space let me simply suggest that the koubaro's "plain" bouyatsa might reinforce the notion that he is a spiritual patron, above the mundane (sexual) exchanges that create families. The pieces given to the guests of the two ikoyenies, pieces coming from the bouyatsa of their respective affines serves to link all relatives with their new affinal group, just as they will be linked through the bride and the groom.

30. See Chapters 4 and 7; also note Herzfeld 1985:233.

31. Fayito is distinguished from mezedhes (sing. mezes) in that the mezedhes are usually eaten at a kafenion, or in the house between meals with a drink usually of ouzo or tsipouro (see Chapter 2). The mezedhes are small bite-size pieces of food such as meat-balls or pieces of cheese, some bread and a few olives or nuts. They are not considered a proper meal but most often an accompaniment to a drink. Here the word is used to mean an extra choice morsel or tit-bit, which is not fayito.

32. Mezedhes are sometimes offered to the guests by men. Dubisch (1986:207) notes that in certain context men feed people thereby calling the simple association between women and feeding into question, though it is noted that the men only offer choice morsels not the full meal. See also Herzfeld op.cit.:52,130; Campbell 1963:79.

33. This meal perhaps may be likened to the sacrifice Christ made at Easter to ensure the eternal life of humankind; a sacrifice in which Christ may be said to be symbolically consumed in the eating of the pascal lamb (or kid in the village) thereby uniting the human with the divine. See Brandes op.cit.:78; Chapter 7 below.

34. It should be noted that the bride's family will often celebrate the wedding by killing and roasting a lamb or goat as well as accepting the meat sent by relatives. The stress however is placed on the kaniski sent to the bride's family upon receiving the invitation to the wedding.

35. See e.g. Segalen op.cit.:35,93, 115 for France; Douglass 1969:151 for the Basque.

36. See.g. Alexiou 1974:10; Danforth op.cit.2:43; Ott op.cit.:125 for the Basque; Pina-Cabral op.cit.:215 for Portugal.

37. Danforth (op.cit.:105,131) notes that fish is sometimes said to be "like fruit" that is not a "heavy" and filling food, not fayito.

38. See e.g. Alexiou op.cit.:49; Bloch 1982; Danforth op.cit.:69 thereby reinforcing the belief that death cannot be overcome, that body, soul and flesh cannot again become one.

39. One could argue that cooking at a time of mourning may also be seen as unnatural (i.e. who has the desire to do this), but again I was told that eating food is something you must do in order to survive whereas sexual contact can be and is avoided during mourning.

40. Alexiou (op.cit.:180) records two folksongs which graphically portray this symbolic death of the house. See also Danforth op.cit.:55; Pina-Cabral op.cit.:223 for Portugal; Douglass op.cit.:58 for the Basque.

41. This of course seems to coincide with the movement on health foods that has begun to take hold in Greece. I doubt in the past whether the villagers had much of a chance to over-indulge in meat or other types of fatty foods. The major health problem both today and in the past arises most probably from the over-consumption of alcohol. Yet, I was unaware that this was regarded by the Church as an item to be avoided during the fast until I spoke with the nuns. The villagers do not seem to include it in their scheme of fasting foods, a distinction which will have to await another paper for elaboration.

42. This is particularly true of fruits, bread (see above), and sweets (see below).

43. In fact, a meal of lentil soup with olive oil and olives, bread and halva (a sweet made of sugar and sesame seeds) is richer than what many people have described as a meal before World War II. Then olive oil was precious and only a tablespoon per plate was the norm. Halva was also a luxury, so the daily meal was simple indeed. Many people somewhat jokingly remarked that they were very virtuous in the past since they fasted almost all year round unlike the bishops whose bellies' were always full and round.

44. See Chapter 7. Du Boulay (1984b: 553) similarly argues that oil and blood can be seen as parallel principles of growth, the

former associated with the spiritual and the latter with the physical. At another level, they may be placed side by side as sacred, life-giving substances. Thus, blood and oil are opposed in baptism as physical and spiritual entities respectively, yet oil, like flesh (blood), is seen to nourish the body, while the blood of Christ, like the oil of baptism, is seen to link humans with the divine.

45. See e.g. Gilmore 1975:315; Papataxiarchis op.cit.:264.

46. This period is defined according to how close the relative was and one's personal feelings for the deceased as well as by social etiquette.

47. See e.g. Alexiou op.cit.:7; Danforth op.cit.:42-44. The link between kolliva, bread and life either in this world or in terms of the Resurrection is noted by Danforth op.cit.:97,105-106 and Douglass op.cit.:55,79 for the Basque.

48. See e.g. Chapter 4; Danforth op.cit.:136-139; Hertz op.cit.:78.

49. Similarly, Ott (op.cit.:125) notes the emphasis placed on the frugality of the funeral meal in a Basque village. The people say this frugality is both a sign of respect for the dead and a means of ensuring that the soul will not be jealous of the food and drink denied to it now by death.

50. Similarly, the exchange of cakes before the wedding by the groom's and the bride's household's may be understood to signal the continued boundedness of the two ikoyenies while also marking their new relationship. The cakes are sweet signifying the spiritual link between the two households as opposed to the strong link of bread.

51. It has been noted elsewhere that sweet things, especially drinks, are considered to be especially desired by women, whereas men are said to prefer savory foods, mezedhes, which go well with alcohol ouzo (Cowan op.cit.; Damer op.cit.:297-298; Rushton 1983:60). Though such divisions are not strictly adhered to in Peta, men often speaking and eating sweets with relish, it is true that upon formal visits men were expected to prefer ouzo to sweet liqueurs while women seldom partook of this "strong" masculine drink.

52. Coffee is "roasted" not "cooked". In other words, it is made in the way that men prepare food and not in the way that women do. And it is a drink that both men and women in the home make and one always made by men in the square.

53. Whiskey though a man's drink and thus associated with tsipouro, is the drink of the young, modern, fast, smooth-operating men, distinct in this manner from the traditional drink in the village. See Stewart (1989: 86) for discussion on whiskey.

CHAPTER 6

Consumption and the denial of exchange in the convent

"When we turn from the function of food practices within the family to the function of food practices within the church, it is crucial to note that fasting, feasting, and feeding are merely aspects of the same phenomenon: the religious significance of food. These aspects were closely intertwined in the daily lives of holy women. Whether a woman was withdrawn from the world or living in it, whether she saw herself as a contemplative or as a servant of the poor, she tended both to reject food and to see it as a powerful symbol of union". (Bynum 1987:227).

Introduction

In Chapter 5 I sought to portray how food and commensality are understood within a village context. It was seen that the serving and sharing of different types of food signalled different forms of interaction. In the convent the symbolism of food will be seen to have many similarities with that of the village. Where the village and the convents differ are in their views concerning the power of the acts of consumption and commensality. In the village, commensality was seen to indicate membership within a household, an ikoyenia, or a community. In the convent too, commensality indicates membership within the convent community but this membership is institutionally fixed. Interaction between lay and religious is said to truly occur only within a divinely sanctioned space. Thus, though no outsider may eat with the nuns, regardless of their kin or social relationship, all Orthodox together may partake of the meal of communion within the convent church.

In the following two chapters, the distinction between the secular and religious significance of food and consumption will be illuminated through a discussion concerning the nuns' preparations for and partaking of the Holy Communion. It will be noted that this is a preparation enacted in their daily, weekly, and yearly cycles¹. This chapter is also concerned with dhiakonia (work) and its relationship to

hospitality, particularly as related to commensality. The underlying theme here is that these preparations seek the maintenance of the boundaries and distinctions between lay, religious and divine.

It has been noted that the nuns by separating themselves off from the secular world attempt to minimise the effects of sin and temptation that threaten the soul and thus undermine their efforts to achieve eternal life. The closure expressed in the locking of the convent door and the cells at night (see Chapter 2) indicates fear or sense of threat from malevolent forces which lie beyond.

This sentiment is also expressed by the great care taken to avoid or mitigate the interpenetration of secular, religious, and somatic boundaries during the act of consumption. The violation of boundaries by foreign substances or entities, particularly with regards to food, is seen as an incorporation within oneself of that substance and therefore as a potential threat to one's spiritual and physical well-being. However, anticipating the argument of the following chapter, consumption may also be regarded as a means of incorporating spiritual and material good through the Holy Communion. The act of consuming therefore is regarded with ambivalence: it is at best a blessing and at worst a curse. It is both a means of maintaining boundaries and a means whereby those boundaries are overcome.

Douglas's (1979) work has been discussed in Chapter 5. Here I simply wish to point out again that though Douglas's thesis stressing the importance of the maintenance of boundaries as a means of assuring purity is applicable, it does not go far enough. The holy for the Orthodox nuns is not expressed through distinction and separation but through absolute integration. It is unity that is sought. After all, the word for community, kinonia, is the same word used when referring to Holy Communion, Theia Kinonia. Boundary distinctions, as will become evident in Chapter 7 are only one part of the story.

Daily Cycle

Ideally, the ritualised lives of the nuns are divided into twenty-four hour days which in turn are divided into two distinct periods of twelve hours each. These twelve hour periods are broken into four three hour periods. Though the Liturgy is not part of the daily cycle of prayer offered by the Church, none the less, within the convent of P. it was celebrated often--two or three times a week--and served as the culmination of the fasts and preparations undertaken.

The day begins in the evening and is divided into four watches: Evening, from 6 to 9 p.m.; Midnight, from 9 to 12 a.m.; Cocks-crow, from 12 to 3 a.m., and Morning, from 3 to 6 a.m.. From 6 a.m. onwards the day is again divided into four three hour periods, the Hours: 6 to 9 a.m.; 9 to 12 p.m.; 12 to 3 p.m., and 3 to 6 p.m.. This has resulted in respectively eight services: Vespers (Esperino), Complines (Apodhipno), Nocturnes (Mesoniktion), Matins (Orthos), for the night and First (Proti), Third (Triti), Sixth, (Ekti) and Ninth (Enati) Hour (Ora) for the the day. The Typika, the pro-liturgy service, is read every day and the Liturgy (Liturgyia) can be but is not always held after the Typika. This forms the daily ritual cycle in the Greek Orthodox monastic communities.

In the convents of T. and P. Vespers are described as the prozimi, the leavening, since they mark the commencement of a new day. During this service anthems for the saints to be celebrated on the following morning are sung. It is customary for the nuns to read the Ninth Hour just before Vespers. Matins and the First, Third and Sixth Hours are read in the morning before the Liturgy. Complines are read just before going to bed, after the evening meal. As for Nocturnes, they are either recited in the privacy of the nuns cells or before the Liturgy. The nuns explained that they did not follow the order of the services in strict accordance with Church law because numerous duties in the convent would go unattended. They were forced therefore to arrange the services so as to provide a long free period in the day to complete their tasks.

In P. some nuns told me that they woke at about one a.m. to pray in their cells. This they said was done because the nuns "pray when all the world is asleep so that God will always hear prayers for humanity's salvation." At three a.m. the talanto, a long wooden board which is knocked rhythmically with a wooden mallet, is sounded, calling the nuns to church. The nun who performs this service must walk throughout the convent with the talanto to make sure that all have heard. Outside it is still dark and silent. Some time later, half an hour or so, the bell rings sounding the start of morning services. Having finished their private morning prayers, the nuns now make their way to the church. Drifting in, they make the sign of the cross², bending low before the thaumaturgical icon of the Panayia of P., before the icon of the Christ and finally before the throne of the Despot (Bishop's Chair found in all churches). They then take their place either by the western doors of the church or in the psaltirion (where the cantors stand--see Chapter 2). If some have jobs to perform which take them outside the church they are not hindered. Thus, some nuns will occasionally slip in and out of the northern door, making the sign of the cross both as they enter and as they leave.

If there is a liturgy, the services may take up to four hours otherwise the morning services last up to two hours. On Sundays, when people from the surrounding villages come to the convent for services, the talanto is struck between four and five a.m. By starting the services late the villagers are able to attend the liturgy. Otherwise it would be too early for most of them.

The nuns leave the church between six and seven a.m. The sun is up; everything is bright. The nuns chat amongst themselves. Some go to drink coffee and eat some bread in the trapezaria (dining-room). Others go to their cells to sleep or pray. Still others may have to attend to duties around the convent³.

At approximately twelve-thirty the small bell outside the dining-room is rung signalling lunch. This meal is similar to the evening meal in that the nuns of the community

gather together along with the Hegumeno/ni to eat in the common dining room. The food has been brought to the table by the three nuns who have kitchen duty that month. The nuns must eat without criticism whatever is served by the cooks though slight grumblings over the ineptitude of some nuns to produce a good meal were not unheard of. The nuns stand by their chairs speaking quietly until grace is said by a designated nun. The priest is asked to give the blessing. The nuns cross themselves and sit silently to eat. One nun is responsible each day to read during the meal. These readings often narrate the life of the saint celebrated that day. When everyone has finished eating, the nun stops reading, says grace and asks the Hegumenos/i for the blessing. It is given. The nuns cross themselves and the meal is over. One may now speak freely but it is extremely bad manners to eat anything after the blessing. The completion of the meal signalled by crossing oneself is similar to village practice noted in the previous chapter, and, as will be noted further on, may provide protection against Temptation. To eat after the end of the meal may imply greed and the triumph of the devil over one's will.

After lunch the nuns may attend to tasks around the convent or they may go to their cells to read, nap, or pray. At around four some may ask for a coffee or a sweet. At four-thirty the talanto sounds for Vespers marking the beginning of the new day. After Vespers the nuns may chat to one another, complete unfinished tasks, prepare dinner, or drink their afternoon coffee. It is the bell which, once again, summons the nuns to the meal. Dinner is conducted with the same solemnity as lunch but here after the final blessing the nuns remain seated, except for those who have kitchen duty, and discuss with or simply listen to the priest who may deliver a small sermon or describe and interpret the life of the saint to be celebrated the following day. In any event it seems to be a time for religious discussion and instruction.

At about nine or possibly earlier the nuns gather quietly in the dark church for Complines (Apodhipno). Often they stand at the back of the church. There is no

electricity; the only light comes from the candilia (oil lamps) hung just above the icons throughout the church. Complines are recited by different nuns. In the darkness it is as if disembodied voices from different parts of the shadowy church are chanting. Then, from elsewhere in the church other voices will take up the recitation. It is a ghostly and mysterious experience and I often felt that I too, along with the voices, had lost all contact with the material world.

Complines finished, the nuns form two lines which lead out into the darkness from the church's northern door. It seems that the lines are formed according to the status of the nuns in the community, those who are older and more prestigious stand at the head of the lines inside the church, while those who are younger and newer stand at the end, outside the church. The Hegumenos and the Hegumeni walk between these two lines giving their blessings to the nuns who kiss the outstretched right hands of their spiritual parents as a sign of respect. Some will ask for forgiveness; others simply murmur good-night and then move off towards their cells chatting quietly in the dark. Once alone in their cells, private prayers are said and the nuns then sleep until the talanto sounds once again.

Though the daily routine seems to begin with the Liturgy in the morning, it should be remembered that it is Vespers that marks the commencement of the day. The apotheosis of the day, if you will, is achieved with the celebration of the Eucharist (thanksgiving-- during which the bread and wine are consecrated) during the Liturgy in the morning. It should be noted however, that the Liturgy lies beyond human time. It is an aspect of the eternal and divine and as such not part of any daily human cycle. Yet, the Liturgy is also a celebration of light and joy and as such should be held (except during times of repentance and sorrow such as Lent) in the mornings. This was made evident by the Hegumeni of T. who related with distress the insistence of a woman visitor that her child receive the Sacrament during the afternoon services. The Hegumeni refused thereby angering the mother who could not be given to understand that the

Eucharist is a "celebration of light and life. This is why it is held in the mornings. We come from the darkness of the night to the sanctity of the day; from sin to grace."⁴. The Eucharist is the moment towards which each day's activities aim.

Weekly Cycle

Like the day, the week too has its set routine centered around the Church and, like the day, culminates with the Sunday liturgy and the Eucharist. Every day of the week is consecrated in honour of an event or of a special being. And the fasts as well as the partaking of the Holy Communion (often referred to in religious texts as "the feast") is dependent on the nature of the day.

Monday is in honour of the Holy Angels. It is a day of fasting for the nuns in preparation for the next day. Tuesday is in honour of the Prophets and in particular of John the Precursor (Prodromos). It is a day when a Liturgy may be performed. Wednesday is consecrated to the Cross of Christ as it is the day of Judas' treason. It is a day of deep mourning and as such it is a fasting day. This also applies to the villagers who though many do not adhere to the fast recognise Wednesday as a day of mourning. Thursday is in honour of all the sainted bishops and again serves as a day when the Liturgy may be performed. Friday is consecrated to the Cross as it is the day of the Crucifixion and again constitutes a day of mourning and fasting for the villagers as well as for the nuns. Saturday is in honour of the saints and in particular of the Panayia. It is also in memory of all who have died in the hope of resurrection and eternal life. It is the seventh day and as such, blessed by God as the day of rest (see Gen 2:3). Saturday marks the end of God's creation of this world. Yet, it is also the day before the Lord's Day, Kiriaki (Sunday). Sunday is the first or the eighth day stressing "its difference from and a certain opposition to Saturday which forever remains the seventh day" (Schmemmann op.cit.:69). Saturday signifies the day before

the rising of Christ. It is a day of celebration as well as a day of expectation; an expectation which is fulfilled on Sunday, for Sunday marks Christ's conquering of death and the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Thus, the week ends and begins with the glory of the Eucharist and the promise of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Should however a commemoration of a great saint or martyr occur during those days when fasts are usually kept a liturgy may be held. Moreover, there are six weeks throughout the year during which the weekly fasts are suspended in honour of joyous events. They are the two weeks after Christmas; the week of the Publican and the Pharisee preceding Lent; the week before the beginning of Lent; the Easter Week and the week preceding Pentecost. The rules of fasting and performing the Liturgy therefore are not rigid; they accommodate to the fluctuating calendar of the yearly religious rituals.

Yearly Cycle

The yearly cycle of feast days are divided into the Feasts of Christ and God; the Feasts for the Panayia, and the Saint's Feasts, in honour of the holy Angels and holy persons. In the convent the feasts were described as being either great or lesser such that feasts of the Great Martyrs (Meyali Martyres) carry greater significance than the feasts of those who are not considered to have suffered⁵ or to have died such dramatic deaths.

The feasts are also either fixed or movable. Fixed feasts return periodically on the same dates on the same month every year. Movable feasts occur yearly on the same day in the week but may occur on a different date or even a different month each year. The movable feasts are linked closely with Easter which is celebrated on a different date, though always on Sunday and in the Spring, every year since it is calculated in accordance with the Julian calendar and not the Gregorian one used in secular society and for all other religious feasts⁶ (see Diagram 4).

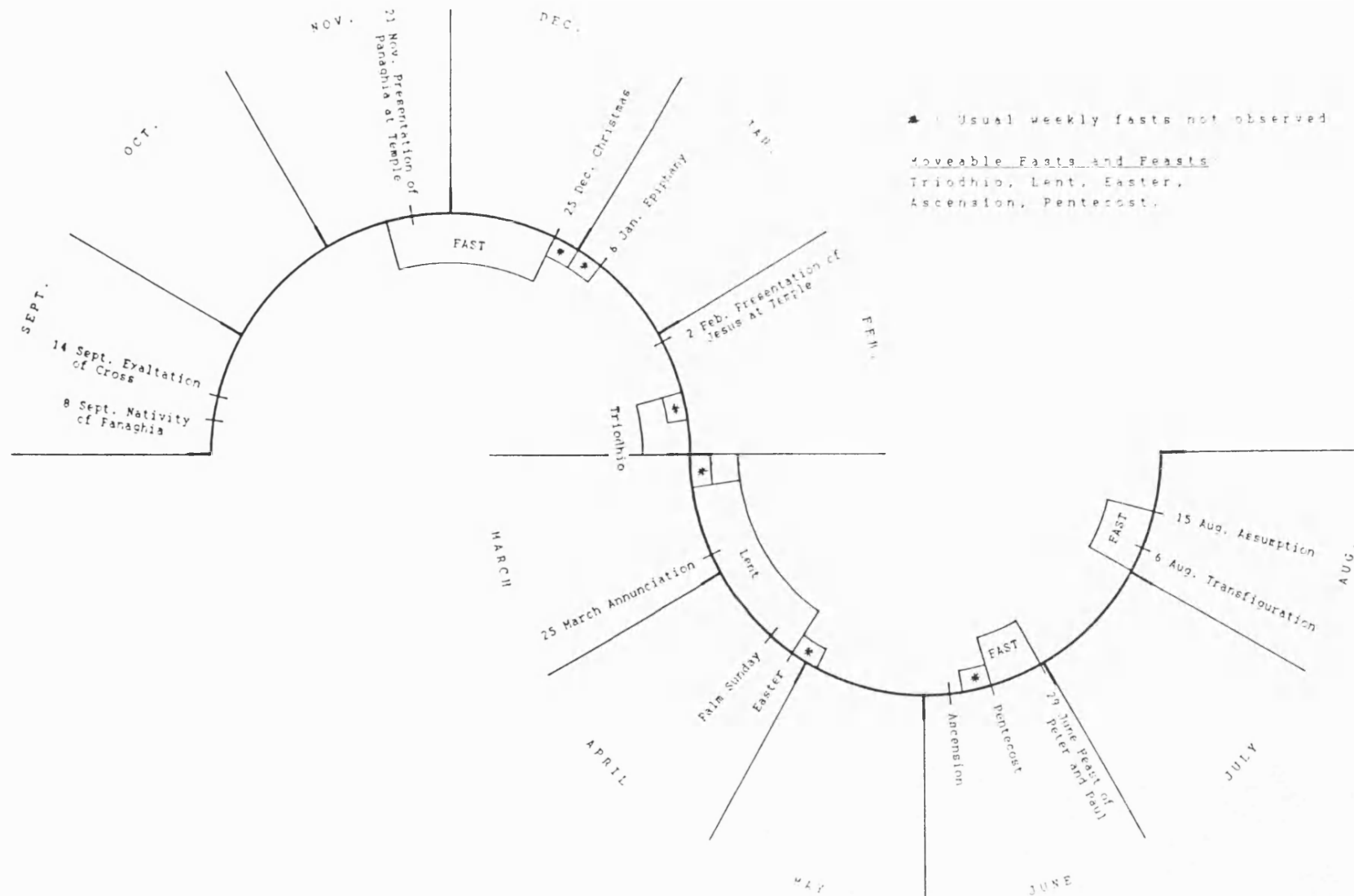


Diagram 4: Major Fasts and Religious Feasts

The Paschal Feast, Easter (Pascha), is considered to be the feast of feasts as it celebrates the Resurrection of Christ. There are also twelve other major feasts known as the Twelve Feasts (I Dhodheka Iortes)⁷. These feasts, except for the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrate major events in the lives of Christ and Panayia. The Exaltation of the Cross is part of the history of the Orthodox Church and celebrates the finding of the cross by the emperor Constantine and his mother Eleni in 300-400 A.D..

In preparation for the major feasts, penance and fasting are observed as well as prayers for the dead. In the convents, as in the village, there are four major fasting periods: seven weeks including Lent preceding Easter; forty days preceding Christmas and fourteen days preceding the Dormition of the Panayia on August 15; and an unspecified period, starting on the Monday, eight days after Pentecost and ending on the 28th of June the eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. These are the times during which most pious villagers prepare to receive Holy Communion. Many however, fast only for a week before each event while others receive Communion only at Easter and the Dormition, if at all. The nuns, however, as expected, maintain the fasts and the feasts in strict accordance with Church dictates.

The greatest preparations conducted are of course those of Lent which precede Easter. Easter marks the grandest expression of the Eucharist for it is this event, the Resurrection of Christ and the promised and created unity between the Divine and human, that is strived for throughout the year. The day, the week and the year endlessly repeat and commemorate the cycle of birth, death, and resurrection as witnessed in the Eucharist.

Repetition and Change

It is evident that the nuns' daily, weekly, and yearly routines differ from those of the village women. Not only are the nuns' lives highly structured and centered around church worship rather than on the maintenance of the household and

the reproduction of children, but the essential framework does not vary (e.g. Edmunds op.cit.:90,95; Williams 1975:115). Moreover, though the convents do use some modern appliances and amenities such as telecoms, electricity, phones, running water, large automatic kneading machines to help make bread, the emphasis is still on subsistence agriculture and herding. There are no televisions or radios. Only the Hegumenos/ni reads newspapers. The nuns leave the convent only when ill. Any shopping the convent may need is completed by lay persons or by certain nuns usually in the company of the Hegumeni or Hegumenos. As an institution the convent maintains its distance and distinction from the world outside by opposing change or progress to repetition and enclosure (e.g. Edmunds op.cit.:122; Campbell-Jones op.cit.:92,96-98).

The nuns seem to espouse two views concerning the highly structured routine of their lives. On the one hand, when proclaiming that their lives are grounded in the Tradition of the Fathers, the nuns insist that nothing in the monastic life has changed from the time of the apostles; the days flow on, the one like the other. By contrast, when responding to lay queries concerning the boredom inherent in the continuously repeating cycle of religious observances, the nuns respond that life in the convent is not in the least dull and tedious. Rather, each day brings something new. Speaking in terms of worldly concerns, the daily schedule does vary simply by the fact that the seasons change. During the summer both convents are inundated by visitors. The nuns are kept busy catering for their guests and tidying up after them. In the winter the convents are left in relative peace. T. no longer has bus loads of curious tourists and pilgrims though it must meet the spiritual needs of the people from the town and the surrounding villages who come either for the church services or simply to find some peace and pay their respects to the nuns and the Panayia. The convent of P. is virtually cut off during the winter since the road leading to the convent is not yet paved and the winter snows and rains make for difficult and dangerous travelling. In the spring and autumn,

times of harvest, planting or lambing, the nuns are kept busy with agricultural duties. In terms then of worldly tasks to be performed the days vary considerably.

More importantly however, argue the nuns, their days also vary with the religious feasts and fasts that make up the religious year.

Each day is a celebration. Sometimes there are close to 300 saints, martyrs, and osious (saints issued from monastics) who may be celebrated on a particular day. Each day is the glory of some saint. Each day brings a new celebration.

Each day a new holy person must be remembered and honoured with the prayers and hymns associated with that person. Having said this it must also be said that though the work and the feasts and fasts bring variation, there is a concerted effort made to maintain a consistent daily schedule throughout the year. A small example was that neither convent changed to daylight saving time. One nun said that there was no need to change the time as they had very few direct dealings with the "outside world" while another nun told me that it would confuse their herd animals because they would be fed at different times. It seemed impossible for her to imagine that the nuns themselves could adapt to the new times and feed the animals one hour later. Such flexibility is not immediately evident it seems. Thus, the time meals and church services are held vary only slightly throughout the year usually in accordance with changes demanded by the Orthodox ritual cycle rather than by secular concerns. This matches with the impression the nuns seek to create of the convent as a sacred institution. When comparing the convent with secular life (kosmiki zoe) the Hegumenos of P. told me that :

"In the kosmiki zoe (secular life) one is always anxious for there is nothing stable or sure in one's life. Even the furniture in the house must change to fit the new style that has come in. One is always witnessing and adapting to different appearances and new things. This makes it difficult to act like a good Christian. Many circumstances will prevent you from abiding by the laws of God and keeping Him foremost in your thoughts and heart....In the convent there is no change because

whatever we have we use until it cannot be used any longer. We do not keep up with the fashions. We live very simple lives in the manner of the apostles. Essentially very little has changed since then. That is why, even in the past many people have felt the need to withdraw from society in order to achieve a lasting union with God. In the monasteries, they find peace away from the turmoil and change of society."

According to the Hegumenos the convent is not subject to the whims of human society (kinonia); rather monastics seek to follow the example of the apostles and live in simplicity and in accordance with the rules of God. Their way of life is not subject to social history and time but is eternal. By maintaining that the daily schedule does not change, the image of the convents as ahistorical is reinforced, and the separation and distinction from secular life is bolstered.

Hospitality as Dhiakonia

Yet, though the nuns sought to minimise outside intrusion, they were similarly compelled to offer hospitality, to allow those outside to come within and partake of the grace of God evident in the convent. For the nuns hospitality was said to be the most important aspect of their dhiakonia. Dhiakonia, I was given to understand, is work that must be carried out in the convent community. This includes the herding of animals; the cleaning of the church; sewing; cooking, or any other chores that are not directly related to church services, strict prayer, and rest. Dhiakonia however, implies that throughout the task the nun unceasingly focuses upon God through silent prayer in her desire to do His bidding at every moment. Thus, dhiakonia which is defined as serving or begging is an apt expression to describe the nuns' lives in that they both serve God and, through their prayers, continually ask, beg, for pardon (a point which will be elaborated further on).

The emphasis on prayer serves to oppose dhiakonia to dhoulia, as work is referred to in the village. The nuns insistence that dhiakonia is in the service of God masks the

work they do in order to maintain themselves and the convent. The prayers cloak the work transforming its base and earthly functions into heavenly tasks of achieving communion⁸.

By contrast in the village, work, or *dhoulia*, is done in order that ones children can have the best chances of success in the world which in turn, reflect upon one's character as a parent and thus as a person. Furthermore, it is explicitly stated that the meaning of life and work lies in children: "Ti ine i zoe choris pedhia? Afta dhinoun noima stin zoe, stous kopous mas" (What is the meaning of life without children? They give meaning to life, to our efforts).

Whereas the villagers regard the meaning of their work to be their children, that is on the continued interaction and success of their household within the community, the nuns focus is on the divine and the interaction with God through work associated with prayer. This is most evident in the association of hospitality with work and furthermore with *dhiakonia*. Hospitality associated only with the task of maintaining the convent in the material world, would be a base task indeed. Instead the interactive quality of hospitality best exemplified through *kerasma* in the secular world, is denied in the convent in that *dhiakonia* by definition subsumes the task at hand to the interaction with the divine through prayer. Thus ideally, the worldly guest is denied attention since attention is focused upon God.

This distinction underlies the different practices of hospitality within the convent and the village. For, though on the surface, the offering of formal hospitality in the convent closely follows the practices of the village household, in the end, we shall see that convent hospitality attempts to both deny material existence and interaction, and to maintain hierarchical relations.

The practice of hospitality:

After the morning liturgy in P. visitors are served sweet coffee, bread and olives while in T. they are offered coffee and a preserve. If the visitors arrive in the afternoon they will be greeted in both convents with a coffee and preserved

fruit or turkish delight (loukoumi). On feast days such as the birth of the Panayia or at Christmas, they may be served a baked cake. Only one, or at most two, nuns are present at any one time serving the guests' needs but not interacting with them. Nor will the nuns eat in the presence of their guests. Only the Hegumenos or Hegumeni will occasionally drink coffee or eat a sweet in their company. As the spiritual elite of the convent they are probably less vulnerable than the nuns to the possible effects that sharing food with lay persons implies and more adept in maintaining their inner focus upon God. Moreover, as in the village, sweets seem to fulfil the sense of sharing a common substance without denying existing distinctions. The sweetmeats serve only to bridge separate categories.

In Chapter 2 it was noted that the nuns in both P. and T. have their own dining room. Lay visitors are never allowed to join the nuns at a meal for meals are shared strictly with those of the community. Only visiting monastics and clergy will eat with the nuns. This emphasises the sense in which all monastics belong to one order, one community. Meals are a time when the nuns gather and partake of the food and substance of life together in the sight of God.

In T. the secular visitors' dining room is the same room where they are greeted on all occasions. In P. there are two dining rooms for visitors. The one is reserved for those who come in large groups or who come for the morning liturgy and then leave. The other adjacent to the nuns' dining-room in the inner courtyard is reserved for those closer to the nuns and to the community in general. A window connecting these two rooms is opened during meals and the nun who is reading for the day sits by it thus giving the visitors the benefit of the religious readings. Though the meal is not shared in the sense that all eat together at a single table, the meal is none the less commensal in that both groups are joined by the open window and the religious texts. Yet the nun who read often seemed like an angel in black guarding with powerful words the open aperture connecting the lay and the religious.

The lay visitors were thus both included in the meal and kept from intruding upon the religious community.

In P. the visitors, lay men and women, eat at separate tables whenever possible. If it is crowded, men and women may be put at the same table but on opposite sides. The separation of the two sexes during the meal echoes the separation of the sexes in the sleeping quarters where not even married couples were permitted to sleep in the same room⁹. Also, in the church the men stand to the right facing the templo, the women to the left (see Chapter 2). The separation of the nuns from the laity in the church, in the dormitories and in the dining room may also be related to the separation of the sexes. These practices seem to symbolise a desire to maintain category distinctions, to avoid confusion and the combining of what is different and what should therefore be kept apart. By comparing these views with those held by the villagers it seems that the nuns wish to avoid any hint of physical reproduction which, as shown in the previous chapter, comes through the controlled combining of different categories: men and women; different households; types of food. By maintaining category distinctions the nuns seem to be upholding and reiterating their spiritual as well as physical virginity. Their world, in this world, is one in which the violation of boundaries should not ideally occur. This is well expressed by their avoidance of meat and certain types of alcohol.

The consumption of meat

In P. the nuns never eat meat. Sometimes they will eat shell fish which has either been brought to the convent as a gift, or ordered from town. In the convent of T. meat is eaten "for medical reasons" as some nuns are said to need meat to strengthen them against their illness. In this instance the other nuns will also eat the meat. To do otherwise, it is said, would entail extra work for those in the kitchen. Cooking different meals for the separate needs and tastes of each nun is considered an unnecessary luxury.

The prohibition on meat in P. seems to arise from a type of identification with the animal, similar to that described in Chapter 5 between the men in the household and their flock animals. Both P. and T. own flocks of sheep and a few goats. They drink the milk produced and also make yoghurt and cheese. In T. they use the wool to weave rugs and blankets on looms situated in a large, sunny workroom at the back of the convent. These items they either use themselves or sell. In P. they sell the young lambs directly for slaughter. However, when I asked a nun of P. if they ever ate the meat the suggestion was greeted with a grimace of disgust. Pinching the flesh of her arm under her raso she said: "We are made of flesh. And to eat flesh is disgusting. It is horrible to slaughter and eat flesh and blood when you yourself are flesh and blood." In T. the prohibition is recognised as being ideally desirable but in certain situations not feasible.

As was shown in the previous chapter, meat is associated with the men of the household, with the strengthening of the body, and with reproduction. To eat meat when one has no intention of bearing children, of continuing a household and an ikoyenia in this life, means that one is simply eating for oneself, strengthening one's material substance, something the nuns avoid. They, after all, wish to transform their bodies, to spiritualise them. This life does not interest them. Killing animals for consumption therefore becomes an unnecessary act of destruction unless of course one is ill and in need of material strength and replenishment. For, to wilfully kill oneself by refusing medicine is also considered by the nuns a sinful act: you destroy a creation of God. Thus, for many of the nuns, "excessive" acts of fasting or punishment were condemned as acts of pride unless, of course, they were carried out by a saint¹⁰.

To reiterate, the eating of meat was regarded with disgust by the nun for it was likened to the eating of oneself, similar to the attitude the villagers assumed for the eating of meat after a funeral. To eat together what is dead or with the dead implies consuming death. To eat what materially

strengthens you without producing life, in the form of children, is to strengthen that aspect of you which you have sought to "kill" by becoming a nun. It is to share in a material strength attained through death and which in the end, according to the nuns, is death.

The consumption of alcohol

Only once in my many visits to the convents was I given any alcohol, that is, one small glass of wine, to drink. This was in the convent of T. on the same Sunday that I had my only meal of meat in either of the convents. Alcohol in the form of wine and in very small quantities is not prohibited in either convent. The Hegumenos of P. once noted that a little wine is good for the health. It cleanses the blood.

Beer and ouzo however, are never drunk complementing the practice in secular society whereby beer and ouzo in particular, are consumed in the kafenion usually amongst men. These drinks may be associated with (male) self-expression in the kafenia (see Chapters 2 and 5) unfettered by social (household) norms and expectations. They represent the exact opposite of the highly regulated, hierarchical convent community where self-expression is found only through the suppression of one's will and the unquestioning obedience of rules as laid out by the Church. Wine however, is linked with the household and with household consumption and in the convent it may be associated with commensality and the creation of community through the acceptance of the Holy Communion.

What is noted is that both alcohol and meat, two symbolically loaded foods when consumed outside of the church ritual are often consumed for "reasons of health" and in small quantities. They are like medicine, an entity semantically different from food.

The avoidance of meat and alcohol also emphasises the nuns' desire to control and maintain the boundaries as constituted by the Church and by their vows. Reproduction of the self through sex and children is denied as is any wilful (male), and thus potentially dangerous self-expression.

Categories ultimately should be kept distinct¹¹.

Boundaries and the Apotropaic Power of the Cross

The inherent dangers accompanying the violation of constituted boundaries were graphically expressed with the insistence by a few nuns in P. that whenever I eat or drink anything I should first cross myself and the food or drink I was to consume¹². This is similar to the practice of some village women to cross themselves before and after a meal. Failing to do this in the village implied that one was simply not a strict adherent of Orthodox practice. In the convent, failure to cross the food and oneself had dire consequences. Temptation (pirasmos, euphemism for the devil) has long, green fingers with long, horrible fingernails which it dips into one's food and drink. Only the sign of the cross dispels the evils of Temptation.

In the convent the cross is a symbol imbued with immense power. In a sermon I heard given by the Hegumenos of P. on the celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14th September, he differentiated the cross from icons. Icons, he said, should not be worshipped in themselves but simply respected as images of the divine. The cross, on the other hand, and the sign of the cross have power in and of themselves. For example:

Above the still unexcavated cross of Christ there had grown a basil bush. Every evening a Jewish rabbi had chopped down the bush. But every morning the bush had grown again. When the cross was finally unearthed along with those of the two thieves who had been crucified with Jesus the people did not know which one was His. They held the three crosses in turn by a dead man. When the cross of Christ was placed by the corpse the man rose to a new life.

"Such", said the priest, "is the power of the cross. It brings life¹³". The dead man returning to life is proof of the power of the Cross and God, who is the giver of life. It can also be seen as a metaphor for the eternal life that awaits all humankind after death.

The sign of the cross was also used to demarcate and contain events. In the village some men and women would cross themselves before starting out on a long journey to assure their safety during the journey. When reaching their destination they would again cross themselves as a sign of thanks for having arrived safely. Similarly, whenever I left the convent of P. I was accompanied to my car by one of the nuns. There she would make the sign of the cross over me and the car. On one occasion when I had been given a small bottle of holy water, the nun sprinkled some of the water on the car as well and explained the reason for making the sign of the cross:

You should make the sign of the cross before and after each journey. It is the sign of the opening and the closing as in the prayer at Complines. You should begin and end everything with the sign of the cross.

Thus, just as Complines marks the end of a day and the beginning of a night when the nuns will sleep, open and more vulnerable to temptation (see Chapters 2 and 4), so to the journey must be marked with the cross and a prayer to ward off danger, spiritual or otherwise¹⁴.

Opening and Closing in Life

Life in this world for the nuns and the villagers alike is seen to consist of action and movement. To be in motion is, after all, one of the ways some villagers distinguished between what was animate and inanimate (see Chapter 1). To be at rest, to be motionless is to be dead. This is supported by the use of the word sleep both in the convent and occasionally in the village to describe death (e.g. Campbell-Jones op.cit.:101). "He has gone to sleep (kimithike)", they say of someone who has died. An older woman in the village explained the relationship between sleep and death as follows:

Death is like sleep. Don't they call sleep a second death? Well, death is like sleep. And when you sleep your body rests and is dead but you dream and your

spirit (pneuma) travels to other places--to places where you've never been. It floats away. That is like death. We go to another place, a higher place but we don't know what it will be like.

The nuns, in fact, rarely used the word death to describe physiological death. To do so seemed to imply that the soul of the person had died and not just the body. A rhyme posted in the outer visitor's dining room in P. stated:

Ean pethanies	If you die
Prin pethanies	Before you die
Dhen tha pethanies	You will not die
Otan pethanies	When you die ¹⁵

That is, if you "die" to this material world, in the manner that the nuns have, before your physiological death, you will not die spiritually when your body dies. By referring to death as "sleep" the nuns are able to portray the motionless state of the person in question while equally maintaining that the person is still alive spiritually. He has not died even if his body is no longer in motion and alive.

Motion, actions, life in this world seem to be fraught with dangers. They leave one open (anichtos), that is vulnerable to temptation and evil, particularly for the nuns. Actions outside the confines of everyday experience may seem especially fraught with danger¹⁶. Was it due to this that the nuns in P. seemed impressed not only with my ability to drive but with the evident ease with which I offered to tackle what seemed to them the hectic town market to buy the goods they needed?

In any action, events, people, foreign entities that are part of that action enter into the bounded domain of one's existence. One, of necessity, interacts. Boundaries are necessarily crossed and combined when ideally, for the nuns, they should be kept separate and distinct.

Eating then, or consuming, is ideologically and quite understandably, viewed as an unwelcomed and for some a dangerous activity for in consuming one incorporates into one's body a foreign substance. If the food is not spiritually pure, if temptation has polluted the food with its long,

green fingers, then one is in danger of incorporating the devil within oneself; a horrible thought particularly if the daily struggle is to rid oneself of all temptation and earthly desires in order to achieve grace. It is only when one has achieved eternal life that one is finally released from the endless need to maintain the body--a need which expresses humanity's sinful state:

In Heaven we are said to have different bodies from the one's we have on earth. These heavenly bodies are eternally 33 years old. They do not age. Nor do they experience thirst or hunger.

Eating is just one more sign of humanity's enslavement to the material world from which the nuns seek to escape.

This view of eating is somewhat different from the one held in the village. It is only when eating fayito (a cooked meal, see Chapter 5) that a few villagers find it necessary to cross themselves. Fayito is linked with procreation as shown above. It is linked with the ideas of strength, and continuity in life. Thus, to make the sign of the cross is to bless the substance that will be incorporated and grant life and strength, as well as spiritual grace. By contrast, for many of the nuns, all foreign substances are potentially dangerous. They must be bounded by spiritual power in order to neutralise, or better yet, to make them first and foremost spiritually sustaining.

It should be noted however, that for other nuns particularly those in T., their demands that I cross myself and my food before eating applied only to meals, equivalent in other words to the practice in the village. And though the nuns in both convents espoused the belief that food was not to be consumed for its taste or for enjoyment but simply in the service of bodily needs, for "appeasing the belly", the nuns never the less seemed to enjoy their meals and snacks. The truth is I never felt so full nor ate so well as when I was visiting them. Eating then, though regarded as a duty to be performed, and sometimes a dangerous one at that, was conducted at times with evident pleasure.

Hospitality and Exchange

Though the nuns should ideally break relations with their ikoyenies and friends once they enter the convent, in practice many nuns maintain close contact with those outside. Kinspersons will often donate money, food products, work, etc. to the convent where their female relative resides. If one of her parents is ill the nun will often be given permission to visit though she will not be permitted to stay with the parent for over one or two hours at any one time. Though not permitted to attend funerals¹⁷, baptisms or weddings of even her closest relatives, a nun will learn of the details of the event either through a visit or a phone call. Thus, what goes on in the outside world is not unknown to these cloistered women.

Visitors too are great resources of local gossip and events as they are providers of food products, oil or wine to the convent. These gifts are signs of respect and thanks for the hospitality shown and the prayers offered for them by the nuns. Some of the people in my village also remember trading with the monasteries of the region before WWII. The villagers, for example gave three okadhes (pl. of oka; 1 oka= 2.82 lbs.) beans in return for one oka wool. Today most bulk food items brought to the convent are donations and they are all, to my knowledge, raw food products. I never saw large quantities of cooked or prepared food donated to the convent, except perhaps cartoned fruit drinks, or ice cream. Usually, the products given to the convent come in small quantities: a bottle of oil to light the candilia (oil lamps) in the church; a bottle of wine to be used in the liturgy. Sometimes small offerings of coffee, sugar, or preserved sweets are brought as signs of thanks. Bread, to be used as prosforo (liturgical bread) and made by pious women known to the nuns, may occasionally be given and accepted though most villagers avoid giving prosforo since they know it will not be accepted or used (see Chapter 5).

Nuns also offer food back to the villagers yet the food they offer is cooked and served as a meal. Food, in general,

is not given in its raw, "natural" state though occasionally I did deliver in town raw foods to friends or relatives of the nuns. Such food may have been some garden grown tomatoes, wild greens, or some eggs. Most people however, to whom the nuns felt a special affinity were given bread or a baked cakes as gifts.

The acceptance of raw food stuffs and the production and distribution of cooked foods to visitors by the nuns may be linked with the need to maintain spiritual cleanliness. Raw food brought by the villagers is "clean" in that it is from "nature". The priest expressed this view of "raw, natural" foods when describing the life of the monastics:

We think of God always whenever we do things. We gather the wild greens and wash them and marvel at God's creation and thank Him. We cook the greens. We do not eat them raw for we are humans, not animals".

Raw food is God given. It is something to be marvelled at and can cause no harm. But to be eaten it must be cooked for humans, unlike animals do not eat foods directly from "nature". It may be understood that in cooking food or, as in the case of bread, kneading the dough, "natural" substances are combined and made into an edible item. Fayito in the process of being created may be said to be "open" thereby increasing the chances of pollution. If the nuns cook the food, it remains as untainted by the practices and objects of the world, (ta enkosmia) as possible.

This insistence on "natural" substances and the avoidance of the "enkosmia" was made clear to me one night at P. It was just after the evening meal. I was the only guest at the convent and one of the nuns was sent to keep me company while the others stayed with the Hegumenos. She had brought with her some bees wax. She asked me if I was "clean". This did not mean as I thought at first if I had confessed, had recently taken communion, or had fasted that day from oil but simply if I was menstruating. As I was not, I was allowed to help make the candles for the church. I was told, one should never make candles out of anything but bees-

wax. Nowadays people bring paraffin candles to burn in the church as tamata (ex-voto offering)¹⁸. These candles are not accepted by the nuns. They say it is disrespectful to God. Only things from "nature" should be brought into the Church for the glory of God. Those things in other words that are part of the creation, God-made. Could it be then be that a man-made substitute is seen as an attempt by man to outdo God? Or is the house of God like His Creation and should therefore not be tainted by those objects created by humans in their fallen state?

The incident of the candle-making however does portray the vulnerability of things when in the process of being created; whether that be cooking, kneading, rolling out candles, or in the actions of people in their daily lives. It seems to bear a relation to the implied cleanliness and perfection of things in their raw state and the need to take care that in their transformation no temptation enters¹⁹, that contact with things of an ever transforming world, here portrayed by menstruation and reproduction, are avoided.

This practice of accepting raw food and transforming it into acceptable cooked fayito serves to place the nuns in a position of dominance. It implies that lay people, the kos-miki, are not as spiritually clean, not as spiritually intact to offer cooked food to the nuns. They must be on the receiving end of the relationship. They must accept nourishment both materially and spiritually from the nuns. They themselves can offer only that which is already there by "nature", God-given.

It also becomes clear that the nuns can never eat fayito in the same room with the laity. They cannot share the same substance of life for they are different. The nuns are spiritually superior to the laity, in a different category, and consequently vulnerable to the temptations inherent in life and actions as represented by the laity. To eat together would be to integrate these different social categories; an act detrimental to the spiritual position of the nuns.

This however, does not contradict the nuns constant emphasis on hospitality as a central component of monastic

life. Hospitality, (filoksenia) literally translated means befriending (filia) a stranger or foreigner (ksenos). This is the core notion of the nuns' hospitality. They offer to their visitors food and accommodation expecting only that their visitors respect the "House of God".

In T. the importance of hospitality was portrayed by a story which also emphasised the need to obey the clerical leadership of the convent, the Bishop (Dhespotis). It seems when the Hegumeni first established the convent the Bishop sought to test her. He told her that she must not offer hospitality to any who came to the convent. This the Hegumeni described as a great cross to bear, for when people asked her for even a glass of water she had to refuse. This went on for a few months. She had not heard from the Bishop. It was as if he had forgotten the instruction he had given. The Hegumeni was desperate. Then one day a relative or friend (?) of the Bishop came to visit the convent. As it was a hot day, he asked for water. The Hegumeni despite her shame, denied him. The next day the Bishop visited her and praised her obedience. He had been testing her and she had proved herself a true follower of God's commandments. The ban on hospitality was lifted and the convent was able once again to offer food and drink, as well as accommodation to its visitors.

The second story was told to me by a nun at P. She noted how the convent always offers coffee, olives, and bread at the end of the liturgy for their guests. This is usually done on Sundays as it is then that most people make the difficult journey up the dirt mountain road. At one point in the past the Hegumenos had suggested that it might be difficult and tiring for the nuns to continue this practice. Many of them are quite old, the guests are numerous, and the nuns must be absent for part of the liturgy in order to prepare the coffee for the guests. It was decided then that the nuns should simply put out some bread and olives. The coffee would no longer be made. " But", continued the nun, "Panayia of P. grew angry for the people come to visit Her and not us. We are simply her servants who offer hospitality to Her guests."

Suddenly, where the nuns had once had an abundance of coffee and sugar they had none. Not only did they not have enough to offer the guests if they had so wished ; they no longer had any for themselves. For the first time in many years, they were forced to buy coffee. Seeing this the Hegumenos realised that the Panayia was gently but firmly indicating Her dissatisfaction. The Hegumenos decided that the nuns must once again make the effort to provide coffee for the Sunday morning visitors. When they began again to offer their full hospitality there was again more coffee and sugar than could have ever been desired. "Panayia always provides if you do Her bidding. She does not turn away or forget."

The relationship between the convent and its visitors, seems to be one of exchange. For the hospitality and the religious services offered, the visitors in return bring goods, particularly food stuffs, but occasionally a helping hand. Should the convent cease to offer hospitality, the visitors will cease to provide it with the raw goods necessary for it to survive. Such at least is one interpretation of the story.

In further comparing the two stories it may be noted that the nuns feel they must obey the dictates of those in authority, those who are their spiritual leaders. In the first case the Hegumeni is tested by a member of the Church. In the second case, by unknowingly yet always in good faith, disobeying the rule of hospitality demanded by the Panayia, the nuns are punished. Hospitality is seen as an integral part of convent life; a major aspect of the nuns' vocation when entering the community. Hospitality is a divine precept.

Finally, in the second narrative, the nun uses a metaphor common in describing monastic hospitality and illuminating in relation to monastic life: that of the servant and the master, a point which takes us back to the definition of dhiakonia (see also Atkinson 1987). The nuns are likened to servants of the divine, offering the guests of God's House, not something which they themselves possess but that which is God's. It is not for them to offer or refuse; they

are there only to serve God's visitors. Moreover, by being of God's house, provided for by the Panayia, the nuns are thereby able to deny any dependence on lay donations. It is Panayia who was responsible for the cessation and resumption of coffee to the monastery. Furthermore, unlike priests who, as we shall see, offer the truly divine food of Holy Communion, the nuns (and monastics in general) serve the worldly food which sustains the body. Their service imitates the service of mothers and wives of the household who offer visitors the bounty of the male household, or in the case of the nuns, the bounty of the divine (male) household. This immediately implies not only a hierarchical relationship between divine and human, male and female, cleric and monastic, such that priest: male food (Christ -- Holy Communion)::monastic: female food (worldly food provided by the Panayia), but also a hierarchical relationship between the religious and the lay. For the nuns, though women, are perceived as part of, members of God's household, unlike the laity. The laity are only guests, welcomed but ultimately foreign, outsiders in debt to their host. To explicate let us re-examine certain notions of hospitality in the convent and in the village.

Hospitality and Hierarchy

As we have seen in the convent and village hospitality is a major concern and commensality a means of demarcating "insiders" and "outsiders". In the village fayito is given to visitors only on feast days, that is on days marking a special occasion. It is eaten in a special area, an area which is not at the center of the home but in the liminal space between the house and the world beyond its gate. In the convent fayito is provided for all visitors regardless of the time of year. Yet, the fayito is never consumed in the joint company of nuns and visitors. Those of the community are always kept apart from the visitors. Thus, the offering of fayito by the nuns, though it serves to integrate "outsiders", never fully includes them within the community.

In both instances it is a partial inclusion of outsiders.

In the village, it will be remembered, the relationships forged through hospitality are ideally depicted as relationships between equals²⁰. This is not to say that the villagers are unaware of the power of certain social and economic positions (e.g. Bennett op.cit.:226; Boissevain 1965:51). They will expect a doctor, university professor, or civil servant to dress and act according to his/her position. However, they will appreciate a doctor even more if he/she does not stand on ceremony but drinks and eats with even the poorest of farmers; of whom it might be said, "he/she is just like us" (san ke mas). Such a person will be respected for not putting on airs, for not thinking that he/she is a better person, unable to accept the hospitality of a mere villager. Moreover, hospitality not only should be accepted but it should be reciprocated. Ideally, it should establish relationships and override social and economic differences. A story told to me by a male informant (age appr. 70) illustrates this point. I paraphrase:

There was once a mountain villager who was visited by a wealthy merchant. This merchant was travelling to buy various goods and needed a place to stay the night. The villager invited the merchant to stay with him and his wife. He killed a chicken for the guest and the best foods the house could provide were offered. After the merchant had eaten and drunk well the village couple offered him their bed for the night while they slept on the floor by the fire. The next morning, the merchant woke and thanking his hosts for their hospitality, left for home. "If ever you are in town and need a place to stay," said the merchant to the villager, "you are most welcome to come and stay with me."

A few months later the villager did indeed come to town and needing a place to stay the night remembered the merchant's invitation. "Yes, of course I remember you," said the merchant when the villager knocked on his door. "We have just finished eating. Go to the kitchen and they will give you plenty to eat". The villager was given the rich remains of the elaborate festive meal the merchant had held that night. After he had eaten the merchant came to the villager and said, "Have you eaten well? You must be very tired. There is fresh straw in the barn laid out for you and warm blankets. You will be most comfortable there". The next morning the villager rose and thanking the merchant for his hospitality made his way home.

A few months passed and the merchant found himself once again in the village. Remembering the good hospitality of the villager, he went by his house. The villager greeted him warmly and offered him onions, bread and water for supper. He laid the merchant down to sleep on the floor by the fire. The next morning the merchant could no longer contain himself and asked: "Why did you give me only onions and bread to eat and bed me on the floor." "Because," replied the villager, "it is what we have available. The last time I treated you as a guest but when I came to you, you gave me only what was convenient for you to give. So this time I gave you the equal of your hospitality."

Anyone, irrespective of their position or that of their guest's, should offer the best of what they have. Moreover, it is expected that the hospitality given will be reciprocated, if the situation arises, to the best of the former guest's ability. It is then that the true worth of a person is recognised. Hospitality allows for the semblance of equality between people not in material terms but in terms of their essential qualities as humans. It allows for the statement: "In the end we are all same"²¹.

In the convent this semblance of equality does not exist. Instead, all exchanges be they defined as hospitality or no, are hierarchical. The secular people give the raw, natural food stuffs to the nuns who transform it and redistribute it as properly cooked food which is both physically and spiritually nourishing. The nuns "sacrifice their youth and life" to Christ and gain in return eternal life for their souls. The act of communion is the giving of Jesus the man by human beings, since He is one of us, for the return gift of the living Christ and salvation. The "raw" entity which was presented is returned in a transformed, or "cooked" state, in a state that nourishes the recipient. In these exchanges it is the spiritual quality which is paramount and which between laity and religious establishes the nuns as superior.

In the exchange of material gifts however, the nuns sometimes seemed shy and embarrassed. I was given small cheap coloured prints of various saints, hand-made koboskinia (similar to rosaries; see Chapter 4), plastic crosses and

once an older nun gave me some clothes that had been given to her and which she assured me had never been worn: a corduroy skirt, a black sweater, a cotton dress. With all these gifts the nuns were apologetic: "I have nothing to give you but this" or "I hope you will not be offended or think ill of me if I only give you this. I have nothing else."

In this instance, the precept of poverty is evident. The nuns truly do not have many goods of their own that they can offer as gifts to individual friends. And in fact to create special bonds with a particular person is frowned upon for the nuns' minds and hearts should be given ideally only to God. Having achieved this they are then capable of loving all humans as creations and manifestations of the One God (e.g. Edmunds op.cit.:96). Yet, in practice the nuns do form ties with people "outside" as I myself experienced and their occasional gifts were given to edify and protect me as well as being tokens of the bond between us. In return, I often brought gifts of sweets, beads, and medicines either for the use of particular nuns or for the convent as a whole.

Both the hierarchical nature of their hospitality and their shyness in offering material gifts however comply with the order of their world and the manner in which they view secular society. This world, they hold, is unimportant and their exchanges on this level are poor for they of their own accord have chosen to abandon the material world. Thus their humility, though I do not doubt for an instant that it was real, in fact supports their superior spiritual position. This is similar to the practice whereby they identify themselves as simply servants of God. By doing so they place themselves, in secular terms, in a lowly position of servitude while simultaneously emphasising their superior position vis-a-vis the laity in the divine hierarchy. They, amongst all humans, were chosen to serve God. They, amongst all humans, had the strength to leave aside the material world.

To summarise then, the nuns' hospitality though it speaks well of them in the sense that they never close their doors but welcome all who come, is a hospitality which em-

phasises their spiritual superiority. It can never be reciprocated for the nuns neither visit their lay donors nor accept cooked food from them. Depicting themselves as self-sufficient, they are able to portray themselves as distinct and separate from the lay world. And since this self-sufficiency is not due to their own efforts but to God's, they may further portray themselves as indebted to the divine, not to the lay donors who support them²².

These lay donors therefore find themselves always on the lowest rung of the spiritual ladder. To offer raw food is to offer that which is by definition God's. To offer cooked food is to offer that which is unworthy of consumption. The relationship between convent and laity, between human and divine remains always unreciprocated for by definition the lay person can never equal the religious.

This type of relationship is well explained in Parry's (1986) seminal article concerning the nature of the gift. He argues that a dominant proposition in Mauss's The Gift (1966) was that gift-exchange as expressed, for example, by the Maori is characterised by reciprocity whereby the gift containing some part of the donor constrains the recipient to make a return. This implies that there can be no disjunction between person and thing:

It is because the thing contains the person that the donor retains a lien on what he has given away and we cannot therefore speak of an alienation of property; and it is because of this participation of person in the object that the gift creates an enduring bond between persons. (Parry op.cit.:457)

Thus the gift-exchange may be expressed as the merging of persons and things, interest and disinterest thereby necessitating reciprocity and creating spiritual and social bonds between persons.

This is contrasted with the notion of the pure gift whereby a disjunction is created between persons and objects. Parry suggests that the ideology of a pure gift is most likely to develop in state societies with an advanced division of labour and a significant commercial sector because it

is within these circumstances that the economic relations are most likely to be separated from other types of social relations. This would allow for the separation of persons and things and the analogical separation of interested and disinterested giving (Parry op.cit.:457).

He goes on to suggest that in all major world religions, salvation religions, great stress is laid on the merit of gift giving in which there is no expectation of return. Noting Obeyesekere (1968), Parry argues that the concept of salvation--the condition whereby suffering has been eliminated--though found in both tribal and world religions assumes different parameters. In tribal religions social behaviour tends to be sanctioned by secular rather than religious morality and the violation of religious norms engenders immediate retribution rather than being postponed for the future.

By contrast, in religions which emphasise strong soteriological beliefs, social behaviour tends to be evaluated in accordance with the religious morality thereby entailing an elaboration of the concept of sin and religious merit. There is a powerful conception of a bifurcated other world-- a heaven and a hell. All actions therefore are oriented towards the attainment of heaven. As a consequence, this world proves at best to be only a poor image of the divine after world. Life is lived with the constant sense of inadequacy. One must continually strive to perfect oneself. Suffering as sacrifice becomes a means of denying the material self and atoning for sins which are by the very nature of one's existence unavoidable. Ideal goals are therefore oriented towards a future existence.

Such an ideology allows for the concept of the unreciprocated gift; a gift which would allow for the liberation from bondage to the material self, atonement from sin, and ultimately the hope of salvation. Such sentiments were often expressed with reference to the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican; a parable known to all the villagers and of course the nuns. It also marks the beginning of Triodho, the

period beginning with the preparation for Lent and ending on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abused; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Bible, King James version, Luke 18:10-15).

A hierarchy of sanctity exists in which the lowly, here by implication the villagers, only give pure gifts; they cannot expect a return as, by implication did the Pharisee for their lowly state gives them no right to demand. And yet, it is only when there is no expectation of return that there is hope of salvation. Yet, the ideology of the pure gift also underlies much of the nuns' interaction with the villagers. For, it is made to seem that the nuns offer without getting anything in return. Their gifts after all, out-weigh and will always out-weigh those of the lay donors, a point to which we will return.

The situation is not straight forward. As Parry notes, reciprocity does exist in some contexts in all societies. Thus, villagers with the tacit permission of the nuns promise votive offerings of candles, jewels or prayers to a particular saint or to Christ and the Panayia in exchange for the fulfilment of a wish: passing exams; healing; the safe return of a travelling relative. The path of exchange in these instances does not only run in one direction. Similarly, the lay visitors expect to be given hospitality by the nuns. I have often heard women and occasionally men, complain about the poor hospitality they received at a given monastery. Lay visitors expect monastics to be spiritually superior and regard monasteries as rich land owning institutions (which many were and some still are) with money to

spare. Both materially and spiritually therefore monastic institutions should offer good hospitality. If the nuns wish to maintain their spiritual position in the eyes of the greater community, they must be hospitable. To act in any other way jeopardises their spiritual status for they are immediately thought to be miserly, tied to the worldly pursuit of amassing wealth. So too, the saint who does not deliver his/her promise is abandoned and another found who will keep to his/her bargain. The lay view thus reinforces and is reinforced by the perceptions the nuns have and wish to project of themselves.

This relationship bears strong similarities with the relationship described by Fuller (1988) and Parry (forthcoming) in India between the superior castes, the Brahmins above all, and the lower castes. They note that in Dumont's view a complementarity between the 'pure' and the 'impure' exists, mirroring the complementarity and interdependence between the castes. This interdependence however, exists only from the inferiors' point of view whereas the superior Brahmans portray themselves as self-sufficient and autonomous. Moreover, though the higher castes can and may encompass the lower, they are not dependent upon them, while the lower orders certainly see themselves as dependent upon the higher. Thus, it is the lower order who through their religious practice continually reproduce, or at least support, the ideology necessary for the legitimisation of the hierarchy. In the instance described here, it is the expectation of hospitality that legitimises the nuns' superiority and which, in the end, reinforces the challenge and the threat presented by the nuns to the villagers' way of life.

Exchange and Gender

The hierarchical exchanges between the convent and the secular world are reminiscent of the exchanges between men and women within the village household. Women, as mentioned in Chapter 2, are the recipients and transformers of raw or natural products into socially acceptable goods. They take

the raw food given to them by their husbands and transform it into sustaining, nourishing food; semen they transform into children; houses they transform into homes. In this capacity, women and houses may be analogous to the (male by definition) clergy and the church. After all, it is the clergy who transform the bread and wine into the living body of Christ--the greatest of feasts, the most nourishing of substances. Through the clergy the sinful human is transformed by confession into a cleansed and purified being. Through baptism the raw and natural infant is transformed into a "cooked", socially and spiritually integrated member of the community. The clergy thus may be said to be the greatest of cooks²³. Both women and the clergy then are transformers within the conceptual confines of the "home", be it the "House of God" or the house of the ikoyenia. They take what is basic or "raw" and transform into a life-giving property, understood either in the religious or secular sense. Yet, this similarity is offset by the underlying distinction: priests "cook" in public houses while women "cook" in private ones. The clergy do what women do but in public as men.

Although women's transformative powers at one level offer power and prestige, at another level they serve to maintain them as socially inferior to men. Women may be transformers, but in lay society they are not considered as socially or spiritually capable as men. Moreover, it is only through men that women are able to realise their natural potential as mothers in a socially acceptable manner. For men, naturally social, are able to control and socialise female powers through marriage and the house. The transforming qualities of women are thereby minimised and made dependent on men.

We may begin then to understand the ambiguous position occupied by the clergy and ordained monks²⁴. The transformed gifts that the congregation receives from priests derive from a male-centered authority, that is from God the Father. These gifts, it is implied, cannot be reciprocated. One will be always in the position of receiving, and one's gifts will always be transformed and returned to one enriched and

spiritually augmented. Thus, the power of the clergy cannot be easily made to depend upon lay men as can the power of women. Nor can the ecclesiastical gifts be understood in terms of male reciprocity or household hospitality for there is no semblance of equal participation nor a levelling of differences in status. In the discourse of the church, lay men find themselves the poor recipients, allowing for the homology: woman:man::humanity:the divine²⁵. Moreover, since the clergy cannot participate in any male-centered activities such as card-playing, drinking or dancing in the kafenion there is no scope to establish a semblance of equality within a secular male domain. Thus, in church, lay men are forced to publicly become like women--inferior recipients of a higher good.

In response it seems the clergy with their long-hair and their long black robes are not considered truly men. They are both ridiculed and respected. They may be considered either over-sexed or effeminate; either overly powerful and fertile, embodying both male and female powers that cannot be contained, or unnaturally weak²⁶. Monks, by contrast, pose less of a threat and so less of a dilemma. Not ordained, they do not have the public, religious transformative powers of priests. Monks look like women, refuse to act like men and unlike priests, cannot even administer the sacraments. It is no wonder then that they are assumed to be "passive" homosexuals²⁷.

In contrast with lay men, many lay women are able to take part in church rituals without feeling demeaned or lowered from a position they generally hold in the secular world. In church they are the recipients of blessing and spiritual enrichment from a God who is represented in a male image²⁸. Taking this spiritual good, the women are able to transform it into good for the household and so eventually for society. The process in the church rituals in which a man gives spiritual strength to a woman and she in turn uses this to transform and benefit the household is analogous to the situation between the genders within the household. Women are therefore able to keep the religious

ties active and functioning. Their roles as transformers places them between two worlds--the religious and the social as they are again between the natural and the social worlds. Here the analogy between women and monastics is apt for the monastics see themselves as existing somewhere between the natural and the spiritual world. They, like women, are transformers caught in-between. But what they transform are themselves.

Should however, secular women invert their priorities by placing their household in a secondary position vis-a-vis the church and church affairs they will be strongly criticised by their husbands and society. Their actions will be deemed un-social for they are no longer fulfilling their roles as women but have placed themselves under another male hierarchy, the church institution. They have passed beyond secular social control giving themselves completely to the religious domain (e.g. Rushton 1985; Christian op.cit.:151-152). It is understandable then that nuns are derided and pitied and why, in statements that smack of sour grapes, men will often say that all the nuns need to come to their senses is a "good fuck"; that is, a good man.

Time, work, hierarchy, and exchange

Throughout this chapter the discussion, centered upon nuns, has turned time and again to the dangers associated with interaction, particularly as it pertains to the relations between the secular and the religious. The nuns avoid all interactions with the secular world--commensality between lay and religious is masked by the reading of religious texts; *dhoulia*, which implies action in the world and ultimately reproduction, is masked by the concept of *dhiakonia*; reciprocity between lay and religious is transformed into the giving of the pure gift. All interactions with the material world are re-defined as interaction between the religious and the divine. Life in this world is denied in favour of the eternal life beyond.

This distinction seems to reinforce the idea that the nuns live a "time" which is ideologically divorced from history. Edmunds (op.cit.:16) in her seminal account of Spanish nuns, defines ideology as representing transitory, historic affairs as if they were permanent, natural and lay outside time. The nuns' lives are made to seem part of this reified time. Thus, the potential to achieve sanctity or the possibility of becoming modern day saints (see Chapter 3) must be maintained in order to maintain the legitimacy of their world. For the villagers, the notion of a pure past and a transitory present allows for historic transformations which are part both of their experiences in the world and of their practices within it. Bloch's (1977) paper well suits this distinction, wherein religious symbols are understood from the perspective of doctrine and ideology. Historic or durational time and transformation are seen to lie squarely within the world of the everyday, of practical exchange, while cyclical time is seen as that which allows for the conflation of the past with the present since all things are forever repeated. Such divisions allow for the institutionalisation of hierarchy and inequality, for what existed in the past must exist now and forever. By contrast, durational time is a time of change and transformation, providing thereby a means of questioning or challenging the time of ritual.

Following these lines of thought it is seen that the nuns refuse to partake in the durational time which they see to be exemplified by the secular world. They do not adjust their clocks to daylight-savings; they, along with the rest of the Eastern Orthodox world, use the Julian calendar, the "old calendar", to determine the date of Easter, the grand, annual Liturgy; they insist that they live in simplicity, "like the apostles"; that no change has come into their lives; they do not adapt to the historical whims of human time and society but stay static, eternally fixed to the ways of the Fathers and Tradition. In the convent the cyclical patterns of the days are repeated in the weekly and yearly cycles. Any work, *dhoulia*, that the nuns might do, anything

that would associate them with the transformations of the material, practical world, with the linear, durational time of birth and decay is denied. It is transformed by prayer into dhiakonia, into a communion with the divine. The nuns world then, is one of continual ritual, continual preparation for and participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. By removing themselves symbolically from life, they deny the finality of death. And in denying life, they deny exchange and reciprocity. Instead they embrace a world of hierarchy in which humans are forever cast as the poor, and sinful recipients; a direct contrast with the villagers who find in reciprocity, exchange, transformation, the very basis of life.

This is not to say that an opposition between villagers and nuns can simply be equated with the opposition between durational and cyclical time. The villagers adhere at least in part to the ritual, cyclical time of the Orthodox Church, just as the nuns, as some examples in this chapter have shown, take part in the durational time of everyday life, however much they may deny it. None the less, the distinction drawn between the two aspects of time illuminate the highly ritualised lives that the nuns lead and show how this ritualisation assists in their denial of all interaction with a secular world characterised by death, but also by birth, life, and change.

By seeking to maintain their physical boundaries the nuns are seeking to maintain their spiritual integrity. The wish to create within themselves a static purity which, it is hoped, will make them worthy of partaking in the Holy Communion and achieving for a brief period a state of unity with the divine; a world without history²⁹.

In the following chapter I will seek to explore how the sacred and the material meet, are seemingly united and then once again set in opposition by examining the Holy Communion and the events leading up to it. For, it is in the Holy Communion where the contrast between secular and monastic reproduction is ultimately portrayed.

Notes for Chapter 6

1. Mother Mary and Ware (1969) note the five cycles within the Church. The first is the cycle of human life from birth to death. The second cycle consists of the prayers offered by the Church once in every twenty-four hours. The third cycle is the weekly cycle culminating in the Liturgy. The fourth is the annual cycle of movable feasts centered upon Easter, and the fifth is the annual cycle of immovable feasts beginning in September. See also Campbell-Jones 1979:31.

2. The sign of the cross in Orthodox Christianity is made by placing the two forefingers together with the thumb of the right hand and touching them to the forehead, the stomach--around the region of the belly button--or when bowing, touching the ground--the right shoulder and then the left.

3. Edmunds (1986:91) also notes that breakfast is perfunctory amongst the nuns she studied.

4. Schmemmann (1974:53) states that the Eucharist has no fixed hour since in the Orthodox tradition the Eucharist must simply be preceded by a period of total fasting, that is, total abstinence from food and drink, which marks a period of penance. Thus, should the Annunciation fall on a weekday of Lent, that is a day of strict or total fasting the celebration of the Eucharist is prescribed to take place after Vespers. The Eucharist always crowns the end of preparation. It is the fulfilment of expectation as expressed by the fast. This instance however, notes one of the exceptions rather than the rule. And in both cases, the Eucharist follows a period of penance and "darkness"; it is the longed for gift that is granted after preparation.

5. There is no space here to discuss the significance of suffering both as a sign of grace and as a sign of damnation (though see Chapters 3 and 7). See e.g. McKevitt 1988; Dalberg 1987; Bottomley 1979; Bynum op.cit.; Obeyesekere 1968, 1984.

6. Up until the end of WWI all Eastern Orthodox used the Julian calendar which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. In 1923 the Gregorian calendar was adopted by most Orthodox Churches. However, Easter is still reckoned by all Orthodox in accordance with the Julian calendar reaffirming the importance of Tradition in the Orthodox Church and the stress on the timelessness of sanctity.

7. The Twelve Feasts are as follows: the Nativity of Christ (Christouyena) on the 25th of December; the Epiphany (Ta Ayia Theofania) on the 6th of January; the Transfiguration (I Metamorfosis tou Somatos) on the 6th of August; the Entrance into Jerusalem (Ton Vaion) on the Sunday preceding Easter Sunday; the Ascension (Tis Analipsis) on the fortieth day after easter; Pentecost (Tis Pentakostis) on the fiftieth day after easter; the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Ipsosis tou Timiou Stavrou) commemorating the finding and the setting up for public adoration of the Cross on which Christ was crucified, on the 14th of

September; the Nativity of the Panayia (I Genisis tis Theotokou) on the 8th of September; the Presentation of the Panayia in the Temple (Ta Isodhia tis Theotokou) on the 21st of November; the Annunciation (Evanyelismos tis Theotokou) on the 25th of March; the presentation in the Temple of the Infant Jesus (Ipapantitou Chistou) on the 2nd of February; the Assumption (I Kimisis tis Theotokou) on the 15th of August.

8. Edmunds (op.cit.) discusses at length the relationship between work and obedience. By having to submit to a higher authority be it God or their Superiors, work lost, for the nuns, its self-expression and autonomy and was subsumed by the religious order, but then one might argue that is exactly what is meant to happen.

9. Should the lay visitors wish to stay the day or spend the night at the convent they are welcomed as long as they abide by the rules of the convent and treat the place as "the House of God".

10. This raises the question of the relationship between the Church institution which tries to control outbreaks of spiritual zeal and those charismatic spiritual leaders who have arisen from time to time throughout Church history. This is not of immediate concern here, nor is there space to address the matter fully. Suffice it to say that the nuns whom I knew were highly conservative and strict adherents of the Church's dictates and hierarchy, unlike the charismatics described for example by McKevitt op.cit.; Bynum op.cit.; Obeyesekere (1984) and more in accordance with the Benedictines described by Bottomley op.cit..

11. This may also serve as an explanation of the nuns' strong disapproval of women wearing trousers. Women doing so were refused entry into the convent church and often into the very convent itself. The nuns explained that it was sinful for women to dress like men. To confuse the categories by dressing like a man may be seen as a defiance of the laws and creation of God. Similarly, any food brought by a visitor for his/her own consumption in the convent of P. could only be eaten in the outer dining room: nowhere else. Boundaries had to be maintained.

12. See e.g. Douglas op.cit. noted above. Goddard 1987:189-190 suggests that food crosses the boundaries of the body penetrating it just as the penis penetrates the female body. A notion not new to anthropology but one that never the less should be noted.

13. This of course does raise a point of contention for if the main goal and aim of the nuns and of the truly religious is to achieve eternal life after death it seems somewhat contradictory to prove the cross's power by resurrecting the dead back again into this life. After all, this life is supposedly a time of exile and misery, an undesirable state to say the least. However, it is still an expression of life. And it might be said that people can best understand the eternal and the sacred when depicted in terms of life and death as experienced in this world. Thus, the crucifix which brought about Christ's death served as a passage into life; a passage whereby death was conquered.

14. This may be associated with the care taken not to sweep until the traveller has reached his/her destination. See also Pina-Cabral (1986:184-186) who also notes that the cross is used to demarcate sanctified or blessed space in opposition to un-sanctified or chaotic space. Note the sign of the cross made on the lintel of the door on Easter, Chapter 7.

15. Pina-Cabral (op.cit.:234-235) notes that physical life and spiritual life may be both metaphors for one another as well as opposites. The point is made by du Boulay (1984b:553) in relation to oil and blood. See Chapter 5 for discussion.

16. See Hirschon (1978) who contrasts the open and closed aspects of the house and its relation with the world outside.

17. This is in marked contrast with many Roman Catholic orders in which nuns and monks are hired to attend funeral processions as a means of alleviating the burden of sins the dead person carries with him/her to Purgatory, personal correspondence, McKevitt.

18. Tamata, ex-voto offerings, are promises made to the saint or to God in return for a wish. For example, people may promise the saint a large candle if the saint helps their sick child, or if they write well in exams.

19. This is also linked to the purity of children who are believed both by the nuns and by the villagers to be incapable of sin. Yet, as children grow older they learn the difference between sin and grace. They also learn about people's ways and participate increasingly in social interaction. Through this interaction they may get angry, or or disrespectful though now they should know better. In this manner they sin.

20. Many of the older villagers assert that in the past in the village there were no social or economic differences between households. Everyone was more or less the same. When questioned, they adamantly refused to set up any clear distinctions between households despite the fact that there were and are certain ikoyenies in the village whose names do indeed carry greater social prestige (e.g. Campbell 1979:266-267). Stories of wealth and honour won and lost are not unknown in the village. Yet, these stories are told when the situation calls for the precise description of a particular incident or person. In discussing the village as a whole and in the past, the portrayal is of a group of households with no great economic or social distinctions, something which has been noted in other parts of Greece though there are exceptions--see Bennett (1988); Hoffman (1976); Papataxiarchis (1988).

21. Such a sentiment of equality and the offence that may arise if it is not recognised is noted by Campbell 1974:144. Pitt-Rivers (1968:22) notes the potential for hostility underlying relations of hospitality thereby necessitating a form of reciprocity. Lison-Tolosana (1983:346-348) notes that a balance must be maintained between the maxim of equality and deportment associated with one's status in life id honour is to be maintained. See above.

22. To accept gifts for themselves would be to admit to a dependence upon the secular world thereby endangering their stated transcendence of all worldly interaction. See Parry (1986).

23. An apt phrase for which I am grateful to M. Phylactou.

24. It will be remembered that most monks are not ordained. Many often refuse to take on the priesthood and the responsibilities it entails. This establishes them as people outside the orders of the Church like the laity, but unlike most people, making the primary aim of their life the ultimate unity with the divine. See Chapter 1.

25. See e.g. du Boulay 1986; Herzfeld 1985: 241-243; Brandes 1980:177-88 and Christian 1989: 157 for Spain; the Bible Ephesians 5:22-3.

26. See e.g. Rushton 1983:60; Herzfeld op.cit.:66,102,158; Hirschon 1981:183; Blum and Blum 1970:22-27; for Spain: Gilmore 1980:148-149; Freeman 1968:44; Brandes 1980:180:189-192; Christian op.cit.:152; for Portugal: Cutileiro 1971:262-263. Rodgers (1981) presents a parallel argument noting that women members of the House of Parliament who are pregnant are seen as being concurrently creative both as men and as women. Seen as threatening they are often ridiculed, ignored, and often verbally attacked, and few, if any, concessions are granted to them.

27. This, of course, is but one albeit very strongly expressed attitude towards monks. It is true also that monks are also though not often regarded as true spiritual leaders unlike bishops who are said to have mistresses and have simply taken the vows to gain social prestige and power.

28. After all as one woman pointed out: "O Theos ine tranos" God is a strong male-being.

29. It should be noted however, that though Bloch's argument well fits the nuns' views of the world and their relations within it, it does not, I feel, fully explain ritual or religion. For these are part of the social world and though at times represented as unchanging and static cannot surely be divorced from human practice and thus from transformations. Often they serve as the point from which transformations arise. After all, many of the everyday practices themselves are imbued with such "ideologies".

CHAPTER 7

Fasting, confession, and communion: hierarchy and commensality

When the pleasure originating from the body enters the mind, it conveys to the latter a corporeal aspect... and this is why the whole man is called "flesh".... Conversely, the spiritual joy which comes from the mind into the body is in no way corrupted by the communion with the body, but transforms the body and makes it spiritual, because it then rejects all the evil appetites of the body; it no longer drags the soul downwards, but is elevated together with it. (Gregory Palamas, quoted from Meyendorff 1983:51).

Introduction

In the previous chapter the discussion centered upon the notion of preparation. It was seen that the daily, weekly, and yearly cycles as well as the practices of hospitality, and *dhiakonia* served one over-riding purpose--the achievement of separation from the secular so that unity with the divine could be realised.

In this chapter, the movement towards union will be explored through the practices of fasting and confession. These practices will be seen as intensifications of vigilance over somatic and social boundaries as the time of Communion draws near.

The act of fasting serves to sever one physically and socially from the world. No longer do you share food; no longer do you nourish your body. For the body, as representative of the physical world is placed in opposition to the spiritual world and to the soul. Yet, as will be seen, it is through the hunger, weakness, and suffering that the nuns contemplate upon and participate in Christ's suffering and sacrifice. It is through the sacrifice of the body, subdued by the spirit, that humans who are both body and soul are transformed (see McKevitt 1988 for seminal analysis).

The act of confession, on the other hand, allows for the externalisation and objectification of sins which, as humans,

we inevitably commit. With the confession one is cleansed and forgiven by God. As a penitent one addresses the divine and is answered by the divine through the instrument of God, the priest. As a penitent one ignores social norms in order to fulfil divine laws. Thus exposed, the penitent suffers a type of martyrdom. As with fasting, this martyrdom felt both emotionally and physically, enhances the experience of divine grace, allowing one to participate in the life of Christ. Only after confession and fasting can one receive the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist; can one follow Christ in the promise of a life after death. The fast and the sacrament of confession therefore, find their culmination in the Eucharist. With the Eucharist the passage from an abstract, personal, inner sense of the divine to a concrete, tangible and communal relationship with Christ is realised. The Eucharist fulfils the nuns' destiny, for a time, for through it they are in unity with God.

But there is another aspect of the fast, the confession and Communion. Through the acts of confession and fasting one's sinful state is thrown into sharp relief. One becomes supremely aware of one's lowly position vis-a-vis the divine. One is a mere penitent accomplishing, in a small way, what Christ did for all humanity. One's salvation is, moreover, dependent on divine grace, not upon one's actions. Thus, despite the unification with the divine that is achieved, it is a unity predicated upon hierarchy. The Eucharist is a divine gift which humans can never repay, which they can never equal. In the end, the fast, the confession and the sacrifice of Christ, as expressed in the Liturgy, are all 'pure gifts' from God; gifts which humans cannot reciprocate¹.

Fasting

The term fast (nistia) has been used throughout to describe abstention from certain types of food. However, both the nuns and the villagers also abstain from all food and drink for certain periods before receiving Holy Communion. Neither the villagers nor the nuns distinguish between these

two fasts, seeing them rather as parts of a totality. For the purposes of this chapter however, I would like to introduce Schmemmann's (1974:49) distinctions between the total and the ascetical fast. Total fast refers to a total abstinence from food and drink; ascetical fast refers to abstinence from certain foods.

The nuns are expected to strictly observe the weekly ascetical fasts, avoiding the same foods avoided by the laity (see Table 1). Since most nuns receive Holy Communion on Sundays, and sometimes on other days in the week, oil is generally prohibited on Wednesdays and Fridays along with dairy products and meat. The nuns at T. said that oil, meat and dairy products should also be avoided on Thursday for those receiving Holy Communion on Sunday. On Saturday however, in the convent of T., oil is permitted at the mid-day meal. I was told that "This is the rule" and that "People should not become too weak". Beyond this it may be noted that Saturday is a day of feasting, a day during which the All Sainted Panayia is celebrated and Holy Communion often received. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 5, the use of oil in food, the mixing of elements which are by their "natures" unmixable and distinct, reinforces the miracle of unification which takes place during Holy Communion. One may eat the strengthening oil at the Saturday mid-day meal as an expression of the unity between divine and human achieved with the celebration of the Eucharist. With Saturday evening Vespers however, the progression towards Sunday begins. The ascetical fast is enforced in the evening meal and the total fast commences with the meal's end. No food or drink, not even a drop of water that may trickle down the throat while brushing one's teeth is permitted. This total fast lasts until the end of the morning Liturgy. To receive the Holy Communion one must have adhered to a total fast. To receive the antidhoro (the consecrated bread without the wine; see Chapter 2 and 5) a total fast is also required. The duration of the total fast however, was not clearly defined. It could last from a few hours to days. A basic criterion amongst the nuns was to avoid food and drink after the previous evening's

meal. Some villagers however, felt that if you had had time to digest whatever you may have eaten in the morning (two or three hours) you were able to receive communion. The idea essentially for the villagers was that your stomach should be empty: divine and worldly substances should not be mixed.

We may say then that the total fast is the last and ultimate preparation before receiving Holy Communion. As Schmemmann (op.cit.:50) notes:

in the early Church this total fast had a name taken from the military vocabulary; it was called *statio*, which meant a garrison in the state of alarm and mobilisation. The Church keeps a "watch"-- she expects the Bridegroom and waits for Him in readiness and joy...[it is in] expectation of Christ who comes to her in the Eucharist².

The importance of being prepared was discussed in Chapter 4 in terms of the coming of the Bridegroom for his bride. Here it is the metaphor of battle which is stressed. This metaphor was a favourite one amongst the nuns of both convents. Whenever, upon first seeing them, I would ask how they were they would inevitably answer: "Ston ayona" (In battle). Life was conceived of as a battle against sin waged with the assistance of God and the angels but often lost through a person's weakness and surrender to Temptation. The battle lost however, did not mean the loss of the war and there was always the hope that one day the triumphant victor would be crowned with laurels in Heaven. Similarly, the nuns also depicted themselves as athletes preparing, exercising and testing themselves so that one day they would be crowned victorious. The athlete, like the warrior, had to be always prepared to run the race, to fight the battle. According to Schmemmann and evident from the nuns' behaviour, the total fast is a way of preparing oneself to accept the Eucharist, to accept Christ who is coming.

The ascetical fast has slightly different connotations. Its purpose is to liberate humans from the tyranny of the flesh. According to Schmemmann (op.cit.), it restores the primacy of the spirit over the flesh and it is essential that

such a fast take place over a long period of time.

Fasting: body versus soul

Essentially, fasting is a means of separating the body and spirit from this world, making them "clean", distinct and whole within themselves so that they are ready to receive the body and the blood of Christ. This is graphically expressed in a pamphlet given to me by the nuns (Vasiliou 1986:7):

let the house become quiet and peaceful after the noise, the smoke, the knisa³ and all those who struggle to serve the body.

Fasting is said to re-establish a harmony which the normal routines of life disrupt. With fasting, activities cease. The body is sealed and the world with its temptations are renounced. As in the village, there is ideally no interaction when one is fasting.

To understand the fast as described above, two equally viable interpretations may be given. The first to be discussed here, is the concept of the fast as a means of eschewing physicality in an attempt to achieve spirituality and coincides somewhat with Schmemmann's ascetical fast (e.g. Pina-Cabral 1986:233-234 for Portugal). It is evident, for example, in the nuns' antipathy to meat-eating which expresses the deeply felt opposition between the body and spirit. In a book given to me by the Hegumenos of P. (Schina 1957:36) food is linked directly with lustful thoughts and action:

Because of excessive joy and eating of food and drink a person will be inclined to pornoorafikes (sexual) thoughts, to dance and song and other sins.

It is to suppress these sensations of the body, to avoid gluttony and lust, that the nuns fast. Enslaved as they feel by their bodily needs, they seek to control them through ascetic practices. Fasting is a means of conquering the body (Vasiliou op.cit.:10):

The soul and the body are in a state of war. With which on will you side? If you side with the body you will weaken the soul. But, if you side with the soul you will enslave the body. Since you want to strengthen your soul, subdue your body by fasting.

Fasting is also a means of obtaining salvation and a place in the promised land (Vasiliou op.cit.: 11):

Do you not consider that with all this food you will bar yourself from the heavenly earth...

With fasting, the sinful desires of the body, particularly gluttony and lust are defeated. Peace and what should be the ultimate goal of all humans--a place in the sight of God--become possibilities. In denying the body and its needs, one focuses upon God⁴.

Fasting then, is one means of achieving this spiritual state: hard labour as dhiakonia (work) is another. As with fasting, physical labour may be viewed as an attempt to deplete the body's resource and drives which lead to sin. In T. the Hegumeni held that the monastics on Athos are shining examples to the rest of the Orthodox world. They lead difficult lives, imposing trials upon themselves so that "like athletes" they may one day be worthy of receiving the crowning laurels (stefania) of a victor in heaven. Some of the trials include carrying stones from the shore to the monastery perched high in the mountain; a task designed to kill the demon lust.

Women are not considered physically capable of sustaining long, arduous physical labour since they are physically weaker than men. Moreover, said the Hegumeni, they did not have the same need for physical labour since women release their bodily tensions, their sexual tensions, through their monthly menses (see Chapter 3). Men must find other means to overcome their sexual drives, hard labour serving just such a purpose.

The predominant association of dhiakonia with hospitality for the nuns and hard labour for the monks, reflects the proper gender roles of men and women in the vil-

lage. Often I heard from monks, nuns and secular people that convents were better looked after, cleaner and more inviting. Women are after all "naturally" inclined to caring for their home. Men simply did not have the knack for it. Similarly, the natural attributes of nuns does not mean that women are spiritually stronger. On the contrary, women are said to be less able than men to sustain the constant deep belief and spiritual dedication required of them⁵. Thus, just as men are physically stronger so too are they spiritually stronger (and by implication sexually stronger). For this reason, says the Hegumeni, there are fewer women anachorites than men. Women are fickle, more easily swayed to the seemingly less arduous path of temptation. Eve is constantly referred to when describing women in this context. One may infer from this that women are considered to be more in need of spiritual guidance and ritual practices than men in order to remain on the path defined by God's laws. As in the secular world, nuns, as women, are in need of men, in this instance as priests, to make their houses complete; to realise their full potential and religious identity. Men, it is felt, can more easily distance themselves from the hierarchy of the Church while maintaining a communion directly with God as anchorites⁶. Thus, despite the fact there is no male or female in Christ; despite the monastic denial of the world, monks and nuns did take on secular gender distinctions within these religious institutions.

What remains however the same for both men and women is the conquest, the task of subduing the body to the soul. This conquest focuses on the sins of gluttony, greed and sex, and fasting is regarded as combating all three in an admirable fashion.

The strict dichotomy between the body and the spirit, the material and the spiritual, however, is often overstressed particularly where monastics and anachorites are concerned, as Bynum (1987: 247) has pointed out for Medieval Western European women ecstasies⁷. The nuns of P. for example, assured me that with the Second Coming every bit of body will be reassembled down to "the last, and tiniest

splinter". In heaven, as noted above, we will have bodies that are eternally thirty-three years old and those who are virgins "will dance around the Panayia in joy". Happiness in Heaven is expressed as a physical as well as spiritual experience. Our bodies in heaven might not be similar to those we have now, but bodies they will be. The denial expressed in the fast therefore might have more to do with the body's natural functions, functions usually associated with life on earth, than with a denial of the body's capacity to achieve grace and salvation along with and through the efforts of the soul. From this point of view it is the preparation of the body to participate in Christ's sacrifice and divinity which is stressed in the fast and not the separation of the self from the physical world, similar in other words, to Schmemmann's total fast.

Sensuality

The body besides being the symbol of humanity's sinful state, is also regarded as potentially saved or damned. True, its baser instincts must be overcome and conquered. Yet, the body as a part of God's creation is redeemable. Sensuality therefore is not denied. Rather, what the senses perceive must be controlled.

In Chapter 4 it was seen that with tonsuring the nuns "die to the secular world". For example, they avoid all music except for church music; all visual contacts excepts for those that are religiously enlightening. Yet, many of the nuns' spiritual experiences are expressed in terms of somatic and emotional responses. Taste and pleasure in food is controlled or denied in order, say the nuns, that a "taste for God" (yefsi yia ton Theo) through prayer and communion may be acquired. Once one has acquired this taste, says the Hegumenos of P., one will hunger for this alone. Similarly, as noted in Chapter 4, the raso is said to keep the nuns warm despite the cold of early winter mornings in an unheated church. Great pleasure and joy is gained from singing or listening to psalms and hymns or, gazing upon the glory of

the saints as depicted in the icons. Icons and hymns however, can also engender fear or sadness to the point of weeping. Gazing upon the stern features of Christ, the nuns said that one became aware of one's sins and of one's unworthiness in the face of Christ's suffering. The emphasis on the religious does not mean a denial of the sensual. The body is not lost. Rather, divine grace is experienced through it⁸.

It is the two notions together: the body despised and the body in union with God that inform the nuns' metaphors and actions. One nun for example, told me that Lent was the most wonderful time of year:

We are alone then. Very few people come to the convent and we do not cook. There is only one meal a day. The rest of the time we are either in the church or in our cells where we can pray and weep. It is the best time in the year for monastics.

Lent is a time of protracted penance which the nuns experience vividly (e.g. Christian 1982). They eat little. No fayito is cooked. The needs of the body are denied and all attention is focused on the spirit. Yet, the women actively participate in this penance. They do not simply contemplate their sins. They are hungry. They weep alone. They pray to exhaustion. And through this suffering and active participation they say they find joy for they come closer to God:

He suffered so much for us and asks to little. Is it that difficult to be a little hungry or tired? It is for our own good that He gave us the gift of fasting and penance so that we might find eternal happiness.

Through suffering as Christ suffered, the nuns feel that they participate both spiritually and physically in Christ's sacrifice. By "sacrificing their youth", by dying to the material world and its needs, the nuns symbolically offer their bodies to God. Yet, the fast is also seen as a gift from God, a gift which allows the essentially sinful human to sacrifice himself, to offer freely a gift to God without expectation of return, with only the hope of salvation. This

notion of the gift closely associated with the Eucharist will be explored further on.

To summarise, then, the fast serves to separate one from social interaction, to symbolically define the boundaries of the body. This is expressed through the denial of the body and its needs. Yet, through a heightening of hunger, a participation in the suffering of Christ is achieved. This heightening of physical distress serves, as will be seen, to accentuate the release and pleasure associated with the acceptance of the Holy Communion.

Confession

In anthropology, confessions have, for the most part, been examined with relation to witchcraft accusations and demonic possessions. Many of these studies note the cathartic effect, both psychological and physical, of the confession and its function of restoring social harmony through the ventilation of social tensions. Here discussion will center on the Christian tradition of the Sacrament of Confession, focusing on the confession of sin, rather than the confession (avowal) of faith or praise⁹. The cathartic effect of the confession will be noted as will its power to uphold social values. Yet, the main aim of the discussion will be to compare the act of confessing in the village and the convent, and to see how these two different approaches portray different views of human interaction and community.

Confession, from the Latin confrateri, 'to declare or avow', similar to the Greek eksomoloyisi -- ekso from eksesti meaning 'is permitted or allowed' and 'to speak'-- involves the full declaration of ones faults under the active guidance of a priest consecrated to hear the confessional. In the convent, we have seen how the nuns through the cycle of fasts are in a state of perpetual physical preparation. Deciding to partake of Holy Communion however requires that they also 'cleanse' their spirit. To accomplish this, say the nuns, it is necessary to partake in the sacrament of confession. The confession is said to be a "second baptism"

leaving one "light and joyous". The likening of the confession to baptism (Rom 6:3-11) is theologically significant for it means that through repentance, as enacted in the confession, one is again, as in baptism, united with Christ in His death with the view to participation in His resurrection, as experienced in the Holy Communion (Sykes 1980:75)¹⁰.

With the confession of sins and the granting of pardon, the nuns feel that the burden of sin is placed on the father confessor who is responsible for one's spiritual well-being (e.g. Herzfeld 1985:242). Great pain, they said, was caused to the confessor by those who sinned despite his best advice and spiritual guidance. However, though he "carries the burden" of the sins in praying to God for the sinner, he is in no manner polluted or stained by these sins. For, in his capacity as confessor, he acts through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; not simply as a man. Thus, as a confessor, he is beyond the scope of human frailty. This implies that despite the faults the priest as a person may exhibit, in his role as priest and confessor he remains always above criticism. In his capacity as a confessor and as a consecrated successor of the apostles, he enjoys, in Weberian terms, the charisma of his office which guarantees the purity of his role and authority. The nuns thus often reprimanded me when I complained of certain priests who cursed or forgot the readings and prayers during the service. It was not the place of the unconsecrated to judge the priest for it is through the priest that the Holy Spirit communicates. Thus, to judge a priest is to judge God.

In the convent of T. neither a priest nor a confessor are there full time. Instead a confessor is brought in about once a month, and a priest is called in to conduct as many services as possible. In the convent of P. however, the Hegumenos is a confessor. He therefore acts not only as priest but as a father confessor to the nuns. A nun may seek to confess any number of times in one week. It is up to her needs and what the father confessor thinks is necessary¹¹.

Confessions in P. take place either in the church or in the small chapel located in the Hegumenos's apartments¹² (see

Diagram 1). In the church the Hegumenos sits in a stasidhi facing the templo. In a chair beside him sits the penitent. This affords the priest height so that he is literally raised above one making it impossible to look directly at him while confessing. This combined with the semi-darkness of the church gives one the impression that one is speaking to a disembodied voice. Moreover, one sits facing a group of icons depicting the Panayia, Christ, and John the Baptist amongst others. It is as if they, along with the priest, are listening. And in fact, the confession is being made to God through His priest. The listening eyes of the icons; the voice of the priest; the pools of light from the candles and the vastness of the church give one the sense of another world, a world removed from everyday time and space.

After the confession if one is to be granted absolution, one kneels before the confessor. He places the epitrachilion¹³ (stole) over one's head and reads a prayer of forgiveness. One then rises and kisses his right hand in thanks and respect. This granting of pardon is felt to be the sealing of one's own peace. Kneeling before the priest, covered by the epitrachilion, feeling the weight of the priest's hand, and hearing the voice of pardon, may give the nuns a sense of being restored to their community; they are baptised anew; reintroduced into the divine ikoyenia, the divine community. Touched, both literally and physically, they are once again given leave to interact, to take part in the holy meal, the Communion (e.g. Sykes op.cit.:69-70). As Turner (op.cit.:34-35) notes confessions seem to justify and maintain social values by legitimating proper behaviour and belief. By accepting one's transgressions one affirms socially appropriate attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, one's humility and contrition are proof that one is human, capable of sincere human feelings. For the nuns, the confession may function as a means of upholding rules which govern their lives¹⁴, a means whereby the proper attitude of humility and contrition before their superiors, divine and human, can be expressed¹⁵.

Confession in the village

By contrast, in the village, most people denied the importance of confession as a means of receiving forgiveness. Many men in particular held that they had no sins to confess since they had not deliberately harmed anyone. Others, both men and women, denied the necessity of a priest, pointing out that through private prayer they could achieve the desired state of purity¹⁶. They prayed directly to the divine. The arguments were bolstered by numerous accounts of priests who, after hearing a particularly interesting confession, would relate what they had heard to others¹⁷. Priests, in other words, could not be trusted despite their divine office, for despite their divine office, priests are still human -- a statement in direct contradiction with the views expressed by the nuns¹⁸. For the villagers, the spiritual aspects of a person must appear in harmony with his social and physical attributes and behaviour, something which they believe highly improbable in today's world. For the nuns, the priest's spiritual kinship, over-rides his human failings.

Only a few people, predominantly women, took the confessional seriously (Rushton op.cit.:66). Yet, even they chose their confessors with care making sure that the priest would be both understanding and tolerant overlooking or excusing certain actions which did not coincide with the ideal dictates of the Church¹⁹. For, on the whole, villagers tended to regard sin predominantly in relation with the violation of social norms (e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.:238-239). As a man noted (appr. 50 yrs.):

The idea of sin was set up in the past when people needed rules and needed to be afraid of punishment in order to do things. Now we have laws and people can judge their own actions so there is no need of religion or of sin and confession.

Though not all people expressed such a radical view, there was a sense in which the religious dictates were seen as separate from secular ones²⁰. For example, though many women in the village agreed with Church doctrine that abortions

were sinful, they held that to bear a child you could not afford constituted a much graver sin. With too many children you could not properly fulfil your role as a mother and caretaker; you could not provide for them properly. In a sense, the one sin was cancelled by avoiding the other²¹.

The ideal values, espoused by the Church and exemplified and lived by the nuns, though recognised are not seen as supportive to the basic ethos expressed in the village: the maintenance and health of the ikoyenia. Many villagers when confronted with the opposition between Church and secular values either refused to confess sins that they knew would not be pardoned, or refused to confess altogether thereby avoiding any direct confrontation with religious authority and its attempt to govern their lives; a direct contrast, it may be noted, with the nuns' approach to religious authority and confession.

Shame and guilt

Broadly speaking, shame and guilt are emotions which arise from opposing perceptions of the person within society. Shame is primarily a social emotion, orienting the person to the reaction of others. She/he seeks social approval and fears and avoids social disapproval and ridicule. Guilt, on the other hand, establishes conformity to society through the internalisation of a judgmental authority (whether parent or society). Guilt thus relates to inner feelings; it is a personal emotion (e.g. Obeyesekere op.cit.:80-83)²².

Though shame and guilt are expressed by both the nuns and the villagers, I would suggest along with others²³, that in the village shame is the predominant form of social control whereas in the convent, I believe it is guilt. In the village, people are embedded in social relations, identified within kinship and the household; in the convent, the predominant relation of any nun is between herself and the divine, as embodied by Christ and the Hegumenos/ni.

The central dogmas of Orthodox Christianity preach, according to Ware (1985:228-229), that as a result of

humanity's fall the human mind became clouded and human will-power was impaired so that there was no hope of achieving the likeness of God. But, the fall did not deprive humanity entirely of God's grace. The image of God in humans was distorted but not destroyed. Though we inherited Adam's corruption and mortality we did not inherit his guilt. Though prone to sin which distances us from God we also contain within us the potential for grace and unity with the divine.

Such a view does not condemn humans outright to an inherent guilt that they must strive to expiate but which they can never hope to erase. Rather, it allows for the potential of redemption while situating the fall from grace to sin squarely in the hands of each person. One is ultimately responsible for one's actions good or sinful since one is a free agent not inherently guilty²⁴.

Shame and the spoken word: appearance and reality

In the village the proverb: I glossa kokala dhen echi ke kokala tsakizi (The tongue does not have bones, but it breaks bones) expresses the power of the spoken word²⁵. What people say about you can cause you great harm. Similarly, children will often be scolded into submission by the words: Ti tha pi o kosmos!? (What will people say!?) -- see also du Boulay 1976:395). It seems that to speak or be spoken about objectifies inchoate thoughts into a concrete reality and thus is linked with the concern that people express over correct appearance²⁶. Proper dress and behaviour in public, the cleanliness of the house, the care taken in fields or gardens, contribute to the overall assessment of one's fellow villagers. One's reputation depends on the reputation of one's ikoyenia and vice versa. And this reputation is not dependent "upon the conscience of the individuals in a family whose reputation is under scrutiny, but on the concessions and reluctant approval of other families" (Campbell op.cit.:317). It is what others say about you that counts, not what you yourself believe or know to be true²⁷. Thus, if a young couple are having an affair they will not openly ac-

knowledge it despite the fact that their friends may be fully aware of the affair. Moreover, their friends will not speak of the match. Rather, they will deny any knowledge of it thereby protecting and shielding the couple from public discussion. To speak is to make the affair a reality; to keep silent is to deny the affair's existence.

From this it follows that one should keep those attitudes, behaviours and events that may lead to dishonour strictly within the boundaries of the household. Like the villagers of Minot in northern Burgundy who avoid opening the house preferring even to sweep the ashes of the fire into a corner by the cooker (Zonabend 1984:16), so too the villagers attempt to conceal within the household any acts which might be deemed shameful in an attempt to maintain their reputation in the eyes of the community²⁸.

For this reason however, the people do not always take appearances for granted. People's inner selves are not always immediately perceptible: Pote dhen cheris tin psichi tou anthropou (you never know the soul of a person). A person who by all appearances seems good may finally prove to be wicked and vice versa²⁹. Moreover, to judge simply by appearances may not only lead to false conclusions but is also recognised as a sin--the sin of gossip which many indulge in with enthusiasm. Homilies about the sins of gossip were often told, though interestingly, many of them were said to have been first told to the villagers by nuns. For example, a few women recalled a story which they had heard from older women who, many years ago, had gone to T.. There, a nun had overheard them gossiping and laying aside her work she had told them this (I paraphrase):

There was once a widow who was very good. During the day she cared for her children and at night she sat high in her room until late embroidering. She lit no candles or lamps but there was always a beautiful light shining from her window. She did not go out though the neighbourhood women often asked her to join them in the evening. One night they persuaded her. They sat together talking. Another village woman walked by and immediately the others started to gossip about her. The widow said nothing but when they asked her opinion she agreed with them and joined the conversation. The next night the

light did not shine in her window. Distressed, she went to the priest who told her: "You have sinned because you gossiped with those women. Who are you to judge others? In penance you will not receive communion for nine months. And during these months you will pretend to be pregnant. On the ninth month we shall see what happens."

So for nine months the widow slowly made her belly bigger by stuffing rags in her skirt and the villagers talked and shunned her. Then, on the last Sunday of the ninth month she went to church to receive communion and there before all the wagging tongues she let the rags fall from her skirt. Thus, all the villagers were shamed and understood the sin of gossip.

This, said the women, illustrates the dangers of falsely judging others: "We say things about others quickly enough but we don't look at our own (faults)". As many women in the village would often remark: "We are all sinners. It is part of life. You fight with your husband. You gossip. But what is to be done? We do what we can."

By making sin an inevitable part of life however, you absolve yourself of the responsibility of the sin. Or rather, by confessing to faults in this manner, the Christian precepts as expressed in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, genuine admittance of sin and purity of intention, may be upheld, but within a generalised context. Such an admission of guilt does not single one out as a deviant in need of forgiveness but just the opposite--a member of the human community³⁰. It is those who confess in private to specific sins who are regarded with suspicion. For, on the one hand, to seek out the confessional implies a grave misdemeanour; one which you cannot but divulge in secret. On the other hand, to openly seek confession is to flaunt your adherence to religious precepts. It is an ostentatious exhibition of religious and moral superiority and, as such, something to be dismissed. Thus, it was said of the nuns: "Why must they go to confession so often? They must have done something terrible" or, "What do they have to confess, closed in as they are?". The nuns are either grave sinners or weak-minded women turned in upon themselves; seeking to show themselves superior to lay persons even though they have

excused themselves from the more difficult struggle of living in the world.

The case remains then, that though appearances are acknowledged to be misleading, great store is still placed by them. It is best to avoid confession and its implied secrecy. It is more reasonable to place oneself on equal footing with everyone else by admitting that like all people you sin. This leaves one unexposed, safe within one's social conformity: no better (or slightly better) and certainly no worse than one's fellow villagers. One may sin; one may be guilty but then, so in everyone else. It is a part of life.

Guilt and the power of confession: appearance and reality

The story related above and first told by a nun to the villagers serves to illustrate, according to the villagers, the sin of gossip. But, one can also push the interpretation further in the light of its monastic origins. The woman is bathed in spiritual, not man-made light. Thus, the darkness of her clothes--for she is a widow and dressed in black as are the nuns--is contrasted with the light of grace that shines for her. Also, like a nun, she is dead to the material world, that is the world of interaction. As a widow, she should not be sexually active; nor does she join the women in the neighbourhood. She is silent. Yet, once tempted, she does go down, literally and spiritually, to sit with them. Tempted again she speaks, and speaks ill, as is inevitable, for all human interaction eventually leads to sin. Thus, begins her communion with the material world and the break in communication with the divine. The light no longer shines in the evening. Repentant, she confesses, a positive action, and as a consequence is banned officially from spiritual interaction, from partaking the Holy Communion. Moreover, she must appear to interact with the material world in an exaggerated fashion: she must appear to be pregnant. Here, it is not only her sexuality, her natural aspect, that is exposed, but also her reproductive aspect which lies at the nexus of the social and the natural. She

is a pregnant fertile woman, but not one that is contained by house or man. She is a threat. Exposed, she is now ostracised by both the spiritual and the secular worlds--a topic of gossip, a woman without communion.

And yet, like the nuns, the true pregnancy does not exist within her body. Rather, after nine months, she "is liberated" (eleftheronete)³¹ from the burden of the rags and the gossip that caused her social ostracization, her martyrdom. She is free of both the weight of the rags and the social weight of secular judgement and interaction. Able to receive Communion she has also given birth to a renewed spirituality, a renewed unity with the divine.

The emphasis in the story then is not on the comparison between the widow and her neighbours in which case there would be no story, for she is, even in sin, evidently more blessed than they are. Rather, the story concerns personal sin. The widow is only judged in her own terms. She has only herself to blame and though she becomes as instrument to shame others, her guilt is only expiated through her penitence and martyrdom. It is a story primarily of sin, guilt, and forgiveness, and only secondarily of shame. It is a story in which the widow alone speaks before the confessor, and alone enters into the hierarchical relationship in which her guilt is only expiated by a show of penance and by the grace of God.

As we have seen then, forgiveness is not granted on request but only through the undertaking of penitent actions which prove a willingness to bow to God's will. As the Hegumenos of P. often stated:

It is not enough to believe in your heart for often we say we believe and then go and do whatever we want. Belief has to be supported by the desire to follow God's laws in your every action. You must bend your every desire to the will of God.

Actions must express belief otherwise belief is placed in doubt³². Thus, though actions (see Chapter 6) are considered potentially dangerous, they are also necessary for the

realisation of God's will and the achievement of grace. Repentance, instigated through the act of confession, places you in God's mercy. You are dependent upon Him, and also on the priest who speaks through the Holy Ghost, for eventual re-inclusion into the divine community; an re-inclusion which you pay for by relinquishing your place in the human community; which you pay for through a type of martyrdom, as the nuns would often say.

Penthos, suffering, and interpretation:

Central to this view of repentance is the emotion of sorrow or penthos. Penthos, broadly speaking, means mourning. Theologically it refers to the feelings of sadness and suffering due to the privation of salvation. Hausherr (1982:18) notes St. John Chrysostom who taught that the only justifiable sorrow is for the loss of eternal happiness through sin. This view was supported by the nuns who condemned public displays of sorrow, penthos, and the singing of laments upon death as sinful. To be saddened by death is a human emotion that cannot be easily controlled, but to mourn (penthis) someone's death in such a public fashion is to insult the divine, for it is divine grace that has called the person from this life³³. Sorrow and penthos should be reserved for the loss of divine grace, for sins committed. Such sorrow however, cannot exist without the notion of thanksgiving for then it would be despair. Thus, the notions of sorrow and repentance go hand in hand with the notions of grace and forgiveness: true sorrow leads to communion.

Salvation and grace (see Chapter 3) however, concern not only the perfection of the spirit but also the perfection of the body. Thus, in the convent, parallels were often drawn between physical and spiritual illness, the most obvious being epilepsy which was attributed to possession by Temptation. Similarly, mental illness, eczema, headaches, fainting spells, etc. were also often attributed to a sickness of the spirit. The body and the soul were one. This however did not keep the nuns from visiting doctors who sought to cure the body for the work of a doctor is to alleviate a symptom

and not the underlying cause of the illness. Rather, the nuns spoke against the psychiatric profession whose work was seen as a misguided attempt to appease souls whose only true salvation lay in the Church and confession: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and then you will be healed" (James 5:16).

Yet, physical illness or accidents were also interpreted as blessings from God³⁴. Either they were sent by God to prevent a sinner from committing further spiritual violations or were sent as trials to those truly worthy of God's grace to "make them stronger in the battle against Temptation, like athletes exercising themselves ever more rigorously". In these latter instances it was said that one had to accept and overcome the illness and misfortune as one recognised and overcame ones sins through the acts of confession, penitence, and repentance. How one interpreted the physical signs depended upon how one perceived the spiritual grace of a given person. Thus, despite the nuns insistence on the misleading nature of appearances as portrayed in the story above and in many others, appearances did seem to portray inner states. For example, they would often comment on my apparent grace, something they could see by looking at me. "Some things cannot be hidden", they would say.

To summarise, the fast and the confession demand the separation of the secular world from the spiritual, creating thereby a dichotomy between body and soul. Yet, it is recognised that the body is also a means of expressing grace. The deification of a human entails a unity between body and soul since it entails the unity between human and divine. It is this play between unity and opposition which creates the ambiguity surrounding appearances and reality; for appearances, the physical world, the body, both mask and reflect the reality of the person, the soul. The body, like the soul, is both potentially damned and potentially saved; the body is both opposed to and united with the soul in its struggle to achieve its true nature in God. And this in large part because it is only through the body, through the physical, tangible, visible aspect of the human that the spiritual, in-

choate and invisible aspects of human concerns may be depicted and defined.

The Liturgy

Having participated in the ascetical fast; having confessed and cleansed yourself of sin and guilt; having adhered to the rigours of the total fast and prayed for forgiveness you are now, at last, ready to partake of the Holy Communion. The talanto awakens you; the bell summons you to the church. The sun has not yet risen. It is dark and cold. The church is lit by a few oil lamps and the few dim lights which allow the cantors to read the texts. The nuns enter silently, heads bowed. They do not smile; they do not greet you. Only one or two will ask you, out of concern, if you slept well. Otherwise, their voices are raised only in hymns.

You are closed therefore upon your own thoughts, the boundaries of your body secured through the fast; social interaction minimised or absent. The divine is the only outside entity upon which you can focus. The incense is strong, overwhelming, aromatic. The lights flicker upon the icons gold and red. The voices of the nuns are raised in the glorification of God. All your sentiments are focused on that glory and by contrast also on that which is considered weak and human: the grumbling of your stomach; your thirst; your cold feet and hands. You are made to feel acutely aware of the chasm dividing the divine and the human, the spiritual and the material.

In this section I will discuss the Liturgy and the Holy Communion. It will be seen how the divine and human are united by this act and yet, how the prospect of total unity in the future, be it the Second Coming, or one's own death, is also kept alive; how in other words, despite the unity achieved with the Holy Communion the hierarchy between human and divine is maintained and reinforced.

The word liturgyia derives from the classical Greek word meaning public service or duty. Hammond (1956: 54) suggests that the Orthodox Liturgy is, in a sense, also a public serv-

ice performed not on the behalf of a terrestrial "polis" but for the city of Christ's body of which Christ is the head. As in the eighth century³⁵, the liturgy remains for the Orthodox of central importance. It enshrines, as Hammond (op.cit.:20) says, the element of joy in the resurrection wherein Orthodox spirituality lies³⁶.

Here I shall outline only briefly some aspects of the service, based in large part on a primary school text book (Skiadha 1980) given to me by an eleven year old girl in the village. What is in the text is also found, though in a more elaborate form, in the books given to me by the Hegumenos of P. and the Hegumeni of T. The information presented here is well known to the nuns either through the reading of texts or through the religious instruction provided by their Superiors. It is also information easily obtained by the villagers. Information from any other source is clearly marked.

Description:

The Liturgy like the daily, weekly, and yearly cycles is structured on the life of Christ from his nativity to his resurrection. The preparation of the sacrament, of the bread (prosforo--see Chapter 2) and wine opens the service. The bread and wine are referred to as gifts since ideally they are provided by those participating in the service. They are gifts made to God by the congregation. The rite of preparation takes place in the prothesis, sometimes called the fatni (manger). There the bread is cut and placed on the paten and the wine mixed with water poured into the chalice. The place, the fatni, combined with the yet unconsecrated but pure bread and wine signal the birth of Christ. The bread is cut by an instrument called a lonchi (lance) in remembrance of the piercing of Christ's side on the cross, and the wine and water mixture represents the water and blood that spilled from Christ's side.

The second part of the Liturgy is characterised by the Mikri Esodhos (Small Introit) in which the gospels are brought out from the northern door and carried down the northern aisle and up the central aisle, through the Royal

Gates and to the altar in the sanctuary. The priest then reads a designated passage from the Gospels³⁷. Bashir (1960:103) notes that the procession and the reading are allusions to the coming of Christ and the bringing of his teachings into the world.

It is noteworthy that in all church related rituals and indeed in all folkdances, movement proceeds in an anti-clockwise direction, from right to left³⁸. Thus, in the chain dances common to the folkdances throughout Greece, the right hand and foot always lead. This may have to do with the strong sense that the right side, the right hand, etc. are the correct, or the auspicious parts of the body. To do left-handed work is to do bad work, work which is ill-fated. Similarly, when entering a house or, even more significantly, a new house for the first time, one should cross the threshold right foot first. The only time I saw a reversal of this process was in the making and burning of the psychokeria (soul candles). These candles are burnt "for the deceased's soul". The candle is wound in a tight, flat spiral and is lit during church services, the wick burning in a clock-wise direction, from left to right, in a direction described by a number of women as "backwards". This could possibly denote the unwinding or separation of the dead from life (e.g. Danforth 1982:51-52).

The final act of the Liturgy begins with the transfer of the chalice with the wine and water, and the bread to the altar. This follows the same procedure as the transfer of the Gospels with the exception that the priest bearing the "gifts" is followed by two persons (in the convent two nuns, in the village two young boys), each bearing hechapterga ("six-wings", representing the six-winged angels). This procession is called the Meyali Esodhos (Great Introit) and is likened by the nuns to Christ's funeral procession at which both humans and angels are in attendance. As a funeral it occurs on earth; as a funeral of a god it is attended by beings of divine origin. The material world is inundated by the divine (e.g. Hammond op.cit.:54).

Once the gifts are placed on the altar the Royal Gates are closed signalling the burial of Christ. The Creed of Faith is read and the Gates are opened to reveal the priest standing with his back to the congregation wafting the "gifts" with the aer³⁹ in a gesture symbolising the breath of the Holy Ghost. A hymn follows which, the nuns say, is sung in the very presence of God seated on His Throne in Heaven surrounded by angels. Humans are thus slowly being raised to the heights of heaven. No longer is it the angels who attend an event on earth but humans who attend one in heaven. The priest then repeats the words of Christ at the last supper: "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you unto the remission of sins" (Lavete, fayete, touto esti to Soma, to iper imon klomenon is afesin amartion); and "drink ye of it; this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins" (pyite eks avtou pantes, touto esti to Ema mou, to tis Kenis Dhiathikis, to iper ke pollon ekchivomenon is afisin amartion).

The priest now following Christ's command to do this in His memory, lifts the paten and the chalice saying as he does so: "Thine own, from Thine own we offer in behalf of all and for all" (Ta sa ek ton son si prosferoumen kata panta ke dhia panta). That is to say what is Yours we offer, Your servants in behalf of all humans, and for all Your mercies. It is now that the bread and wine are transformed into the living body and blood of Christ. The sacrifice has been completed.

The bread and wine are now prepared for the Communion. The priest (Bashir op.cit.:115) rips the bread into four parts⁴⁰ saying: "Broken and distributed is the Lamb of God, which is broken yet not severed, which is ever eaten yet never consumed, but sanctifies those who participate". One portion is then placed in the the chalice with the words : "The consummation of the Holy Spirit". Warm water which has been prepared is now blessed and poured into the chalice: "Blessed is the warmth of Thy Saints" (the warmth of the heart). "The warmth of faith is full of the Holy Spirit" (the warmth of faith is enkindled in the human soul through the action of the Holy Spirit). In these two blessings the

spiritual and the material are combined⁴¹. Skiadha (op.cit.:67) notes, the warm water is added so that it will be like the blood of a living being (Etsi tha miazi me zontano ema).

The people now approach the priest who holds the chalice containing the blood and body of Christ. They bend their knees so that the chalice is slightly higher than their head. The priest places a small spoonful of the bread soaked in the wine into the open mouth of the recipient. The communicant kisses the hand of the priest and moves aside. S/He is now united with Christ by the partaking of His Blood and Body.

The communion over, the priest places the chalice on the altar, blesses the congregation and a short Pentecostal hymn is sung: Edhomen to fos to alithinon... (We have seen the true light...) completing the cycle of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection. The priest then carries the chalice and the paten to the prothesis. The chalice is in his right hand held above the left which bears the disk with the bread. The combined life and blood, the spiritual and the material, are placed symbolically above the material.

After a few prayers the service is completed. People line up to receive from the priest a blessing and a piece of the antidhoro (blessed bread). There is a sense of relaxation. The heightened tension and formality that accompanies the Liturgy and the Communion is replaced by an ease in relations and movement. Whereas during the liturgy the nuns avoid all eye contact and do not under any circumstances smile--thereby displaying the solemnity of the liturgy and the concentration that should be focused on the divine and not on human interrelations--they now chatter happily with one another or with lay acquaintances. This animated interaction with the world contrasts vividly with the very measured actions preceding and during the liturgy. Now united with Christ, the nuns and laity are united with all creation through Him. There are no longer any distinctions for there is only one Christ who incorporates all within Him. Thus the fast, the confession and the Holy Communion mark the movement from supremely private, individual acts to a

supremely public act; the move from being within oneself to communing with the whole of Creation.

The unity is both explicitly voiced and sensually experienced. The duality of the body and the spirit and their subsequent unification serves to make tangible the reality of the divine. The body as an expression of the physical world is denied, yet, as an expression of the divine it is celebrated and consumed. The divine is first glimpsed through the hymns; the icons; the incense; the read texts and prayers; the disembodied voice of the priest during confession; the glow of the candles. Its ultimate realisation however, is experienced with the consumption of the divine itself as made physically present in the transformed substances of bread and wine. What was inchoate is given physical expression; an expression that signals ultimate union between body and spirit, human and divine.

Bloodless sacrifice

When reading the religious texts given to me by the nuns and speaking with the nuns themselves what struck me most concerning the Liturgy was the insistence that the sacrifice experienced in the Liturgy was indeed bloodless (anemakti theisia). Their insistence seemed out of proportion with the fact that there was indeed no blood in the Liturgy. Moreover, how is their insistence to be understood when the nuns also speak of the blood that Christ shed for the salvation of humankind and of the pain He suffered upon death? How is it to be understood when the bread and the wine are said to be literally the blood and body of Christ and the Liturgy the actual sacrifice as the authors and the nuns insist?

Bashir (op.cit.:112ff) notes that while the blood of the Old Testament is the blood of animals given in sacrifice to God, the blood of the New Testament is the blood of Christ shed for humankind's salvation. Because the wine in the Liturgy is mystically transformed into Christ's blood, the New Testament sacrifice is a "bloodless sacrifice". It does not involve the immolation of living creatures. This serves

to distinguish Christians from all other humans. It is a mark of sanctity.

Skiadha (op.cit.:67) offers a slightly different understanding. The wine in the chalice is mixed with warm water in order that it may resemble living blood. We may see it then as a living Christ who is consumed despite the fact that He was killed on the sacrificial altar. The "bloodless sacrifice" reinforces the miracle of the conquering of death by Christ.

Yet, why this emphasis on blood? Blood it will be remembered is linked with vitality and life (e.g Blum and Blum op.cit.:131-132; Campbell op.cit.:193). Passed on from parents to children, it creates kinship ties, basic to concepts of the continuity of life (see Chapter 3).

The blood of dead animals however is regarded with ambiguity. Slaughtered animals must be hung for a few days before they are consumed. The flesh must be well-cooked either roasted or boiled⁴², and few villagers had an appreciation of rare meat. In fact, they found it repulsive--too much blood. People usually said that the meat was uncooked and therefore unhygienic. One could become ill from eating raw or uncooked meat. To be eaten, flesh must become kreas, a process which begins with the skinning and the cutting of the animal and ends with the transformation of the raw product into cooked food.

The reluctance of many villagers to discuss the element of blood in their food may arise from the sense that blood, as a separate element, is associated more with the category sarka⁴³ which is similar to the English category of flesh. Sarka is associated with the raw or living body. Thus, as in English, sarkikes epithemies, desires of the flesh, point to bodily or carnal desires, desires of a living entity. Equally, the sarka of an animal is its body or flesh. One does not eat sarka⁴⁴.

Blood is further associated with life as exemplified by the epithet: a "hot blooded man" (thermo-emos). This refers to a man who is full of life, sexuality, and who is quick tempered. The phrase "blood was spilled" (chithike ema)

serves as a metaphor of death or wounding. This may be related to notions of containment. Blood spilled either through wounds or during menses indicates a loss of life, blood uncontained.

Blood and sarka associated with life prohibit the consumption of the blood and flesh of dead animals unless it is first transformed by cooking into kreas⁴⁵, and even then, in the convent, kreas is avoided whenever possible.

Instead the living Christ, bread soaked in wine which has been transformed, "spiritually cooked" we may say, to become the living body which is consumed. The two together, the co-mingling of living blood and body, combined with the grace of the Holy Spirit create life, transform the sacrifice into a bloodless act⁴⁶. The Holy Spirit, as the breath of life, symbolised in the wafting of the bread and wine with the aer (the air), signals the fulfilment of the Resurrection. Body, blood and spirit have been united after death; the divine and the human are no longer distinct: "When you take communion you take within you the body and the blood and the soul of Christ". Communion then is the only instance when blood as an element, transformed from wine, is consumed for it, as a sign of life, it is consumed as part of a living body. It is life.

In the New testament it is just this association which gives the wine its power in the Communion. Wine as blood leads to intoxication through the Holy Spirit (Feeley-Harnik op.cit.:57-8) for wine is also a metaphor for the inspired words of God. Citing Acts (5:11) in which the apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, she notes that some ironically call them drunk. And so they are, for they are "filled with the new wine" which is Christ. Thus wine is blood, eternal spiritual life, the words of God⁴⁷. Wine as blood is consumed, not spilled for it is life not death.

The nuns do recognise the symbolic aspect of the bread and wine. Lewis (1988:114) in discussing the affective

quality of symbols makes the point that:

The recognition of the difference between the image and reality, the distance and the half-doubt, may vanish in the desire to accomplish something. The difference may be suspended before the will to believe in the truth or efficacy of what he asserts...

The nuns realise the difference between bread and wine, body and blood and this is made evident by their emphatic statements that the bread and the wine are not "simply symbols" (dhen ine aplos symvola--see also Campbell-Jones 1979:151,163)). This implies that bread and wine are recognised as symbols. But, these symbols not only appeal to the intellect but to the emotions whereby the belief in Christ and His actual incorporation into the world through Communion overrides to a great extent the knowledge that it is wine and bread that are being consumed.

Uniting of dualities

It was noted above that in the Liturgy, transubstantiation is believed to take place despite the lack of perceptible physical transformation in the bread or wine⁴⁸. This lack however, merely supports the belief that with the Eucharist human and divine, material and spiritual are combined. For the transformation of the Elements into the living Christ, is a transformation also experienced by the nuns upon receiving Communion. In consuming the transformed bread and wine the nuns told me that they were filled and warmed. They felt no immediate need of food for they were no longer hungry. Filled with the Spirit they were immune to the cold of winter and the summer's heat; to the physical needs of their bodies. The spiritual transformation of the bread and wine, had physical effects upon the nuns, which in turn reflected their imperceptible yet miraculous spiritual transformation and the equally miraculous physical transformation of the bread and wine.

The use of bread and wine also enhances the emotive power of the Communion. Firstly, all villagers and nuns will

readily tell you that the three elements blessed by God are bread, wine and oil. Wheat, grapes and olives have been for centuries the basic agricultural products of Greece and one could say the Mediterranean⁴⁹. They are the staples of life, the assurance of survival. Thus, the combination of wheat and wine consumed in the communion reinforces the feeling that these are the very elements of life--those elements which sustain and nourish. The binding element of oil, present in the main meal after the Holy Communion, is unnecessary for the feast of Communion as it is Christ, the human God, who is consumed thereby symbolising the unity between the mundane and the divine.

Secondly, the combining of bread and wine symbolises the unity of categories which are kept strictly separated in all other aspects of convent life: the male and the female. Following a simple binary opposition we could say that the bread (prosforo), usually associated with the women of the house, is mixed with wine, usually associated with the men of the house⁵⁰. The wine is also associated with the household which is perceived as continuing through time, while the prosforo is made by women who either have abstained from sex or are socially and/or physically unable to reproduce: preferably elderly widows. Thus, (female) reproduction is denied while unity and (male) continuity are reinforced. Combined, prosforo and wine create the eternity-granting, living flesh of Christ, mirroring the creation of children by men and women in the secular world. It is only through the combining of categories that life, in whatever form, is created. But, in the Communion the life granted is eternal and marking the end of reproduction and the re-creation of life on earth. With Communion no blood is passed on from one generation to the next. Rather, the blood given is Christ's, assuring individual eternity and the unity of human and divine, of male and female. Christ is eternal continuity, in opposition to eternal reproduction.

Historic time and the eternal

The concept of the bloodless sacrifice as a true sacrifice, coupled with a historic sense of time in which the Liturgy is said to be conducted in remembrance of Christ and His life demands an exploration, however brief, into the theological notions of historic and eternal time: how the two conjoin and how they are different. Concepts of time central to the ritual of the Eucharist, prove to be central to the lives of the nuns, portraying the relationship between the nuns and the divine.

In many theological and historical texts, it is noted that during the moment of consecration Christ is present in time and in space. In general, it is agreed that this presence is not a reappearance nor a re-enactment of the event of the crucifixion and the resurrection which are historical and thus unique events but a revelation of something that exists outside of history and so outside of creation. The temporal and spatial limitations which separate humanity from the eternal and the divine are temporarily over-come by the presence of the eternal.

Lossky (1978: 58-63) explains this by noting that the Fathers of the Church defined two beginnings: the eternal beginning which is God, and the beginning recorded in Genesis, which marks the creation of the world and of time; a beginning which came about through the will of God. Yet, eternity is not itself time which has no beginning or end. It should not be regarded as an infinite reduced to the indefinite, a line upon which the segment of historic time rests. Rather, eternity and time meet at an indivisible moment. Quoting from St. Basil (Lossky op.cit.:61):

As the beginning of the road is not yet the road, nor the beginning of a house, a house, thus the beginning of time is not yet time, nor even a minimal part of time.

It is an instant, an opening onto eternity; a present without dimension. For this reason says Lossky is Sunday the eighth and the first day for it is the day of creation and

recreation; the day when time began and the day when time as part of the Creation will cease to be, or rather will be transformed.

Zizoulas (1985) further elaborates on this argument by placing it within a historic framework. During the first few centuries of the Christian Church, an attempt was made to reconcile two different conceptions of time: Judaic and Hellenistic (Zizoulas op.cit.: 68-69). Judaism viewed history as the fulfilment of God's law and will. God's promises to humanity were realised through the signs or manifestations of God's presence and His activities in history. Moreover, by carrying out God's will one was "doing the truth", that is, responding to God. This was an essentially eschatological orientation, forever turning people's gaze towards the future of God's promise (see Eliade op.cit.:102-110).

For the Hellenistic mind, truth transcended history. The kosmos was a unity between the intelligible world and the thinking mind and being. This unity created a sense of harmony and beauty. But events and history could only be explained as either having some underlying cause and thus part of the harmony, or were dismissed as having no meaning.

Christianity sought to reconcile both these views and did so through the existence of Christ. Creation (Zizoulas op.cit.: 97-98), it is said, exists only through the living will of God, only as a realisation of His own will and love. Should He cease to love so too will creation, and created time, cease to exist. Creation therefore, exists through its relation with God and by God's instigation. Christ being both God and human is identical with the ultimate will of God's love, the realisation of the relationship between humanity and the divine. The meaning of being and the purpose of history, as parts of the creation and thus defined in relation with God, find their meaning or fulfilment in the incarnate Christ. Thus, the truth of history lies in created existence since it is willed by God; in the fulfilment of history since this is identifiable with the final communion of creation, expressive of a Judaic sense of history; and in the incarnate Christ since the unity of human and God is achieved and

expressed through him. Christ is the principle and the end of all things. The present, future and the past therefore exist simultaneously in the Eucharist, for the Eucharist is Christ: the eternal God, and the created, historic human being.

Within this eternity humans are no longer prone to the vicissitudes of life. In God, there is no man or woman, no ageing or death. Time and creation are transformed. The idea of receiving the wine in individual disposable cups as the nuns heard was done by some Catholic and Protestant denominations, was regarded with horror. For them it portrayed a profound lack of faith: "You are in no danger of disease" when you take Communion. The power of the sanctified bread and wine overcome earthly illness, as they defeat death. Thus, from the same chalice and spoon all those prepared receive the Communion, partake of the same meal, partake of the same eternity⁵¹.

This unity however is regarded as short-lived. It is true that both nuns and villagers felt that spitting after Communion was sinful. One was spitting out Christ. The nuns felt that kisses of greeting on the cheek were also sinful since they implied disrespect to Christ with whom you were identified. In the village, many women said that taking Communion when you were menstruating was not good, not only because you were not clean but also because with the blood flow you rid yourself of Christ. Yet, by the next day, or after a few hours, depending on one's interpretation, the injunctions were lifted. The divine element no longer bound you in the same manner. One was of this world again.

This view of time within and surrounding the Eucharist allows for the continual preparation in the achievement of the longed for destiny of unity with God, as is experienced with each Eucharist. Thus, Christianity which began as a millenarian movement and which later became institutionalised and grounded in the historic time of humanity, yet found a means of preserving a quality of the millennium, a quality of the impending coming of Christ in the Eucharist.

Communion, then though perceived as a unity with the divine, is none the less realised in created time and as such

within the fallen state of humanity. We are prone to sin despite our unification with God, thereby once again creating the chasm which divides us from the divine. We become once again of this world.

Hierarchy, unity, and the gift

Yet, even such an interpretation does not fully present the notion of the Communion as encompassing both historic time and the eternal. Rather, the moment of communion might better be viewed as a moment of unity predicated upon hierarchy for the realisation of the Eucharist is contingent upon both human and divine sacrifices.

The "gifts" of bread and wine made by the congregation to God; the sacrifice of youth made by the nuns; the sacrifice of the fast and the confession are all acts dedicated to God. They are "pure gifts", (see Chapter 6) given (ideally) without the expectation of a return but with the hope of salvation. As noted above, there can be no penitence without the notion of thanksgiving; no repentance without grace and forgiveness. None the less, hope is not expectation; one cannot force God's grace.

Yet, these sacrifices, these "pure gifts", are recognised by the nuns to be, in the end, God's. As an important phrase in the Liturgy states: "That which is Yours we offer, Your servants in behalf of all humans, and for all Your mercies". God has given the gifts of repentance, fast and confession which make it possible for humans to cleanse themselves of sins and to approach the divine. God has given, moreover, the ultimate gift: He has sacrificed His only Son in order that humans may once again realise their full potential as divine creations. His is the true "pure gift" for such gifts can never be reciprocated. Receiving the Communion then, one is aware of one's pathetic condition as a human. God's gift is so great that the suffering experienced through fasting and repentance is over-shadowed by it. Thus, the encompassing unity of the eternal, expressed by the Communion, is predicated on a hierarchy which forces humans to

realise the greatness of God and their utter dependence on His mercy, as the Hegumemos of T.'s constant reiteration supported: "We can never match God's love. It is so great that He sacrificed His only son to save us from damnation even though we had betrayed Him [referring to the Original Sin]".

Yet, without human effort, without human sacrifice there is no salvation. God only comes when asked. A paradox therefore exists. The "pure gifts" must be reciprocal: God does not come unless called; one does not offer without belief in God's mercy. And yet, there can be no expectation for, if there were, there would be reciprocity and exchange and the undermining of the divine and absolute hierarchy. And yet again, there cannot be absolute hierarchy for if there were there would be no hope of unity and so of salvation. So there must be a reciprocity of "pure gifts", a denial of reciprocity coupled with the hope of return⁵². Christ, who is both human and God, both of the world and apart from it, both eternal and part of historic time, embodies this paradox; the paradox of unity predicated upon hierarchy. Thus just as the nuns' hospitality seeks to deny exchange and supports hierarchy, so too is the communion a unity which, in the end also reinforces the distance between humans and the divine.

It seems then that we are confronted with a relationship of asymmetrical complementarity (to use Parry's (forthcoming) phrase). As noted above, those lowest in the religious hierarchy, the laity, portray themselves to be in an inter-relationship with those higher in the hierarchy, the nuns: a relationship predicated on interdependence. Those higher in the hierarchy however, the nuns, deny such an interdependence with those lower, seeking instead to depict themselves as self-sufficient and self-contained. A similar process seems to be at work in the relationship between the nuns and the divine. For again, though interaction is evident, it is denied in order that the hierarchy may be maintained. The gifts given by the divine are said to be 'pure gifts', thereby denying the possibility of reciprocity. The gifts given by those lower on the hierarchy are defined in certain

circumstances as pure gifts but, as I hope to have shown, there is always an expectation that through this gifts salvation and unity with Christ will be obtained. From the bottom up there is always a hope of return, a view of reciprocity; from the top down, reciprocity is deemed, in the end, impossible. In this manner, the hierarchy is maintained and reinforced. The unity of Communion is predicated on a hierarchy, a hierarchy evident in many exchanges within the convent. Exchanges in which it is the spiritual quality which is paramount and encompassing and which between laity and religious establishes the nuns as closer to the divine.

Communion in the village: the blessing of the here and now

For the villagers, the relationship with God is subtly different from that of the nuns. The nuns seek to achieve deification, a divinity which they believe is obtainable but only with great difficulty. The villagers stress the desire to harness, to bring the divinity within their world. This is not to say that they do not regard God as omnipotent and omniscient. But, God, like Christ, the saints and the Panayia, belong to a different world; a world which is separate, though linked to the human world of life and death. As one woman informant (appr. 63 yrs) explained:

There is the community of humans, who try to live together in unity. And there is Holy Communion wherein you try to live united with the Divine. Together these two form an harmonious life. When, like the nuns, you live only in unity with the Divine, you are not a good person. You should live in life and try to create a good community.

Religion is something else. The community, to survive, needs rules. And to uphold the rules there must be logic (the intellect "i loyiki") and the Divine...there must be logic and fear. God is everywhere. The Divine supports the [human] community.

Iparchi i kinonia ton anthropon opou prospathoun na zisoun metaksi tous enomeni. Ke iparchi i Theia Kinonia opou prospathis na zisis enomeni me ton Theio. Mazi afta ta dhio kanoun mia armoniki zoe. Otan ise, san tis kaloyries, apoklistika enomeni me ton Theio, dhen ise kalos. Prepi na zisis mesa ke na ftiaksis kali kinonia.

I thriskia ine kati alo. I kinonia yia na iparksi

chriazete kanones. Yia na tous ipostiriksi prepi na iparchi loyiki ke to Thio...ke loyiki, ke o fovos. O Theos ine pantoparon. To Theio stirizi tin kinonia.

The villagers' lives therefore are not governed by constant preparation to receive Holy Communion, to receive unity everlasting with the divine. Such would be a denial of the human community, a denial of life. Rather, communion is received on certain designated times in the year. When I asked a woman (appr. 60) who was fasting in order to receive Holy Communion on the sixth of August (the day of the Saviour) whether she would take Communion again on the fifteenth she looked at me in amazement: "No. This much is enough. There is no need to do it again".

Holy Communion serves to make this world harmonious and good. It is a means of bringing eternal order and time into the human world thereby rectifying that which has gone wrong (e.g. Campbell 1974:158). For example, the unruly child will be given Communion because "like medicine" Communion will calm it; an old woman who is experiencing a difficult death will be given Communion "to liberate her soul" and help her find peace, and death. If someone is ill but considered too young to die they will be taken to receive Communion. The eternal time and power of the divine is called in to reverse those events in life which have gone wrong, which do not conform with the proper order of life; which are socially disruptive: not dying quickly or dying too soon. In its capacity as an outside force the divine acts to order the world. But, it is equally recognised that God has reasons for acting which are beyond human knowledge and understanding: "Pios kseri; thelisis tou Theou itan" (Who knows. It was God's will). Holy Communion does not have to work but it may work.

To summarise, the nuns realise the Communion as a unification with the divine, a movement towards heaven achieved through constant vigilance and sacrifice. This unification is predicated on a hierarchy in which the nuns realise that their deification comes about only through the great sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice they can never match.

The unity they achieve however briefly through Holy Communion, is one in which they are the poor receivers of divine grace; a unity wherein not all members are equal. In this instance they are like their lay visitors--what they give is never enough.

For the villagers, the unity with the divine achieved in the Holy Communion is regarded as one which grants power and order to the community of humans on earth. It is like medicine, a restorative whose curative powers are a mystery beyond human comprehension. By taking Holy Communion one can re-establish the balance and harmony in life or maintain what exists. One can re-establish communication with the divine and thereby better order one's life.

Sacrifice and Commensality

Levi-Strauss (1976:224-225) using Evans-Pritchard's discussion of Nuer sacrifice notes that in the sacrifice the objects to be sacrificed play the role of intermediaries between the sacrificer and the deity. The object of the sacrifice is to establish a relation not of resemblance but of contiguity. If the sacrifice is expiatory the person identifies with the sacrificer, the sacrificer with the victim, the sacrilised victim with the deity. The reverse process takes place should the sacrifice be one of communion. Once the relationship between the sacrificer and the deity is made by the victim, the victim is killed. This human action brings about a break in the continuity, establishing a relationship between human and divine which before had not existed. They stand opposite one another as two separate entities in a relationship.

In this sense, the Eucharist may be said to be both a sacrifice of communion and of expiation and this because Christ is both sacrificial victim and priest, both man and God⁵³. Through Christ, both humans and God, offer as sacrifice a 'pure gift', a gift which both reaffirms the distinction between human and divine thereby allowing exchange, while simultaneously affirming the unity of divine and human.

Thus, through his sacrificial death as a human Christ expiates human sin, while through his sacrificial death as God, he creates communion. In Christ, the bridge between humanity and the divine is created, and re-created with each liturgy.

There is yet another aspect of the sacrifice as a commensal meal. Throughout this thesis it had been seen how commensalism confirms social relationships. Robertson Smith (1889:251-293) was one of the first to develop this idea in relation to the religious sacrifice among Arabs and Israelites noting that in the sacrificial meal "the god and his worshippers are commensals".

In her discussion of the Eucharist and the Passover in early Christianity Feeley-Harnik (op.cit.) notes that the Jewish community was divided according to descent and laws of purity. She suggests that food was one of the important languages through which Jews sought to express relationships amongst humans and with God. God's word became increasingly identified with the law, which in turn became increasingly identified with food laws. The sectarianism within the Jewish community therefore also came to be expressed primarily in dietary rules (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:91). Thus, the Essenes (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:41) were prohibited to intermarry, eat, or have any close contact with all other Jews. Eating with Gentiles was considered by most Jews as extremely polluting.

The early Christians, as a Jewish sect amongst many, also used the language of food to establish themselves and to make clear the novelty of Christ's interpretations of the law. As Christianity sought to be a religion of unification⁵⁴ as opposed the separatist nationalism of the Jews, Christ came to be depicted as a glutton and a drunk (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:67-70). For example, he is depicted eating and drinking with harlots as well as with Pharisees. He does not obey the Sabbath nor follow proper ritual conduct during meals. With the Last Supper the most astonishing transformation occurs, for here the crucifixion and the resurrection are turned into a meal of bread and wine in which it is not the sacrificial animal which is consumed but the body and,

worse still the blood of the host.

The Last Supper, argues Feeley Harnik, though a reinterpretation of many meals, is focused primarily on the Passover. Passover, is in commemoration of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt and describes the killing of a lamb by every family so that the Lord would pass over those families whose lintels had been marked with the lamb's blood, when He struck down the first born (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:134-135)⁵⁵.

With Jesus, the passover is transformed into a meal, a heavenly wedding feast (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:108-111), that includes all persons. He does not celebrate the Passover with his family but with his disciples (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:144). They represent the relationship of family and kin, being brothers as God's children, and not in the terms of descent. Jew or Gentile, whosoever partakes in the sacrificial meal becomes one of the chosen people. The dietary laws are confounded; as are the distinctions between consumer and consumed, between edible and inedible. The divine and the human are one. There are no chosen people for all are chosen by God if they so desire (Sykes op.cit.:72).

This potential universalism is understood by the nuns to be the outcome of their unity with Christ, a unity which they await with great anticipation. Their shock when they hear that some Christians do not partake of the Communion from the same chalice portrays their belief in the blessed unity that is achieved by the Communion, particularly when compared with their anxiety and the attention given so that social and somatic boundaries be maintained in all other commensal, or potentially commensal, situations. Yet, this universalism exists only within, or predicated upon, hierarchy. Commensality can only take place when grounded in religious practice and even then distinctions must be maintained both between the nuns and the laity, and between men and women. The communal meal is received in strict order: first the nuns, then the men; and finally the women and children.

Within the village the universalism of the Church, exemplified by the Holy Communion, is recognised. People will say that Christianity is a religion of love in which Christ

sacrificed himself for the world. Yet, for the villagers too, this universalism is difficult to adhere to but for a different reason: the predominant focus is the ikoyenia. It is for the ikoyenia that religious practices are carried out. Kinship, in the village, cannot be denied as it is by Christ and ideally by the nuns, for kinship is the very basis of social and personal continuity.

This is evident particularly during Easter. Just before midnight on Holy Saturday, almost all the members of the village are assembled in the church and the square outside for the midnight service signalling Christ's resurrection. At a given moment the lights of the church are extinguished and the Holy Light from the Church sanctuary is used to light the candles that each member of the assembled congregation holds. The light is ideally passed on from one candle to the next though often people in the square will use their bic lighters to speed the process. Not only is it a beautiful rite but it signals the new light of Christ, the birth of a new covenant with God. It signals ideally the unity of the community in Christ. People will then wish friends and relatives: "Chronia Pola" (Many Years) or "Christos Anesti" (Christ has Risen), and make their way home to the festive household meal despite the fact that the church service is not over. Over, the lintel of the door of each house the sign of the cross will be made with the smoke of the candle from the church, reminiscent perhaps of the old covenant in blood, a blood covenant which has been replaced by the light of Christ, by his sacrifice. Thus, the Resurrection instead of simply uniting people into one great Christian community, serves also to contain the household; to define it as separate and uniquely blessed. The paradox is maintained despite the efforts of the Church (e.g. Friedl op.cit.:103).

The following day a meal will be served to members of the household and any relatives who may have come to join them for the celebrations. Ideally, the main dish should consist of a whole (unbroken) lamb or kid, roasted over coals in the yard by the man of the household. Like Christ, the man of the household both offers the food and serves at the meal.

He is both victim and priest, uniting all persons through his actions. Thus, as in a wedding feast, the Paschal meal is centered around the killing, roasting and consumption of the sacrificial lamb. Both are celebrations of the continuity of life, in whatever way this continuity is defined.

To summarise, the festive meals in the village and in the convent are structurally quite similar. Yet, in the village the festive meals, be they weddings or paschal meals, seek primarily to define the community of the ikoyenia and celebrate its continuity through time. By contrast, the festive meal in the convent, the Liturgy, symbolises the unity of congregation through its spiritual kinship in Christ; a spiritual kinship made possible through His sacrifice and the Eucharist. The Liturgy is both a celebration of the hope and the realisation of eternal unity with the divine.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to explore the ritual complex of Holy Communion. I began by examining the fast and the sacrament of confession. It was seen that for the nuns fasting and confession were means whereby the material world was denied through the denial of the body and social interaction. Paradoxically, these practices by enhancing the suffering of the body, and with the exaggerated interaction in the social world through a display of sin in the fulfilment of repentance and penance, serve to heighten one's sensibilities in the world. One suffers hunger and thirst and loneliness. Yet, in this manner, one is also able to participate in the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. Moreover, fasting and confession become part of the commensal system for through them one prepares to receive the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ contained in the chalice. The bitter cup offered to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; the vinegar which was given to him instead of the water he sought to relieve his thirst are symbolic of the pain, suffering, mockery, and death that must be experienced before the grace of everlasting life is granted. Sins must be expiated before one

can eat, before one can sip the sweet wine of Communion and eternal life.

Having received the food of Communion, nuns and lay people regard themselves as unified with the divine. Yet, this unity, as has been shown, is not only short-lived and, in the village, countered by kinship; it is also predicated on hierarchy. The sacrifices which humans perform in order to participate in this heavenly wedding feast are made possible only through the sacrifice of Christ. Though human, Christ is also God, and the only son of God. Humans cannot equal the gift of an only son, of a God. Thus, the unification of Communion though recognised is also denied, for in the end, God remains the only one able to truly give the gift of life.

Notes for Chapter 7

1. The relationship between the fast, confessional and the eucharist and indeed the relationship between the daily, weekly and yearly cycles as discussed in the previous chapters can be analysed in the manner suggested by Fernandez 1986:47-57. As my concern is not Fernandez's I simply refer the reader to this text. Let me point out however, that the transformation of the inchoate subject, I, into a transcendent we, through the metaphor and metonymy as expressed in ritual is helpful. Thus, as I hope to show, each person (the "I") sacrifices his bodily appetites as Christ, the sacrificial lamb, is sacrificed. The lamb, as bread and wine, is sacrificed for us as the creation of God and consumed. Thus, our bodily appetites now serve to unite us (not just the "I") with the glorified body. In the process our bounded form is transformed, transcends itself to become one with creation through the body we have consumed. Each "I" becomes united within a whole, a "we".

2. Bottomley (1979:75) associates this link between the fast and the military with the esteem and admiration many early Christians held for the physical prowess and endurance of Roman soldiers. For this reason, the soldiers became models for the Christian "soldiers"--the members of the Church militant who were to put into practice the same askesis, self-sacrifice, and loyalty. Yet, the metaphor "life as a battle" is not restricted to monastic institutions. See e.g. Friedl 1963:112.

3. Knisa is a classical word signifying the layer of fat used to wrap sacrificial offerings as well as the smell of burnt offerings. In the village, it is used to describe the smell or smoke of roasted or burning meat and occasionally, the smell and smoke of frying fat.

4. Rushton (n.d.:4) notes that icons depict a similar quality. To look at an icon is to "fast with the eyes" for there is nothing sentimental or sensual in the figures. Their expressions show an inward focus. In Russian icons, the sense organs are also diminished, portraying a transcendence of physical needs and pleasures. Only the eyes, which in all icons are highly visible, allow the observer a sense of communication; their inward gaze drawing the observer ever inward towards the divine.

5. See e.g. du Boulay 1979:100-120; Campbell 1979:276-278; Rush-ton 1983:65-66; Topping 1987.

6. See Edmunds' (1986) seminal work which discusses the search for self-determination within the patriarchal hierarchy of the Church amongst nuns in Spain after Vatican II.

7. Women ecstasies as discussed by Bynum op.cit.; Lison-Tolosana 1988; Obeyesekere 1984; Danforth 1983 seem to respond to the passive marginal roles they were forced to assume by using their bodies, which had condemned them to these roles, to gain recognition and authority through the avenue of religious ecstasy which lay outside the strict male hierarchy of the Church. Yet,

religious participation through the body also occurs within the established religious institutions as Dalberg 1987; Bynum 1982; Campbell-Jones 1979; Bottomley op.cit. have shown.

8. Runciman (1987:81) notes that according to the fifth century mystic Dionysius the Areopagite the world of the senses mirrors the world of the spirit. "The essences and orders which are above us are incorporeal....Our human hierarchy, on the other hand, is filled with the multiplicity of visible symbols, through which we are led up hierarchically and according to our ability to the unity of God." See also Chapter 1.

9. Yet, there is a similarity. Ruel (1982) in his discussion on the term belief notes that it derives from the ancient Greek and Hebrew meaning "of trust in God". With Christianity it became "a confidence or conviction concerning the (past) event of the Resurrection which was then but a small step to the notion of belief as asserting a proposition. In "confessing Christ" one declares one's belief wherein belief becomes a badge or a symbol of an act of affirmation as belonging to a group (associated in this manner with baptism, such that confession is felt to be a "second baptism"). To confess sins is to confess transgressions against laws, divine and historic, as laid out by God and to accept those laws as binding. Therefore, it is to confess one's belief in Christ. See also Pouillon 1979.

10. Eliade (1989:73-86) describes the confession of sins as the need to free oneself from the recollection on sin, from the succession of personal events i.e. history, which we may add, removes us from eternal time and our "oneness" with God. With personal history we become part of this world, that is more human (in the fallen state) and less divine (less angelic). This is associated with the need of archaic societies to regenerate themselves periodically through the annulment of time.

11. The concern of psychologists and theologians on the issue of the 'compulsion to sin' referred to by Turner (1977: 38-39) is dealt with by the Hegumenos of P. who does not always grant absolution nor always fulfil the desire of a penitent by hearing his/her confession.

12. I only once experienced a confessional outside of the church. After I had visited the convent of P. a few times, I was called to confess in the Hegumenos's chapel. We were seated in a manner similar to that in the church. Yet, the atmosphere was much more intimate and informal. Though there were many icons hung on the walls they did not tower over my head as in the church. The room was carpeted and warm, unlike the church which was a cavernous, unheated building. In the chapel a more intimate relationship with the divine could, I felt, be established, though it was still a hierarchical relationship, a relationship between sinner and judge.

13. Epitrachilion is part of the holy vestments worn by all classes of ordained men in token of the grace of the Holy Ghost that is upon them. It is similar to a highly embroidered scarf worn about the neck, the two ends descending in front. Without it

those ordained cannot officiate in any service.

14. Turner (op.cit.:39) rightly points out that confession may serve to reinforce social values in a society where there is relative agreement over these crucial social values. The convents I studied were such communities. Change in social values may bring about change in the nature and the role of the confession. In such a situation there would inevitably be argument over the nature of sin and the appropriateness of the penance.

15. In this manner sin is not a magical offence but a sign of disbelief (Weber 1977a:274) and the confession an act which openly places one again within the context of belief.

16. See e.g. Blum and Blum 1970:88. This may have to do with changing relations with the divine such that God is less a judge and more a friend. See Christian 1989:180-187.

17. This wariness of priests in the context of confession is reported in many areas throughout the southern Mediterranean. See e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.:240-242; Christian op.cit.:151-152 for Spain; Cutileiro 1971:264-265 and Pina-Cabral op.cit.:199 for Portugal.

18. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:74; Brandes 1980:186 for Spain; Cutileiro op.cit.:265 for Portugal; Ott 1981:94 for the Basque. Parish priests in Eastern Christianity are preferably married. They therefore are part of the secular social order. Though all others in the Church hierarchy must be celibate the general view is that they too cannot always adhere to the ideal religious values.

19. Campbell-Jones (1980:97) notes a similar attitude amongst a teaching congregation of nuns after the reforms of Vatican Two. She also notes that this is associated with the questioning of the strict hierarchy of the Church. See also Edmunds (op.cit.:229-230) concerning the choice of spiritual leaders in the post Vatican II convent communities and the attempt to keep spiritual leaders who had been imposed from above at a distance.

20. The expression of similar views and how they effect social relations within the village has been discussed by e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:78,193; Campbell op.cit.:167-169; Christian op.cit.:129 for Spain; Cutileiro op.cit.:143 for Portugal.

21. Friedl (op.cit.:119-120) cites a similar reason for the decrease in birth rate which accompanied a higher standard of living.

22. It should be recognised however, that guilt can refer to many different conditions. For example, it may indicate a sense of moral responsibility for a specific action. Or, at the other extreme, it may indicate a general sense of unworthiness.

23. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.: 109, 1976:395; Campbell op.cit.:317, 335-336; Herzfeld op.cit.:239-240; Friedl 1962:85-86.

24. Campbell (op.cit.: 324); du Boulay 1979: 53; Blum and Blum op.cit.:165-170; see Chapter 1.

25. Amongst both nuns and villagers it often seemed that it was not the thought but the deed that made the reality. To think of some disaster does not cause harm but to speak the words may instigate the realisation of the event. For example, a number of old women refused to say the word cancer but simply implied it by the words: "Afti i palio arostia" (this horrible old disease). Or, if I spoke of a possible ill occurrence, I was told to "move from my place"; to move from the place where I had said these things so that they would not catch hold i.e. come true.

26. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:309-310; du Boulay 1979:81,143; Rushton op.cit.:61. Rushton associates this with the Resurrection whereby the physical aspect of humanity is joined harmoniously with the spiritual. What a man is, is reflected by his physical aspect.

27. Much has been written on the nature of honour and shame and the play between these two concepts in people's struggle to gain social recognition and status. See e.g. Herzfeld op.cit.; Campbell op.cit.: Chapter 10; du Boulay op.cit.:107-110; Lison-Tolosana 1983:318-348 in Spain; Goddard 1987; Peristiany 1974. Here let me simply note following Pitt-Rivers (1974:42-43) that honour and shame seem according to context to be either "synonymous as virtue or contraries as precedence and humiliation". Honour originates within the person and "comes to triumph in the social realm" through recognition. Shame may either originate in the actions of others who deny one honour until one is forced into having shame, or it may be a sentiment possessed by the individual wherein the person is sensible to public opinion and so wary of it. In this instance the person has shame and thus adheres to social norms without overt pressure thereby gaining reputation and honour.

28. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:191-193; Friedl op.cit.:86-87.

29. See e.g. du Boulay op.cit.:195, 1976:397,401; Friedl op.cit.:79-80; Rushton op.cit.:66. Alexiou (1985:163) in a discussion of a poem by Cavafy entitled "Apistia" (Unfaithfulness) she notes that the author portrays the sense the "there is no absolute truth, and therefore there can be no implicit faith: everything depends on the art of interpretation, or the skill of deception."

30. See e.g. du Boulay 1979:173-174; Christian op.cit.:158-159 and Freeman 1968:43 for Spain; Obeyesekere 1968:30; Chapter 1. Herzfeld (1983:171) notes that by stressing the moral superiority of one's village in the past, one is able to assert that the source of one's original sin lies but one generation behind one. Thus one is no worse and possibly better than those "outside".

31. To be liberated is a common euphemism for giving birth and was said to refer to the freedom to move, release from the weight.

32. The correlate of this was the concept that the thinking of sinful thoughts without actually acting upon them or speaking them was not truly sinful. To conquer one's wicked thoughts by not putting them into action made the thoughts inconsequential. It was by speaking and acting that one brought about change, placing one definitively into certain relations with the world.

33. See Alexiou (1974). Also Caraveli (1986) notes that the lament is a means whereby women express themselves publicly. The laments though engendered by death, may become a form of social commentary and protest, voicing the concerns of the living. Moreover, as Brown (1981:30-38) notes elaborate mourning rituals stress worldly kinship over spiritual kinship and the sense of the Church as a single community. In other words, this life is stressed over the life to come wherein lies the dominion of the Church.

34. It should be noted that the nuns did not support extreme expressions of suffering. These women lay within the mainstream of the Church, unlike the ecstasies described by Bynum (1987). They did not seek either fame nor recognition as individuals nor did they seek to rebel or criticise the institutions of the Church through practices which would out-strip the clergy. In fact, in certain contexts, they compared their lives favourably with the lives of their secular counterparts. They knew what the future held; they knew they would be provided for in life and in death: "What secular woman can say the same? In God we suffer less for greater reward than many married women".

35. See e.g. Runciman (1987:97) who also notes that the Liturgy by the eighth century became the central feature of Byzantine life. It is from then that the earliest surviving manuscripts of the Liturgy attributed to John Chrysostom, the regular liturgy of the Church, and that attributed to Saint Basil, read during certain days of the religious year, are dated. See also Ware op.cit.:56.

36. Ware (op.cit.:233): "The west, so it seems to them [the Orthodox], tends to think of the Crucifixion in isolation, separating it too sharply from the Resurrection. As a result the vision of Christ as a suffering God is in practice replaced by the picture of Christ's suffering humanity: the western worshipper, when he meditates upon the Cross, is encouraged all too often to feel a morbid sympathy with the Man of Sorrows. rather than to adore the victorious and triumphant king."

37. Sykes (op.cit.:66) has pointed out that one of the essential functions of the Gospels is to provide a narrative within which Christ's sacrificial death might be contextualised. "To know that a person was a martyr or an innocent victim one must be in possession of the circumstantial details leading up to his death... A capacity to recall the whole story is therefore a necessary part of the proper recollection of his death". McFague 1975 also notes the importance of parables in expressing and communicating Christian beliefs and doctrines.

38. Du Boulay (1982) has noted the significance of cyclical pat-

terns in rituals of marriage and death and linked this with the movement in folkdances. See also Pina-Cabral op.cit.:140-143,146-150 for Portugal; Jung 1988:108; Hertz 1960.

39. The aer notes Bashir (op.cit.:48) is a cloth or veil which protects the gifts from dust and flies and symbolises the air that covers the earth.

40. From Jung (op.cit.:115) it is noted that the bread is divided into the four corresponding parts containing the letters ΙΣ ΧΡ ΝΙ ΚΑ ('Iesous ~~Ch~~ristos Nika -- Jesus Christ is Victorious). The arrangement of the letters represents quaternity, characteristic of wholeness and thereby refers to Christ glorified, Christ the Pan-tokrator (holder of the universe).

41. Jung (op.cit.:105-106) associates the mixing of wine and water with ancient Greek practice of mixing the two elements. It may also signify the mixing of the divine with the human.

42. It is said that when the animal is dead the dirty and unhealthy elements (vromikes ke anthiyines ousies) should come out and some say that they do so when the animal is hung. Some villagers regard the drippings from an animal roasted over coals as the unhealthy fats and salts. The good elements (kales ousies) are sealed in the meat by the fire. Others hold that boiling is better as the water retains many of the nourishing elements that the meat gives off. There is obviously no clear consensus though the point remains that animal flesh should be well-cooked.

43. There are many distinctions between kreas, sarka, and other words defining the bodies of animals and humans. I do not have the material or the space to fully explicate the differences which, in various contexts, serve to either distinguish or integrate animals and humans, nature and the social. What is noted here serves only as a simple sketch of an interesting area for further exploration.

44. Yet, Jung (op.cit.:101) notes that sarka as edible substance and body are practically identical in Paul. This might have to do with the Resurrection and the fact that it is the living Christ who is consumed. See below.

45. This seems to be supported historically as well. Feeley-Harnik (1981:65) notes that according to Mosaic Law blood must be separated from food. Blood is the life--not just the mortal life but the spiritual essence of the living entity and thus God's (see Lewis 1987:605). Note Leviticus 17:11.

46. The importance of the Holy Spirit should not be minimised. As there is no space to elaborate, let me simply note that the distinction between life and death is often portrayed as the presence or absence of the spirit or soul, entities which are sometimes interchanged. The spirit is often associated with the intellect and conscience of the person, guiding the human soul to God. The soul is the divine element of the person. When someone dies it is said by both the nuns and the villagers that the soul leaves the body through the mouth. Sometimes this departure is

invisible " like a breath" ; sometimes it is described as a little bird which flies to the skies. The image is of a spiritual, ethereal entity that makes its way effortlessly to the heavens and is at times said to be the spirit as well as the soul.

47. See e.g. Campbell op.cit.:117; Pina-Cabral op.cit.:122-123 for Portugal; Jung op.cit.:107,114.

48. My thanks to C. McKevitt for this point. Also a point noted by Rushton n.d.:5; Zizoulas 1985:81; Ware op.cit.:290.

49. Also note that in ancient Irish literature, the Brechon Laws and the lives of the saints, bread was a significant item of food (O'Damachair 1981:57).

50. See Chapter 5. Jung (op.cit.:117) associates this with the androgynous nature of the mystical Christ.

51. The unification of all those who receive Holy Communion is expressed as Campbell-Jones (1980: 97-98) notes is expressed by a group of teaching nuns who after Vatican Two drank from the chalice as well as receiving the host. No longer was there a distinction between priest and nun, in which only the priest received the blood.

52. See Sykes op.cit. for a discussion on the association of the concepts of power and transcendence coupled with the concept of forgiveness. See also Campbell-Jones 1979:170.

53. See e.g. Herrens Schmidt 1979:31; Jung op.cit.:111,117.

54. Note Morris (1953) who discusses the revolutionary character of the early Church and the establishment of doctrines which brought the poorer masses in support of the new religion and secured its establishment.

55. For the Latin Church, following the synoptic Gospels (the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke) the Last Supper is, in fact, a Passover meal whereas for the Eastern Orthodox Church, which follows John's chronology, the Last Supper may be said to have occurred a day earlier so that the crucifixion would coincide with the slaughter of the lambs and the subsequent deliverance of God's chosen people (Feeley-Harnick op.cit.:115). Note too that Christ as the sacrificial Lamb of the New Testament, is like the paschal lamb whose bones should not be broken according to Judaic Law. Thus, He too is left whole and only His side is pierced.

Conclusion: Reflections and Continuities

"We contemplate what we are and are what we contemplate; for our essence, without losing any of its proper personality, is unified to the divine truth which respects the distinction" (de Rougement 1983:157 as quoted from Ruysbroek Book of the Twelve Beguines).

In the convents there are no mirrors. The area above the wash basin is bare. When, after washing your face you cast the habitual glance to examine your image, your gaze meets only the unyielding white-washed wall. The nuns say there is no need to look upon your image. To do so is a sign of vanity, an excessive interest in appearances. Mirrors embody the desire to please others, whereas you should desire only to please God. This does not mean that you should be neglectful of your appearance. You should come to church clean and decently attired as a sign of respect but you should not seek to enhance your worldly image.

In the village there are mirrors; small mirrors hung over the wash basins in the bathrooms, or poorly made full-length mirrors hung on a wardrobe door giving one a ripply underwater reflection. It is the young who are said to be the most interested in mirrors, gazing into them to make sure that they display themselves to advantage when they go to the square. The older women or men will look into the mirror when they dress to go out into the square for a festival, or to pay a formal visit. They must be sure that their appearance matches expectations; that they are dressed appropriately. However, the old and widows in particular, say that they have no need of mirrors: "What is there to see?" (Ti na dho?).

Mirrors allow us to objectify ourselves. They allow us to gaze critically upon ourselves as if upon another. Wishing to change what we see we can adjust, to a certain extent, this image, this object of our scrutiny, to suit our wills; to have what we see coincide with what it is we wish to

portray. The image we create with the help of the mirror is recognised as our own, an image we appropriate.

In the village there are children. In the children, say the parents, they see themselves. The children, in this sense, are mirrors, images of the parents. In the children, the grandparents are assured that their ikoyenia and its name will continue through time. In the children, the parents can measure their lives. If a child is successful the parent feels pride, for what the child has accomplished is due to the hard work and sacrifice of the parent: "What meaning does life have if you have no children. Why do you work? For the children." (Ti noima echi i zoe ean dhen echis pedhia? Yiati dhoulevis? Yia ta pedhia.) A child's success justifies a parent's life. Yet, material or academic success is secondary to the accomplishment of a successful marriage and the birth of children. As one woman in her sixties whose children were academically successful but had no children of their own wailed: "What am I to do with all these degrees. I want children. Children are life in the house. They bring happiness" (Ti na ta kano ta ptichia? Thelo pedhia. Ta pedhia ine zoe. Fernoun zoe sto spiti). Children assure continuity. Gazing upon the grandchildren one gazes upon the proof of one's success and the continuity of the ikoyenia and oneself through time.

In the convent there are no children. The nuns, having renounced the secular world, have renounced their ikoyenia and their potential as child-bearers. They can no longer serve as mirrors of continuity for their parents. With their vows dies one hope of regeneration.

In the convent there are no mirrors. The nuns, as if blind, adjust their clothes, comb their hair, wash their face. In the beginning, say the nuns, the novice will be assisted. The others will be her eyes for her. Later, she will learn to move without their assistance. She will be surrounded by women who dress as she does; who work similar tasks, and follow the same routine in life. Her sisters (adhelpes) in Christ, are her mirror. By looking upon them she sees herself.

Yet there are also other "mirrors" in the convent. In the confessional, the nun presents an image of herself in words, an image which is reflected back to her through the words of the Holy Spirit and the Hegumenos. This reflection, if in the words of forgiveness is one of beauty, grace, and light or, if absolution is withheld, one of penitence and penthos.

But, the grandest "mirrors" and the most ubiquitous are those that hang on the walls of the convent; are painted on the walls of the church; cover the walls of each nun's cell: the icons. Each nun has a patron saint to whom she prays, a favourite icon of the Christ or Panayia. These icons serve not only as windows, a glimpse of the divine world, but as mirrors, as images of what the nun strives to be. The icons, like the children in the village, serve as images of the future. They are the images the nun seeks to emulate, of what she wishes to become. Thus, surrounding the nun are images of her past, present and future. Gazing into the icons she seeks to become divine; in regarding her sisters in Christ she sees herself as she is now; looking upon the lay visitor she looks upon the image of her past existence.

Thus both nuns and villagers gaze into mirrors which assure them of their continuity, which give them a glimpse into the future while reflecting aspects of themselves. For the villagers the mirror is embedded within social relations, within the ikoyenia. In the convent the mirror is, in the end, embedded in the relationship between the divine and the nun. It is a relationship which a nun seeks all her life to establish, a relationship in which she must bend her will to the dictates of those above her in an effort to find the Beloved Bridegroom.

This thesis has sought to explore how the nuns attempt to create and maintain their relationship with the divine. This has been done by comparing two convents with a village community. For despite the nuns' denial of the secular world they do not live in a closed community. They are in contact with local, national, and international events through their visitors, through the newspapers read by their Superiors, as

well as through the occasional trips to sick parents or to doctors for various ailments. The convent is dependent upon the secular world for its novices, for the maintenance and continuity of its worldly institution. Despite the denial of sex and reproduction, these are what provide the convent with members.

The major concern of the thesis has been the manner in which the nuns use images from the secular communities around them to create their own world and to explain, portray, and understand their relations with the divine. Much is based on relationships and interactions borrowed from the "outside" world which, as metaphors and symbols, serve to make the relations with an inchoate divine more concrete and approachable. Thus, the metaphorical usage of, for example, kinship terms, or the images of marriage and elopement as used in the convent can only be understood by placing them within a broader context, a necessarily secular context.

Yet, in using lay terms and images the nuns reinterpret them, granting them and the relationships they engender new perspectives. For example, love seems to refer to different types of relationships in the convent and in the village. In the latter context, the relationship between a mother and a child is said to be the greatest expression of love arising as it does from the strong, 'natural, physical bonds created by pregnancy, childbirth and feeding. In the convent, this type of love is diminished when compared with the purely spiritual love God the Father bears towards His children; towards those humans who seek Him out. In the convent the physical is subsumed by the spiritual; the female image is subordinated to the male and kinship terms which in the lay world imply the sharing of a common substance are redefined so that material substance is shared by a corporate group-- those persons who are in a state of grace.

The nuns similarly reverse and prove themselves superior in matters concerning work and hospitality. Work in the village is associated with the prosperity of the household and its continuity through time. In the convent however, the nuns, in seeking to avoid all interaction with the "outside"

world, mask the interaction that is necessarily entailed in work by emphasising the prayer that must be continually in the heart and mind. Work thereby becomes something that is done for and in the spirit of God's will. Interaction with the world is subsumed by interaction with the divine.

Hospitality too takes on a different meaning in the convent. In the village hospitality is premised on reciprocity whereby relationships are created and maintained through the denial of immediate return. Moreover, the exchange is made to seem like an exchange between equals masking or denying hierarchy within this reciprocity.

In the convent, hospitality is offered to all who come to the convent but wary of infiltration by Temptation the nuns seek to maintain the boundaries that they have so carefully constructed. The gifts offered by lay visitors often in the form of raw food stuffs are given back to the villagers in the form of cooked food, in a form which the lay person, as receiver, can never reciprocate or equal. Thus, instead of being indebted to the secular community, the nuns' sanctity is highlighted. They are no longer of this world. They are provided for solely by the grace of God.

It is not surprising then that the lay people when confronted with the nuns and their ideology consistently find themselves in a lower position on the spiritual ladder. Their values, their striving for continuity through exchange by the giving of daughters and the receiving of wives between households; by the work of parents and the opening of new houses; by the birth of children; by the harnessing of divine grace through the attendance of church rituals and the maintaining of ceremonies for the dead and the living of the ikoyenia, is denied by the nuns' very existence. For the nuns deny interaction. They seek to create a world of continual preparation and expectation of the unity to be achieved with the divine bridegroom in heaven upon death; a world in which one continually is preparing for and realising that unity through Holy Communion. Thus, the nuns strive to maintain the boundaries between the secular and sacred, between the divine and the mundane, between Temptation and grace in order, in

the end, to be able to overcome these boundaries through the achievement of unity with the divine.

It is only with Holy Communion and through the belief that this act constitutes the incorporation of Christ into one's body, that villagers and nuns meet on common ground. In seeking out Holy Communion and the commensality achieved within the convent church through the consumption from the same cup and spoon, the same bread and wine (body and blood), a behavioural and metaphorical link is created between nuns and villagers, between the religious and the lay world. At the moment of communion all are Orthodox Christians worshipping God and therefore united in spirit.

The aims however seem once again, differ. The villagers, it seems, through communion ultimately seek to harness divine grace so as to order their social and natural worlds, thereby obtaining proper social continuity. The nuns by contrast emphasise that the partaking of communion transforms the person enabling him/her to realise for a limited time and however incompletely the desired union with Christ. And here too this unity is denied for like the hospitality of the nuns, the unity is predicated on hierarchy. The gifts given by the nuns are in the end recognised as God's. It is only by His love and His will that salvation is made possible. It is not humans who save but God, and it is not humans who unite the divine and the material world but God.

To summarise, the nuns appropriate, often through metaphor, secular relations and images to legitimate their own world view while subordinating secular values to religious ones. In this manner, the villagers find themselves always second best within the religious framework as constructed by the nuns. The villagers' denial of the legitimacy of the nuns' lives and true vocation may be a possible reaction to this situation. Nuns are often accused of acts, usually abortions or illicit love affairs which are highly disruptive to both the monastic and the lay communities. Significantly, the alleged crimes point to a disruption of household ties: unborn children are killed; illicit affairs which potentially undermine marriages are

enacted. In this manner the villagers voice their opposition to a monastic life which violates the basic values and perceived goals of human existence--procreation. Interestingly enough, this negative image of the nuns compliments the positive image the nuns attribute to themselves through their appropriation of the acts of elopement and eros.

Yet, despite the antagonisms between the two worlds, they are none the less dependent upon one another. The villagers despite their objection to young women becoming nuns, will occasionally seek out convents as places of peace, beauty and hospitality. It is in the convents that the religion is often said to be truly felt. It is often said that only in monastic institutions can Orthodoxy in terms of tradition, history and belief be truly participated in or observed. The nuns, on the other hand, though they deplore the sinful state of lay communities must also acknowledge that the practising Orthodox can achieve a state of grace even in the lay world. Though their community exists in opposition to the lay society, financial assistance and labour for the convent depend, in part, on the good will of their lay visitors and supporters. Finally, to sustain a monastic institution one must have recruits who by necessity come from the lay world, from children born to lay parents. Against all these arguments the nuns are able to posit the overriding ideal that should all persons become Orthodox monastics the world would achieve a state of divine grace and have no need either of sexual reproduction nor of material life or death. To this argument the villagers respond with mute frustration or angry denial.

The convent and the village then are both influenced by one another and maintain their distinctions through the manipulation of often similar symbols, relationships and metaphors. Thus, what is defined as a secular relationship in the village community may become a metaphor of another type of relationship in the convent and in so doing acquire a new meaning and presence. In its latter capacity it can in turn serve as a metaphor of an ideal secular relationship, an ideal towards which lay people should strive. As metaphors

highlight both similarities and differences so too is the interaction between the lay and the religious constant. They are, in certain capacities, intimately dependent upon one another.

Underlying this study has been an implicit study of gender and gender roles. This has been inevitably skewed because, as a young woman, I was not able to gain access either to the kafenia and the relations between men which took place there, nor did I have access to monks. This thesis is therefore the beginning of what hopefully will be an area of further research. Monasteries and their relations with the outside world should be examined. Monks have historically taken more active roles in the social and economic policies of both the state and the Church. If ordained they can act as priests and as holy confessors. Traditionally, they have received better formal education than the nuns and many have often chosen or been obliged to leave their cloistered lives to enter the fray of political life. Given this historic precedent coupled with a social ideology which, though admittedly is changing, none the less regards men as essentially the publicly active members of society, one could assume a very different attitude between monks and nuns vis-a-vis the lay world. By examining the interrelationship between lay society and monks we may gain a better understanding of the distinctions and similarities between monks and nuns, and more importantly a better understanding of the ways in which the Church has defined and used gender distinctions and how it has influenced and been influenced by secular society.

Another question that this study raises is the relationship between Church doctrine and the practices and beliefs of the monastics in their respective communities. The study of theology obviously differs from the lived experience of the monastic and as many nuns and monks are semi-literate their understanding of their religion may be equally or possibly more influenced by lay views than by modern theological treatise. There is also the point that the Church finds itself caught between espousing a religion which grants bless-

ing to the lives lead by the laity and to the lives lead by the monastics. It is forced to maintain its doctrines in such a manner as to accommodate both views of grace and sanctity. This may in part account for the ambiguities encountered throughout the text concerning the nature of salvation and the lay views of nuns, monks and the monastic institutions, and vice versa.

Yet, it should also be kept in mind that an increasing number of convents and monasteries boast that the majority of their members are trained white collar professionals. In contrast with the convents I studied, such institutions would be made up of women who would be well aware of not only the religious texts but of contemporary scholarly works particularly as they pertain to monastic and religious life. Their relations with the lay community may be better in that they may understand the dilemmas facing the Church today as well as the problems and needs faced by lay society. On the other hand having themselves chosen to leave successful positions within the lay community to become monastics they may also prove to be less tolerant of lay anxieties and questions of belief. This too is an area which demands attention.

We began this chapter by noting that in the convent there are no mirrors and no children, but there are icons. For the nuns the future is clear, their task defined. Continuity lies in a continual struggle to overcome temptation, to rise above and beyond the material world in order to finally consummate the holy marriage.

In the village there are mirrors, as well as children and icons. In the village the task is to assure continuity through a successful marriage, the birth of children and the maintenance of the household. This is accomplished through the constant balancing of the natural, the the social and the spiritual realms, a task of transformations in which the villagers, and in particular the women, are adept. It is a task whose major concern is with life in this world, whereas for the nuns, life truly begins after death.

Appendix 1:

Agricultural Production in the Village

This breakdown of agricultural yield in the region of Peta in 1987 is from the unofficial statistics of the regional bureau of Agriculture. These figures include the six small off-shoot villages linked officially with the village of Peta. Together they number a further 1458 people. These statistics therefore give only an impression of the activities and production of the village of Peta. Moreover, not all of the fields or produce are registered by the villagers for various reasons.

<u>Produce:</u>	<u># of Trees:</u>	<u>Produce per kilo:</u>
Olives	210,000	4,500,000
Oranges	86,000	300,000
Tangerine	1,200	20,000
Lemons	700	14,000
Bitter Oranges	800	16,000
Pears	3,000	10,000
Apples	2,000	20,000
Figs	1,000	25,000
Almonds	3,800	11,400

Garden Vegetables

<u>Type</u>	<u>Strema¹</u>	<u>Produce per kilo</u>
Potatoes	310	155,000
Onions	200	80,000
Tomatoes	210	810,000
Courgettes	12	1,300
Cucumbers	40	45,000

1. One strema is equal to 1,000 m² or 0.2471 acres.

Animals

<u>Type</u>	<u># of Heads</u>
Cattle	45
Pigs	72
Sheep	570
Goats	2,100
Poultry	8,000
Bee-Hives	900

Animals Slaughtered

<u>Type</u>	<u>Weight per kilo</u>
Lambs	19,200
Kids	6,300
Cattle	1,000
Sheep	7,000
Goat	4,500
Pigs	10,000
Poultry	300,000

Milk

<u>Type</u>	<u>Weight per kilo</u>
Sheep	200,000
Goat	32,000

The following is a breakdown of the income brought in by the produce sold. What is not sold often goes for family consumption.

<u>Produce</u>	<u>Kilo x price/kilo</u>	<u>Total in Drachmas²</u>
Olives	3,000,000 x 70 dr.	210,000,000 dr.
Oranges	200,000 x 15 dr.	3,000,000 dr.
Tangerines	20,000 x 30 dr.	600,000 dr.
Lemons	13,000 x 20 dr.	260,000 dr.
Bitter Oranges	10,000 x 30 dr.	300,000 dr.
Pears	5,000 x 50 dr.	250,000 dr.
Apples	10,000 x 40 dr.	400,000 dr.
Figs	8,000 x 80 dr.	640,000 dr.
Almonds	5,000 x 100 dr.	500,000 dr.
Potatoes	70,000 x 30 dr.	2,100,000 dr.
Onions	30,000 x 20 dr.	600,000 dr.
Tomatoes	300,000 x 50 dr.	15,000,000 dr.
Courgettes	1,000 x 50 dr.	50,000 dr.
Cucumber	30,000 x 70 dr.	2,100,000 dr.

Nurseries with citrus trees: 80,000 trees x 400 dr. = 39,000,000 dr. Yet, it is believed that there are many nurseries which are not declared by the owners.

From the animals the income is: 63,570,000 dr.

From the Bee-Hives (Honey) the income is : 9,000,000 dr.

From the Milk the income is : 10,000,000 dr.

TOTAL income: 357,370,000 dr.

Divided by approximate number of families (750): 476,494 dr./yr.

2. During the time of fieldwork there were 250 drachmas to the English pound.

Appendix 2:

The Seven Sacraments

1. Baptism: in which the person dies to his/her former sinful life and receives the grace of the Holy Ghost entering thereby into a new and holy life. This sacrament takes place usually when the individual is an infant and it is the God-parent (nouno/nouna) who speaks for him/her. The infant is immersed in water three times by a priest who speaks the words: "Thy servant of God (the name of the infant) is baptised in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost." In this ritual the infant receives his/her "Christian" name.

2. Confirmation: a sacrament received upon baptism in which, through the unction of different parts of the body with the holy chrism and with the words " the seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost", the infant is confirmed in its new Christian life.

The two sacraments above work together and are preceded by certain rites which prepare the infant to receive them: the conferring of the name; the reverence to the Church; and the reception amongst the catechumens. This is followed by other rites which impress or confirm the significance of the rituals: ablution; tonsuring; and going to church.

3. Penitence: a sacrament in which one confesses one's sins and is pardoned outwardly by the father confessor and inwardly "loosed" from sin by Christ. Since the confession is a remission of sins it is called a "second baptism" or a "baptism of tears". It consists of three acts: the prayer for the remission of sins; the confession to the father confessor; the absolution of the sins in the name of Christ.

4. Sacrament of Marriage: is the blessing of the conjugal union between a man and a woman in the image of the union between Christ and the Church. It consists of the betrothal in which the man and the woman affirm their mutual engagement before God and the Church and rings are exchanged as a pledge, and the rite of marriage. Here the union is blessed and the grace of the Holy Ghost is invoked. Often both these rites are performed together.

5. Sacrament of the Holy Communion: is a sacrament in which the Christian partakes of the actual body and blood of Christ in the form of bread and wine. In this manner, the Christian is united with Christ and with everlasting life. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." (John 6:56)

"whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:54)

6. Sacrament of Unction with Oil: is administered to a sick person. He/she is anointed with holy oil and the grace of the Holy Ghost is invoked to heal the sick both bodily and spiritually.

7. Sacrament of Orders: is the sacrament in which one who has been canonically selected and ordained by a Bishop receives the grace of the Holy Ghost and may then perform the sacraments and administer a Christian church. This sacrament is called the Cheirotony, that is the "laying on of hands", because the prelate lays his hands on the one to be ordained. The rite is the same for all grades of the priesthood-- Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon¹--differing only on the time that it is performed during the liturgy.

1. The difference between the orders are as follows: the deacon serves at the sacraments; the priest hallows the sacraments in dependence on the bishop; the bishop not only hallows the sacraments but also has the power to impart to others the gift and grace to hallow them through his laying on of hands.

Appendix 3:

Extracts from the Tonsuring Ceremony for Microschimes

Loosely translated from Theotoki (1970:102-110).

1). Q.: Why have you come, Sister, prostrating yourself before this holy altar and this holy gathering?

A.: I desired the life of askesis (monastic training and dedication), honoured father.

2). Q.: Do you want to be worthy of the Angelic Schima and to join the monastic dance (chorus)?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

3). Q.: Have you yourself chosen to come to God?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

4). Q.: Have you come perhaps through need or by force.

A.: No, honoured father.

5). Q.: Do you intend to abide in the monastery and lead a life of mortification unto your last breath?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

6). Q.: Will you keep yourself in virginity, wisdom and piety?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

7). Q.: Will you sacrifice your life in obedience to the Hegumeni and to the brethren of God?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

8). Q.: Will you patiently accept the pain and sorrow of monastic life in order to achieve the Kingdom of Heaven?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

The priest then describes the perfect life of Jesus Christ which the nun should seek to imitate in order to represent on earth the polity of God. This life should consist of:

1). the cleansing of the flesh and spirit and the active seeking of grace in the form of God.

2). the acquisition of humility through which the nun will inherit eternal rewards.

3). the rejection of human pride.

4). obedience towards all people.

5). uncomplaining obedience to the demands of one's dhiakonia (work as prayer--see Chapter 6).

6). patience with the desire of others and the avoidance of slovenliness so that one may always be in readiness.

7). the avoidance of underestimating Temptation, as well as never breaking the fasts.

The bishop then continues:

Through prayer and fasting you will redeem yourself before God. In sickness do not tarry. Beware of wicked thoughts because the enemy will not stop bringing before you memories of

a former life and instigating hatred towards the virtuous polity. For, having once started on the road towards the Kingdom of Heaven you should not turn back. Do not prefer anything to God. You should not love either father or mother or siblings or anyone else. Nor should you love yourself more than God. Neither should you love the kingdom of the world, nor rest and ease, nor honour before God. Do not reject poverty, nor bodily distress, nor anything which seems difficult, and do not see these as obstacles in following Christ. Always hold before you, in accordance with those who live in God, the hope of heavenly rewards; those rewards acquired by Martyrs, Osiours through sweat, pain, blood and death. Suffer as a good soldier in Christ who is great in mercy and who, for us, became destitute. Who became like us so that we could gain His Kingdom. We must therefore imitate Him and for Him suffer patiently, obeying His laws night and day. For God has said: If someone wants to follow me he should deny himself and carrying his cross, follow me. This means that one should be always prepared even unto death to fulfil God's commands. Therefore, you must hunger and thirst, go naked, be cursed and abused, shamed and rejected and brought to many other pains which are entailed in the life according to God. When all this has been suffered, Hail! because your reward will be great in Heaven, in Jesus Christ our Lord whose grace will prevail. Amen.

Q.: All this do you accept in the hope of the power of God and in these promises will you live until death, by the grace of God?

A.: Yes, with the help of God, honoured father.

One nun at T. remembered the following as question which she had been asked at her tonsuring ceremony:

1. Why do you wish to become a nun/monk?
2. Were you forced to become a monastic against your will?
3. Do you know that you will thirst and hunger?
4. Do you realise that you will only leave the monastery upon death?
5. Do you realise that you will be ridiculed?

Know that the vows you are to take are made before God, the angels, and the people (that is they are binding).

For the nuns these questions served as the central aspect of the ceremony. This makes sense in that the questions, which demand answers, are the only place in the ceremony wherein the woman speaks and commits herself to the monastic life.

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