



CONTESTED AUTHENTICITY, IDENTITY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE *ANASTENÁRIA*

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This thesis is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Adelaide, April 1999.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, this work is original, except as acknowledged in the text. It has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for a degree at this or any other University.

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Synopsis

This thesis is the outcome of eighteen months fieldwork undertaken in Lagadhás, a town in the north of Greece, examining the *Anastenária* ritual. The ritual is most famous for its performance on the 21st of May when it celebrates the Saints Constantine and Helen. The ritual performance includes music, dancing, prayer, the sacrificing of animals and a firewalk. As the ritual has become a popular tourist attraction, this thesis primarily examines the cultural commodification of the ritual and the ritual objects. My objective is not to simply discuss the influence and effects of tourism on the *Anastenária*, but also to discuss the ways in which the phenomenon of tourism has affected the identity of the *Anastenáride* community and the identities generated individually.

My methodology lies with my understanding that all social practice occurs within different sites of struggle where individuals and groups compete against each other for particular types of resources which accord them a dominant position. In these struggles, identities are generated in opposition to each other. The *Anastenária* has entered into the economic and political fields, thus into new sites of struggle, as a result of its involvement in the tourist industry. Within these new fields, new forms of opposition have been made available and, therefore, the possibility of the generation of different identities has been created.

I argue that the development of the *Anastenária* into a cultural product has not witnessed the demise of the ritual as a significant religious celebration but, rather, has introduced additional meanings, widened its effects and appeal and has consequently remained a significant dynamic in the generation and negotiation of the *Anastenárides* identity.

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Transliteration

The transliteration used in this thesis approximates the Modern Greek punctuation and follows the transliteration system suggested by the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*.

Greek	English
α	a
β	v
γ	gh (before the vowels a,o,u & consonants) y (before the vowels i & e)
δ	dh
ε	e
ζ	z
η	i
θ	th
ι	i
κ	k (not c)
λ	l
μ	m
ν	n
ξ	ks (not x)
ο	o
π	p
ρ	r (not rh)
σ	s (not ss)
ς	s (not ss)
τ	t
υ	i (not y or u)
φ	f (not ph)
χ	kh (before the vowels a,o,u and consonants and always after s) h (before the vowels i & e, except after s)
ψ	ps
ω	o
αι	e
αι̅	aī
γγ	ng
γκ	g (initially) ng (medially)
γκ̅	nkh (before the vowels a, o,u & consonants)
ει	i
ευ	ef (before voiceless consonants; θ,κ,ξ,π,σ,τ,φ,χ ,ψ) ev (before vowels or voiced consonants)
μπ	b (initially) mb (medially)
ντ	d (initially) nd (medially)
οι	i
οι̅	oī

ou	u (not ou)
oü	oï
’oï	óï

Glossary

This thesis follows the transliteration provided by the *Journal for Modern Greek Studies*. There are inconsistencies within the text, particularly with place and personal names because I have not altered the transliteration of Greek words taken from other texts. All quotations which include transliterated Greek words appear in their original form. Accents have been used to assist with the pronunciation and appear as instructed by the Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek. All translations from Modern Greek to English and vice versa come from the Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek. Other words which are either Turkish, Slavic or otherwise in origin appear as they were shown to me by my informants or as they appear quoted in another text. In this case, the reference is cited. Greek personal names, apart from those of my informants who are given pseudonyms, appear in my text as they have been published by themselves or others. The pseudonyms of my informants also follow the transliteration procedures listed on the previous page and accents are used to assist in correct phonetic pronunciation.

Below are listed most of the Greek words (and some other foreign words) which appear in the thesis. The words are cited without their articles. In most cases Greek words appearing in the text are accompanied by an English translation.

<i>Áhiropoítos</i>	“Not made with hands”
<i>Aghrótis</i>	Farmer
<i>Ánde</i>	“Come on!”
<i>Akrabade*</i>	Relative
<i>Anádhokhos</i>	Godparent
<i>Anastenária</i>	The ritual performed by the <i>Anastenárides</i> .
<i>Anastenárides (pl.)</i>	Person/s involved in the ritual performance and/or the community.
<i>Anastenárisa (fem. sing.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Anastenárisse (fem. pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Anastenáris (masc. sing.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Anastenáride (sing. and adj.)</i>	To sigh.
<i>Anastenázo</i>	Brave; strong.
<i>Andrioménos (sing. Masc.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Andrioméni (pl.)</i>	To be risen.

<i>Anevázo</i>	Senior, male <i>Anastenáris</i> .
<i>Arhianastenáris</i>	Non-circular dance.
<i>Antikhristós</i>	Carnival season; particularly the three days prior to the beginning of Lent.
<i>Apókrios</i>	
<i>Asimiká</i>	Silverware; refers to the metal plaques given as offerings to the Icons.
<i>Asthénis</i>	Sick person.
<i>Áyios (masc.)</i>	Saint; holy, sacred.
<i>Ayía (fem.)</i>	<i>Ibid.</i>
<i>Ayiasma</i>	Holy water well/source.
<i>Ayiasmós</i>	The blessing with Holy water.
<i>Ayía Trápeza</i>	Altar in the Christian Church.
<i>Ayioghráfos (masc.)</i>	Icon Painter.
<i>Ayía Eléni</i>	Village in the north of Greece where many <i>Anastenárides</i> reside and where their rituals are performed.
<i>Bikádhi*</i>	Refers to the animals which are to be sacrificed during the festival before they are slaughtered. <i>Bikir</i> (Oxford Turkish — English Dictionary 1984, also spelt <i>bakire</i> , Redhouse Turkish — English Dictionary 1968) translates as ‘virgin’. The word <i>bikádhi</i> has developed from the Turkish word for ‘virginity’, <i>bikir</i> , as it refers to the ‘virgin’ animals which are chosen to be sacrificed for the Saint.
<i>Brodívo</i>	Village in what was Eastern Thrace (now Bulgaria), where it is claimed some <i>Anastenárides</i> came from.
<i>Ch’i*</i>	Chinese term for ‘breath’ or ‘force’. Is believed to be the source of everything; from which everything is composed.
<i>Dhaúli</i>	Two sided drum used in the performance of the <i>Anastenária</i> .
<i>Dhéisis</i>	Prayer.
<i>Dhespótis</i>	Bishop; ruler.
<i>Dhínamis</i>	Power; refers to the supernatural power of the Saints and their Icons.
<i>Dhianomi</i>	Distribution; refers to the land distribution program which was instituted in Greece during the 1920’s.
<i>Dhodhekhás</i>	(The) Twelve; refers to the group of twelve <i>Anastenárides</i> who assume specific roles in the community.
<i>Dhohimasia</i>	Suffering.
<i>Dhrakhmés (pl.)</i>	Drachmas; Greek currency.
<i>Dimósios Ipiresies</i>	Public sector.
<i>Dhóksa</i>	Opinion; Glory.
<i>Dópii (pl.)</i>	Locals; natives.
<i>Ekklesia</i>	Church.

<i>Ékstasis</i>	Ecstasy.
<i>Eortí</i>	Festival; holiday; name day.
<i>Fotiá</i>	Fire.
<i>Frontistírión</i>	Tutorial establishment.
<i>Ghaidha</i>	Musical instrument similar to a bagpipe.
<i>Héri</i>	Hand.
<i>Ierón</i>	The sanctuary in a Church.
<i>Ikodhómos</i>	Contracted builder.
<i>Ikóna</i>	Image; picture; Icon.
<i>Ikonostásis</i>	Icon stand.
<i>Ípnosis</i>	Hypnosis.
<i>Ipoféri (3rd person, sing.)</i>	(She) suffers.
<i>Kalí (más)</i>	“Summons” (us).
<i>Karsí (adv.)</i>	Opposite.
<i>Katalamvánume(3rd person)</i>	(We are) Possessed.
<i>Kárvuna</i>	Coals.
<i>Kataghoyí</i>	Origin; descent.
<i>Kathari Dheftéra</i>	“Clean Monday”; the first day of Lent
<i>Kelkini</i>	Village in the north of Greece where <i>Anastenárides</i> reside and where their ritual is performed.
<i>Kérasma</i>	Treating; tip: refers to the bags of chickpeas, sultanas and lollies given to everyone at the end of a festival.
<i>Kháris</i>	Grace.
<i>Kharstilamas</i>	A type of <i>antikhrístós</i> (non-circular) dance from Asia Minor
<i>Khorós</i>	Dance.
<i>Kinótita (sing.)</i>	Community; unit of local Government.
<i>Kinótites (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Klironomikós</i>	Hereditary.
<i>Konáki*</i>	Derives from the Turkish word <i>konak</i> , meaning government house or mansion. Refers to the room or building where the <i>Anastenárides</i> meet and hold their celebrations and where they keep their Icons.
<i>Kostí</i>	Village in what was eastern Thrace (now Bulgaria) where many of the <i>Anastenarides</i> ' families came from.
<i>Kostilís (masc. Sing.)</i>	Person from Kostí.
<i>Kostianós (masc. sing.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Kostilidhe (sing. person and adj.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Kostilú (fem. sing.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Kostilidhes (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Kumbáros (masc.)</i>	The man or woman who performs the <i>Stefána</i> (crowning) of the bride and groom at their wedding (<i>i.e.</i> best man/matron of honour). This person usually becomes the Godparent of the first born child of the couple and so this word is also used to refer to Godparent. The spouse of the <i>Kumbára/os</i> also takes on this name.
<i>Kumbára (fem.)</i>	
<i>Kurbáni *</i>	Refers to the animals which are sacrificed during the <i>Anastenária</i> . Comes from the Turkish word <i>kurban</i> , meaning ‘sacrifice’;

<i>Lagadhás</i>	‘victim’ ¹ . Town in the North of Greece where some <i>Anastenárides</i> reside and where their rituals are performed.
<i>Laghkádhi</i>	Narrow valley, usually heavily wooded.
<i>Laoghrafía</i>	Folklore.
<i>Laoghrafíki etairía</i>	Folklore society.
<i>Leptó (masc.)</i>	Delicate.
<i>Leptá (fem.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Líra</i>	Lyre.
<i>Lutrópolis</i>	Spa; fresh water spring (town).
<i>Mághos</i>	Magician.
<i>Makedhonia</i>	Macedonia.
<i>Manávis</i>	Greengrocer.
<i>Mantili (sing.)</i>	Kerchief.
<i>Mantilia (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Mantilátos Khorós</i>	Kerchief dance.
<i>Mavroléfski</i>	Village in the North of Greece where <i>Anastenárides</i> reside and where their rituals are sometimes performed.
<i>Mayía</i>	Magic.
<i>MikroKostantinos</i>	“Small Constantine”; refers to the main song sung during the <i>Anastenária</i> .
<i>Meliki</i>	Town in the north of Greece where some <i>Anastenárides</i> reside and where their rituals have been performed.
<i>Mikrá Asia</i>	Asia Minor.
<i>Mikrasiátes (pl.)</i>	People from Asia Minor.
<i>Mikri-paniyíria</i>	Small festivals.
<i>Mitrópolis</i>	Cathedral; capital parties
<i>Néa Demokratía</i>	New Democracy: one of in Greece.
<i>Nevriká (adj; noun)</i>	Nervously; Danforth’s (1989) term for a nervous condition.
<i>Nevrikós</i>	Nervous; highly strung.
<i>Omádha</i>	Group.
<i>Orthós</i>	Right; true.
<i>Panayía</i>	The Virgin Mary, Mother of God.
<i>Paní</i>	Cloth.
<i>Paniyíri (sing.)</i>	Patronal festival; fair.
<i>Paniyíria (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Pappús</i>	Grandfather; refers to the senior male of the <i>Anastenáride</i> group.
<i>Pará Ikonómia</i>	‘Other economy’; refers to economic activity which illegally avoids tax.
<i>PASOK</i>	Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement.
<i>Patrídha</i>	Fatherland; place of birth.
<i>Pidhiktós</i>	Leaping; refers to the leaping style of Greek dances.
<i>Pirovátis (masc. sing.)</i>	Firewalker.

¹ Importantly, when used in the plural (in my experience in Lagadhás) the word ‘*Kurbáni*’ did not change. This can be explained by the fact that it is not originally a Greek word. If it was used in the plural applying Greek grammatical rules, it would read ‘*kurbánia*’. In this thesis, however, I have left it as ‘*kurbáni*’, as I heard it being used in Lagadhás.

<i>Pistis</i>	Belief; faith.
<i>Podhiá</i>	Apron; overall.
<i>Polithésia</i>	Moonlighting.
<i>Póndios (masc. sing.)</i>	Person from Pontia.
<i>Póndii (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Pontyi</i>	Karakasidou's (1997) spelling, which appears in the text.
<i>Prana*</i>	In Hindu religion, the 'breath of life'; life-giving force or inspiration.
<i>Prognopleksía</i>	'Ancestoritis' (Clogg 1992).
<i>Prósfyies (pl.)</i>	Refugees.
<i>Proskini</i>	Worship.
<i>Proskinima</i>	Act of worship; pilgrimage.
<i>Proskinitáron</i>	Table or lectern in a Church .
<i>Púlman</i>	Coach.
<i>Rúkha tú Pappú</i>	'Clothes of the grandfather'
<i>Rusfēti</i>	Illegitimate political favours; bribes.
<i>Simádhia (pl.)</i>	Mark; scar; sign; omen: refers to the Sacred kerchiefs of the <i>Anastenárides</i> .
<i>Simvúlion</i>	Council
<i>Sirtós</i>	Dragging; drawling; sliding; a type of cyclic dance.
<i>Skopía</i>	The terms Skopia and Skopians have been coined by Greece to refer to the capital city, the entire Republic and the people of FYROM, Skopje. Most Greeks prefer to use these terms as they refuse to accept FYROM's adoption of the name 'Macedonia'.
<i>Skopós</i>	Tune
<i>Skorpízo</i>	(To) disperse.
<i>Skorpízane (cont. past.)</i>	Dispersed/scattered.
<i>Stafidhes ké straghália</i>	Raisins and chickpeas.
<i>Stasídhí</i>	Pew; refers to the ledge where the Icons are placed.
<i>Stásis</i>	Stop, stopping place.
<i>Stéfana</i>	Marriage wreaths.
<i>Stefanóno</i>	To get married.
<i>Stín iyía más</i>	To our health; used in the same way that "Cheers" is used in English.
<i>Stratíotiki Thítia</i>	Military Service.
<i>Strémma (sing.)</i>	Quarter of an acre.
<i>Strémmata (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Tá Néa</i>	The News: a leading newspaper published in northern Greece.
<i>Táma (sing.)</i>	Vow; <i>ex voto</i> offering.
<i>Támata (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Tavérna</i>	Tavern; eating house.
<i>Thávma (sing.)</i>	Miracle.
<i>Thávmata (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Thavmaturghós (sing.)</i>	Miraculous/miracle working.
<i>Thavmaturghí (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Théama</i>	Spectacle.
<i>Théatro</i>	Theatre.
<i>Thessaloníki</i>	Salonika; the second largest city in Greece, situated in the north of the country.

<i>Thiásos</i>	Theatre company, cast or troupe.
<i>Thimiatrion</i>	Incense Holder; censer.
<i>Thimiatíze (3rd per. past)</i>	(He) Censed.
<i>Thisía</i>	Sacrifice.
<i>Thráki</i>	Thrace.
<i>Thrakikí Laoghrafikí Etairía</i>	Thracian Folklore Society.
<i>Thrakiótes (pl.)</i>	People from Thrace.
<i>Tímvos (sing.)</i>	Burial mound.
<i>Tímvia (pl.)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Topikós</i>	Local.
<i>Topiksmós</i>	Localism.
<i>Trapézi</i>	Table.
<i>Vasilópitta</i>	Saint Vasilios' (Basil) cake; New Years' cake: the cake made, cut and eaten on December 31st, the Saint's Name Day.
<i>Voíthia</i>	Help.
<i>Xénos (masc. Sing.)</i>	Foreigner.
<i>Xéni (fem. sing and plural)</i>	<i>ibid.</i>

* Denotes non-Greek words.

Methodology

My interest in ritual and the relationship between the public and private meanings of religion and religious celebration led me to examine the *Anastenária*. Initially interested in Greek Orthodox festivals performed by Greek Australians living in Australia, I learnt of the *Anastenária* through a Greek Australian friend. He returned from a visit to Thessaloníki with a video of a current affairs program shown on a major Greek television station. The program was about the *Anastenária*, a fire walking ritual performed in towns and villages in and around Thessaloníki. The program introduced the problematic relationship between the Church and the performers of the ritual, acknowledging the tourist interest which it attracts and the position of the local and state governments in the debate. It was not just the fact that firewalking was performed in the ritual which interested me, but the debate going on between the Church and the *Anastenárides*. Obviously the ritual had become quite a significant tourist attraction and I was curious how the *Anastenárides* were able to negotiate their religious celebration with Church opposition and tourist interest.

I first turned to any literature written on the *Anastenária*. I read Loring Danforth's work (1970, 1978, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1989, 1991), Stavroula Christodoulou's (1978) thesis on the *Anastenária* and as many references I could obtain listed in their respective bibliographies. I sought an enormous amount of Greek ethnography available to me and the more I read, the more interested I became in the dynamics of the relationship between the Church and the *Anastenárides*. By the time I left for Greece, my research proposal outlined my focus on the effects of tourism on the ritual. I was particularly interested in how the ritual had been able to maintain itself and maintain

religious significance for the *Anastenárides* and others who attended the performance, bearing in mind that it had become a tourist attraction and was condemned by the Orthodox Church.

Prior to leaving for Greece, I had been attending Greek language lessons provided by the Greek consulate. By the time I left for Greece my Greek language had improved greatly but was still very confined to basic conversation and while I had learnt the alphabet and was able to read and write in Greek, my vocabulary was still rather limited and my grammar, average. Whilst I knew that this was going to be a problem, not having an interpreter, I decided that my Greek would improve tenfold once in Greece. I was also restricted with time and finances and had little choice but to begin my fieldwork.

Once in Greece, I made personal contact with the Anthropology Department at the Aristotle University in Thessaloníki, to whom I had previously forwarded my research proposal and a request for contact. I discussed my intentions and concerns and took advice given to me regarding my intended place of study and methodology. I also made contact with the Folklore Museum in Thessaloniki and spent several weeks in their library discussing my proposal with *Kiria Kefála*. She had been attending the festival in Ayía Eléni and Lagadhás for years and was a wonderful source of information and support. Even more importantly, she knew several of the *Anastenárides* well and, in particular, was a good friend of the leader of *Anastenáride* group (*Pappús*) in Ayía Eléni. She provided me with several telephone numbers and gave me permission to use her as my contact reference. The first person I contacted was Tássos Réklos, the *Pappús* in Ayía Eléni and also a practicing psychiatrist. I met with him at his practice in Thessaloníki. I was invited to Ayía Eléni to meet his parents and discuss my research project. The following weekend I took the bus to Sérres and another to Ayía Eléni and following Tássos' directions found his parent's house. The men were out working on their land so after introducing myself to his mother and wife, I sat over

coffee until they returned. When they came back from the field, we chatted for a while and then Tássos and his father took me for a walk around the village, pointing out the houses of two *Anastenáride* families. Before I left, Tássos gave me the name of two other *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni whom he suggested I speak to. I returned a few days later and went to see one of the *Anastenárides* to whom he referred me.

The following week I returned to Ayía Eléni. I was not greeted with overwhelming interest initially and, respecting their privacy did not push myself onto them. I learned afterwards that there had been a death in the community and, in mourning, the individuals to whom I had spoken could not talk about the festivals. Whether or not the death occurred after I had seen Tássos, or whether he failed to tell me, or did and I did not understand, I still do not know, but the experience stole my confidence and saw me treading cautiously afterwards. I decided that it would be better to let some time pass and allow for the forty days of mourning to pass before I called on the *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni again.

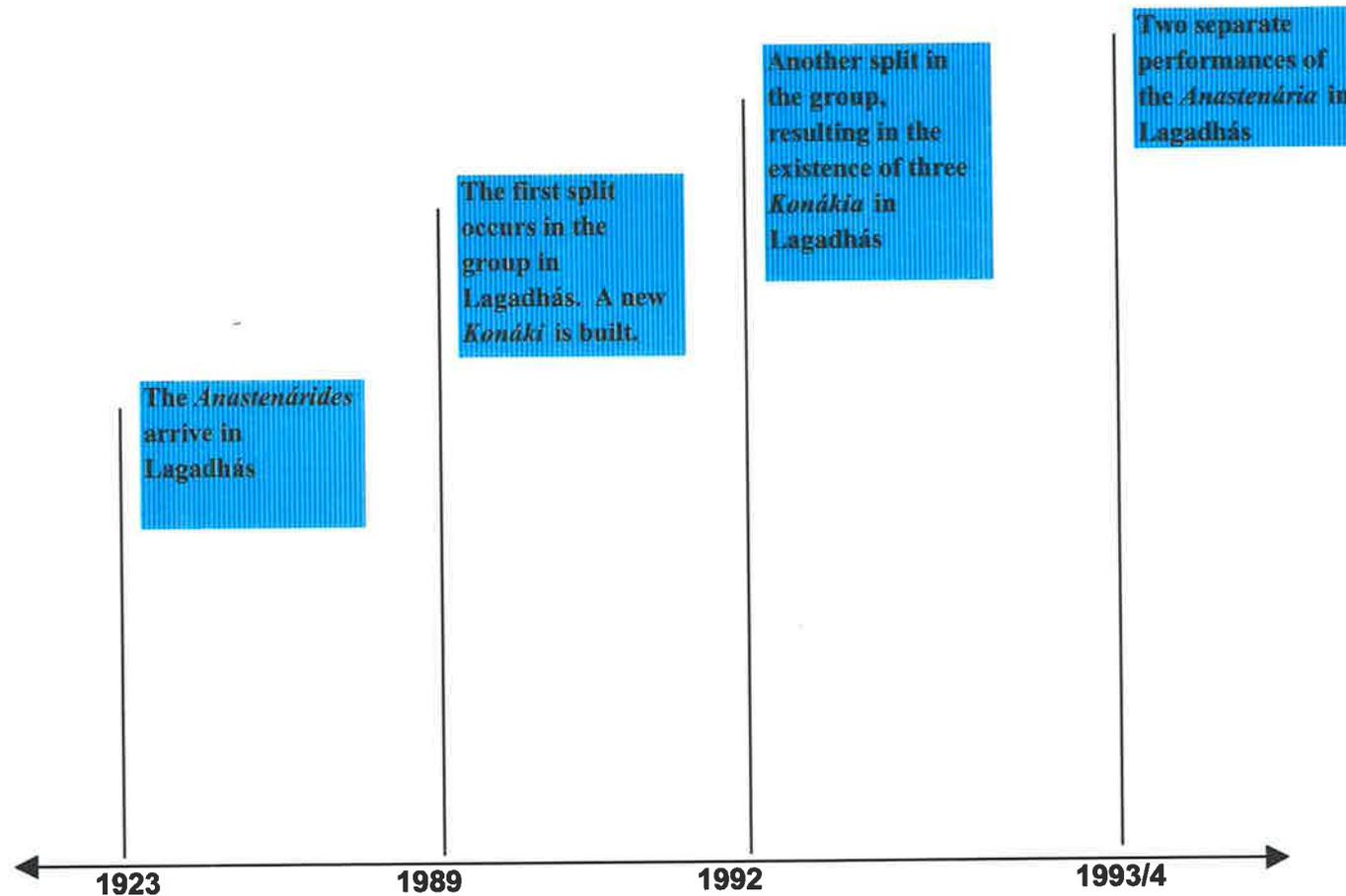
I decided to telephone the contact I had in Lagadhás. I had the phone number of Mikháli, an *Anastenáride* who was also a journalist, given to me by *Kiria* Kefála at the Folklore Museum. When I reached Mikháli he was immediately very eager for me to come to Lagadhás and went out of his way to put me in touch with other *Anastenárides* who resided in Lagadhás as he himself lived in Thessaloniki. After making contact with Tom, an *Anastenaris* in Lagadhás, I was welcomed to the town and everyone showed great interest in my research.

It was immediately apparent that there existed rivalry between the towns of Lagadhás and Ayía Eléni and whilst I knew that my desired presence in Lagadhás may have been due to this rivalry, I nevertheless felt comfortable and more confident there. It meant that I had to make a decision as to

where I would locate myself at least for the first part of my fieldwork. After talking with Tássos and explaining my position, I decided to remain in Lagadhás, at least for six months and then, when my language and confidence had improved, perhaps move to Ayía Eléni and undertake fieldwork there also.

I made contacts with the *Anastenárides* freely in Lagadhás and they welcomed me warmly. It was not until after some weeks that I became aware that the group had in fact suffered several divisions over the past year (see Diagram One). The former leader (*Pappús*) had isolated himself from the group once they decided to move the *Konáki* (the place where they meet and keep their Icons) away from his house. Later in that year, there had been arguments within the group over leadership and Icons and the group split into two, creating the existence of three *Konákia* and two active groups in the one town. This division was a sensitive topic as it had split families and friends. The details of the division were never spoken of freely and it was only after my relations with the *Anastenárides* developed that I learned of the exact events that had occurred. I had spent some time with the former *Pappús* who was eager to tell his side of the story and warn me about the group. He had been used to researchers and interviews and was never short of stories to tell. After a short while I was made aware that my going to see him offended the other *Anastenárides* and out of respect for their kindness and the friendships which we had made, I saw very little of him after that and if I did, it was never in secret. For the same reasons, I did not spend time with the other group in Lagadhás. Whilst I visited their *Konáki* during one festival, accompanied with a musician from Tom's group, it would have been inappropriate for me to have spent time with them. The fact that attending their festivals would have meant that I would have missed out on the other groups' is only part of the problem. It would have also offended them if I had shown the other group my attention and would have jeopardised the relationships that I developed with them.

Time Line Depicting the Divisions in the *Anastenáride* Community in Lagadhás



In the same way, I have been faced with ethical problems in the writing of my thesis. Whilst the division of the group is crucial to the arguments and problems discussed in my thesis, I am aware that this was a subject which the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás did not want to discuss or to be discussed in public. Hence my restricted use of information regarding this topic. After much deliberation, I made the decision that I could not ignore the topic in my thesis. I have however, restricted the amount of detail and have chosen to omit certain information. To reveal the information would breach the trust I was given and would be disrespectful of the relationship that I have with these people.

The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás found it hard to see me as an academic, or a researching woman, I was a young girl and a student and our relationships developed in that way. An obvious consequence of this was that certain relationships were taboo and hence I was restricted in some senses. In the same way however, an alternative area of relationships and areas of information were opened to me. I spent more time with the women and children of the community and less with the men. If I had opposed the natural progression of these relationships I do not believe that I would have gathered the data that I did and I would have disrupted a situation that was both comfortable for them and myself. I was not prevented from joining in on male conversations, however. Those times when I sat with the men and either listened or joined in on their conversations, I was warmly welcomed.

I rarely undertook formal interviews, with the exception of my time spent with the Church officials, the local Council and meetings with people at the Universities. Apart from these discussions, the only other time I used a tape recorder was when I was with the son of the former *Pappús*, who expected me to use it and clearly felt more comfortable with my use of it. He had been interviewed before and being the son of the former *Pappús*, was familiar with researchers and reporters. With

the other *Anastenárides*, I only used the tape recorders to record the music and the video recorder was only employed during the firewalking, dancing in the *Konáki* and the processions etc. I used to spend a great deal of time in the *Konáki* with the *Anastenárides* and their families, helped organise things for the festivals, prepare and serve the meal and clean up after the festivals. I spent time at people's houses talking with the women and children and the majority of conversations held were held at the *Konáki*. It was there that the men often chatted with me and the younger men, particularly the musicians and also other *Anastenárides*, Tom, Mikháli and Rénos, engaged in more relaxed conversation and were more open with me. Whilst I had good relations with all of the *Anastenárides*, there were a few individuals and families with whom I spent more time and spoke more candidly with. These people consequently feature more often in my thesis. I consider that it would be dishonest of me to present any other type of reality.

I acknowledge the problem of language in the field. My Greek continued to improve and I conversed freely with the *Anastenárides* but doubtless, there were things that I missed, misunderstood or misinterpreted. My lack of funding also meant that I had to engage in some part time work; teaching English. This, however, also worked to my advantage as it meant that I was not just a visitor to Greece, but was also participating in their society in another way, working, paying bills, dealing with bureaucracy etc. This meant that I was able to learn things about Greek lifestyle, which may have been otherwise unknown or at least unexperienced.

The choice of Lagadhás as a site of study also posed problems due to its size. Working in a town with a large population, close to Thessaloníki, meant that I was not confined to a small, intimate space, which might have made it easier as an observer. Many of the *Anastenárides* lived in Thessaloníki and others worked outside of the town. Because most of them lived in apartments or small homes I was not able to reside full time with a family (although I was always invited to stay).

This allowed me privacy and freedom but obviously also restricted me from the intimacy and full-time observation permitted when a researcher is able to live with the people whom they are studying.

My being a woman was neither a hindrance nor a benefit. I was treated as a woman, a young unmarried woman, and nothing else. My being a foreigner, a non-Greek and a non-Orthodox meant that I was perceived differently from their own daughters, sisters and wives. However, the longer I was there and after they met my partner, Vangélis (a Greek Australian) I felt that I was treated more and more as a young woman away from home than a researcher. Looking younger than I actually am, also meant that I was generally not considered a serious academic and therefore not considered a serious threat. I was comfortable with this as it allowed me to enjoy more relaxed relations with the *Anastenárides*. My naivete was honest and I developed trusted relationships because of this. I respected people's understandings of politeness and as a result, often stopped myself asking questions I would have liked to. None of this do I regret however, as I believe that I gathered an enormous amount of information as a direct result of the type of relationships I developed.

Like all researchers, I would love the opportunity to return to the field to fill in gaps I discovered once home and to probe further into areas that have developed in the process of writing up. There are an enormous number of areas that I could develop further and look forward to the opportunity of one day, doing just that. Similarly, the fact that I did not end up spending any significant time in the other villages where the ritual is performed, leaves me with an enormous area still to cover.

Introduction

This thesis examines the cultural production of the *Anastenária*, a firewalking ritual performed by Orthodox Christians in the North of Greece¹. The ritual is an Orthodox Christian celebration, primarily associated with the Saints Constantine (*Kostandinos*) and Helen (*Eléni*). On several important dates on the Orthodox calendar, the *Anastenárides* come together to celebrate. Their ritual performances include music and dancing and on May 21, for the celebration of the Saints Constantine and Helen, an animal sacrifice and a firewalk are performed firewalk². During their ritual performances, when dancing and crossing the burning coals, the *Anastenárides* have been claimed to be in a tranced or ecstatic state. Central to the *Anastenárides*' ritual life, are Holy Orthodox Icons that they venerate and that they believe transmit the Grace and supernatural power of the Saints to them.

¹The *Anastenária* is not to be confused with the *Anthestéria*, an annual festival held in Athens. The *Anthestéria* is said to be the oldest festival of Dionysis and involves drinking contests, singing, dancing and the re-enacting of a sacred marriage. Lonsdale (1993:121) claims that the *Anthestéria* included activities which “led to the disturbance of social structures with the goal of restoring an improved and more lasting order”. Similar links between Dionysis and the *Anastenária*, have been made by folklorists and historians. See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of the role of academics in the construction of identity.

The word *Anastenária* is said to derive from the word *anastenázo*, ‘to sigh’ (see Christodoulou 1978, Danforth 1989:4,65). This connection was made largely due to sighing noises that the *Anastenárides* sometimes make when they are believed to be *called* by the Saint in the *Konáki* and in the fire. The verb used most commonly by the *Anastenárides*, however, to refer to these noises, was *tsirízo*, ‘to scream’ or ‘to shriek’ (see also Danforth 1989:65). Danforth suggests that it is more likely that the term *Anastenária* is “derived from *asthenis*, a sick person, preceded by the pleonastic privative *an-*” (*ibid.*). *Asthenis* translates as ‘patient’. Danforth also quotes Giorgakis (1945-1946) who states that the word *Asthenaria* is recorded from the thirteenth century as a “contemptuous reference to the ‘sickly’ appearance of a group of Vlachs and Bulgarians who were ““possessed by demons”” (in Danforth 1989:65). I was also told when I was in Greece that the word *Anastenária* comes from the verb ‘to raise’ (*anevázo*, to be risen). It was also suggested to me that it comes from the adjective of the Greek word for ‘weak/powerless’ (*anishiros*), written as the word ‘to sigh’ (*anastenázo*). The *Anastenárides* who commented on the source of the word all claimed that it was from the verb ‘to sigh’, but most of them were repeating the definitions provided by academics.

In Greek ‘*Anastenária*’ is a plural noun. In this thesis, however, I use it in the single English, referring to the entire integrated ritual process (Danforth 1989 also uses it in this way). Participants in the rite are known as ‘*Anastenárides*’. The masculine singular is ‘*Anastenáris*’, the feminine singular ‘*Anastenárisa*’, the feminine plural ‘*Anastenárisse*’, and the masculine plural, ‘*Anastenárides*’.

² A firewalk is also performed sometimes on July 27 for Saint Pantelímon and January 18 for Saint Athanásios.

Each ritual performance is both a religious practice and a tourist event, in which individuals negotiate the significance of their identity and their positions within these different social worlds. I argue that the *Anastenária* is polysemous³. It can mean different things at the same point in time and different things for the same people at different points in time. Often these different meanings appear to be contradictory, even exclusionary when viewed reflectively. Those involved in the ritual appeal to different cultural logics to accommodate the representation of their religious celebration as a tourist attraction and become absorbed within different fields of practice and significance. As practice, the ritual and its constitutive logic colonize other areas of social significance, appropriating their essential values and qualifying its religious expression with the immediacy of the occasion. The *Anastenária* does not exist separately from the everyday life of this community; it is encompassed within and responsive to the living practices of these people and is a constituent of their total sense of self. I argue that there is an integral relationship between the constitution of identities in different social situations and the transformation of the ritual performance of the *Anastenária*. I examine not only the transformation of the *Anastenária* into a tourist attraction but the correlative process of transformation within the *Anastenáride* community itself, as the people come to understand themselves and their ritual in local and wider environments which are both changing.

The notion that identity is constituted out of oppositional relations is well established⁴. I expand this theoretical concept to examine the constitution of multidimensional qualities within a personal 'self' to allow a religious celebrant to co-exist substantively within a self concerned with the commodification of this identity. Increasingly the ritual has become more involved with the Greek tourist industry. The *Anastenárides* have engaged in new worlds of action

³Turner (1967:50-51) argues that many ritual symbols are 'polysemous' or 'multi-vocal', meaning that "...a single symbol may stand for many things" (*ibid.*:50). Importantly, he explains that, "The property of individual symbols is true of ritual as a whole" (*ibid.*).

which compel them to reflect upon and justify their identity both as Christians and as *Anastenárides*. Within the framework of their wider environment and the demarcation of the ritual as a tourist attraction, the *Anastenárides* generate different identities according to the particular situation they are in. In part, these identities are the products of history, embodied within their biographical particularity. But these habitus are also responsive to the material, cultural and political forces of the immediate occasion; what it means to be an *Anastenáride* shifts substantively and in emphasis, over time and within different fields of relations⁵.

While discourses on tradition and authenticity dominate the cultural production of the ritual performance, the identification of the ritual as a tourist attraction and its subsequent commodification engages economic and political ideals within these discursive forms. Commodification encodes the *Anastenária* with a secular appeal and understandings of authenticity and tradition are fiercely contested. These terms operate as moral and normative sanctions that influence the way in which the ritual is performed and consequently effect the way in which the *Anastenárides* think about themselves. I argue against the notion that the *Anastenária* has been able to maintain itself only because of tourism. I argue instead, that the ritual has survived because its boundaries of inclusion are responsive to the changes occurring in the wider social context.

My theoretical interest lies in the area of practice and while I acknowledge the significance of a phenomenological understanding of the fire walking ritual, I argue that the ritual's force flows from a dialectical relationship between meaning and ritual practice. I take beliefs and actual

⁴ See Barth (1966, 1969), Bourdieu (1985a), Derrida (1978), Epstein (1978), Foucault (1979) and Mitchell (1969, 1974).

⁵ Habitus refers to a set of dispositions that are created and re-created through objective structures and personal history. Bourdieu (1979:vii) writes "The habitus is a system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices". The schemes of the habitus operate "below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will"

practices to be mutually generative and analytically contingent on the process and relations within which they are expressed. My analysis is informed by Bourdieu's theory of social practice. My approach to ritual practice is through his inter-related concepts of habitus and field, as I examine the engagement of particular individuals within different kinds of relations. For Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1985c, 1990, 1992), habitus and field are relational concepts that are fundamentally generative, in both their composition and their execution. Habitus is constituted in practice and brings to an analysis both the impetus of history as material and structuring forces and the engagement of individuals with these forces, through their biographical circumstances. For Bourdieu, field is a concept that is irreducible to either spatial or epistemological parameters. It comes into existence only through actual relations and its dynamic is linked in with issues about truth, meaning and the right to legitimate representations of reality. These sites of action are unique in terms of their particular logic and in their composition. Each field is dynamically constituted out of positioned relations and purposeful objectives; it "prescribes its particular values and possesses its own regulative principles" that make it not only unique in terms of its elements but these elements are also peculiar to the particular occasion. Thus, specificity is both a consequence of the biographical dispositions each field of relations engages and the historical distinctiveness of particular points in time (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:17).

The concepts of habitus and field "function fully only in relation to one another" as it is the specific particularities of a field that generate the possibilities of meaning and, thus, the nature of identity (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:19). It is habitus that establishes one's sense of 'place' in the world, as it constitutes ways of behaving, feeling and responding to situations and relations that are largely unreflected upon until contested. Practical knowledge is the

(Bourdieu 1984:466). These dispositions that constitute the habitus, are embodied and "engage the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world..." (*ibid.*).

knowledge that action is predicated on; it is evident within the ritual performance of the *Anastenária* and it informs their everyday living. It is a knowledge that is embodied and largely expressed within one's physical, conceptual and affective orientation towards relations and situations.

Bourdieu's approach to the constitution of subjectivities through habitus contrasts markedly with the concept of 'role' or 'rule' associated with the 'presentation of self'⁶. The significant property of habitus is its generative capacity that analytically allows the concept to be responsive to the dynamics of historically specific relations. It is because of habitus and its enactment within specific fields of relations that Bourdieu argues in terms of possibilities rather than probabilities. On occasions when experiences and routines become familiar and predictable the knowledge of habitus becomes regulated in the sense that things done and said regularly or habitually become part of one's taken-for-granted world. Yet in every practical relation there is always the space for the arbitrary to intervene, to contest, even transform that which is regarded as 'normal'; and within every 'field' of contested relations there is always a multiplicity of logics redundant within the dominant form. I argue that the identity generated at a particular point in time is a consequence of the engagement of a biographically distinctive habitus within a particular field and the individual's distinctive position within this context of relations.

⁶ The notion of roles (see Linton 1936, Merton 1968, Goffman 1971) develops a dramaturgical analogy in which individuals have on offer multiple roles, providing multiple identities from which they can choose; replacing one with another. Goffman (1961:93 original italics) saw role as "the *typical* response of individuals in a particular position". Although he acknowledged a difference between a 'typical' and an 'actual' role performance (depending on the perception of the individual in a particular situation), his work and much of the other work on role theory (see for example, Swartz 1968) disregarded history and individuality. This understanding of roles assumes, sometimes tacitly, the existence of a cultural text, without explaining where the text comes from. I argue instead, that identity is a relational concept, (determined by history and social relations) rather than an issue of role.

The *Anastenárides*' identity is characterised by both marked qualities and ambiguous aspects that make each performance and everyday living practices mediums for the reproduction, transformation and regeneration of what it means to be *Anastenárides*. I argue that an *Anastenáride*'s identity has been able to alter over time without being in conflict with previous notions of what it meant to be an *Anastenáride*. This is also why individuals who would have been excluded previously from the group are now able to call themselves *Anastenárides* and be accepted as such. Similarly, it may explain why previous ethnographies which detail characteristics of *Anastenárides*' identity, differ from my own (Christodoulou 1978; Danforth 1989).

It is from Bourdieu that I also draw my conceptualisation of power, to be expressed within the structural positioning of the *Anastenária* as a form of 'capital'⁷. Fields constitute "simultaneously a *space of conflict and competition*" and what is at stake in these struggles, are issues about authenticity, integrity and identity (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:17 original italics). Different relations contest different manifestations of these issues and the distinction between types of capital, be it social, cultural, economic or symbolic, allows me to examine the convertibility of these different expressions of power and identity. In particular, I argue that the *Anastenárides* make use of their Icons to gain access to and position themselves within both religious and non-religious fields of relations.

This thesis examines the *Anastenária* uniquely. It contrasts with previous work undertaken [in English] on the ritual (Christodoulou 1978, Danforth 1989). I approach the study of ritual not from the perspective of it being constituted by a symbolic representational paradigm. In this essentially Geertzian approach meanings are interpreted as residing in paradigmatic

⁷Bourdieu asserts that power is a multi-faceted concept that comes from relations within fields.

cultural logics. Instead, I examine the ritual as it and its meanings are constituted and transformed in and through practice.

The Structure of the Thesis

I begin by locating the *Anastenárides* and their ritual within more recent history. I introduce the town of Lagadhás, positioning the ritual and its performers within their immediate environment and their wider relations: Thessaloníki, Greece and the Balkans⁸. This contextualisation is to show that the environment of the ritual performers, like their ritual and their identity as *Anastenárides*, has been and continues to be a contested and constantly negotiated space. I argue that these changing historical relations affect the way in which the *Anastenárides* position themselves in their environment; their identity has ranged from persecuted Greeks in Kostí to Greek refugees in Lagadhás⁹.

Chapter Two examines the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the *Anastenárides*. Positioning the *Anastenária* within the religious field, I draw out the points of contestation between the Church and the *Anastenárides*. I briefly introduce the *Anastenária* ritual and then examine the way in which the *Anastenárides* understand and articulate their ritual as religious and themselves as Orthodox Christians. I reflect on how their position, in opposition to the Orthodox Church, is central to the way in which they negotiate their Orthodox Christian identity and their *Anastenáride* identity, within this field of contestation.

⁸ The name Lagadhás is derived from the former Turkish name, *Langaza*, meaning ‘woods’ (Karakasidou 1997:5). Most of the forests, however, have now disappeared. *Laghkádhi* translates as a ‘narrow valley, usually heavily wooded’.

⁹ Kostí is situated in mountains close to the coast of the Black Sea and was referred to as the ‘Blind City’ as it was well concealed by thick forests and, therefore, relatively safe from attack in times of war. In 1914 Kostí had a population of several thousand, mainly farmers and lumberers (Danforth 1989:133). Brodívo, (or Brodílavo) a village not far from Kostí is also relevant in this thesis as some of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás come from Brodívo. The villages of Trípori and Grammatikóvo are also cited as places where the *Anastenárides* came from (Christodoulou 1978). An *Anastenáris* told me, that Kostí was named after a man of the same name who successfully organised for soldiers to be placed around the town in the mountains, to protect it from attack by

Chapter Three introduces the ritual performance in detail. Describing the celebrations that take place on certain important religious days in the Orthodox calendar, I introduce the dancing of the *Anastenárides*, both inside the *Konáki* and on the fire, the preparation and sacrificing of the animals on the festival of Saints Helen and Constantine and the firewalk itself⁴⁰. Presenting extracts from my field notes and then reflecting on each part of the ritual, I examine the way in which the *Anastenárides* understand their ritual performance.

The Chapter continues with a discussion of notions of trance and altered states of consciousness, where I argue that the *Anastenárides* experience a shift in self during their dancing in the *Konáki* and their passage onto the fire. These shifts, however, are specific to each individual and may alter from time to time, depending on the particular circumstances. Critiquing previous work undertaken on the *Anastenária* that presents the ritual as a healing ritual (Danforth 1989), I argue that the ritual is polysemous which, at different times, means different things to different people.

Attention is given to the firewalk itself and to the *Anastenárides*' ability to walk on burning coals unharmed. I reflect on previous work done on firewalking, presenting an overview of interdisciplinary understandings of the phenomenon. I examine the public attention that the firewalking attracts and critically examine the crossroads where the various meanings of the phenomenon meet. As the firewalking is the most significant part of the ritual with regards to tourist interest, the *Anastenárides*' ability to firewalk has several different points of significance. These are discussed further in this Chapter.

bandits. Danforth (1989:133) claims that early in the 20th century Kostí began to suffer severe harassment by Bulgarian bandits.

Chapter Four specifically examines the music and dance of the *Anastenária*, arguing that the ‘aesthetics’ of the ritual are central to its performance and its meaning to individuals. I examine the importance of music and dance in the achievement of shifts in subjectivity and, therefore, their role in the negotiation of identities.

Chapter Five centers on notions of identity and grounds my previous thoughts in a theoretical discussion of the construction and experience of identity. In my examination of the ritual as a cultural product, I argue that the generation of a particular identity is dependent on the social situation, the dynamics of the relationships of those individuals involved and also on their particular habitus. I reflect on and expand the notion of difference and argue that categories of distinction, which are learnt and embodied through life, are what differentiate one person’s identity from another.

Chapter Six returns to a discussion of the transformation of the ritual as a tourist attraction and examines the way in which the ritual has become commodified. Detailing the tourist interest in the ritual and examining the involvement of the local and state Governments in the ritual’s performance, I argue that particular individuals and groups engage in struggles for the accumulation of different types of capital. These different types of capital are made available through different types of association, participation and interest in the ritual. It is in this discussion that I refer to Bourdieu’s understanding of symbolic labor through which capital may be generated¹¹.

¹⁰ The term *Konáki* is derived from the Turkish *konak*, ‘mansion’ or ‘Government house’ and was used by the Greeks living under Ottoman rule to refer to the building that housed the local administrative authorities (Danforth 1989:134).

¹¹ Symbolic labour, as understood by Bourdieu (see especially 1990), is labour that is unrecognised as such. That is, labour that does not directly (although more often ultimately does) generate economic capital. My use of the concept of capital here also follows Bourdieu (1983, 1992) who refers to economic, cultural and symbolic capital.

Chapter Seven takes these ideas further and examines the different forms of capital that are generated, transferred and competed for, by individuals and groups involved in the *Anastenária*. I look directly at the mechanisms employed in social relations and present the struggles within which the ritual is performed. I examine to what extent the ritual itself, is a site where capital is generated and transferred, reflecting on whether participation in the ritual is in fact, a form of symbolic labour.

Conclusion

This thesis analyses the way in which identities are generated and negotiated through examining practices involved in the production of the fire walking ritual in Lagadhás. I examine the incorporation of this ritual into the Greek tourist industry to consider the extent to which these changes in the ritual performance effect the identities of those involved. I argue that the ritual needs to be considered as a ritual practice that is integral to and, in turn, grows out of the complex system of social life of this community and its broader commitments. My analysis demonstrates that practice and meanings are mutually generative and that it is in the performance of the ritual that the *Anastenárides* constitute their sense of self and their belief about their social world.

Bourdieu argues that all forms of capital are reducible to economic capital, but the efficacy of cultural and symbolic capital lies in their ability to appear as separate from economic capital.



1

Contested Spaces

Introduction

This Chapter introduces the environment where the *Anastenárides* reside and presents an overview of the contested histories and geographies in which they have been positioned¹. In this Chapter I argue that the dynamic and contested history of the north of Greece and the entire ‘Macedonian’ area is not only important in understanding the movement of the *Anastenáride* communities, but is also crucial to a discussion of the contestation of Macedonia and the *Anastenárides*’ position within this debate². It is, therefore, relevant to an examination of *Anastenáride* identity. Macedonian identity is not only contextualised and dynamic but also highly contested. Battles for the legitimate ownership of the area, as well as ideologies, have continued with the Greeks maintaining, by using arguments of historical authenticity, that the area is Greek.

Over the past few centuries, there has been constant conflict in the Balkan region, most recently evident in the war in the Former Yugoslavia and the current crisis in Kosovo. Other issues that have recently affected Greece in a direct way, are the debate between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)³, and also between Greece and Turkey. This recent history has effected a reconstruction and reinforcement of a Greek national identity that is predicated on the constant inclusion of historical arguments of legitimation. Politically

¹ I would like to acknowledge Dr. Roger Just’s valuable comments on the re-working of this Chapter.

² As Danforth (1995:6) notes “from an anthropological perspective, however, ‘Macedonia’ can have many different meanings, many different definitions”. Danforth cites three basic meanings of the term ‘Macedonian’. One meaning refers to people who have a Macedonian national identity. That is, as opposed to a Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, etc. identity. Secondly, the term is used in a regional sense, to denote people who hold a Greek national identity but who come from ‘Macedonia’. The final use of the word refers to the indigenous people of Macedonia, (‘local Macedonians’), who may speak Greek or Macedonian or both languages (Danforth 1995:6-7). Most of these ‘local Macedonians’ have developed a national Greek identity, but others have adopted a Macedonian national identity. Danforth (1995:7) suggests that this final meaning has an “ethnic meaning”.

³ I have chosen to use the term FYROM in this thesis when referring to the relatively new Republic of ‘Macedonia’. I discuss the problematic usage of the term ‘Macedonia’ later in this Chapter.

articulated slogans re-appeared, (like those of the early 19th century), citing the ‘Greekness’ of Macedonia⁴.

Today, the *Anastenárides* are implicated in the ideology that constitutes the politics of the Balkan region. Like in the 19th century, the *Anastenárides* have once again, become implicated in an ‘imagined’ Greek national identity as their ritual is articulated as a remnant of ancient Greece. As ‘Thracians’ and as ‘Macedonians’, who conceptualise and articulate themselves as being Greek, they are excellent ‘proof’ of a Greek Macedonia. Greece sees FYROM as a threat to Greek national and historical ideology by its adoption of symbols (the name Macedonia, the use of the Vergina Star⁵) that constitute Greek ideology. The *Anastenárides*, like other Greeks with heritage to geographical areas outside of modern-day Greek borders, are presented as evidence of a Greek history and dominance in the area. As it is history that is being disputed between the two sides, the *Anastenárides* are implicated like other Greek refugees from Macedonia. After a major protest rally⁶ in Thessaloniki in 1994 against the formation and global recognition of the new ‘Macedonian State’ an *Anastenáris* in Lagadhás commented:

“This is nothing new. We Greeks have always had to fight for what is rightfully ours. All the Slavs have to do is read the history books and they can see that they are telling lies” (November 1994)⁷.

⁴ There was a calculated construction of a Greek identity that was deliberately propagated by the Government and academics during the early 19th century struggle for Greek independence. The role of folklorists, in particular, became significant as they authorised, through the power of legitimate knowledge, the construction of a Greek national identity based on ‘tradition’ and on the imagined memories of the Hellenic state. This *prognoplexia*, or ‘ancestoritis’ (Clogg 1992:2), was a successful political tool and one which immediately implicated rural customs and rituals as they came to be seen as proof of the remnants of Greece’s past. See Chapter Five for a discussion of this period. More recently, with the conflict between Greece and FYROM, rural rituals such as the *Anastenária* have been similarly used to prove the ‘Greekness’ of land both inside and outside of Greece’s current borders.

⁵ The sixteen-ray sun or star of Vergina is widely recognised as the emblem of the ancient Macedonian royal family. This symbol was also chosen as the flag for the newly independent Republic of Macedonia (Danforth 1995:148). As Greeks believe the ancient Macedonians were Greeks, FYROM’s use of the Vergina star is the “theft of national Greek property” (*ibid.*) as is the use of the name ‘Macedonia’. From a Greek nationalist perspective, it also proves that FYROM has irrendist claims on Greek territory (*ibid.*). For a pro-Greek discussion on FYROM see Kyriakidis (1955), Martis (1984) and Vakalopoulos (1988).

⁶ There had been similar rallies prior to this one, both within and outside of Greece.

⁷ A newsletter produced by the Council for visitors to Lagadhás references its mixed population. It acknowledges that half of the population are locals (*dópii*) and the other half are refugees (*prósfiyes*) from Thrace and Pontia. The newsletter reads: “Today all of them constitute one tight ethnic total, with its own ethnic identity that is not afraid to defend any claims made to its land. The principal argument which unites them all is the ‘Greekness’ of our Macedonia”.

All *Anastenárides* to whom I spoke, held this view⁸.

The *Anastenárides* came from regions that are now being indirectly implicated in the argument over historical ownership and dominance of the Balkans. In response to what Greece sees as a threat to their history and present-day borders, Greece is arguing, through historical construction, that these lands are essentially 'Greek'. The *Anastenárides*, therefore, are used as evidence of this 'Greekness' of particular geographical areas. 'Greekness', I would argue has been somewhat of an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) constituted not by geographical boundaries (ie the Greek diaspora) but through a range of characteristics, some real, others imagined⁹. For the *Anastenárides*, living in Thrace did not mean that they were not Greek: their 'Greekness' was understood by their religion, Orthodox Christianity, and their language¹⁰. 'National' identities came to be constructed as a consequence of the contestation over land that ensued after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Greece's attempt to unite all Greeks within the same borders, to unify the Greek 'nation', intensified the development of a Greek *national* identity. The 'imagined' greater Greece thus developed as Greece attempted to realise this nation, creating a unified, ethnically homogenous Greece, its population united within same borders. Whilst the other Balkan states were also developing nationalist intentions, it was far more of a challenge for Greece as its population was widely scattered¹¹.

⁸ It was also the opinion revealed to me, however, by almost all Greeks both inside and outside of Australia with whom I discussed the issue.

⁹ Danforth (1995:16) also refers to Anderson's (1983) 'imagined communities', and the processes by which they are constructed; "print-capitalism", the development of "standardised national languages". In the 19th and 20th centuries, Greece employed both of these tools in the Balkan region in their attempt to Hellenise the area. Danforth (1995:18) acknowledges that war, the development of 'national' symbols and 'invented traditions' and histories (see Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) also contribute to creating nations.

¹⁰ This had been further enhanced during Ottoman control as the Ottoman Empire organised their populations through a millet system that divided people into religious beliefs rather than ethnicity. The word millet was adapted from the Arabic *milla* and is perhaps ultimately of Aramaic origin. It occurs in the Koran as meaning 'religion' (Lewis 1968). The *Anastenárides*, however, whilst able to speak Greek, spoke a Thracian dialect. Many other Greeks across the Ottoman Empire spoke alternate languages. Many, especially those who resided around Asia Minor, spoke Turkish.

¹¹ During this period in the southern part of the Balkan Peninsula, there were Greek populations living from Valona (now Vlore in Albania) in the West, to Varna (in present-day Bulgaria) in the East. In the North part of the peninsula, Greeks lived amongst Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Turks and Vlachs (Clogg 1992: 48-49).

For the *Anastenárides*, like other Greek refugees now living in Greece, the shifting borders in the Balkans and the confrontations over land have quite a different significance than for those Greeks who have always resided in what is today, Greece. When they refer to Kostí, they are not referring to Bulgaria, even though Kostí is now situated in Bulgaria, and when they refer to their villages in that area, they talk of Thrace, not Bulgaria. Borders are, therefore, somewhat ‘imagined’ in that they are contextually (and, therefore, historically) understood. That is, for different people in different positions, places mean different things¹². For the *Anastenárides*, the Balkan contestation meant that they had to leave their villages and start a new life in another place. As Greeks, they were able to move legally and freely, but as Thracian refugees they were distinct¹³. What made some of them even more distinct was their practice of the *Anastenária*.

Unlike Serbian and Albanian refugees who have subsequently come to Greece, however, the *Anastenárides* are Greek and their ‘Greekness’ is highlighted as foreign refugees, such as Albanians, become more common in Greece. This, I would argue, is what makes the dynamism of the Balkan area, the influx of foreign refugees as well as migrants (as a result of the EEC), important for the construction of the *Anastenárides*’ identity. On one level they are different from locals, but with the influx of non-Greeks into the country and an assertion of things ‘Greek’, their ‘Greekness’ is emphasised¹⁴. With the recent debate over FYROM’s use of the title, ‘Macedonia’, and the symbols that historically appropriate this name, Greece has become engaged in a debate not so much over borders, but over the threat to their ‘imagined community’. Within this debate, the *Anastenárides*, as part of this Greek community that resided in areas outside of current Greek borders, are consequently referred to as an example of

¹² Bourdieu’s (1992:124) acknowledgment of the importance of histories can be referred to here. “Human action is not an instantaneous reaction to immediate stimuli, and the slightest ‘reaction’ of an individual to another is pregnant with the whole history of these persons and of their relationship”. Bourdieu argues that history is objectified in things (i.e. institutions) and incarnated in the body (i.e. those dispositions that constitute the habitus).

¹³ Many wore Thracian dress and spoke Thracian dialect. Other everyday practices that they performed (i.e. particular food dishes etc.) also distinguished them from the larger population. See Danforth (1989:180-181).

¹⁴ The enormous number of Greeks who migrated to Greece from Russia (Pontians), whilst unarguably Greeks, have also provided another set of Others with whom the *Anastenárides* can be compared.

the ‘Greekness’ of Macedonia. What I am arguing, is that the *Anastenárides*’ identities are negotiated in different fields¹⁵. In the debate over Macedonia and the historical legitimacy that the Greeks employ in their position, the *Anastenárides*’ (and others’) Greek identity is produced and highlighted. In other fields, however, alternative identities are generated. Their ‘Greekness’ becomes politicised through Greece’s historical claims of legitimate ownership of Macedonia. This is not to suggest that the *Anastenárides* themselves, do not call themselves Greeks, they do, but their Greek identity, like that of other Greek Macedonians, has become politically significant.

In order that this discussion be understood, therefore, I outline the events that occurred in Macedonia since the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire to reveal how identities were produced over a contentious period. As the Ottoman Empire began to weaken (from the 17th century), land previously under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire became the site of diverse struggles. What ensued was a lengthy period of contestation over land ownership specifically between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. This contestation over land included a contestation between nationalisms and this period witnessed the construction and development of Greek, Bulgarian, and Slavic as well as independent Macedonian, nationalisms. This Chapter begins therefore, with a discussion of this period, outlining the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan wars and their outcomes and the continuing competition for land. I address the consequent rise of competing nationalisms in the Balkan area which forced people like the *Anastenárides* to make a conscious nationalist choice as to who they ‘belonged’. A brief discussion of the continued confrontation in the area ensues. I complete the first part of the Chapter with a discussion on the relevance of these events for the *Anastenárides* and reflect on how the ‘past’ continues to influence the negotiation of *Anastenáride* identities in the present¹⁶.

¹⁵ I refer here to Bourdieu’s definition of field. See Introduction.

¹⁶ The production and transformation of identities is dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five.

Part Two moves on to a discussion of the current environment in which the *Anastenárides* with whom I was involved reside: Lagadhás. Locating Lagadhás in its wider context, I present the dynamic and shifting environments within which the *Anastenárides* live and argue that their continued involvement in this contested environment is greatly implicated in the construction of their identity. Understanding the current environment of the *Anastenárides* is crucial in developing a sense of how they have come to identify themselves. I argue that their identities are negotiated dynamically and contextually and, therefore, their surroundings and environment are relevant to a discussion of their identity.

PART ONE: the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire

Under the Ottoman Empire (until 1913) three main groups, Moslems, Christian Slavs and Christian Greeks (Danforth 1995:38-39) constituted the population. In the northern part of Macedonia during this period, the Greeks dominated: the Greek Church was allowed relative autonomy and there were many Greek schools and clubs, all of which were permitted to use the Greek language and Greek texts.

From the late 17th century, the Ottoman Empire faced continuing threats from both within and outside the Empire. Up until 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Turks, the Ottomans had held authority not only over Greek land, but also over land right across the Balkans; in Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, the Danubian principalities of Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia and a large part of Hungary (Clogg 1979:18). From the 18th century, however, Ottoman rule began to weaken¹⁷. I show in Map One the international and district borders as well as the boundaries of

¹⁷ From the 17th century, the Ottoman central Government began to lose control. Those who had previously worked for the Turkish landholders began to be paid in money, allowing them economic and social mobility. The Turkish army began to enlist Greeks in official duties (the Phanariots) thereby empowering Greeks within the Turkish administration. During the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire was weakened further, militarily, economically and territorially (Clogg 1992:20). There was a significant revival in Greek commercial activity, witnessing the emergence of an entrepreneurial mercantile class, which was based both inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire. This destabilised the control of the Turks over their Empire, saw the spread of the Greek language and influence further afield and created a Greek diaspora. Greek nationalism began to develop.

Kingdoms and principalities in the Balkans in the period from 1817-1872. Map Two details the international boundaries of the Balkan area from 1878-1912.

In May 1832, after years of fighting towards their independence from Ottoman control, Greece was granted formal independence from the Ottoman Empire. Despite Greece's new independence, however, an enormous number of Greeks remained under Ottoman control within Ottoman land. Over the ensuing period, therefore, Greece sought to reunite its people and reclaim great parts of land.

In 1870, the independent Bulgarian Church (Exarchate) was established, providing Bulgaria, which had been intensifying plans for a 'greater Bulgaria', with even more autonomy. What ensued was a competition between Greece and Bulgaria (and Serbia, but to a lesser degree) for influence over the area. To achieve this, both countries needed to win over "the loyalty of the Slavic-speaking population of Macedonia who had either a Greek or Bulgarian national consciousness" (Danforth 1995:39). Greece was more successful in this endeavour than Bulgaria and the Bulgarians' failed rebellion against the Turks in 1903 (the Ilinden uprising) only made the situation worse for Bulgaria¹⁸.

A great deal of the ideological impetus behind this period and the Balkan wars which ensued, was articulated through the irredentist plan of the *Megháli Idhéa* ('Great Idea', coined by Kolettis in a speech he gave in 1844). This 'Great Idea' sought to reunite all Greeks who were spread across the land under the Ottoman Empire. The *Anastenárides* were part of this Greek population who had not previously had to identify themselves outside of their being Orthodox

¹⁸ In 1893, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO), which affirmed the desire of many Macedonians for national independence, was founded. One of its main leaders was Gotse Delchev, a central figure in the struggle for an independent Macedonia. On the 2nd of August, 1903, the VMRO led the peasants of Macedonia into an uprising against the Turks. It was named the Ilinden Uprising, after the festival of the Prophet of Elijah on which it began. By November, however, the uprising had been suppressed (Danforth 1995:51).

The Balkan peninsula, 1817-1877



The Balkan peninsula, 1878-1912



Maps One and Two (Taken from, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* 1993:85)

Christians and bilingual Thracian/Greek speakers. A type of 'cultural propaganda' ensued as Greece attempted to Hellenise its vastly differentiated Greek populations, many of whom spoke various Thracian and Slavic dialects and others who were Turkish speaking. Greek schools and academies were opened, where Greek literature, history and 'culture' were taught. A Greek literary revival occurred, encouraged by those Greeks residing outside of the country. There was a general increase in the secularisation of Greek culture and a general "rediscovery" of the Greek past and heritage (Clogg 1979:35)¹⁹.

Bulgaria and Greece legitimated territorial claims through arguments of national consciousness, ethnic identity and religious and language unity (Danforth 1995:28). Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria saw the opportunity for the acquisition of Ottoman land and so the Balkan Wars began.

The Rise of Competing Nationalisms

For the past two decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, Macedonia, with its extricably mixed populations of Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, Albanians, Turks and Vlachs, was to be the focus of the competing nationalisms of Greek, Bulgarian and Serb, as each sought to carve out as large a stake as possible of the crumbling Ottoman possessions in the Balkans (Clogg 1992:70)

On October 18, 1912, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. The attack was highly successful and early in December the Turks sought peace. More fighting erupted in January and February 1913, however, but the Turks were once again forced to call

¹⁹ Clogg (1979:38-39) acknowledges that this increase in awareness of Greek history and culture was at this time, largely experienced by a very small percentage of the population. That is, the educated elite. However, they were able to articulate what became a growing Greek national consciousness, which by the 19th century was more widely felt. Clogg (1992:1) argues that a new "sense of a past", mainly brought in from western Europe, was a major cause of the development of the Greek national movement which then contributed to the establishment of nationalist movements in the other Balkan countries. Importantly, the 'klephts' ('brigands' or outlaws who lived in the mountains and were engaged in rebellion against the Ottomans) can also be seen as an earlier example of an armed national movement (see Clogg 1992:15). The French Revolution (1789-1795) also influenced and encouraged the drive for nationalism. See Chapter Five for a detailed discussion on the role of folklore in the construction of a Greek identity based on Greece's past.

for peace and in May, by the Treaty of London, the Turks were obliged to accept their enemies' territorial acquisitions. In June 1913, Greece and Serbia agreed to divide their newly acquired land in Macedonia and to support each other in the case of counter attack. This agreement clearly excluded Bulgaria which had suffered the most in the attack against the Ottomans but gained the least. In response, Bulgaria then attacked Greece and Serbia. This second war was short and Bulgaria achieved little. With the Treaty of Bucharest²⁰ on August 10th 1913, Serbia and Bulgaria were granted 40% and 10% respectively of the north part of Macedonia (Danforth 1995:39). The Southern part of Macedonia was awarded to Greece. It was this part of Macedonia that "corresponded to the 'historical' Macedonia of antiquity and which was now inhabited by Greek speakers and by Slav speakers with a Greek national consciousness" (Danforth 1995:39).

In 1913 when Greek Macedonia was 'liberated', 43% of the population was Greek, 40%, Muslim, and 10%, Bulgarian (Angelopoulos 1979:123). Over the next ten years, this ethnic composition varied dramatically²¹. After the First World War, (November 1918), Venizelos (the Prime Minister of Greece at the time)²² anxiously waited for Greece's rewards for its efforts in the war²³. Venizelos particularly wanted Smyrna and its surrounding region (in Asia Minor), mainly because of the large number of Greeks living in the area²⁴. He was also interested in taking control of Constantinople and the entire region of West and East Thrace, up to the area around the Ottoman capital.

²⁰ The Treaty of Bucharest, administered in 1913 by the "great powers" of Europe, formally partitioned the region between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia (see Karakasidou 1997:24).

²¹ This was a result of the First World War, the disastrous Asia Minor campaign and the population exchange in the early 1920's.

²² Venizelos, born in 1864 in Crete, was involved in the revolt against Turkey in 1896 and became involved in Cretan politics (when the island became autonomous in 1913) before being drawn into mainland politics. He became Prime Minister of Greece for the first time in 1910.

²³ Venizelos deployed divisions on the Macedonian front and was particularly involved in the successful offensive of September 1918. This offensive helped towards the collapse of the western front. Venizelos also sent two divisions to the attempted destruction of the Bolshevik Revolution by getting rid of Russia from the war in 1917 (Clogg 1992:93). Venizelos also dispatched these troops, however, because of the 600, 000 Greeks living in South Russia and the Pontos.

²⁴ Italy, however, had already been granted much of this area in the 1915 Treaty of London and the 1917 St Jean de Maurienne Agreement.

On May 15, 1919, after learning that Italian forces had landed in the region, a Greek force supported by allied war ships, occupied the city of Smyrna, which resulted in the murder of some 350 Turks. This attack initiated a revival of Turkish national fervour and before long, fighting broke out between the two sides (Clogg 1992:94). In 1920, with the Treaty of Sevres, which contained the terms of the peace settlement of the Ottoman Empire, Greece was granted administrative control over Smyrna for a period of five years. Turkish sovereignty would remain, but after the five-year period the region could be annexed officially to Greece. This was not to eventuate, however. With the death of King Alexander just months after the Treaty was signed, the Royalists came back into power²⁵. Defeating Venizelos and re-appointing King Constantine, the Royalists revived the aggression against the Turks in Asia Minor and in March 1921, waged an unsuccessful and unsupported attack on Smyrna²⁶. The peace settlement that the British offered and which the Greeks accepted (March 1922), was ignored by the Turks, now led by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk). On September 8, Mustafa Kemal launched a massive attack against the Greeks who were quickly forced to evacuate Smyrna. In the Turkish occupation of the city some 30,000 Greeks and Armenian Christians were killed. The subsequent burning of the city left only the Jewish and Turkish quarters standing²⁷. Refugees and soldiers fled the area and the 'Great Idea' appeared doomed²⁸.

As a result of the Asia Minor Campaign, in January 1923 a convention was held on the compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. This was realised in the form of the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923. This Treaty, however, also meant the reverse of

²⁵ King Alexander had been appointed Monarch in 1917 after his father, King Constantine the First, left the country.

²⁶ Greece went into this new battle alone as in April 1921, all of the Allies declared neutrality and refused to be involved in further aggression against Turkey in the area.

²⁷ This is referred to as the 'disastrous Asia Minor Campaign'.

²⁸ During this period, Greece was experiencing its own internal strife. The country had been divided between two groups; the royalists, supportive of the monarchy and those supporting a Greek republic, led by Venizelos. Clogg (1992:103) writes that the newly acquired regions in the Balkans caused tension within Greece that

many of the gains Greece had made in the Treaty of Sevres. This exchange of populations did create, however, a more homogenous Greece (Clogg 1992:106). The census of 1928 revealed that out of six million people in Greek Macedonia, only 1.3% were Slavophones (Slav speakers or bilingual speakers of Slav and Greek) who had a national Greek consciousness: “The basis of the exchange was religion rather than language or ‘national consciousness’” (Clogg 1992:101). Some 1,100,000 Greeks moved to Greece, as well as 100,000 Greeks from revolutionary Russia and Bulgaria and 380,000 Muslims went to Turkey. The survey also revealed, however, that almost half of the inhabitants of Macedonia were of refugee origin and many of the refugees only spoke Turkish or dialects not understandable by Greek speakers. While the country appeared more homogenous, there were vast differences between the different ethnic groups that now lived side by side. Clogg (1992:103) writes that the refugees: “...encountered a considerable degree of prejudice on the part of the natives”. See Maps Three to Six that show the shifting borders and populations of the Balkans from the period from 1912 to the present day.

The *Anastenárides* were part of this percentage of bilingual refugees who were managed by the Refugee Settlement Commission. The Commission oversaw the division of the remaining large estates in Greece and their distribution between the refugees. Between the 1920's and 1930's, a Land Distribution Program (*Dhianomi*) was first implemented in an aim to break up the large landed estates (particularly in Thessaly and Macedonia) which accounted for more than half of Greece's total *tsiflikia* (feudal estates) at that time. Locals and refugees were awarded land under this scheme. An average family of three was awarded a lot equal to thirty-six *strémmata*, a family of four, forty-five *strémmata* and a family of five, fifty-four *strémmata* (Karakasidou 1997:168)²⁹. Depending on the quality of the land and the location, the allotments varied. Property titles went to the man of the family, which encouraged extended

contributed to the ‘national schism’. This was further intensified by the arrival of huge numbers of refugees in Greece after the Balkan and First World Wars.

families to put their land together. It has been suggested (Karakasidou 1997 and by some individuals within Lagadhás) that some families, refugees in particular, did not initially receive land, and some, not at all. Others have claimed that not all people received equal amounts of land.

This period did not witness a lapse in the process of Hellenising the area and its population, however, and Greece maintained an effort to ‘unite’ its different ethnic groups.

The goal of the Greek government’s assimilationist policies in Greek Macedonia were to impose a sense of Greek national identity on the diverse inhabitants of the area, most of whom still identified themselves primarily in regional and ethnic terms (Danforth 1995:70).

In the period between the two World Wars, the different ‘ethnic’ groups “that organised social and economic life in rural parts of northern Greece” (*ibid.*) were largely referred to in Greek as *rátsets* (races)³⁰. These were defined into ‘locals’ (*dópii*), ‘local Macedonians’ (*Makedhónes*), which comprised mainly of Slavic speakers in the northern parts of Greek Macedonia and Greek speakers in the southern parts, and refugees (*prósfiyes*) (Danforth 1995:70). It was in this final group that the *Anastenárides* were positioned³¹.

This process of unifying these ‘*rátsets*’ living in Greece with a sense of Greek national identity proved to be difficult. During the Second World War many Slavophones collaborated with the Bulgarians in persecuting Greeks when Bulgaria occupied a large part of Macedonia. During this time, a Slav-Macedonian resistance was established that attempted to recruit Greek-Slav speakers to its cause. During the Greek civil war this Slavo-Macedonian struggle, making use of internal strife in Greece, continued with the intention of separating Greek Macedonia from

²⁹ Land is measured by *strémmata* in rural Greece. There are approximately four *strémmata* to one acre.

³⁰ See Danforth (1978) and Herzfeld (1982) for a discussion of the meanings of *rátsets*.

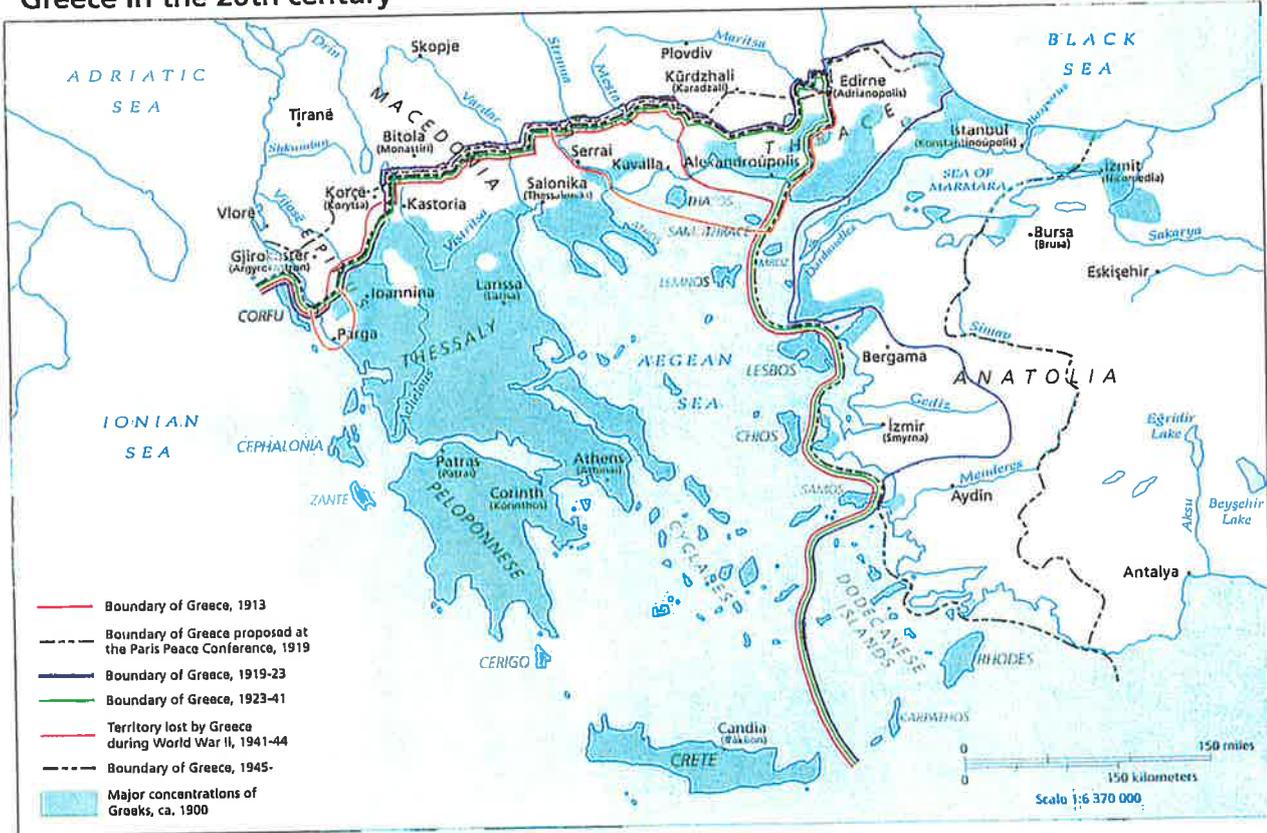
³¹ This group referred to those populations that had come from Thrace and Asia Minor during the population exchanges between Turkey and Greece.

The Balkan peninsula, 1912-1913



Map Three (taken from the *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe 1993:89*)

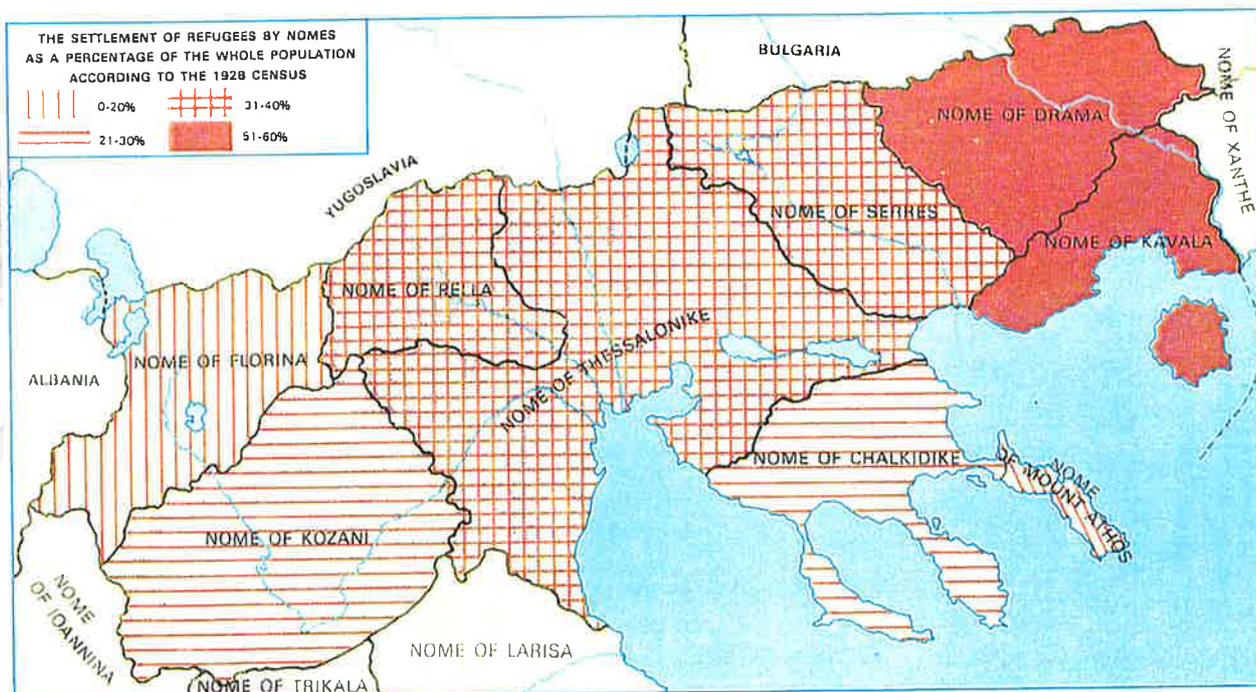
Greece in the 20th century



Map Four (taken from the *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* 1993:147)



Map Five (Taken from Sakellariou 1983:504)



Map Six (Taken from Sakellariou 1983:513)

Greece³². This new Macedonia would ultimately be aligned with Yugoslavia (Danforth 1995:41-42)³³.

FYROM: Continued Contestation

In August 1944, at the Monastery of Prohor Peinjski, the establishment of today's 'Socialist Republic of Macedonia' was proclaimed as a federal state of the new Yugoslavian Federation. This time Greece did not respond aggressively. In July 1978 at Skopje, the Macedonian debate was officially discussed by the 11th Congress of the Communist Union of Yugoslavia, headed by Tito. Tito drew attention to the 'minority problem' of Slavs in Bulgaria and Greece and accused both countries of violating the rights of the Macedonian Slavs. He also accused them of not recognising the 'Macedonian' southern Yugoslavian nation (Angelopoulos 1979:130-131). Bulgaria retaliated by accusing Tito of falsifying the history of Macedonia, of having expansionist intentions and interfering in the country's internal affairs.

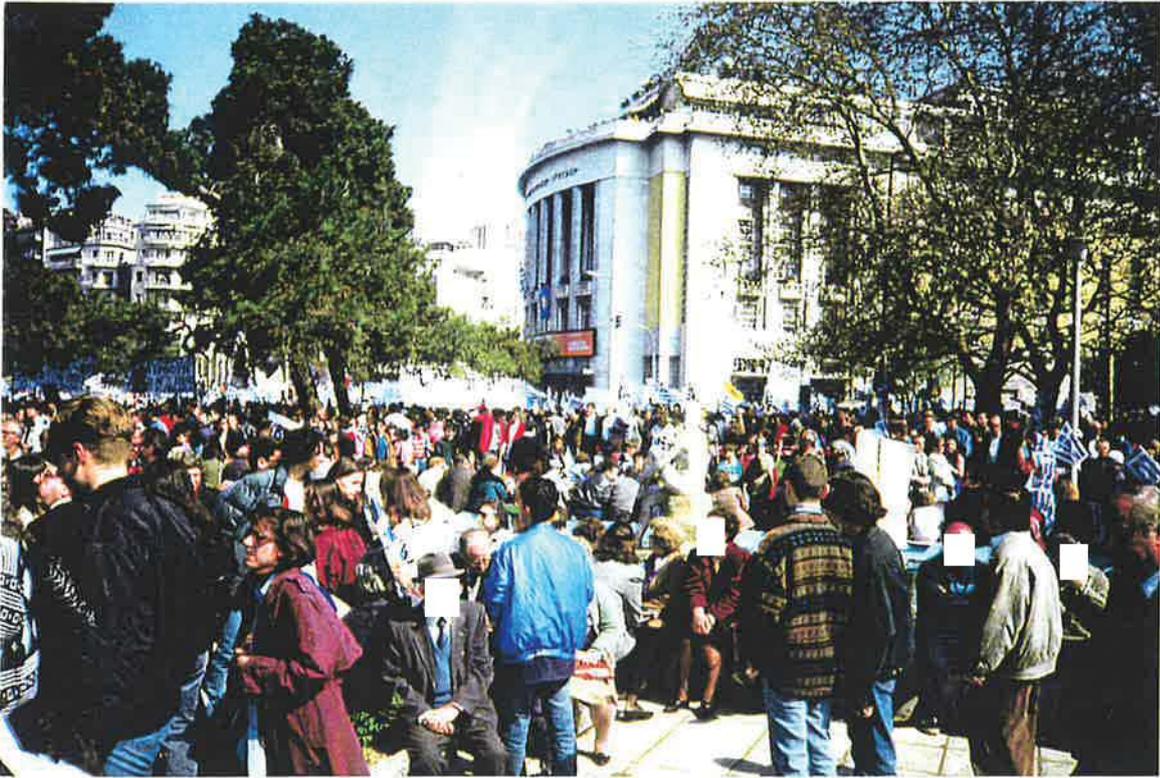
Since 1944, Yugoslav Macedonians have been engaged (not unlike Greece and Bulgaria during the period around the Balkan Wars) in creating an ideological and historical base for their 'Macedonian nation'. These historical and ideological claims are the main source of contention for Greece who asserts that FYROM's claims are false propaganda and infer Slavic territorial claims on their country. What has eventuated is a war of histories between the two countries, as each tries to present Macedonia as theirs, legitimated through historical claims of continuity.

Although Greece's relationship with some of her neighbours still remains tense, particularly with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey over Cyprus, contact with her Balkan neighbours has been relatively non-contentious since the end of the Balkan wars³⁴. In September 1986, Bulgaria and Greece

³² The Civil War in Greece occurred from post World War Two (1946) until 1949. The country had been previously divided between those who supported the monarchy and those supporting a republic. During the Civil War, the country was divided between communists and non-communists. See Clogg (1992) for further detail on the civil war.

³³ Macedonians living in Greece continued to be persecuted under General Metaxas (1936-41). Assimilation continued to be enforced during the civil war.

³⁴ Throughout the 20th century, Greece has taken an active role in promoting multilateral Balkan cooperation, beginning in Athens in 1929; in 1934 the Balkan Pact was signed again in Athens and in 1975, President Karamanlis again attempted a Balkan reconciliation through the introduction of economic and technical



The 1994 rally in Thessaloniki against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

cooperation. Prime Minister Papandreou, in the attempt to implement a nuclear free zone in the Balkans, initiated a similar convention in 1984.

signed a declaration of “Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation” - pledging allegiance to each other in times of threat. It is also well documented, however, that the two Governments remain at least ideologically at odds about territories and the treatment of minorities (*Report by The International Studies Association, 1988*).

During the past five years, many Albanians have fled to Greece, many illegally³⁵. Although Greece established diplomatic relations with Albania in 1971, which was and still is in part, a measure of support for the substantial Greek minority living in Southern Albania, this affinity seems to exist at the level of political relations rather than personal relations. I witnessed a much more sympathetic Greek audience for the Serbians than the Albanians who were overwhelmingly regarded and spoken of as being thieves and rogues³⁶. When people were complaining about work or pay conditions, I often heard expressions like “*Ti ime? Alvanós?*” (“What am I? Albanian?”). This was because most Albanian refugees worked in return for very low cash wages. Albanians were also often singled out as being the cause of both economic and social problems. Theft, murder and assaults were often locally blamed on Albanians. At the level of diplomatic relations, however, the relationship between the two countries is relatively stable.

It is amongst these contested histories that the *Anastenárides* have been and continue to be situated. Their arrival in Greece is itself a signifier of contested land. The conflict in the Balkan region has directly affected the majority of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás and continues to be made relevant: being ‘Macedonian’, whilst at the same time also being ‘Greek’, is once again fervently politicised.

³⁵ The problem has escalated particularly in the past two years (and probably even more so in January-March 1997), with Greek police and officials rounding up huge numbers of illegal Albanian immigrants and busing them back to the border. Many Albanians do have work permits and residency in Greece and are popular for employment as they provide extremely cheap labour.

³⁶ According to Clogg (1992), while the Greeks claim that there are 400,000 Greeks living in Albania, the Albanians say that there are only 60,000. They reside in northern Epirus on the Greek/Albanian border. There are continuing problems regarding the Greek minority in Albania with claims of human rights abuse being made by the Greeks against the Albanians.

PART TWO: the movement of the *Anastenárides*

Before the Balkan wars (1912-14), the *Anastenária* was performed in the North Eastern part of what was at that time, Turkish Thrace, inhabited by Greek and Slavic speaking populations. The performance of the ritual has been traced to approximately twenty villages (Danforth 1989:133), the most important being Kostí. The Greeks of Kostí performed their ritual without much interference under the Ottoman Empire until the Balkan wars broke out³⁷. At the outbreak of the Balkan Wars, Kostí and the surrounding villages fell under Bulgarian control. The Bulgarians closed the Greek schools and Churches, forbade the speaking of the Greek language and confiscated all valuables and weapons belonging to the Greek inhabitants of the villages (*ibid.*). The *Anastenárides* removed their Icons from their Churches and, instead, kept them in their houses to prevent them being stolen or damaged. Similarly, they kept the performance of their ritual private and for periods of time, were unable to practise their rite at all.

In 1914, Bulgarian refugees were driven out of parts of Turkish Thrace as a consequence of the relocation of borders initiated by the treaties following the Balkan Wars and many settled in areas where the *Anastenárides* and other Greeks were residing. Eventually, the *Anastenárides*, (along with other Greeks), were forced to flee. The *Anastenárides* made their way to the Port of Aghathupúlis where, with the help of the Greek Patriarch, they were then transported, via Istanbul, to Thessaloníki (Danforth 1989:134). Until the end of the First World War, most of the *Kostilídhēs*³⁸ and those from neighbouring towns, lived in refugee camps on the outskirts of the city surviving through begging (Danforth 1989:134). This relocation had enormous repercussions. Many were left without any wealth and few personal belongings, forced into the status of refugees.

³⁷ By the early part of the 20th century, however, the area was the victim of raids by Bulgarian bandits.

³⁸The term *Kostilídhēs* refers to people from Kostí. *Kostilís* is the masculine singular and *Kostilú* is the feminine singular. A *Kostilís* can also be referred to as a *Kotsianós*; a term derived from Kostí by metathesis (Danforth 1989:5).

After World War One, when Greece regained much of Turkish Thrace in the Treaty of Sevres, many of the *Anastenárides* (and others who had been forced to flee their homes) returned to Eastern Thrace, although not to their original villages that were now on the new Bulgarian border. In 1922, after the disastrous Asia Minor campaign, Turkey regained control of Eastern Thrace in the Treaty of Lausanne and the Greek population was forced to flee once again. “It has been estimated that between 1913 and 1928, approximately 87,000 Slavic speaking people left Greek Macedonia to resettle in Bulgaria, while 600,000 refugees from Asia Minor and Bulgaria, classified as ‘Greeks’ because they were Orthodox Christian or spoke Greek, were settled by the Greek Government in this area” (Danforth 1995:69, taken from Rossos (1991:28). According to Danforth (1989:68), in 1976 there were about 1500 *Kostilidhes* living in Greek Macedonia and approximately one hundred *Anastenárides*, over two thirds of whom he claims were women.

By 1924 the majority of the *Anastenárides* and other Greeks who had come from the same area, had settled in villages in the north of Greece: Ayía Eléni near Sérres, Mavroléfki near Dhráma, Lagadhás close to Thessaloníki, Meliki near Véria and Kelkíni, further north, closer to the present-day Bulgarian border³⁹. For over twenty years the *Anastenárides*, in fear of persecution by the Church and the local population, performed their ritual in private⁴⁰. From early on, the *Anastenárides* were aware of the Church’s opposition to their use of the Icons and their practice of firewalking during their ritual celebrations. The Church, for a period of time and in different degrees depending on the local priest, discouraged the *Anastenárides* from entering the Churches and at times even prevented them from participating in the Orthodox liturgy and other sacraments. The relationship between the *Anastenárides* and the Orthodox

³⁹ The people of Kelkíni prefer to remain private and discourage the presence of tourists. For this reason most work written on the ritual has referred to this village in pseudonym. I have not done so, however, because it is now widely known that the *Anastenária* is performed there, but I have declined to mention the village’s exact location.

⁴⁰Christodoulou (1978) claims that the earliest written account of the *Anastenária* was on September 18, 1872, when A. Chourmouziades presented a lecture on the *Anastenária* at a Greek Institution of Higher learning in Istanbul. This was later reprinted in 1961. Other early accounts of the ritual are Slavejkoff (1866) which was summarised by Megas in 1961; Romaios (1944, 1945); Papachristodoulou (1955); Megas (1961, 1963); Kakouri

Church has remained highly problematic to say the least. This has been revealed particularly in the battle between the two over the ownership of Icons.

In 1947, persuaded by Dr. Angelos Tanagras (the President of the Society for Psychic Research)⁴¹, the *Anastenárides* of Ayía Eléni performed the *Anastenária* in public for the first time (Danforth 1989:134-5)⁴². Despite the strong opposition that was precipitated immediately by the Orthodox Church, the *Anastenária* has continued to be performed publicly until the present.

On their arrival to Thessaloníki and the surrounding towns and villages, the *Anastenárides* were characterised as refugees (*prósfiyes*) and considered a minority⁴³. Although Greeks, they were separated from their land and were distinguished from the rest of the community by the Thracian dialect that they spoke and the Thracian dress that they wore. Furthermore, they were distinguished by everyday practices that were in contrast to the rest of the population. Those who were also *Anastenárides* were further marginalised.

The *Anastenárides*' 'Greekness' has never been contested but the 'Greekness' of their homeland and its surrounding land continue to be contested space. As the contestation over the history of Macedonia continues, the *Anastenárides* have been drawn into Greek nationalist rhetoric that refers to historical continuity as proof of the 'Greekness' of Macedonia. Whilst FYROM is not claiming historical or present day ownership over the land from where the

(1965); Mihail-Dede (1972, 1973). See also Christodoulou (1978); Danforth (1978, 1983, 1989); Makrakis (1982).

⁴¹Dr. Tanagras located the *Anastenárides* in northern Greece and encouraged them to perform the ritual publicly. See Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion of Dr Tanagras' interest and the studies performed by him.

⁴²There is much contention over which village first performed the ritual publicly. I was informed that it was in fact in Lagadhás but Danforth (1989) has reported that it was in Ayía Eléni. As well as the *Anastenária* being performed in the villages cited above, it has also been claimed (Danforth 1989) and was told to me by some *Anastenárides*, that the ritual is performed in Thessaloniki. Danforth (1989) claims that in 1977 *Anastenárides* who were not on good terms with the *Anastenáride* communities in Lagadhás and Ayía Eléni performed the ritual in Meteóra, a working class suburb of Thessaloníki. According to him fifteen *Anastenárides* were still performing it in 1986 with support from the local Government Officials. It is important to note that this dispute over the location of the first performance of the ritual is part of the debate over authenticity and the 'traditional' presentation of the ritual.

⁴³Danforth (1989:180) notes that in Ayía Eléni in 1976, the term 'refugee' (*prósfiye*) was the most common term used by non-*Kostilidhes* to refer to *Kostilidhes*.

Anastenárides originated, the *Anastenárides* are, nevertheless, presented as ‘evidence’ of the Greekness of land outside of Greek borders. They are, therefore, ‘evidence’ of the previous (historical) dominance of Greece in the Macedonian region. This is important to the way in which the *Anastenárides* conceptualise themselves as their ‘Greekness’ is legitimated and, therefore, their ‘difference’ (as Thracian refugees) muted. Importantly, however, their Orthodoxy is still contested by the Greek Orthodox Church. As Greekness and Orthodoxy are inextricably connected, the *Anastenárides* then, are presented with conflicting identities⁴⁴. For them, however, their Orthodoxy has never been in question, nor their Greekness, but the conflict remains important to understanding how they negotiate these identities in everyday practice.

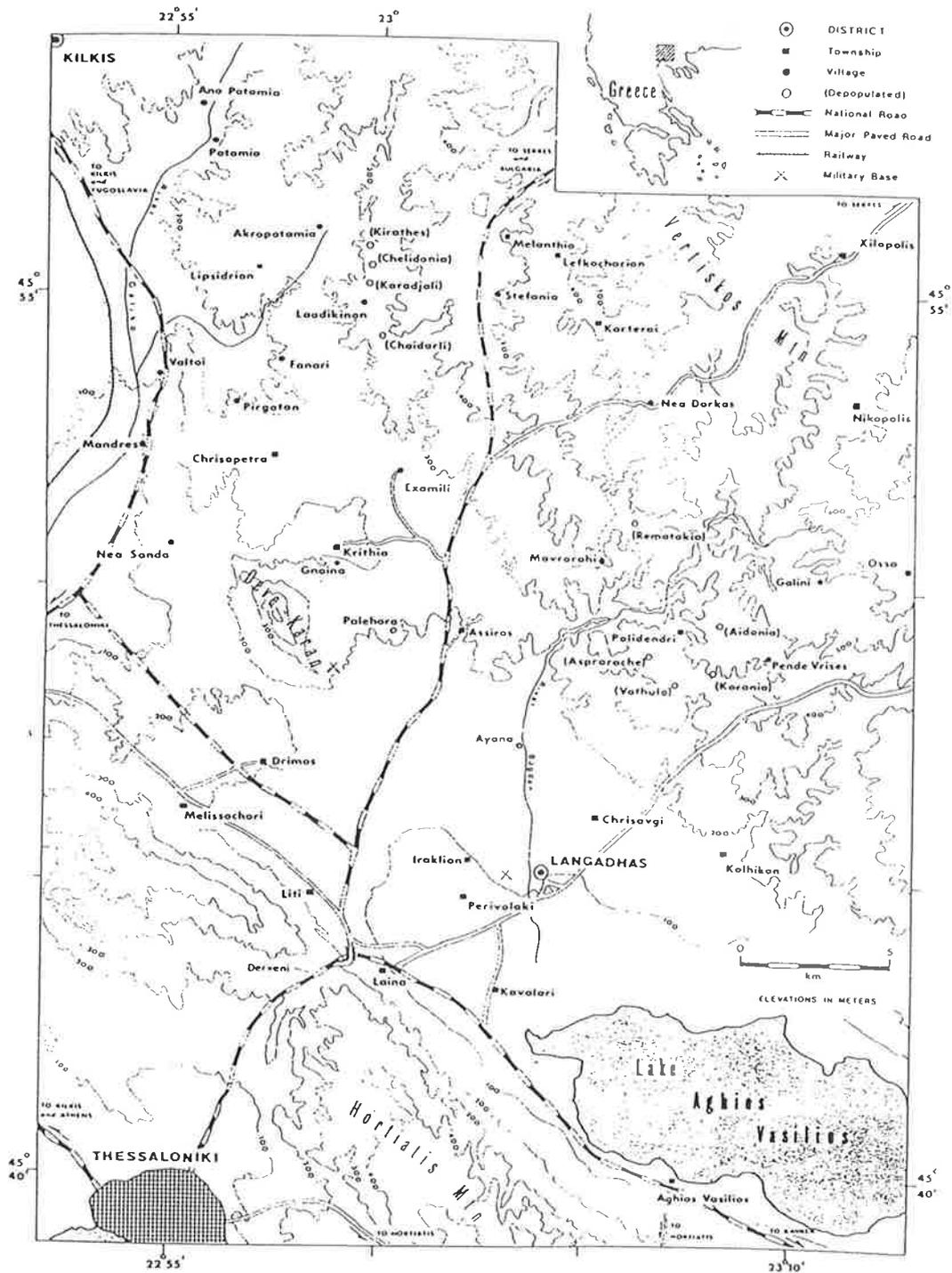
Local Environment: introducing Lagadhás

Lagadhás, where I conducted my fieldwork in (1994, 1995), is an old town in the centre of ancient Mignosía. It is situated on a plain, nineteen kilometres north east of central Thessaloníki (about ten kilometres from the periphery) and the town is the administrative and financial centre of the Lagadhás Basin. It is bounded by Lake Ayíos Vasílios and the Dervini foothills in the South, by the Kamíla Mountain in the West and by the Vertiskós Mountains to the North and East (see Map Seven, which shows the Lagadhás Basin)⁴⁵.

The Basin, which belongs to the prefecture of Thessaloníki, encompasses approximately 192sqm and fifty-three townships (*kinótites*). Lagadhás is located in a small valley which grew rapidly in the 1980s and the last official census conducted in 1991 puts the population of the town at 6700. At least 50 per cent of the population arrived after 1922 as refugees from East Thrace, Asia Minor, the Black Sea, Russia and Bulgaria came to Greece. Karakasidou (1997) points out that within the Lagadhás Basin area, the towns are made up of a mix of locals (*dópií*), people from Eastern Thrace (*Thrakiótes*), Pontians (*Póndii*), people from Asia Minor

⁴⁴ I am not suggesting that all Greeks are Orthodox Christians. There are Greek Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and so on. However, the overwhelming majority of Greeks are Orthodox Christians.

⁴⁵ Karakasidou (1997:262n) notes that the Lagadhás plain is called a Basin by Greek archaeologists because its water has no outlet to the sea.



Map Seven Lagadhás Basin, present day (Taken from, Karakasidou 1997:4)

(*Mikrasiátes*) and Greek refugees (*prósfytes*). Importantly, those Greek refugees were distinguished from foreigners (*xéni*). Unarguably, there has been intermarriage among these groups.

In 1995, the Lagadhás Council claimed a population of approximately 8000⁴⁶ people, including a transient population seeking work, particularly in the markets⁴⁷. Recently, the town has experienced periods of rapid growth, beginning with the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (which included the *Anastenárides*); later with the influx of Greeks from Russian Georgia during the early 1990s and more recently, with the arrival of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and Albania⁴⁸.

In 1995, Thessaloníki completed the process of creating its separate council and therefore establishing an autonomous local government⁴⁹. Lagadhás' autonomy from Thessaloníki is critically linked to both the consolidation of its local industry and its use of cultural resources, such as its religious and archaeological features, as tourist attractions⁵⁰. In the past, Lagadhás was largely an agricultural centre but by the 1990s, agriculture provided only about 50% of employment⁵¹. While some families still own large parts of the land around Lagadhás most of those *Anastenárides* who still work the land own comparatively small properties, between one to five acres. Lagadhás is now linked to Thessaloníki by a main periphery highway and the

⁴⁶The census in 1991 registered 6133 permanent residents in Lagadhás. Most of my information on Lagadhás has come from the Council of Lagadhás. According to the national census and the local Council in Lagadhás, Pontian Greeks make up half of the population.

⁴⁷This 'transient' population consisted mainly of Pontians and Albanians.

⁴⁸As many as 100,000 Soviet Greeks settled in Greece during the early 1990's. As a result of perestroika, there was a rise in ethnic awareness in the Soviet Union. Whilst this consequently caused a revival in Soviet Greek culture, the Soviet Greeks felt threatened by the other more dominant ethnic groups in the area. As a result, thousands emigrated (Clogg 1992:208). Also during this time, the Greek minority living around northern Epirus on the Greek/Albanian border began to feel threatened. In the beginning of 1991, thousands of them fled Albania and arrived in Greece.

⁴⁹The Council of Lagadhás was initially instituted in 1934. Since then it has grown significantly in land mass and population and so now has a separate council, distinct from Thessaloníki although under its prefecture. It now encompasses an area of twenty-five square kilometres.

⁵⁰There are archaeological sites in Thessaloníki, Pélla, Vergína, Díon Píras, Khalkídiki, and Kavála. Close to the military camp on the outskirts of Lagadhás town, lies the archaeological site of prehistoric burial mounds (*timvia*) of the Macedonian countryside.

⁵¹The main crops in Lagadhás are tomatoes, eggplants, corn, and lettuce. There is very little animal husbandry in Lagadhás town and none of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás farmed animals. There is a large tomato-processing factory on the outskirts of Lagadhás. The other forms of employment primarily consist of factory work, clerical positions and private businesses.

distance between Lagadhás and Thessaloniki is no more than fifteen minutes by car. Importantly, this has made it possible for residents of Lagadhás to work in Thessaloniki and remain living in Lagadhás. See Map Eight; Lagadhás Town.

The Lagadhás area relies upon local industry which has grown dramatically over the past fifteen years to include a fruit and vegetable cannery, *Eténa*, three fabric dyeing plants, the largest dairy factory in Greece, *Agnó*, two brick factories, five furniture and textile factories and many small clothing factories. In and around the town there are about five poultry processing farms, a salt refinery as well as a central market and local abattoirs, thirty-seven specialty shops and various convenience stores.

In Greece, as in the rest of Europe, intense industrial development, modernisation and increased taxes forced many Greek families to abandon life on the land and seek work in the cities and abroad. In the 1960's and 1970's, more than one fifth of residents emigrated either to Athens, Thessaloniki or overseas (Karakasidou 1997). The transformations Lagadhás experienced due to industrialisation and emigration influenced family and local relations in the town. Many families ceased working together and many were dispersed as members left the town looking for work elsewhere (mainly to Thessaloniki). There were enormous changes in family dynamics and the general social relations in the town. Factory work and the fragmentation of families often resulted in feelings of social isolation⁵². These developments also played a significant part in the transformation of the *Anastenáride* communities in Lagadhás. Individuals left Lagadhás to find work elsewhere and many of their children moved away for university education. This increased the dispersion of the *Anastenáride* community and in a sense, threatened the future existence of the community.



Map Eight: Lagadhás Town, Present Day

⁵²As I mention below (see footnote 55), however, many acknowledged the financial benefits of factory work.

That is, for the *Anastenárides* living outside of Lagadhás, it became more difficult to attend all of the festivals and impossible to participate in everyday activities with each other. As well as this, with *Anastenáride* children leaving the town to study or find work, it became less likely that they would become involved in the ritual activities of the community or become *Anastenárides* themselves. What is interesting, however, is that the *Anastenáride* community in Lagadhás has not died out. Rather, the community has changed with the changes occurring around it, has enveloped individuals into the community who are not from *Anastenáride* families and has been able to reproduce itself in this way⁵³. With this transformation though, the community has been divided and new problems have emerged.

The *Anastenárides* as Part of the System

The *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás is no longer constituted out of a community sharing common socio-economic circumstances⁵⁴. Whilst they all participate in the same economic, political and social environments, their responses to them are varied. *Anastenárides* vary in wealth, lifestyle and family life and are engaged in different types of employment. Less than half of the core group who participate in the festival in Lagadhás still work on the land⁵⁵. One *Anastenáris*, Tom, and his parents grow and sell tomatoes, but they also own a fruit and vegetable shop and are, therefore, differentiated from those who work solely on the land. Tom calls himself a greengrocer (*manávis*) rather than a farmer (*aghrótis*). Pétros and Rénos are

⁵³ See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of the transformation of the community in Lagadhás.

⁵⁴ Christodoulou (1978) states that the *Anastenárides* belonged to the lower stratum (out of three) in Lagadhás. This situation has altered, however, with some *Anastenárides* remaining in the lower socio-economic groups but there are others who are professionals and skilled workers. The socio-economic situation for *Anastenárides* residing in other towns varies; Ayía Eléni for example, is known to be a wealthy village, where the farmers have better soil, irrigation and Government support.

⁵⁵ One *Anastenáris* often spoke to me about how hard it was to continue living off the land now. He and his two brothers had worked as farmers like their parents had when they arrived in Lagadhás. He explained that in the late 1960's he left the land and decided to find work in one of the factories. Now retired and with a reasonably good pension, he explained that he worries about his elder brother who still works all day, every day, farming, "I tried to tell him to leave the land. It is a hard life and is only going to get harder, but it is too late for him to change now. My work was set, I had fixed hours and I knew how much money I was going to get every week. Now I am retired, younger than him, and have a pension. What will he have?" The third brother also left farming for work in one of the factories.

farmers (*aghrótes*) and they both work their land, growing seasonal vegetables. The rest of the community who reside in Lagadhás are variously employed; builder, restaurant owner, factory worker, and so on, while those who reside in Thessaloniki are largely professionals and financially better off. It is pointless, therefore, to attempt to speak of the socio-economic (and other) realities of the *Anastenáride* community as if they were unitary⁵⁶.

The increasing financial difficulties facing those whose livelihoods remain connected to the land, is relevant to the community as a whole, however. Many *Anastenárides* stopped working the land for these reasons. Those *Anastenáride* families who live in Lagadhás have mostly shared the family land amongst the sons, although on the occasions when one brother works the land and the others are employed elsewhere, the land is left entirely to the one who makes his living from it. In one *Anastenáride* family of three sons, the middle brother explained, “We left the land for him [his eldest brother] as it was impossible for all of us to feed our families from it”. In 1994 and 1995 when I was in Greece, there were continual strikes held by Greek farmers, protesting against the new taxes, lack of financial support by the Government and the European Union, and against the EEC’s import and export laws⁵⁷. The roads were frequently blocked by tomato farmers and their trucks, full of rotting produce, in protest at their plight and the lack of support. These problems directly affected some of the *Anastenárides*.

The children of the *Anastenárides* have been, and still are, encouraged to study hard and try to get to University. Tertiary education, especially, is highly valued in Greece and almost all children attend private schools (*frontistirion*, ‘tutorial establishment’) several evenings a week and often on weekends. María, a granddaughter of two *Anastenárides*, was in her final year of school the year I arrived in Lagadhás. The following year she undertook bridging courses to improve some of her subjects as she had decided to sit University entrance exams the following

⁵⁶ See Chapter Five for more detail on the livelihood of the *Anastenárides* with whom I worked.

⁵⁷ Greece’s relationship with other European countries and its position as an EEC member are important in understanding Greek identity. Greece’s membership to the EEC has direct impact on its economic, political and social affairs and is therefore also relevant to the *Anastenárides*’ lifestyles. This discussion, although significant, has not been dealt with any further in this thesis but is an area that I would like to address in more detail at a post doctorate level. Likewise, a discussion of the concept of a “European” identity (see Goddard *et al* 1994 and

year. She expressed an interest in going to University in Thessaloníki, but said that she realised it was very competitive and that she might have to go further away. Her younger brother, only nine years old, was being encouraged to attend more classes at the private schools and I was often asked to help him with his English and Italian lessons when I visited.

The Performance of the *Anastenária* in Lagadhás

As in the rest of Greece, there is a strong Church influence in Lagadhás. The *Mitrópolis* or Church headquarters, was established in 1967 and the archbishop (*Dhespótis*), resides in the town and heads the main Church of Ayía Paraskeví. There are four other Churches in the town and a large spiritual centre is presently being built in the area⁵⁸. The presence of official Church life in Lagadhás has a large influence on the performance of the *Anastenária* and the Church has actively published their disapproval of the ritual⁵⁹. In addition to the Church, however, there are also other groups and organisations in Lagadhás that are involved in the performance of religious and ‘cultural’ events in the town. There are several organisations in Lagadhás which the Council describe as being responsible for “keeping alive and maintaining, the roots of our culture”. These are the *Cultural Group of Lagadhás*, the *Pontian Immigrant Group* and the *Folklore Society of Thrace*⁶⁰. These groups usually act independently. Once a year, however, on August 15 (The Dormition of the Mother of God which is the occasion of major celebrations in Greece⁶¹) they amalgamate and appear together in a major Cultural Festival organised by the council and the public, which is held in the central square. Throughout the year, the Pontian group organises dances and the Cultural group performs the well known comedy, the ‘*History of Fassuládha*’ in the central square on every Monday that falls in *Apókrios* (literally translating as *carnival*, but signifying the forty days before Lent).

Boissevain 1994) along with an examination of Greece’s contentious relationship with the United States of America, are not explored further in this thesis.

⁵⁸A wealthy citizen of Lagadhás privately donated the money for this project. Once completed, the Centre will hold cultural events, seminars and conferences, thus attracting more people to the area.

⁵⁹ See Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of the Church’s position with regards to the *Anastenária*.

⁶⁰ The town has also had, since the 1930s, an Orchestral Society, ‘*Orpheus*’.

The Folklore Society assists in the presentation of the *Anastenária* by liaising with the local Council about seating, advertising and the public spaces required for the performance. The Folklore Society also negotiates any public funding provided by the Council towards the performance of the ritual.

The Folklore Society's relationship with the *Anastenária* adds another dimension to the ritual's official position in the town. Although facing continued official opposition by the Church in Lagadhás (and throughout Greece), the *Anastenárides* are supported by the Folklore Society and the Council of Lagadhás. Support is manifest in some level of financial assistance (ie the costs of 'putting on' a public performance), advertisement of the ritual performance in May and general assistance with details of public performance (ie organising a space for the firewalk if performed in a public place, the provision of policemen to control the crowds and the erection of signs to direct visitors to the ritual performance)⁶². Paradoxically then, the *Anastenárides* are both 'officially' supported and 'officially' opposed. What emerges, therefore, is a contestation between the Church and the local Council over the performance of the *Anastenárides*' rituals. Importantly, however, the *Anastenárides*' relationships with the local Council and the Folklore Society are not unproblematic despite the support they appear to receive from them. In particular, the local Council, whilst supporting the performance of the *Anastenária* and recognising the benefits of attracting tourists and, therefore, income, to Lagadhás, is forced to maintain some level of good relations with the Church. The Council's motives for supporting the *Anastenária* are, consequently, somewhat different to those of the Folklore Society's. Whilst the Folklore Society is responsible for 'protecting and promoting' the interests of the *Anastenáride* community and their ritual performances, the Society and its members at times have different intentions and agendas than the ritual performers⁶³. Many of

⁶¹ There are several days on the Orthodox calendar devoted to the celebration of the Virgin Mary. August 15 is the Dormition of the Mother of God.

⁶² See Chapter Six for a detailed discussion on the relationship between the local Council and the *Anastenárides*. Also see Chapter Six for a discussion on the way in which the *Anastenárides* and those involved in the ritual are able to benefit through the accumulation of different forms of capital.

⁶³ In the same way, each ritual performer may (and often does) have different expectations and experiences of the ritual.

the Folklore Society's members have connections with the local Council or businesses in the town, or both. They have therefore other 'interests' apart from 'the preservation of Thracian culture'.

In general, the local population of Lagadhás is supportive of the *Anastenária*. As would be expected, however, those individuals strongly aligned with the Church, are critical of the ritual and its performers. Disregarding those directly and indirectly involved in the ritual (those related to an *Anastenáride* in some way) and those aligned with the Church (and, therefore, opposed to the ritual), the majority of those residents remaining are tolerant and respectful of the ritual. Many attend the ritual because of the Icons and the power they believe them to hold. Others attend in the same way they would attend any festival or 'cultural' event in the town and others come, like the tourists, to see the firewalking spectacle.

Without doubt, the performance of the *Anastenária* is an important event for Lagadhás. This is not only because it attracts tourists and therefore income to the town, but also because it identifies Lagadhás as distinct from Thessaloníki. The festival, along with the archaeological sites in the area of Lagadhás Basin and the natural springs, are used to attract tourists and, as was expressed by the Mayor, "put Lagadhás on the map"⁶⁴. He clearly stated that giving Lagadhás notoriety helped it maintain independent local government and prevented it from becoming encompassed by the city of Thessaloníki. Whilst I would not suggest that the performance of the *Anastenária* provides income which is crucial to the town's livelihood, it nevertheless injects some degree of income into the town through the arrival of both Greek and international tourists, particularly via the demand for food and accommodation. Within this logic, the *Anastenária* is but one of a range of attractions within Lagadhás. Like the natural springs and archaeological sites, that along with local industry and links with major industry (such as the *Agnó* factory), have come to be regarded as crucial in order to maintain the preservation of the town as separate from Thessaloníki.

⁶⁴The springs are important when looking at tourism in the area and the way in which Lagadhás is marketed. The water is advertised as the clearest in Greece, and processed in a plant fifteen kilometres from the city South. The spas are claimed to be excellent for healing and attract hundreds of tourists, both local and foreign, every year.

So what effect do these roles as a ‘tourist attractor’ and as an identifier for the towns in which the ritual is performed, have on both the ritual and those who are involved in it? I would argue that it has a contradictory effect on the ritual and the community. On the one hand, it provides the *Anastenáride* community with support, in particular against the Church. It also generates an audience for the ritual and grants it some level of prestige and importance. On the other hand, however, involving the ritual in the tourist industry threatens the ritual’s position as a religious ritual and, therefore, makes precarious the *Anastenárides*’ stance against the Church⁶⁵.

To examine the different ways in which the *Anastenárides* negotiate their identities in a dynamic environment, it is imperative to develop an understanding of the reality of their everyday lives. Knowledge of the contested history in which they are a part, as well as their current political, social and economic environments, are crucial to a discussion of the way in which they construct their identities. What is clear from looking at the constant contestation in the Balkans, is that ‘imagined’ communities have been coexisting with fragmented national identities, presenting the *Anastenárides* (and others) with a contradictory Greek and Macedonian identity. Similarly, another contradiction is created. The oppositional position of the Greek Orthodox Church to the *Anastenárides* questions the *Anastenárides*’ Orthodoxy. At the same time, however, their ‘Greekness’ is celebrated in nationalist rhetoric. What I develop further in this thesis is how the *Anastenárides* negotiate these contradictions in everyday practice to create identities for themselves.

In the following Chapter, therefore, I introduce the problematic relationship between the Orthodox Church and the *Anastenárides* in an attempt to define those areas that the Church deems as un-Orthodox. My argument moves towards my assertion that the Holy Icons are the

⁶⁵ See Chapters Two and Six for a detailed discussion on this debate.

source of symbolic capital that is competed for by both the *Anastenárides* and the Orthodox Church in particular fields in which they are engaged.

2

Beliefs and Practice

Greekness and Orthodoxy are the two most important elements of the tradition of the Anastenaria (Y. Meliki 1994)¹.

Introduction

An understanding of the beliefs, practices and theology of the Orthodox Church is crucial to this thesis, not only because of the opposition of the Church to the *Anastenária*, but also because the *Anastenárides* consider themselves to be, first and foremost, Orthodox Christians. This Chapter addresses, therefore, the elements of Greek Orthodox Christianity that the *Anastenária* celebrates, whilst also presenting the parts of the ritual that have been claimed by the Church to be in conflict with Orthodox doctrine. The Chapter begins with a brief description of the *Anastenária* ritual (developed in more detail in the following Chapter) in order to make clear the distinctions acknowledged by the Church between the *Anastenária* and Orthodox doctrine. I briefly consider the Church's history, theology, and practices and pay special attention to the worship of Saints and the Orthodox Icons, two elements central to the performance of the *Anastenária*. I examine the problematic relationship between the Orthodox Church in Lagadhás and the *Anastenárides*, with particular reference to comments, both official (in the form of Church newsletters) and unofficial (conversations held by me with members of the Church) made by the *Mitrópolis* (Cathedral) in Lagadhás. My aim in this Chapter is to reveal the distinctions that the Church makes between itself and the *Anastenárides* and, therefore, reflect on how this influences the *Anastenáride*'s negotiation of their identities as Orthodox

¹This was the title of an article published in the *Thessaloniki*, a major newspaper in the North of Greece, on the 28th of May 1994. A journalist, who is also an *Anastenáris*, wrote it.

Christians. I position the *Anastenária* within the framework of Christian Orthodoxy to argue, as Melíki states above, that Orthodoxy (and Greekness) is central to the *Anastenária*².

The *Anastenária*: Orthodox or pagan?

The *Anastenária* ritual incorporates dancing, music, animal sacrifice and firewalking. Whilst not all of the *Anastenárides*' ritual celebrations incorporate all of these elements, the central and most well known festival, that of Saints Constantine and Helen on May 21, does. The ritual is closely associated with Orthodox Christian belief and Orthodox Christian Icons but due to the practices of firewalking, the handling of the Icons and animal sacrifice, the Orthodox Church strongly opposes the ritual being presented as an Orthodox celebration.

Whilst the *Anastenárides* meet on several important dates on the Orthodox calendar³, it is the festival of their patron Saints, Constantine and Helen, on May 21, by which the *Anastenárides* are publicly identified. Although there are variations between the context, order and timing of these rituals, there are certain elements that appear to be consistent, both over time and between groups. Every festival includes music and dancing, even if a firewalk is not performed. The music is Thracian folk music and is performed by a lyre, a drum and a piped instrument similar to a bagpipe⁴. Dancing is performed in 'sessions' (the timing and intensity usually directed by the musicians) inside the *Konáki* and during the dancing *Anastenárides* are often given an Icon or a sacred kerchief (*Simáchi*) to hold. It is during the dancing that some *Anastenárides* experience a shift in consciousness; the 'tranced states' that are often spoken of. This dancing with the Icons is criticised by the Church who sees it as a form of idolatry and, therefore, in opposition to Orthodox doctrine.

² I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments made by Roger Just on the re-working of this Chapter.

³ See Chapter Three for a detailed discussion of the ritual calendar of the *Anastenárides*.

⁴ Not all of the instruments are used at every festival. What instruments were used depended on what was available and what musicians were able to attend. See Chapter Four for detail on the music and songs of the *Anastenárides*.

The Church also criticises the ecstatic states that the *Anastenárides* are commonly said to be experiencing (these shifts in consciousness). The *Anastenárides* believe, however, that it is the Icons that transmit the power of Saint Constantine to them that then grants them the ability to walk on the coals unharmed.

The sacrificing of animals only occurs during the festival of Saints Constantine and Helen. The animals, purchased well in advance, are censed and blessed with water sanctified by the Icons before being slaughtered. The flesh is cut up and part of it is cooked and eaten at the meal shared after the firewalk, while the rest is portioned out to the *Anastenárides* and their families. No raw meat is eaten. Whilst this part of the ritual is not closed, it is performed early in the day and, therefore, rarely witnessed by non-*Anastenárides* or their families and others involved in the ritual⁵.

The firewalk performed by the *Anastenárides* occurs during the evening after several hours of dancing in the *Konáki*. The fire is prepared early in the evening, with the firewalk (at least in 1994 and 1995 when I attended) beginning between about 8pm-10pm. Not all of the *Anastenárides* enter the fire⁶. Those who do enter the fire often hold an Icon or a sacred kerchief (*Simádhi*) and are accompanied by the musicians playing their instruments. The firewalk is not strictly choreographed but it is said that each *Anastenáride* makes the sign of the cross in the fire by entering from different points. Each individual crosses the fire differently, however. Some dance on the coals at length, others run quickly across. Once the coals are out (or almost out) the firewalk ends with a traditional circular dance around the fire. The firewalk is followed by more dancing in the *Konáki* before a meal is shared with family and friends.

⁵ Researchers, such as myself as well as locals, particularly those living next to or close to the *Konáki*, also watched this part of the ritual.

⁶ See Chapter Three for a discussion on who enters the fire and why.

Synthesis of the Local and the Secular: the problematic relationship between the Orthodox Church and the *Anastenárides*

The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás are all nominally members of the Orthodox Church; all have been formally initiated into the Church with the Sacrament of Baptism. They openly identify themselves as believing Christians and follow the same devotional practices to Icons and inside the Churches as other Orthodox Christians. Women attend Church more frequently than men and several of the *Anastenáresses* attend Church every Sunday⁷. Often before celebrations started at the *Konáki*, some of the women would go to the Church service together and then return to celebrate with the *Anastenárides*. Men who attended Church only at Easter and perhaps Christmas day and celebrations such as weddings and baptisms, explained their lack of regular attendance in similar ways to other non-*Anastenáride* Greek men. One younger *Anastenáris* who is not a regular Church goer explained, “Sunday I rest”. Yet he always attended the *Anastenáride* celebrations, irrespective of the day. His mother, who attends Church most Sundays explained that men, especially younger ones, are not overly interested in going to Church: it was women who should go, however, she explained. Another *Anastenáris* explained that he rarely attended the Orthodox Church because of its open dislike of the *Anastenária*; “We are called un-Christian, so I do not want to pray with them. I celebrate God in the *Konáki* and when I pray”. Similarly, Thétis, the son of the previous leader of the community, told me that he only attends Church on very special occasions. This is because of a confrontation he had several years ago with one of the Priests in the town regarding the ritual performance and the money collected from offerings made to the Icons⁸. He remains on bad terms with the Churches in the town and with their Priests. On the whole, the frequency and regularity of Church attendance reflected similar patterns and justifications to those of non-*Anastenáride* Orthodox Greeks.

⁷Church attendance in urban Greece has declined noticeably in the past twenty years and very few people I knew either inside or outside of the *Anastenáride* community actually attended Church every Sunday. Most people attended Church on the Saint’s days which had special significance for them (*ie* if it was their name day) and those more important days in the Greek calendar. Importantly, those Saints whom the *Anastenárides* celebrate are central figures in Orthodox worship; they are some of the more popular Saints.

⁸ For a long time after the first public performance of the ritual, the Church used to keep the money offered to the *Anastenárides*’ Icons.

After the first public performance of the ritual in 1947, the Greek Orthodox Church immediately asserted aggressively negative attitudes towards the performance of the *Anastenária*. The President of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece informed the Bishop of Sérres that the *Anastenária* was “an idolatrous survival of the orgiastic worship of Dionysis [that] must be abolished using all the spiritual means at the disposal of the Church” (in Danforth 1989:135)⁹. Even more strongly, four years later, the Bishop of Thessaloníki claimed that the *Anastenária* was “in complete opposition to the beliefs and forms of worship of the Christian religion” (*ibid.*). On arriving in Lagadhás and other villages in the North of the country, the *Anastenárides* did not initially publicly perform their ritual but kept it secret for fear of persecution from fellow citizens and the Church. When they did eventually perform in public they were quickly criticised by the Church and denied access to participation in the liturgy and other sacraments held in the Church. While they continued to perform their ritual, the Church argued they could not celebrate God in the Churches with other Christians. Yet all of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás, including the younger participants, have been baptised in an Orthodox Church. Thus, it is clear that not all Orthodox Priests have refused rites to the *Anastenárides*. The Church’s sanctioning of the group appears, therefore, to be somewhat arbitrary (Christodoulou 1978, Danforth 1989). Several *Anastenárides* recalled instances of being chosen as best man (*kumbáros*) for a wedding or Godparent (*anádhokhos*) for a child but were refused by the particular Church because of their involvement in the *Anastenária*. One *Anastenáris* explained that he and his wife took their children to a Church in Thessaloníki to be baptised. *Anastenárides* describe how in Kostí before the Balkan wars, the local Priest used to assist in the performance of the *Anastenária*¹⁰. Before the threat imposed on them by Bulgarian bandits (during the period of the Balkan Wars), the Orthodox Church used to

⁹It is quite likely that this opinion was formed and legitimated by many folklorists at the time. See Chapter Five on the role of folklorists in the construction of identity formation.

¹⁰ Danforth (1978) writes that a short period prior to the Balkan Wars, the Orthodox Church outlawed the involvement of Orthodox Priests in the *Anastenária*.

house the Icons of the *Anastenárides*. The local Priest would perform the duties that are now under the charge of the leader of the group (often referred to as the *Pappús*, (lit. 'grandfather'): the *Ayiasmós*, (blessing of the water), the blessing of the Icons, of the sacrificial animals (*kurbáni*) and of the people. The local Priest would also often join in the celebratory meal afterwards. Kostí and Brodívo, the two main villages from where the *Anastenárides* came, were small and isolated and it would have been quite likely that the Priest had a relative who was an *Anastenáride*. Once the ritual was brought to Greece, such participation became very difficult due to the Church's official position against its involvement in the ritual¹¹.

Shortly after the first public performance of the ritual in 1947, the Bishop of Sérres imposed two conditions on the *Anastenárides* if they wished to continue performing. Firstly, all of the money collected by the *Anastenárides*, had to be handed over to the village Church. Secondly, the two Icons of Saints Constantine and Helen which the *Anastenárides* of Ayía Eléni owned, had to be kept inside the Church and only removed when taken to the *Konáki* for the May festival (Danforth 1989:135). In 1970, a week before the festival of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen, the Bishop of Sérres informed the *Anastenárides* that they would not be allowed to take their Icons from the Church to use them in the ritual that year. The Bishop argued that they could perform the ritual, but without the Icons. After much discussion, the *Anastenárides* decided to perform the ritual, using only the sacred kerchiefs (*Simádhia*)¹² but they warned the Bishop not to remove the Icons from the village Church. On the morning of 21 May when the *Anastenárides* went to the Church to visit the Icons, they found them gone. It was later discovered that two Priests accompanied by a policeman had secretly removed them the previous night. Consequently, no festival was held that year. In a confrontation of the *Anastenárides* with Church officials, the Bishop produced documents that he said proved that the Icons

¹¹An anthropologist who had been working in Greece informed me that she had in fact seen a Priest participating in the ritual in Kelkíni in the 1970's.

¹²*Simádhia* translates as 'sign'. Mihail-Dede (1972, 1973) refers to the sacred kerchiefs as *amanétia*.

belonged to the Church. The Icons were returned to the Church but in the spring of 1971 a trial was held to decide whose property the Icons were. The court ruled that the Icons were private property and they were returned to the *Anastenárides*. In Mavroléfki a similar debate continues today. The 1970s are often spoken of as the worst period for relations with the Church.

During my time in Greece, the relationship between the Church and the *Anastenárides* had improved but remained tense and the Church's official position was unchanged. In two newsletters put out by the *Mitrópolis* of Lagadhás (the Church headquarters) in May and June 1995, and presented to me by the Bishop (*Dhespótis*), the Church explained its position clearly. The statements relate the ritual to the pagan performances of Dionysiac rites, claim that the firewalking of the *Anastenárides* is a gift from Satan rather than God. The Bishop wrote: "Their tradition is a purely pagan celebration ... The *Anastenárides* will have to find the way to God's communion without the need for paganism ... the open arms of God awaits them". He argued that the Church's position is not one of aggression but, rather, like the "relationship of a father to a son when their child is being disobedient and is at fault". The Bishop appealed in general to the people of Lagadhás and specifically to the Mayor and his Council, to cease supporting the performance of the *Anastenária*: "the municipality spends so much money and throws it into the ashes, so it may revive a primitive, pagan ritual, a custom of fear, ignorance, superstition and unreasonable passion and ecstasy". He openly criticised the Mayor and his Council, questioning whether they realised the degree of their responsibility and whether they were aware of the crime they were committing against God and those Orthodox Christians of Lagadhás who are opposed to the performance of the ritual. The Bishop referred to Law 590/77, clause twenty four, paragraph six of the Orthodox Church, which states that the inclusion of Sacred Icons in public celebrations and performances without the support and Blessing of the Church, is unacceptable. He argued that the "protection and support of the *Anastenária* is an obvious infringement of the Church's constitution" and, therefore, also an outright insult to the

Church. The Mayor was singled out as being accountable for the support of the ritual and the Bishop called on him to be ‘responsible’. In the May newsletter, the Bishop described the ritual as a “kitsch spectacle” reminiscent of the festivals of the ‘Third World’. He wrote: “as Thessaloníki prepares itself to become the Cultural Capital of Europe, Lagadhás prepares itself to lay claim to the title of the cultural capital of the African Commonwealth”¹³.

In person, the Bishop argued that individuals who have no real interest in the ritual, but are only concerned with the money of tourists are exploiting the *Anastenárides*. He claimed that the *Anastenárides* embarrassed and denigrated the traditions of Greece, as he perceived the ritual to be in the same class as ‘Luna Park’. He recalled that currently in Bulgarian Thrace (where Kostí now is), the “custom” is marketed at corner shops and news stands, and is just a novelty, for Greeks and for tourists¹⁴. Throughout the Church’s official and unofficial protests, the rhetoric of folklore is evident as they refer to notions of tradition and continuity¹⁵. In response to an article written in a newspaper in Thessaloníki, which called for the Church to bring the ritual into its circle, the Bishop replied that the journalist was “naive” and “unaware of the Church’s teachings”. He concluded our conversation by stating: “Whoever understands the value of the Icons to the Church, understands our agony (*aghonía*)”¹⁶.

¹³When I suggested to a Priest who works at the *Mitrópolis* that this statement was highly racist, he explained that the Bishop meant that “civilised Greeks” were behaving like “uncivilised pagans”.

¹⁴Nowhere in Greece, according to the *Anastenárides* and verified by those who visit Kostí (now in Bulgaria) regularly, are there any such forms of advertising. The only item sold in Lagadhás during the festival was a book on the ritual, advertised by a man from Thessaloníki, in the street where the sideshows were.

¹⁵See Chapter Five For a detailed discussion of the role of folklore in the construction of national identities and its use of ‘histories’ and tradition.

¹⁶*Aghonía* translates as “agony, anguish; anxiety”, coming from the word *aghon*, which translates as “struggle, exertion, contest”. *Aghónes* refers to the “Olympic Games”.

Yet, interestingly, the performance of the *Anastenária* is not the only instance within the Orthodox Christian religion when local ideas and beliefs come into doctrinal conflict with secular Orthodox beliefs¹⁷. The critical issue is at what point does a performance or belief become non-Orthodox and on whose authority and under what kinds of circumstances is this categorisation made and accepted as legitimate? Historically, it is possible to demonstrate that Orthodoxy actually emerged from syncretism, so it becomes difficult for the Church to demarcate the line. Stewart (1991) distinguishes between ‘doctrinal’ religion (textual, theological, the religion of the Church) and ‘local’ or ‘practical’ religion (religion in the form that it is practised in the community). He argues that the non-Orthodox is identified by its distance from the Orthodox cosmological structure, culminating in an open denial of God and Christ. Stewart (*ibid.*) writes that the *exótika* has come to be understood or articulated by the educated as ‘folklore’ or ‘superstition’. By labelling something as ‘folklore’ it enables it to function outside of the official Church as it legitimates it in another category, other than religion.

Crossland and Constance (1982:144) also identify the ritual as being located “in that ill-defined territory where organised religion and more primitive, atavistic beliefs and rites meet”. Similarly, a theologian at the Aristotle University of Thessaloníki, described the *Anastenária* as existing on the periphery of Orthodoxy, as it engaged some elements of Orthodox faith, but offended others. The problem with this argument is that it is predicated on a typification or static notion of ‘practices’ and dislocates the religion as it is practised from the relations that occurs within¹⁸. There exists therefore, an issue of ongoing contestation over whether or not to be ‘opposed’ to Orthodoxy. That is, through

¹⁷See Clarence Maloney (1976) *The Evil Eye and* Charles Stewart (1991) *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture*.

its relationship with tourism, the *Anastenária* stands distinct from the Church and, therefore, also in opposition to the Church. The attraction the ritual receives, however, and the devotion shown to the *Anastenárides*' Icons, not only distinguishes the ritual, but also legitimates it. This controversy has become critical for the *Anastenárides*' definition of their identity, as they stand opposed to the official stance of the Church from which their faith is celebrated. This logic of Orthodoxy versus folklore also presents as uniform, the official Church position and the local practical viewpoint because it leaves no space within the opposition for both to exist at the same time, with authority. The *Anastenárides*, therefore, are in opposition to the Orthodox faith.

A great deal of academic discourse (folklore, history, anthropology) has situated 'folkloric' or 'rural' practices such as the *Anastenária*, in a separate category from that of doctrinal Orthodoxy. The Church has also taken on this logic. Recently, the Church in Greece has become quite specific in defining its objections to the *Anastenárides*. It singles out the use of the Icons during the firewalk and the sacrificing of animals in the name of the Saints, and therefore, God¹⁹. Yet those who practise these rituals do not necessarily make this distinction between Orthodoxy and folklore (although I did witness that some of the younger and more educated *Anastenárides* at times acknowledged this distinction and used terms such as *laoghrafla*, folklore²⁰). For the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás, their ritual is an Orthodox religious celebration, not a presentation of folklore. As such, it is a celebration that clearly supports Orthodox religious orientation²¹.

¹⁸This is where Bourdieu's ideas about the interconvertibility of capital becomes useful, as it provides a means of examining the way in which the definition of 'Orthodoxy' is linked to both vested interests and positions of power and status. See Chapters Six and Seven for more detail on capital.

¹⁹The sacrificing of animals for particular celebrations is very common in Greece. At Easter, for example, lambs (and other animals) are always killed and shared, eaten among families on the Sunday after the resurrection. This type of sacrifice (*thisia*) is not considered pagan. See Chapter Three for more detail on the sacrificing of animals during the *Anastenária*.

²⁰See Stewart (1991:248) for a similar experience.

²¹See Stewart (1991:243-249) and also Dumont and Pocock (1958, 1959) on their work in India.

The Eastern Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church is the depository of the spiritual riches of its Founder and His Apostles, maintaining the undefiled Truths of the Christian Gospel (Father Psaromatis 1988:1)²².

The word 'Orthodox' is derived from the two Greek words, *orthós*, meaning 'right' or 'true', and *dhóksa*, meaning 'opinion' or 'glory'. The Orthodox Church claims to preserve the doctrine of the early Church as stated by the seven Ecumenical Councils that were held prior to the split between the Christian East and West. Consequently, the Orthodox Church considers itself to be the only true Christian faith as they believe that the other Christian Churches have either added to, neglected or moved away from these original traditions (see Diagram Two which outlines the History of the Orthodox Church)²³. It is from this position of 'original tradition' that the Church condemns the *Anastenária* as it sees the ritual and its participants as moving away from 'Orthodox' practices and doctrine.

Orthodox belief posits an interesting paradoxical interdependence between human beings and God. On the one hand, human beings are perceived as being completely dependent on the Grace granted by God but, on the other hand, they are held to be unable to receive His Grace without following Christian practices: they need to perform Christian duties and follow Orthodox teachings. Orthodox liturgy reifies the Orthodox emphasis on the Transfiguration of the body, specifically through the Eucharist, where the bread and the

²²Father Psaromatis is the Priest of the Greek Orthodox Church in Norwood, South Australia. Before leaving for Greece and after returning to Australia, I engaged in several conversations with him and read articles he had written.

²³ There are two sources from which the Orthodox Church derives its teachings; Holy Scripture and Holy or Sacred Tradition. The Holy Scripture refers to the total of books "written by pious men under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit" (Frangopoulos 1993:22). They are considered to be divinely inspired. The forty-nine books of Holy Scripture written before the birth of Christ are referred to as the Old Testament; the twenty-seven books written after Christ's birth constitute the New Testament. The Sacred or Holy Apostolic Tradition is made up of both written and oral Apostolic teachings and includes Ecumenical practices and traditions such as the Sign of the Cross, the Liturgy and so on. With the documentation of these Orthodox beliefs and practices over time these doctrines came to include the dogmatic definitions and canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils. This process was completed in 787 A.D when the Seventh Holy Ecumenical Council was held in Nicosia.

A Time Line of Church History

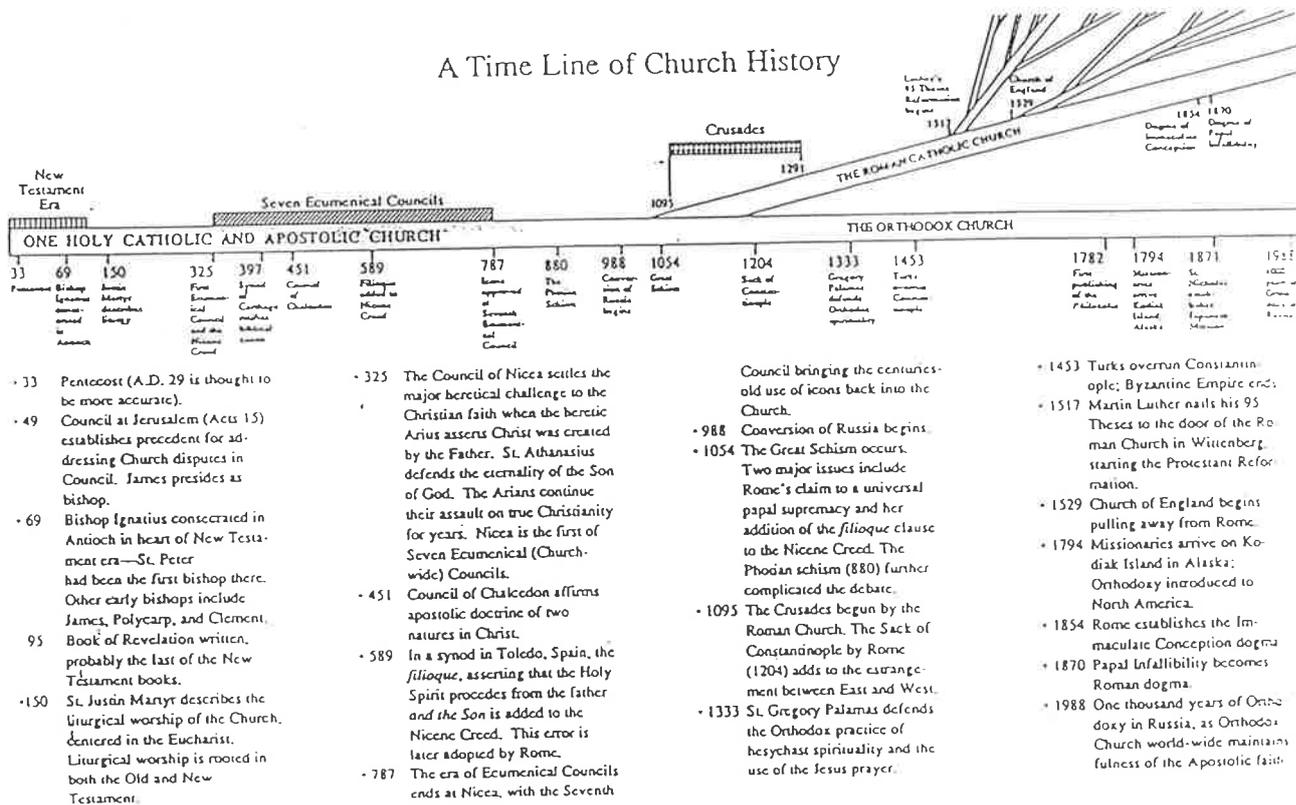


Diagram Two: A Time Line of Church History

wine through the action of the Spirit in their consecration, actually become the body of Christ. The liturgy aims to *sanctify* all of the faculties of human beings, to enable them to perceive the “invisible through the visible” (John Campbell 1968:204)²⁴. This is why Orthodox liturgy and worship engages all of the worshipper’s faculties; through the use of incense, candles, chanting, the Eucharist and prayers, as well as the display of the Icons²⁵.

This Orthodox understanding of the relationship between God and His followers is evident in the *Anastenárides*’ relationship with Saint Constantine. The means taken to ‘engage’ the worshipper in the Orthodox Church are also parallel to those taken in the *Konáki* by the *Anastenárides*. The Saints play a significant role in Orthodox worship, “for the Saints bear for the Orthodox living witness to the fundamental idea of the transfiguration of the creature which underlies the liturgy: to the fact of the possible sanctification of man” (*ibid.*:204). Veneration is accorded to the Saints for the same reasons that it is accorded to the Virgin Mary; they both embody Divine Grace (*kháris*). Like Mary, the Saints represent and physically manifest the union of the Divine and the human.

Orthodox Saints

Within Greek Orthodox religion, God is unquestionably omnipotent but He is not necessarily the most common focus of prayer and devotion. *Panayia*, Mary, Mother of God, is a central figure in the worship and daily lives of Orthodox Christians, and references to her are as common, if not more frequent, than to God²⁶. It is the Orthodox Saints, however, who are most frequently prayed to, perhaps because they appear to be more reachable, more human. Unlike their more distant God, Orthodox Saints “...effectively bridge the conceptual chasm between humanity and the abstract principle of

²⁴ See John Campbell and P. Sherrard (1968) for detail on Orthodox liturgy.

²⁵ Just as this is important in the Orthodox Church, so too it is important for the *Anastenárides*. Song, music, incense and Icons feature in their ritual performances, engaging all of the senses. The role of these elements in the achievement of altered states of consciousness is addressed in more detail in Chapters Three and Four.

²⁶ The expression ‘*I Panayia mu*’, ‘Oh My Mary’, is frequently used in a number of different circumstances.

God” (Stewart 1991:78). Icons help to make this connection possible²⁷. Most Greek Orthodox Christians pray to, and believe in, the power of the Saints. A person becomes a Saint under various circumstances, but always because they displayed exemplary devotion, faith and, importantly, sacrifice for God. It was often explained to me that God gave the souls of Saints power (*dhinamis*) on their death, which enables them to perform miracles. It is generally believed, however, that some Saints are more capable of doing so than others. The relationship between a person and the Saints is one of reciprocity, but also of negotiation (Campbell and Sherrard 1968)²⁸. Offerings (*támata*) and prayers are necessary to gain the protection of and/or possible intervention from a Saint, although help or protection may be granted without explicit devotion. The anticipated help (*voithia*) of the Saint becomes apparent from participation in celebrations on the Saint’s name days festivals, and in the inclusion of a Saint’s Icon in the home, car or work place. A more direct form of devotion is expressed in the gift (*táma*) in the form of bread, money, oil, but particularly jewellery. Special metal plaques, made of tin or silver (*asimiká*), are probably the most popular *támata*²⁹. These are engraved with images of what is being prayed for; often a specific part of the body. The *Anastenárides* venerate Saint Constantine and Saint Helen in this same way but also through the sacrifice of young animals, the calf, kid and lamb, on the morning of the festival (*paniyíri*)³⁰.

Miracles (*thávματα*) are believed in, although not all Saints or Icons are believed to be miracle working (*thavmaturghi*). The *Anastenárides* consider that Saint Constantine and Saint Helen have the power to work miracles. Their Icons are also attributed this Divine power (*dhinamis*) and are regarded to be miracle working. This is one locus of contestation with the Orthodox Church as the possession of the Icons gives the possessor some element of control over their

²⁷See also John Campbell (1964), du Boulay (1974) and Kenna (1985).

²⁸ John Campbell (1964:34-46) points out that the relationship between human beings and the Saints is similar to social systems of patronage in Greece.

²⁹*Asimiká* translates as ‘silverware’. I noticed that these were the most common forms of devotion used in the worship of the *Anastenárides*’ Icons.

³⁰ The sacrificing of animals for Saints is not uncommon in rural Greece. See Chapter Three for more detail on this part of the ritual.

power³¹. That is, the *Anastenárides*, from their association with ‘miracle working’ Icons are endowed with prestige and, they believe, have the Divine power (*dhinamis*) transmitted to them. It is this power to mediate Divine intervention that imbues the Icons with a multivocality that is ambiguous in its effects. It allows the popularity of the *Anastenária* within Greece to be attributed to its spectacular performance, but it also allows the ritual to be recognised as a celebration of Orthodox Saints, one in which the Icons owned by the *Anastenárides*, are perceived to possess the power to work miracles. Many Greeks who attend the *Konáki* or the festival, come to pay respect to or make an offering to the Icons.

The Body of the Church

The *Anastenárides*’ *Konáki* is not understood by them to act as a substitute for the Church and several of the *Anastenáresses* in Langadhás attend Church regularly. What is important, however, is that the outlay of the *Konáki* and the behaviour expected to be maintained within it, parallels that of the Orthodox Churches. The Church (*Ekklisia*³²) is regarded as a sacred place; “the mirror of the Kingdom of God” (Campbell and Sherrard 1968:200) and each architectural piece has its meaning, function and place within a coordinated symbolic structure. Orthodox Christians believe that through the liturgy and Eucharist, Christ is present in their Churches. Similarly, through veneration of the Icons and song, music and sacrifice, Saint Constantine is present with the *Anastenárides* during their festivals.

The Sanctuary (*Ierón*) separated from the main body of the Church, is the image of the spiritual world and the altar (*Ayía Trápeza*), is the heart. The two areas are separated by the place where the Icons are displayed (*Ikonostásis*), which from the 15th to 16th centuries became similar to a high wall, permitting vision of the sanctuary only through the central or royal door which remains closed for most of the liturgy³³. The *Ikonostásis* represents simultaneously, the division

³¹ The Icons and whether or not they are miracle working is not only a source of contestation between the Church and the *Anastenárides*, but also between *Anastenáride* groups. Disclaiming the supernatural power of a group’s Icons or a particular Icon, is a way of questioning their ‘legitimacy’, ‘prestige’ and status.

³²The word Church in Greek, *Ekklisia*, means ‘convocation’, or ‘reunion’.

³³In more recent years the *Ikonostásis* was lowered so as not to separate the Priest from the congregation.

of the human and the Divine worlds and their unification³⁴. The Icons placed on the *stásis* also have this double function (Campbell and Sherrard 1968). Interestingly, there exists no such physical separation between the *Anastenárides* and their Icons in the *Konáki*, which is exemplified further by dancing with the Icons and the holding of the Icons during dancing in the *Konáki* and on the fire. This intimacy between the *Anastenárides* and their Icons is important, not only because of the Church's opposition to it, but also because it exemplifies the possible attraction that the ritual has. That is, I have already argued that Saints are popularly venerated in Greece by all Orthodox Christians and that this is most likely due to the closer relationship available between a Saint and a human that is not possible between a human and God. If then, this type of spiritual intimacy is desired, then perhaps the *Anastenárides* are able to achieve greater levels of this intimacy through their own celebrations and rites.

The nave, the main area of the Church, symbolises the ark, the vessel where the children of God congregate, separated from the outside, troubled world. The architectural form of the Orthodox Churches is usually a 'cross-in-square' surmounted by a central dome, the union of which represents the union of Heaven and earth (Campbell and Sherrard 1968). Icons are placed on other stands within the Church and also on the walls, again separating and merging the secular and the sacred: "Thus the building of the Church, with the symbolic structure of its architecture and its iconographic decoration, is a kind of visible projection of the spiritual world; on entering it, the worshipper feels he enters into the presence of the Divine" (*ibid.*:202). Interestingly, as Campbell (*ibid.*) points out, there also exists an overwhelming feeling of distance between oneself and God and His Divine world, creating a sense of dependence on the Divine. Quite different from this, inside the *Konáki* there exists a much more relaxed, more familiar relationship between the secular and sacred³⁵.

³⁴During the liturgy when the Priest enters the main body of the Church from the sanctuary, his entrances represent "actual entrances made by Jesus during his earthly life-such as the entry into Jerusalem-as well as entrances that are spiritual intervention-such as the Incarnation" (Kenna 1985:361).

³⁵ This is another example of the more intimate relationship experienced by the *Anastenárides* with their Saint.

By contrast, the *Anastenárides* meet and hold their rituals in a *Konáki*, usually a room of a house or a single roomed building. For the group with whom I stayed in Lagadhás, the *Konáki* was a freestanding house, constituting a main room, another small room with a bed and a kitchen³⁶. Attached to the building, but accessible only from the outside, was a bathroom. The seating arrangement in the new *Konáki* in Lagadhás includes benches (rather than ornate chairs or pews)³⁷ placed around the edge of the room while the middle area is left bare for dancing. In many of the older Orthodox Churches, there often exists no or little seating in the main part of the Church, but instead they have seats around the periphery of the Church and at the rear. The original *Konáki* and the *Konáki* being used by the other group in the town, are both small rooms in the homes of *Anastenárides*. They have shelves that hold the Icons and benches around the edge of the room, but they are both very small.

Greeting the Icons: the behaviour towards the Icons in the Konáki

An extract from my field notes, May 1994:

*We sat inside the **Konáki** chatting, about eight of us in total. Some of the women were busy in the kitchen and the older men sat just outside the door, half in the shade, smoking, drinking coffee and talking. Then we heard Toms' car drive up, doors close and the sound of the lyre. Everyone stood and moved away from the door as Tom, Pétros and Yiánnis entered the **Konáki** with the Icons. Tom was at the end of the procession, playing the lyre the other men in front, cradling the Icons in their arms³⁸. The **Pappús** lit the incense in the incense holder (*thimiatrión*) and censed (*thimiátze*) the Icons, making the sign of the cross three times as they were placed gently on the *stasídhi* (lit. table, pew or ledge, and where the Icons are placed in the **Konáki**). Everyone inside the **Konáki** blessed/crossed themselves three times as the Icons moved past them and again as they were placed on the ledge³⁹. The **Pappús** walked around the **Konáki** with the incense and as he passed each person they waved the smoke towards themselves and then crossed*

³⁶ Danforth (1989:142-143) notes that the *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni built a new *Konáki* separate from anyone's home around 1979/1980. He also notes disagreements that erupted over the move similar to those that occurred in Lagadhás.

³⁷ In Greece, it is usually only the larger and more modern Churches that have pews.

³⁸ The lyre, and sometimes the *ghaidha* (similar to the bagpipes) and the *dhaúli*, (a two-sided drum), always accompany any processions with the Icons. The tune played during processions is called the *Tune of the Road*. See Chapter Four for a more detailed discussion on the music of the *Anastenárides*.

³⁹ The sign of the cross is made three times to symbolise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The number three has other significance, also symbolising the three days of the resurrection.

themselves again three times. The *Anastenárides* told me that the smell of the incense is pleasing to the Icons. It is also said that censuring someone is a way of honouring them⁴⁰. Everyone then 'greeted' the Icons by approaching the *stasídhi*, crossing themselves three times before kissing the Icon, usually on the hands of the figure depicted on the Icon.

As the morning progressed into afternoon people came and went, but each one 'greeted' the Icons in the same way, always before acknowledging anybody else. Those who arrived after the Icons had been brought from Tom's house lit a candle or two before kissing the Icons⁴¹.

At early evening, the musicians began to play again. By this time a large number of people had settled in and around the *Konáki* and there were people filing past the Icons, creating a constant flow of people entering and leaving the room. Once the line [of people] in front of the *stasídhi* ended, one or two of the *Anastenáresses* began to dance. They moved forwards and backwards with three or four steps, their heads bowed, or tilted to the side, their arms to their sides. After a few minutes, the *Pappús* got up from his chair at the end of the *stasídhi* and picked up one of the Icons. He shook the Icons, rattling the *asimiká* (chains, bells, coins and metal plaques, given to the Icons as an offering, *támata*), 'waking the Icon' and then motioned for Sofia (actually one of his daughters) to come to him. She went to him and kissed his hands and the base of the Icon he was holding before she took hold of it. It was a smallish Icon and she held it in front of her, the face of the Icon turned away, and continued dancing. Occasionally she too shook the Icon, rattling the *asimiká* and often held it above her head. The music intensified, becoming louder and faster and soon there were six *Anastenárides* dancing. Three of them had been given Icons by the *Pappús* and the other three were holding *Simádhia*, also given to them by the *Pappús*. Sofia was singing the words of the song *MikroKostantínos* and began moving around the edge of the space towards those of us who were watching. As she passed a group of older women from the village, they stopped her to kiss her hands that were holding the base of the Icon and then kissed the Icon itself.

After fifteen minutes or so, the music slowed down and as it did the dancing became less intense until the *Anastenárides* who were dancing soon became still. Sofia, who was the only one still holding an Icon at this stage, (the others had returned the Icons and *Simádhia* to the *Pappús* at various stages), went to the *Pappús* (also her father) who was standing at the *stasídhi* and kissed his hands. She passed him the Icon to put back on

⁴⁰An Orthodox Priest told me that the use of incense is linked to prayer through Psalm 141; "Let my prayer arise in your sight as incense".

⁴¹The use of candles in the *Konáki* and in the Orthodox Church was explained to me as being connected to the teaching that Christ is the 'Light of the world' and so the use of candles is a reflection of His radiance. The Orthodox Church also makes reference to 'keeping watch' for His return. A donation is always made when taking one of the candles, which are always placed near the *stasídhi*, or when you enter a Church.

the shelf. The Pappús kissed the Icon and crossed himself as he placed it back on the stasídhí.

In the ritual world of the *Anastenárides*, as in the wider field of Orthodox worship, the Icons are key symbols. For the *Anastenárides*, their Holy Icons are central to the ritual and their ritual life as a community. The *Anastenárides* conceptualise the Icons as intermediaries that transmit the messages of the Saints to them. “It is the Saints through their Icons (the properly made and respected ones) and not the Icons themselves that call us to the firewalking, the *Anastenárides* say” (Mihail-Dede 1973:159). Anything belonging to or associated with the Icons is also considered sacred, such as the covers of the Icons (*podhiá*), the kerchiefs (*Simádhia*), and the offerings (*asimiká*). “A great part of the happiness or the misfortune of people and of the *Anastenarides* themselves especially is concerned with the proper behaviour towards the Icons and all their belongings” (*ibid.*).

The Icons are central to the *Anastenárides*' ritual performances. The blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*) and the sacrificial animals, as well as the sacrifice itself, are all performed with and in front of the Icons. The fire is lit in the presence of and blessed by, the Icons and the Icons (and/or *Simádhia*) are held by the *Anastenárides* when they enter the fire. The blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*) is performed by the *Pappús* by making the sign of the Cross in the water with the handle of an Icon (thereby transferring the supernatural power that they believe the Icons to carry)⁴². The sign of the Cross is also made three times over the fire with the handle, before the *Anastenárides* enter the coals.

The *Anastenárides* claim that when they left Thrace in 1914, they brought with them five Icons of Saint Helen and Saint Constantine and three other Icons, of Saint Pantelímon, the Transfiguration of the Saviour and the Dormition of the Mother of God. In 1912 when the Balkan wars broke out, the Bulgarians, for whom worship had been forbidden under Turkish rule,

⁴²This water is sprinkled onto the Icons, onto the animals before sacrifice and onto the people present. At the end of a ritual meal and a festival, each person washes their hands/face with the water.

were allowed to practise their religion again. During this period, the Bulgarians forbade the *Anastenária* ritual and the *Anastenárides* were forced to hide their Icons in fear of their confiscation. In addition, the reported fires in Kastanía and Trípori around this time, are claimed to have destroyed a great number of Icons. Thus, almost all of the *Anastenáride* Icons ended up in Kostí, a village protected by the mountains. The three oldest Icons which the *Anastenárides* claim to own are each named after the town from where they came, *Kostianós*, from Kostí, *Kastaniotís* from Kastanía and *Triporinós* from Trípori⁴³. The fact that these three Icons were named after actual places is important for two reasons. Firstly, the Icons, by carrying the names of towns where the *Anastenárides* resided, highlight the importance of place for the Greeks of these areas. By naming the Icons after their towns and villages from where they were forced to flee also creates a legitimate proof of their homeland. Secondly, it necessarily politicises the Icons as they signify the Orthodox origin of these towns. The connection between religion, place and identity is highlighted⁴⁴.

The average Icon of the *Anastenárides* is made of wood; it is about thirty centimetres wide and forty centimetres high with a ten centimetres handle on the bottom⁴⁵. One side of the Icon is covered with a linen cloth (*paní*); this is then covered with a thin layer of plaster onto which a figure of a Saint/s is painted. The Icons of Saints Constantine and Helen depict the two Saints, Constantine on the left and Helen on the right, both usually wearing purple or blue robes. They are presented standing on either side of a silver-plated Christian cross. The edges of the Icon, the entire lower portion and the back and the sides are often covered in silver or gold so that only the faces and hands of the figures can be seen. Attached to the Icons by small chains are small metal plaques (*asimiká*), as well as jewellery, coins, bells and ribbons, all of which have been given as offerings (*támata*) to the Saints.

⁴³ These villages were destroyed during the war between Turkey and Russia (1876-1878) and many of the inhabitants settled in Kostí.

⁴⁴ These connections are what have been referred to on a nationalist level in the more recent debate with FYROM over the history of Macedonia.

⁴⁵ In the group with whom I was involved in 1994/5, there were two larger Icons as well as three smaller ones.

Occasionally the Icons need to be repaired or repainted. A qualified *Ayioghráfos* (Icon painter) who removes and replaces the linen cloth (*pani*), from the Icon, and repaints it performs this job. Sometimes the old *pani* is placed on a new Icon, thereby, it is believed, passing on the supernatural power of the Saint, which is already present in the older Icon and has been transmitted through a hereditary line from the Saint. Alternatively, the paint and plaster of an old Icon may be scraped off the original *pani* that is repainted. The scrapings may then be used in the making of a new Icon, in order to pass on the supernatural power and allow this line of power to remain unbroken. Each Icon is often kept in a cloth case (*podhiá*), which covers the back, sides and the outside edges of the front of the Icon. These covers are usually red in colour but can be white or pink. They are removed at the beginning of a festival (*paniyiri*) and kept off until the end of the celebrations.

In a sense, the Icons are *personified*. The handle is referred to as its 'hand' (*héri*); the protective material cloth which is placed over the Icon, as the 'clothes of the grandfather' (*rúkha tú Pappús*), whilst the (*podhiá*) is referred to as its 'apron'. The wood is said to be its 'body' and the ledge or table where they are placed (*stasidhi*), is there for the Icons to 'sit on'. The Icons are also conceptualised and referred to as 'guests' in the house.

The kerchiefs (*Simádhia*) are also used in the ritual. These are often draped over the Icons and also believed to contain supernatural power (*dhinamis*), because of their long association with the Icons. It is through this process of association that the Icons and objects used in the ritualised devotion to the Saints, such as these kerchiefs, that people believe that the Divine power bestowed upon the Saints that can be acquired.

Transference of Grace: the transmission of Divine Power to the *Anastenárides*

Mihail-Dede (1972) states that the *Anastenáride* Icons are joined through a line of transmission of spiritual power (*dhinamis*), a hereditary line, (*klironomikós*), and the *Anastenárides* indeed see themselves as being related to the Saints through the Icons in this same line. The older Icons are conceptualised as having the most power and each is referred to as *Pappús* (Grandfather).

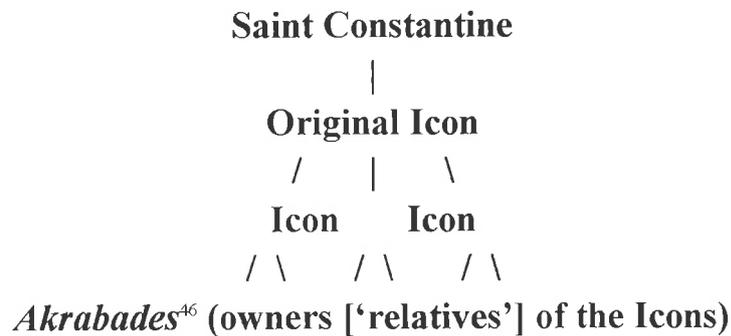


Diagram Three. The Hereditary Line of Spiritual Power⁴⁷

The owners of the Icons (*akrabades*) are believed to be related to the Icons; consequently they are believed to also be related to the Saint⁴⁸. It is through owning an Icon that a person acquires the right to claim a spiritual relation with the Saint and this is a mark of great prestige within the community⁴⁹. This transmission process is particularly important to the *Anastenárides*. Not only do they believe, like all Orthodox Christians, that Icons can carry supernatural power (*dhinamis*), the *Anastenárides* believe also that this power is transferred to them during their dancing in the *Konáki* and on the fire and their protection is a sign of this.

Those who claim to be direct descendants of the first *Anastenárides* claim also to inherit the power of their Icons, which is believed to have descended from the first Icon of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen and, therefore, from Saint Constantine himself. The *dhinamis* of the Saints,

⁴⁶ *Akraba* is a Turkish word meaning relative.

⁴⁷ This diagram was taken from Danforth (1978).

⁴⁸ Danforth (1989:87) claimed that the *Anastenárides* often referred to Saint Constantine as *Pappús* (grandfather). It was not an expression used commonly in my experience in Lagadhás.

⁴⁹ See Chapter Seven for a detailed discussion on the accumulation of symbolic capital as a result of owning and being associated with the Icons.

passed on to their Icons and on to the *Anastenárides*, is transmitted down a line as a substance, hence their use of words such as 'relative' (*akraba*) and 'hereditary' (*klironomikós*). For those newer *Anastenárides* with no familial connection to the first *Anastenárides*, no descent to Kostí or Brodívo and, therefore, no descent to the first Icons, an alternative source of power needs to be identified. One *Anastenáris* (who has no family who are or were *Anastenárides*, nor is he from Eastern Thrace) explained that new *Anastenárides* are first accepted by the Saint and then the *Anastenáride* community. In this way, they are 'touched' by the Saint and endowed with his Grace during the rituals through their association with the Icons. Danforth (1989:197-199) noted that some *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni argued that those who had married into the community and were not *akrabades*, were able to be included in the hereditary line (*klironomikós*) and become *akrabades* through their marriage. In these instances, the line of transmission was extended through the relation, with a husband or wife and his or her families. Danforth (1989:198) also noted, as I did, that many *Anastenárides* did not perceive outsiders becoming *Anastenárides* as a problem and argued that it was the Saint who chose who could be involved and if chosen, then a person would be endowed with the power of the Saint. Danforth argued that these 'new' *Anastenárides* did not threaten the unity and 'family' of the community, but, rather, were seen to 'enrich' the ritual and the work of the Saints. Several *Anastenárides* explained to me that this notion of inheriting the power of the Saints was in itself, insufficient; the Saint must also accept the person. They believe that being the son of an *Anastenáris* does not immediately grant the person a Saint's protection. Rather, they argue, it is folklorists, historians and those who have written about the *Anastenária* who have focused on the importance of the inheritance of supernatural power through a hereditary line stemming from Kostí or Brodívo, rather than through the Saint directly. According to earlier work on the *Anastenárides* (Mihail-Dede 1972-3, Christodoulou 1978), family connections were crucial; that is, it was necessary to be part of an *Anastenáride* family to become an *Anastenáride*. There has been a definite shift or lapse in this belief, as is evident from my field observations. Individuals from non-*Anastenáride* families have become *Anastenárides* and within the group in Lagadhás with whom I stayed, this was not perceived or at least never articulated as being a problem. Importantly, however, it is used as

another means of differentiation between contesting groups and individuals. Those *Anastenárides* who are from *Anastenáride* families and who are oppositionally positioned against the group with whom I stayed, criticised the *Anastenárides* in the group who have no *Anastenáride* 'heritage' and questioned their right to take part in the festivals. I would suggest that the changes in attitudes on the right to become an *Anastenáride* have come about through a dynamic process of reproduction. As the *Anastenáride* community became dispersed due to war, forced relocation, and urban migration, in the process of exogamous marriage and changing environments, they, like most groups, constantly redefined themselves as time went on. Rather than a deliberate, conscious decision being made to widen the boundaries of group inclusion, the community dynamically developed in the way it has. For those groups who have remained relatively more endogamous, I would argue that this may be a result of being more remotely located (that is, small villages as opposed to the large town of Lagadhás). Perhaps their unity is also in deliberate response to the changes occurring in Lagadhás and to the criticisms of lack of authenticity articulated by folklorists and the like⁵⁰.

In 1990, during the split between the group, Tom and Mikháli purchased Icons during a trip to Bulgaria. Tom purchased one Icon, while Mikháli bought three. These Icons have enabled their group to function independently from Thétis (the son of the previous leader at whose house the *Konáki* used to be) and from the other group that is active in Lagadhás⁵¹. The power of these Icons is contested, however, particularly by Thétis, who claims that they are not dancing Icons, which the *Anastenárides* need to dance in the *Konáki* and more importantly, on the fire, but are rather, Icons for the house. Thétis claims that there are five dancing Icons in Greece: one in Mavroléfki, one in Ayía Eléni, one in Kelkini, one owned by the other group in Lagadhás and one owned by him. Tom's group, he insists, does not own a dancing Icon. This is denied by Tom and by the others in his group. During most of the festivals when everyone is in attendance, Tom's group usually has a total of five Icons, three of Saints Constantine and Helen, one of Saint

⁵⁰ It must be noted that in Ayía Eléni, similar in-fighting and disagreements have occurred (Danforth 1989:142-145)

⁵¹ Thétis is now estranged from both groups, choosing not to participate in either of the festivals.

Varvára (Barbara) and one of Mary holding Jesus as an infant. They also have a number of kerchiefs (*Simádhia*). Three of the Icons belong to Mikháli, one to Tom and one to the *Pappús*.

The Icons have a multi-faceted value that, importantly, is also, the source of multifarious symbolic capital⁵². Not only do the Icons transmit the supernatural power of the Saint, which the *Anastenárides* believe enables them to walk on the burning coals unharmed, they also legitimate the ritual as Orthodox Christian (although this is still disputed by the Church) and attract non-*Anastenáride* Orthodox Christians to their celebrations. The age and enormous value of some of their Icons attracts the attention of museums and those individuals, institutions and Government departments involved in their discovery and preservation. For the *Anastenáride* community and particular individuals within it, this multi-faceted quality means that now not only do they own ritually significant religious items, but they are also the owners of highly valuable artefacts. Within the religious field⁵³ the Icons symbolise religious power and authority; those who own them not only have this power transmitted to them, but also the symbolic capital which accompanies it. But as an Orthodox celebration, however, the *Anastenária* is constantly contested. For the *Anastenárides*, their Christian faith is unquestionable but for the Church, it remains problematic.

“Windows to Heaven”: the Orthodox Icons

The word Icon is a Greek word (*ikóna*) which translated literally means ‘image’ or ‘portrait’ and comes from the word *iko*, which means ‘likeness’ or ‘similitude’. As Saint Basil is reported to have said, “What the word transmits through the ear, the painting silently shows through the image and by these two means, mutually accompanying one another — we receive knowledge of one and the same thing”⁵⁴. Orthodox Saints and Bishops are quoted as saying the purpose of the Icons in the Orthodox Church, is “first to create reverence in worship and second to serve as an

⁵² Bourdieu (1993:75) defines symbolic capital as “economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognises, hence legitimate, a ‘credit’ which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees ‘economic’ profits”.

⁵³ The term field is used in Bourdieu’s understanding of the term as outlined in the Introduction.

⁵⁴ Taken from <http://www.csg-i.com/ICONS/over1.htm>.

existential link between the worshipper and God”⁵⁵. The Icons, then, are believed to link the human with the Divine. They are more than a means of arousing devotional emotions, for they actually ‘reveal’ God to His followers. They are perceived to be ‘God-bearing’, that is, to be conveyors of God’s presence, and the Haloes of light which are most often painted around their heads are symbols of His presence. The biblical and historical scenes depicted on the Icons represent aspects of God’s plan of Salvation for the life of the world and again, this is taken to be God acting through these individuals.

The early Christian Church initially objected to representational art, particularly from 726 to 843, when the Iconoclastic controversy developed⁵⁶. Pictures began to be seen as idolatrous; the manufacturing of Icons was banned and a systematic removal and destruction of religious images began. The Iconoclastic controversy lasted approximately 120 years covering two phases, 726-778 and 815-843.

The Iconoclasts argued that since no mortal person had seen God how could He be truthfully depicted? The Iconodules, on the other hand, justified their use of Icons by claiming that they were mediators of God and reminders of divine activity. Through honouring the Icons, people also honoured God: “For the honour paid to the image passes to the original, and he that adores an image adores in it the person depicted thereby” (John of Damascus 246 in Moore 1977). John of Damascus is also quoted as saying

the Saints were filled with the Holy Spirit during their lives. Even after their death the grace of the Holy Spirit lives on inexhaustibly in their souls, in their bodies which are their tombs, in their writings and in their Holy images, not because of their nature, but as a result of grace and divine action (*De imaginibus oratio* 1, 19, p.6 94{1}: 1249CD).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Moore (1977) argues that the Iconoclast controversy occurred because of people abusing the desire to make money from the production of Icons.

The process is perceived to be one of transformation. With the Incarnation, flesh became a vehicle of the spirit (Ware 1978:42)⁵⁷. So too can Icons carry and transmit within a material form the Holy Spirit. The Council of 787 declared Icons to be on the same level as the Bible, both acting as means of God's revelation. In 843 the Council of Constantinople re-established Icon veneration and at the same time inaugurated the Feast of the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy' (on the first Sunday of Lent). After the defeat of the Iconoclasts, the Orthodox Church allowed the veneration of images but their manufacturing had to follow a strict set of guidelines. These were limited almost entirely to paintings in the flat, which suggested a vision of spiritual power rather than a literal dimensional representation (Bowersock 1990).

Within the Orthodox Church the Icons are not taken to be an object of worship in themselves but rather, must be understood as an embodiment of faith and, thus, as a "window to heaven" (Father Psaromatis 1993).

The Icon is regarded instead as a window or mirror reflecting supernatural light and enabling the viewer to experience the power of the Holy from beyond. At the same time, the fixed gaze of Christ and the Saints draws the viewer into their mystical presence (Moore 1977:247).

This understanding supported the eventual establishment of the Icons in the Orthodox Church. However, this belief is clearly contradicted or at least extended in the popular worship of Icons throughout history and in Greece today. The *Anastenárides* are only one example as various Icons across Greece are worshipped for the miraculous ability that they are believed to possess. They are treated as being powerful in their own right⁵⁸. In Greece in 1994 a revered Icon of the Virgin Mary arrived in Cyprus where Greek Cypriots hoped it would assist in finding a solution to the island's twenty-year division. An extract from the *European* newspaper in October 1994 read,

⁵⁷ The Incarnation itself, being the foundation of Iconic theology (Psaromatis 1993). The Orthodox Church denies that the Icons themselves should be worshipped but that they must be seen as an embodiment of faith and as a "window to heaven" (*ibid.*). Many of the Icons in the Orthodox Church, however, are credited with miraculous power.

⁵⁸ See Kenna (1985) for examples of Icon worship.

President Glafkos Clerides and several other political and religious leaders greeted the Axion Estin Icon on its arrival in Larnaca airport in a ceremony fit for a head of State. The Icon, reputed to be able to work miracles, has left its home at Mount Athos monastery in Greece only three times in the past 1,000 years. The Icon is to tour the south of the island for two weeks.

The Holy Procedure of Icon Manufacture

There was, and is still, a set of strict rules as to how the Orthodox Icons should be made. Their manufacture involves strict procedural guidelines, particularly about the use of materials. The larger Icons, mostly found in Churches, are made by gluing several planks of wood together⁵⁹. The wood is then given a base of fish glue, water and ground chalk or alabaster (Kenna 1985:347). The colours used in the painting are of animal, vegetable and mineral extract. “Colours are produced by making various substances, which are extracted, refined and blended by chemical processes that are given symbolic meanings associated with spiritual purification” (Kenna 1985:347 and Stuart 1975:28). Importantly, once produced, these colours are very rarely blended or mixed⁶⁰. The pigments are said to be bound with an extract of egg yolk, water and vinegar and the completed Icon is covered with a mixture of linseed oil boiled up with amber (Kenna 1985:347). Because the Icon is made up from parts of the created world and depicts people and events of religious significance, it symbolises the relationship between the Creator and the created, the Divine and human worlds. “The icon is a microcosm of the relationship between the material world, human beings, and the Divine power believed to have created them all. More than this, it is a sacramental form of communication with that Divine power” (Kenna 1985:348). This process of construction, the materials used and the subject matter, as well as the methods of design, style and procedure, are all strictly according to traditional rules which were documented during the Turkish occupation⁶¹. The oldest known Icons⁶² date from the 6th century AD and the first is believed to be the cloth that Christ wiped His face on, the *Mantilion* (lit. ‘kerchief’).

⁵⁹The glue is made of animal parts; bones, skin and hooves (Stuart 1975:40).

⁶⁰Kenna (1985:348) states that colours cannot be blended or mixed because you cannot blur the individuality of each of the materials used in the making of an Icon. Each item is a contribution to the whole.

⁶¹Dionysios of Fourni wrote one of the best known of these books during Turkish occupation (ca 1670. ca 1745.)

Christ's imprint was left on the cloth, and the painted Icon that resulted from this is considered to be *áhiropoítos* ('not made with hands'). This first Icon is believed to be an authentic copy of the face of Christ, and early Icons are accorded the validity of being copies of the authentic original. The *Anastenárides* have a similar understanding of the way in which supernatural power is transmitted through their Icons and to themselves.

The reproduction of the form, process and substance of this original is considered to be an indication of an Icon's authenticity. Copies must be made according to strict guidelines that enable this authenticity to continue; "...an icon is not just a picture, not simply a copy or a reminder of an original. By representing that original in a particular way it maintains a connection with it, as a translation does with the original text" (Kenna 1985:348)⁶³. This importance of maintaining a link with the original through the process of construction came into question, Kenna (1985) argues, when new materials provided alternative paint substances to those previously used. These new substances are believed to disrupt the connection between image and Grace; they are not used and natural pigments have become the standard medium⁶⁴. In Lagadhás, I was present for only one Icon repair. The Icon in question was one of the oldest and, therefore, most valuable, of their Icons and belonged to Mikháli. The Icon's front needed repainting as it was peeling and fading. There was much discussion over when and by whom the repairs would be carried out. Money was put aside after a May festival for the repairs and the procedures were discussed in detail by several of the *Anastenárides*. When I left Greece the Icon had not yet been repaired.

⁶² The oldest known Icons depict Holy persons, scenes from Holy writings, or both, with the person in the centre and the scenes depicted around the edge.

⁶³Kenna (1985) notes that the Byzantine mode in which hymns and chants are set is said to echo the angelic choirs. In this way the melodies, like the Icons, also received Divine power.

⁶⁴Many Icons available for purchase in shops are made with a paper print, which is glued onto a wood or wood-like substance. The pigments are in line with requirements but natural substances are not used. It seems that the maintenance of the use of natural pigments is the basic criteria, and that using natural substances is not obligatory.

The style of the Icons is deliberately non-representational. The characters and the landscape are based on the Byzantine style, and follow a particular set of criteria⁶⁵. Men are depicted with uncovered heads while females have their heads covered. The nose is the feature from which the rest of the face and body assume their proportions (see Onasch 1977)⁶⁶. While standard bodily proportions are used, some of the characteristics are prescribed and said to express “spiritual qualities” (Kenna 1985:354). For example, hands and fingers are slenderly drawn; faces are given large eyes to reflect an engrossment with spiritual matters; noses are drawn straight and thin; and the mouth is unusually small, indicating austerity and perhaps “silent contemplation” (*ibid.*)⁶⁷. The particular position and gestures depicted will depend on the character in the painting⁶⁸. Although life models are never used, distinctive features of face, form and dress are often incorporated, as well as specific reference to a Saint’s involvement in any particular historical event⁶⁹. The name of the Holy person or scene is painted on the Icon (often in abbreviated form) for identification.

It is through establishing a devotional relationship with an Icon that a devotee is able to establish a link between the Divine and human worlds. There is supposed to be a form of communication between the two. To assist in this communication, the faces of almost all of the characters in the Icons are painted with full or three-quarter face, looking out with a full gaze⁷⁰. This gaze is meant to be met with the eyes of the devotee. An Icon is not to be merely glanced at; the figure demands a response from and an engagement with the observer (Kenna 1985).

⁶⁵Importantly, in Byzantine times, the underlying philosophy of the use of Icons, is the neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus (ca AD 204-70) which had great influence on Christian theology and assumes that spiritual power (*dynamis*) is present in material objects such as Icons (see Kenna 1985:352).

⁶⁶Kenna (1985) discusses the use of the ‘nose modulus’ noticing that it is not explained why it is the nose which is used as opposed to the ears or eyes.

⁶⁷See also Temple (1974).

⁶⁸The most common hand gesture is when the figure’s right hand and the thumb and fourth finger are touching in the gesture of the Blessing. This figure depicted by the hand here is believed to form the Byzantine Greek capital letters, ICXC, the abbreviated form of the name Jesus Christ (Kenna 1985).

⁶⁹For example, the Icons of Saints Constantine and Helen usually have the picture of the Holy Cross in between them, referring to the story of their past. Saint George will also be shown with the dragon that he is said to have slayed, Dhimitris with sword, as he is remembered as a great warrior.

⁷⁰Only the depictions of characters like Judas are painted with a profile. This is because one must not meet the direct gaze of such characters, as he is not a channel of Divine Grace like the Saints (Kenna 1985).

The space and pictures in an Icon are painted in such a way (opening out downward and forward) that the devotee is positioned in the lower physical position of kneeling. Buildings, furniture and features of landscape are represented in both inverse and direct perspectives, perhaps reinforcing the belief that Icons depict the spiritual, not material, world. Uspensky (1976) refers to the use of an “internal viewpoint” by the painter, positioning himself within the painting when fixing the perspective⁷¹. The use of colour and light in the painting of the Icons is also very important. In the Byzantine era, light was considered to be “the very source of goodness” (Rice 1972:203) and so bright colours were used to contrast dark and thereby present the existence of light⁷². The symbolism of God as light Himself, meant that He is present in all Icons, as the creator of colour and the source of light (Kenna 1985:352). Gold, which often figures in the background of Icons in the highlighting and also in the haloes of the figures, was used as the most effective means to achieve this impression; to symbolise the presence of God. The actual use and meaning of particular colours derive their significance from their relationship to gold and to other colours, but also have their own symbolic meanings. Many of these meanings come from the Byzantine Empire and their use in the Byzantine court (Cirlot 1971, Dronke 1972 and Stuart 1975)⁷³. For example, purple and gold signified majesty and when Christ is depicted as King, after the resurrection, He is portrayed in purple and gold.

The Embodiment of Divine Power: the role of the Icons in Orthodox worship

As in the ritual world of the *Anastenárides*, the Icons are key symbols in the wider field of Orthodox worship. The Orthodox Church specifically acknowledges Icons during special ritual celebrations, such as Saint’s name days and key dates in the biblical calendar. The Icons relevant to the particular day are often dressed with flowers and displayed either near the altar or sometimes outside the front of the Church. The Icons are also intrinsically involved in the

⁷¹Uspensky (1976:38, 44) suggests that the use of this viewpoint can be related to the Plotinian position that “the visual impression arises not in the soul of the one who perceives it but in the object itself”. In this way the Icon controls the relationship with the devotee, the onlooker, although the relationship is essentially a reciprocal one.

⁷²In all areas of the visual arts during the Byzantine era, the Plotinian philosophy developed this particular symbolic system for the use of light and colour (Kenna 1985:352).

procedures of Church worship and are seen as an integral part of the liturgy. The common or popular belief is that some Icons are credited with miraculous power and it is generally accepted that “matter can carry grace” (Moore 1977:247)⁷⁴. This belief is reflected in the worship and gift giving to Icons and in the pilgrimages to Icons that are considered miracle making⁷⁵. Recall my previous example of the Icon of the Virgin Mary that was transported around Greece.

Within the Church there is a standard arrangement for the Icons on the Icon Shelf (*Ikonostásis*) of five tiers, each culminating in a central image (diagram two depicts the placement of Icons on the *Ikonostásis* in the Greek Orthodox Church)⁷⁶. In the *Konáki*, the Icons are placed in a line on the Icon table. There appears no hierarchy as in the Church. As in the *Konáki*, during Church service the Icons on the *Ikonostásis* are censed, along with the congregation. Some prayers and chants in the liturgy are also addressed to the Icons. When one enters the Church one must at least kiss the smaller Icon/s, which are placed on the *proskinitáron* (the table or lectern, near the main door), make the sign of the cross (three times) and light a candle. Many people kiss all of the Icons and some will *proskínisi* (lit. ‘act of worship, respect or submission’). This usually involves movements of bowing the head or lying down with one’s forehead touching the ground or kneeling or bending down and touching the floor with one’s hands; all of which are performed three times⁷⁷.

⁷³Many of these meanings were borrowed from the Persian court.

⁷⁴John Campbell (1964:344) also noted that the Orthodox Icons are believed to carry Divine Grace; “...it is a material object” in which it is believed “divine energy is localised”. Campbell also states that it is believed that Divine power is able to enter and “issue from” a variety of material objects; Holy Water, the flame taken from the Church at Easter, incense in the Church and so on.

⁷⁵See Kenna’s description of the miracle-working Icon of the Annunciation discovered on the island of Tinos during the War of Independence. See Kenna (1977, 1992c).

⁷⁶At the top is the row of the Old Testament, the Patriarchs with the central representation of the Trinity, (known as the ‘Worship row’). Then there is a row of Old Testament Prophets with the Incarnation shown centrally by the ‘Virgin of the Sign’. The Icons of Liturgical feasts of Mary and Christ are next, followed by the Angels and Saints standing facing towards Christ who is enthroned in Glory, shown in the central *dhéisis* (lit. ‘prayer’) group of intercession. The lowest tier features the Icons of ‘local significance’ as well as Icons on the three Holy doors showing the Annunciation, the four Evangelists, Church, Fathers, Saints and Archangels. Above the central door is the Communion of the Apostles (Moore 1977:252-3). Moore suggests that the Church itself is an Icon, “reflecting on earth the unity-in-diversity which is the nature of God the Trinity” (*ibid.*: 255).

⁷⁷*Proskínima* translates as ‘pilgrimage’.

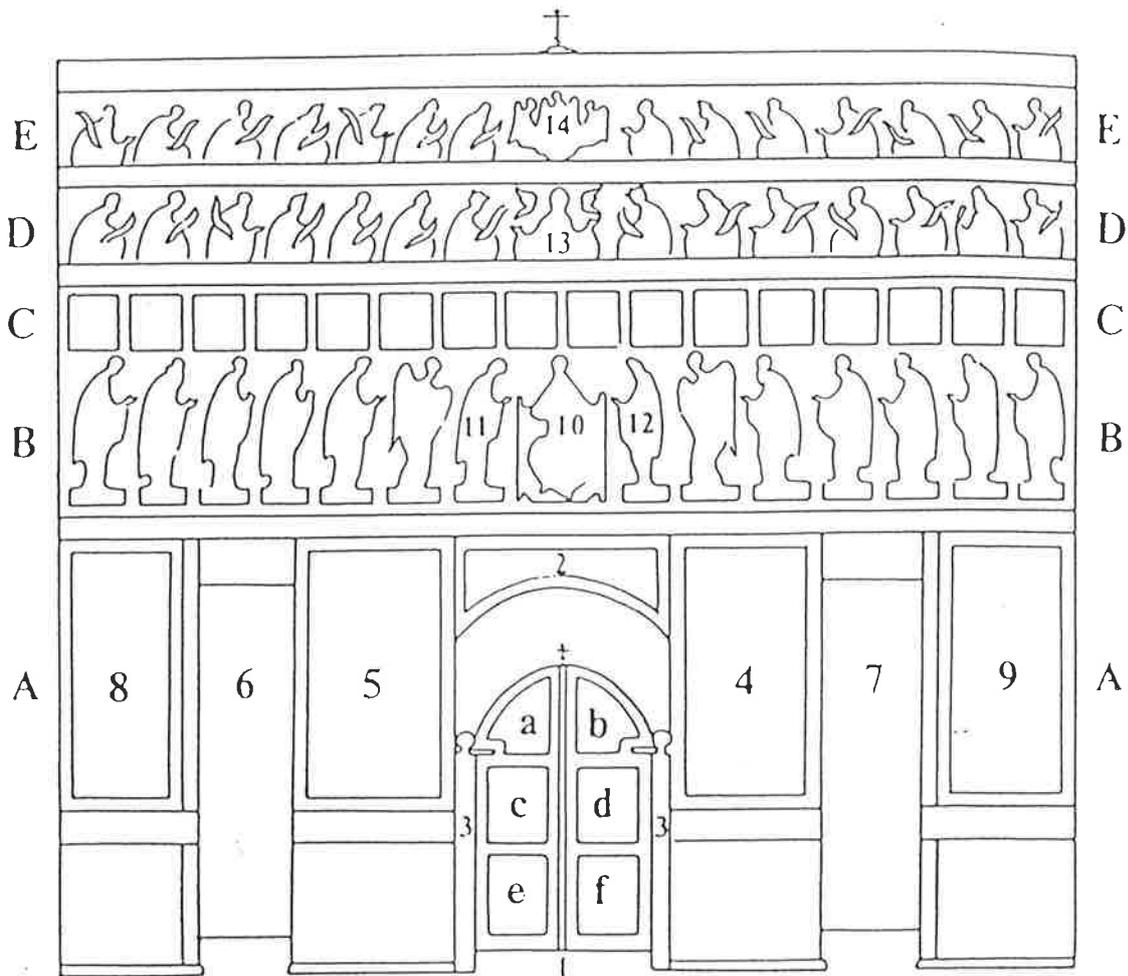


FIG. 3.—An iconostasis. *A*. The worship row: 1, The royal/holy door; *a, b*, The Annunciation; *c, d, e, f*, The four evangelists. 2, The communion of the apostles. 3, The liturgists. 4, Saint of event of the church's dedication. 5, The Panayia. 6, 7, North and south doors, angels or sainted deacons. 8, 9, Other icons. *B*. The Deësis row: 10, 11, 12, Christ, the Panayia, John the Baptist. *C*. Row of the great liturgical feasts. *D*. Row of the prophets: 13, The Virgin of the Sign. *E*. Row of the patriarchs: 14, The Old Testament Trinity.

Diagram Four. The *Ikonoστάσις* (Adapted from L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* 1982, in M. Kenna, "Icons in Theory and Practice: An Orthodox Christian Example" 1985).

Icons are also very important in the house. Du Boulay (1974) noted that having an Icon in the home is an important definition of oneself as not only an Orthodox Greek Christian but is also important in defining oneself as a civilised human being⁷⁸. An Icon shelf is usually kept on an east-facing wall and is most often equipped with an oil lamp, incense, oil and often Holy water. Every house which I entered in Greece, the *Anastenárides* included, had at least one Icon⁷⁹. Mikháli and Tom also both had Icon rooms (small *Konákia*) in their houses where they kept their Icons when they were not required in the main *Konáki*. These rooms were elaborately decorated and had seating on the wall facing the Icon shelf.

While the *Anastenárides* understand themselves and their ritual to be Orthodox Christian, the Orthodox Church questions their legitimation as such. As presented in this Chapter, the ritual life of the *Anastenárides* follows Orthodox practices closely and for the *Anastenárides*, in no way contradicts Orthodox belief. However, the *Anastenárides*' use of their Icons during their ritual performances, particularly during the firewalk, creates the main source of contention for the Church. If the *Anastenárides* were to articulate their ritual as a 'cultural' event, a 'local festival', as opposed to a religious celebration, would the dispute cease? I would suggest not. Without the termination of the use of the Icons in the ritual, I would argue that the Church's position would remain hostile. The power that the Icons yield and represent in Orthodox faith is significant and it is this power that forms the basis of the struggle between the Orthodox Church and the *Anastenárides*⁸⁰. The threats to the legitimacy of the Orthodoxy of the *Anastenária* are important in developing an understanding of the way in which the *Anastenárides* negotiate their identities. As Meliki (1994) states, "Greekness and Orthodoxy are the two most important elements of the tradition of the *Anastenaria*".

⁷⁸During her fieldwork an informant told Du Boulay (1974) that a house without an Icon is akin to an animal shelter, suggesting that Icons are important in distinguishing what she refers to as the nature versus culture dichotomy. Not only are they symbols of Christian identity and more specifically, Orthodox Christian identity, but also they define one as a Greek. Having an Icon in one's home symbolises these identities and also distinguishes one as separate from an animal.

⁷⁹For more detail on family Icons, see Friedl (1962:41), Hirschon (1981:83, 1983:117), Rushton (1983) and Pavlides and Hesser (1986).

⁸⁰See Chapter Seven for a discussion on the manipulation, transference and accumulation of the symbolic capital that the Icons carry.



The following Chapter returns to the ritual celebration of the *Anastenária* and the role of the Icons within it. Detailing the format and content of the main celebrations, I address all aspects of the ritual and discuss the most talked about part of the ritual, the firewalk. I develop a discussion of the way in which the firewalk is understood by the *Anastenárides* and by others. I engage in a reflection on material written about altered states of consciousness and the position of the body-in-the-world to develop an understanding of the way in which identities are produced and generated by and for, the *Anastenárides*.

3

Firewalking for the Saint: the ritual performance of the *Anastenária*

Introduction

This Chapter details the ritual life of the *Anastenárides*. I begin with an outline of the *Anastenárides*' ritual calendar, pointing out the main days of celebration and their significance, and locate the ritual within the wider frame of Greek Orthodox celebration and worship. I continue by introducing the central ritual, that of May 21; the celebration of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen, and describe in detail the events of the festival over a period of four to five days. I acknowledge the ritual's position as a tourist attraction and through my field notes, reveal the tourist impact on the ritual performance and the town. The *Anastenária*'s implication in the tourist industry in Greece has an enormous impact not only on the actual ritual performance, but also on the *Anastenárides*' understanding of their ritual, their community and themselves. I signify the importance of the ritual for the *Anastenárides* and present the various meanings it holds for them.

I outline the involvement of the wider community and indicate the elements of the ritual that cause conflict with the Orthodox Church. Being Orthodox and participating in their ritual are both central to the *Anastenárides*' conception of who they are. These two elements, however, are placed into confrontation with each other by the Orthodox Church's claims that the ritual is un-Orthodox and in fact is idolatrous and pagan. An examination of the confrontation between the Church and the *Anastenárides* is crucial, therefore, to develop an understanding of how the *Anastenárides* negotiate their identities amongst such contradictions.

Moving away from a Geertzian form of analysis, I argue that the meanings that are produced and felt during the ritual are dependent on context¹. The internal symbolic form of the ritual, therefore, is internal to the form. That is, the ritual is to be understood internally, not simply through the external social and political situations in which they occur. This positions my work away from a symbolic representational kind of analysis². Instead, I examine the ritual as being centred on the body, as a site where individuals understand and experience the world. I argue that it is through the body that understanding springs. The rite, as centred on the body (through trance and firewalking), enables a continual process of reorigination of the symbolic universe. It is enduringly made present and unified through the body³.

I make use of previous accounts of the ritual to critically examine its representation as a healing ritual; I examine particularly, the work of Loring Danforth (1989) and make a systematic comparison of the differences between his work and mine. I consider the themes of transformation and healing to argue that while the ritual may have transformative possibilities, it cannot be regarded solely as a healing ritual⁴. I acknowledge other Greek religious celebrations, particularly those marking Saints' days, and argue that the *Anastenária* is primarily a religious celebration. In its performance, however, an array of meanings and significances, some individual, others collective, are revealed⁵.

¹ Geertz (1973a:3-30) spoke of culture being constituted by "socially established structures of meaning" that are embodied in systems of symbols.

² See Durkheim (1915) who worked in a symbolic representational framework of analysis.

³ I would like to acknowledge Bruce Kapferer's positive and helpful comments on this Chapter and the following Chapter.

⁴ Danforth (1989:50) argues that the *Anastenária* is a healing ritual: "The Anastenaria is concerned with healing in the broadest sense. It is both a religious ritual and a form of psychotherapy".

⁵ The way in which I explain the multifaceted meanings of the ritual here is through utilising Bourdieu's notions of field, capital and habitus. As each *Anastenáride* enters the ritual with a particular history, life experience and understanding, they will each have individual experiences and understandings of the ritual and the ritual performance. Similarly, their experiences and understandings may shift with each ritual performance.

The second section of Part One examines the phenomenon of firewalking. I situate what is regarded to be the most famous aspect of the ritual, the *Anastenárides*' ability to walk on fire unharmed, within multi-disciplinary explanations of this phenomenon. Theoretically, I consider the mind/body relationship and argue that reflection on the phenomenon of firewalking involves an examination of the relationships between mind, body and culture. As firewalking is a central part of the ritual and, more importantly, is considered by others to be the most important element, it must be related in some way, to the construction of the *Anastenárides*' identities. I link, therefore, a discussion of the relationship between the mind, body and society to understand the ability to walk on fire unharmed and also to the construction of identity to show how walking on burning coals is an integral part of how the *Anastenárides* are identified by others and, therefore, also by themselves.

I follow this discussion with an examination of notions of trance and altered states of consciousness. I refer to the generalised use of such terms to argue that it is not sufficient to claim that the *Anastenárides* are experiencing trance during the ritual performance, as this denies specific contexts and personal particularities. I develop notions of consciousness and self-consciousness, arguing that in the ritual performance, in different degrees, the *Anastenárides* experience shifts in consciousness. I argue that their selves shift as their consciousness shifts. I reflect on the position of the body during these shifts in consciousness, reflecting on the body's relationship with the mind and the social world. I locate this distinctiveness within the ritual and community duties that have been identified as being characteristic of the *Anastenárides*. In particular, I examine the claim that *Anastenárides* are able to interpret dreams (see Mihail-Dede 1972-3, Christodoulou 1978, Danforth 1989) and position this phenomenon in the wider ritual life of the community. I detail transformations of the ritual, noting that several ritual duties and community services which have been attributed to the *Anastenárides*, appear to be either no longer performed, or performed infrequently.

Linked to a discussion of trance is what Kapferer (1979b, 1991) described as the “aesthetics” of ritual⁶. In the following Chapter, I examine the significance of music, song and dance in the ritual performance and consider particularly their role in the creation of altered states of consciousness. I argue that altered states of consciousness experienced by the *Anastenárides* during their ritual performances are significant to the way in which they experience themselves and are, therefore, significant to the construction of their identities. Perhaps through their ritual performances, the *Anastenárides* are able to negotiate their possibly conflicting identities. The music and song, as integral parts of the ritual and significant in the achievement of altered states of consciousness are, therefore, important to this discussion.

The Ritual Cycle of the *Anastenárides*

The ritual cycle of the *Anastenárides* is closely linked with the ecclesiastical calendar of the Orthodox Church⁷. They celebrate (*kamúne paniyíri*; lit. ‘do a celebration’) not only Saint Constantine and Saint Helen’s day (May 21), but also several other important dates on the Orthodox calendar. For example, they meet on the October 26, Saint Dhimítris’ day, which is also the traditional beginning of the agricultural year⁸. It is on this day that money is collected to purchase the sacrificial animals on May 21⁹. The *Anastenárides* also meet on New Year’s Eve for the festival of Saint Vasílios and on January 18 for Saint Athanásios. On this day, the animals to be sacrificed in May are chosen and

⁶Kapferer (1976, 1991, and 1997) in his examination of healing rites and demonic possession in Sri Lanka writes of the “aesthetics of healing”.

⁷The Orthodox Church in Greece follows the Gregorian calendar (since 1920) which is currently thirteen days ahead of the Julian calendar. In Kostí they remain on the old Julian calendar so they actually celebrate the name day of Constantine and Helen in June. This enables the *Anastenárides* residing in Greece to also attend the festival in Kostí.

⁸ Saint Dhimítris’ day is particularly significant in the north of Greece, as he is the patron Saint of Thessaloniki.

bought¹⁰. Other celebrations include the first day of Lent; Clean Monday (*kathari dheftéra*); May 2, the Deposition of the Relics of Saint Athanássios, when the *Anastenárides* traditionally clean the Holy water well¹¹; on July 27 they honour Saint Pantelimon (the Patron Saint of Brodívo); on August 6 they celebrate the Transfiguration of the Saviour and on August 15, they honour the Dormition of the Mother of God¹². These are all significant dates in Orthodox worship. Although the firewalk is traditionally performed on May 21 and 23, in 1994 and 1995 the *Anastenárides* with whom I was involved ritually firewalked on St Athanássios' Day and for Saint Pantelimon¹³. The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás also meet at the *Pappús*' house on December 4 to honour Saint Varvára (Barbara). While traditionally this occasion has not been regarded as significant by the *Anastenárides*, the *Pappús* explained that he had a dream one night where the Saint came and spoke to him. He saw this as a sign and after having an Icon of her made, promised to honour her day (*eortí*¹⁴) every year.

⁹As the *Anastenárides* have a bank account where collected money is kept, it is from there that they take the money for the animals. These days, money does not have to be formally collected.

¹⁰Saint Vasilios (born 330AD) is most famous for his writings. Born of a very Holy family (his paternal grandmother, elder sister and brother are Saints), Vasilios toured Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia, living a monastic life. He became a spiritual father, writing the rules of monasticism, which most Orthodox monks follow today. On the First of January, his name day, Orthodox Greeks cut and share a *Vasilópita* (Saint Basil's cake). This cake is baked with a coin inside of it and it is believed that the person whose piece of cake contains the coin will have good luck that year. Saint Athanássios was once the Archbishop of Alexandria and is famous for his knowledge of the Scriptures and his defence of the Christian faith. He is most famous for his defence of the belief in the Holy Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus which was contested by Arius who argued that Jesus was not God but a mere creature of God.

¹¹The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás do not have a Holy water well, but there is one in Ayía Eléni.

¹²Saint Pantelimon was born in North-Western Asia Minor, to a pagan father and a Christian mother. A pious Christian, Pantelimon studied medicine and became a doctor where he combined prayer and medicine to heal. It is believed that he rarely charged for his services. One story tells of a blind man who came to Pantelimon for help. Realising that he could not help the man with his medicine, he prayed to God to restore the man's sight. A miracle occurred and the man was able to see. The story claims that this miraculous event so annoyed the pagan authorities of Nikomedhia in Asia Minor that they after tortured both men and eventually beheaded them.

¹³An *Anastenáris* from another town told me that it was wrong to have a firewalk on Saint Pantelimon's Day. Similarly, an *Anastenáris* who is no longer part of the group in Lagadhás stated that a fire walk should only be performed for Saints Constantine and Helen.

¹⁴*Eortí* translates as 'festival'; 'holiday'; 'name-day'.

However, the celebration of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen on May 21, is the main date on the *Anastenáride*'s calendar and carries over a period of about a week¹⁵. The main days of celebration are from May 20th to the 23rd but in Lagadhás, the *Anastenárides* begin to meet at the *Konáki* four or five nights prior to the 21st. An agreement between the *Anastenárides* and the Bishop stipulates that the *Anastenárides* are required to wait until the Church bells signify the completion of the Church service before they commence their own celebrations. While the local people cite respect for the Church I was told that the main reason for this is that it also enables people to attend Church and not miss out on the *Anastenáride*'s celebrations and vice versa¹⁶.

“*Kaló Panaiíri, That Is How It Has To Be*”: the festival of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen

The *Anastenárides* are most widely known for their celebrations held on the name day of their patron Saints, Constantine and Helen. This festival on May 21 is the focus of their religious year. Preparations are made months in advance. They involve such matters as the organisation of the actual performance, where it is to be held, what is required if it is to be outside, the need for any special seating or fences for spectators, the buying of the animals for sacrifice, as well as the preparation of food, candles, incense and oil. It is this celebration (*paniyíri*¹⁷) which is documented by the media and appears on television and in newspapers' photographs.

¹⁵ All of the following material on the ritual refers to the ritual celebrations of one particular *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás for the years 1994 and 1995 unless attributed to personal recollection.

¹⁶ A theologian from Thessaloníki explained to me that most Orthodox Christians prefer popular religious worship and so celebrations outside of the Church were always more popular (with the exception of Easter which is a service which involves much congregational participation). This was why, she argued, the Church made the *Anastenárides* wait until the completion of the Church service before beginning their ritual celebrations. The Church feared that the congregation would choose to go to the *Anastenária* instead of Church if they were on at the same time.

¹⁷ *Paniyíri* is translated as 'patronal festival; fair'.

I continue with an account of the preparation and performance of the main festival on

May 21st:

*A few weeks before the main festival of May 21, (1994), some of the **Anastenárides** made the journey to Meliki, a town near Véria, (approximately 78 kms. from Lagadhás) to the house of Mikháli (his parents live there as he himself lives in Thessaloníki) where his Icons are kept. The trip is made in order to collect Mikháli's Icons and take them to the **Konáki** in Lagadhás. Tom brought his lyre and incense was brought to cense the Icons and the people. When they arrived at Mikháli's house (I had come alone by bus and was already there) Tom began playing the lyre and incense was burnt and held by another **Anastenáris** as everyone proceeded inside the house. Once inside we all moved into the small room where the Icons were kept. Tom continued to play the lyre while everyone greeted the Icons. Some of the **Anastenárides** danced in front of the Icons as Tom played. After about a half-hour Tom slowed the music and the dancing ceased. For a short time afterwards the **Anastenárides** remained in the **Konáki** talking about the coming festival (**paniyíri**). Everyone then congregated in the main living room off the Icon room, where Mikháli's mother served us coffee and sweets. After an hour or so of conversation, the **Anastenárides** returned to the Icon room where Mikháli, assisted by two **Anastenárides**, proceeded to take the kerchiefs (**Simádhia**) and some of the smaller Icons, from a large wooden box at the foot of the Icon shelf. He banged on the lid of the box three times, crying "**Ánde**" (come on) before opening the lid. This was explained as a way of awakening the Icons and kerchiefs (**Simádhia**) from their sleep and activating their supernatural power. As each **Simádhia** and Icon were removed one by one from the box, Mikháli shook them, rattling the chains and coins hanging from them (**asimiká**, [lit. 'silverware'] plaques, which had been given as offerings, gifts, **támata**¹⁸). He kissed them before carefully placing them on the shelf or over the lid of the box. He began to wrap the Icons carefully in their covers (**podhiá**)¹⁹ or in protective sheets. After he had finished, the **Anastenárides** discussed the plans for this year's festival. Conversation centred around the location of*

¹⁸*Táma* translates as 'vow' or 'offering'. I was told that women often used to give a piece of their hair as a *táma*, instead of money or jewellery.

¹⁹ *Podhiá* literally translates as 'apron', 'overall'.

the performance for this year and the discussion became a little heated when there were disagreements over whether or not the fire should be held outside of the **Konáki** or in the centre of the town. After about an hour, when all of the Icons had been wrapped carefully and dressed in their covers (*podhiá*), Mikháli shouted "Good festival, we will do" (*Kaló Paniyíri, thá kánume*) and everyone bid farewell to their hosts. In procession, the **Anastenárides**, with Tom playing the lyre and Pávlos holding the incense, took the Icons to the car where they were driven to the **Konáki** in Lagadhás.

After arriving at the **Konáki** in Lagadhás, the Icons were accompanied inside by the playing of the lyre and burning incense and were placed on the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*) next to the Icons belonging to other **Anastenárides** which had been brought to the **Konáki** a few days earlier. The kerchiefs (*Simádhia*) were positioned around the Icons on the shelf. That evening those **Anastenárides** who live in Lagadhás gathered at the **Konáki** for a few hours, talking and dancing. Tom slept the next two nights at the **Konáki** so as to ensure the safety of the Icons²⁰.

On the 20th of May, the day prior to the festival of Saints Constantine and Helen, the **Anastenárides** (from Lagadhás and Thessaloniki and other towns) gathered in the new **Konáki** in Lagadhás. The **Konáki** had had its finishing touches; rugs had been put on the floor and along the benches which ran around the edges of the room, the curtains had been finished and put up and the small room off of the main room had been filled with two beds, a sideboard and a table. The fireplace had wood neatly stacked inside it, although not lit as it was the beginning of summer, and there were oil lamps around the room²¹. As each person entered the **Konáki**, they greeted the Icons, first lighting a candle or two and then moving along the *stasídhi*, stopping at each Icon and *Simádhia*, crossing themselves three times and kissing the Icon (usually the hands or feet of the person depicted). Then they greeted each other and sat around for the first few hours talking and drinking coffee. Younger **Anastenárides** kissed the hands of the older **Anastenárides**, regardless of gender, as a sign of respect²². Throughout the afternoon people came and

²⁰As I have noted, some of the Icons are extremely old and are worth a great deal of money. During the festivals when the Icons are at the *Konáki*, someone always sleeps there in case the Icons are stolen.

²¹ This *Konáki* had been recently built and was central to the split in the *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás.

²²It is common practice for Orthodox Christians to kiss the hand of a Priest on greeting them.

went, lighting candles and greeting the Icons, some of them stopping for a coffee and talking to the *Anastenárides*. As evening drew near, Tom and the other musicians who had come from Thessaloniki began to play²³. Tom and Sotiris played the lyre (*líra*) and Panayiotis played the two-sided drum (*dhaúli*). Some of them sang along to *MikroKostandínos* and some got up to dance²⁴. The *Pappús*, who at this stage was sitting on a chair at the end of the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*), got up to give those dancing a kerchief (*Simádhi*). Each *Anastenáride* went into the dance differently; some stood for a while before moving closer to the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*) and dancing, while others got straight up from their chairs and began immediately to dance. This continued for several hours, the dancing intermitted with breaks of about 30-50 minutes. A crowd had begun to gather by about 5.30 p.m. and the *Konáki* was filling up. Sotiris began playing the *gháidha* (very similar to a bagpipe) and the music began to intensify. More *Anastenárides* began dancing and the *Pappús* removed all the covers from the Icons, carefully folding them and placing them at the end of the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*)²⁵. As he removed them, he censed the Icons. Once the covers were removed, the *Pappús* handed an Icon some of the *Anastenárides* who were dancing. As they received the Icon, they kissed its handle and the hand of the *Pappús*, before taking hold of it. Once in their arms, they either cradled the Icon, its face always exposed, or held it away from them or above their heads as they danced. As the night proceeded the music and the dancing became more intense, some of the *Anastenárides* clapping, hissing and yelling out as they moved across the floor. By about 10p.m. many spectators and friends had left and the music began to slow down. By 11p.m. the dancing ceased and by 11.30 the last of us said goodnight to the Icons and to each other before returning to our homes.

Saturday 21st May

²³See the following Chapter for more detail on the music and songs of the *Anastenárides*.

²⁴*MikroKostandínos* (Small Constantine) is a Thracian Folk song sung by the *Anastenárides* during their rituals. For detail on the lyrics, music and significance of the song to the *Anastenárides* see Chapter Four.

²⁵All of the Icons are fitted with a cover of red velvet, which protects them from being damaged. Red is a significant and sacred colour in the Orthodox Church, symbolising the blood of Christ. It was also a regal colour in Byzantine times. Danforth (1978:143-145) also noted the significance of the colour red. He writes that red is a colour of salvation, joy and re-birth, referring to the painting of eggs with red paint at Easter time. He also refers to the popular belief that the colour red may protect one from the 'Evil Eye' and, in particular, cites the old practice of painting the fingers of the Bride and Groom red on the Saturday prior to their wedding. This was said to protect them from the 'Evil Eye' and bring them good luck. Danforth (*ibid.*) also refers to the traditional colours worn by Brides in the north of Greece; red, black and white. Importantly, the sacred kerchiefs owned by the *Anastenárides* are red.

When I arrived at the **Konáki** early the next morning, the animals that were going to be sacrificed (**kurbáni**, but before being sacrificed, they are referred to as **bikhádhi**) were already outside, tied up against the sidewall: a black calf, a black kid and a white lamb²⁶. The animals' heads had been dressed with fresh flowers and a small white candle positioned in the middle. We sat outside in the morning sun chatting, until the Church service was over. A few of the women (Tassía, Dhóra and Tom's mother) went to the Church service. Just after 11a.m. when the Church bells rang, signalling the end of the service, the **Anastenárides** made a procession outside with the Icons, to a thin table (similar to the **stasídhi**) which had been erected at the front of the **Konáki** earlier that morning. Once the Icons had been placed onto the table, the **Pappús** and **Mimos** who were holding large white candles censed the Icons and the congregation²⁷. Tom continued to play the lyre. Everyone followed the **Pappús** around to the side of the **Konáki** where the animals were and watched as the **Pappús** lit the candles on top of the animals' heads. He censed them and made the sign of the cross over them. We then made our way back to the Icons for the blessing of the water (**Ayiasmós**). The **Pappús** made the sign of the cross three times with the handle of each Icon, starting with the largest Icon, placed in the bowl of water that had been placed on the ground in front of the Icons. The water was also censed. This sanctified the water, as it is believed that the Icons contain the sacred power (**dhínamis**) of the Saints and so in this way, the power is transmitted physically from the Icons to the water. The **Pappús** sprinkled the water over the **Anastenárides** and the spectators and then people proceeded one by one to wash their hands in the Holy water. As each person approached many placed some money on the Icon Shelf (**stasídhi**) or in the water. No one actually immersed their hands in the water but, instead, Pétra poured the water over the hands of each person who then could also splash his or her face and arms if desired. When everyone had finished, the **Pappús** returned to the animals and sprinkled them with the blessed water.

²⁶The animals, which are sacrificed at the *Anastenária*, are referred to as the *kurbáni*. *Kurbáni* is translated as 'common food', 'common sacrifice' (see Bottomley and Raftis 1984). I found the Turkish word 'kurban' to mean 'sacrifice' or 'victim' (*The Oxford Turkish-English Dictionary*). Danforth (1978) also states that the word '*kurbáni*' comes from the Turkish word, which denotes, 'to sacrifice'. See also Georgourdi (1989) who writes about animal sacrifice in modern Greece and also uses the word '*Kurbáni*', only she uses the spelling, '*Kourbáni*'.

²⁷Large white candles are used in the Orthodox Church during special celebrations.

The butcher, who had been preparing himself during the blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*), plunged his knife into the head of the calf, on its forehead, between its eyes. The animal was lowered onto the ground; the wound positioned so the blood ran into the hole which had been dug earlier. One man in the town said that this was so animals would not consume the blood. Mikháli, however, told me that it was symbolic that the blood of the sacrificed animal would bleed into the earth and go up to the heavens for the Saint²⁸. The Icons were taken by procession inside and returned to their shelf (*stasídi*) while the butcher killed the other two animals in the same way.

During the afternoon the men (mainly the younger *Anastenárides* and including the musicians) cut up the meat from the animals (which had been skinned and hung up by the butcher) into small portions to be cooked and divided amongst the *Anastenárides*. The women prepared some food for lunch and the meal that we would be having later that night. Others sat around talking, and a few of us went for a walk.

Late afternoon everyone gathered inside the *Konáki* again and the musicians began to play. There were thirty-minute intervals of dancing separated by rest periods. As the evening went on, a huge crowd gathered in and around the *Konáki*. Fences had been erected around the periphery of the yard and police started to arrive to organise the crowd. The music intensified, and the periods of dancing extended. The *Konáki* became so crowded that members of the Folklore Society started moving people out after they had greeted the Icons. Everyone except for family and close friends of the *Anastenárides* (including myself) were asked to remain outside, behind the fences. At about 8 p.m. the fire was lit. Rénos had been preparing the fire early in the evening; choosing the best branches and piling them in a crisscross manner until it stood in a pile of about three metres high.

The *Pappús* and two members of the Folklore Society, holding large white candles, and accompanied by the musicians, led the *Anastenárides* outside. The *Anastenárides* carried the kerchiefs (*Simádhia*). The musicians played the "tune of the road" (*ó skopós tú dhrómu*) and had *Simádhia* tied around their necks.

²⁸ Georgourdi (1989:190) notes that commonly in animal sacrifice in Greece, the blood of the animal is drained into a hole in the ground and buried along with all of the inedible parts. She writes that this was to prevent any animals from eating any of the meat of the sacrificial animals, which was considered bad luck.

The **Pappús** censed and blessed the wood and then lit the fire with his candle. Once the fire was lit, they returned inside the **Konáki**. While the fire burned the **Anastenárides** continued to dance and sing inside. By this time the block was full and there were people everywhere. **Rénos** spread the coals as they burned, creating an even covering and by about 10p.m. the **Pappús** announced that it was time for the firewalk.

In procession, the **Anastenárides** came outside. The **Pappús** and **Dhimitris** the head of the Folklore Society, led, followed by the musicians and then the other **Anastenárides**. They circled the fire three times in an anticlockwise direction²⁹. Those who were going to enter the fire had their shoes and socks off and the men had their trouser legs rolled up. **Mimos**, who was holding the largest Icon, made the sign of the cross three times over the fire with the handle of the Icon. The **Anastenárides** positioned themselves around the fire in a circle and then one by one after **Mimos**, they began to cross the bed of coals. There were twelve of them in total who entered the fire that night. Some entered together, some danced around the coals or moved back and forth on one spot. **Pétros** danced energetically on the coals, his arms outstretched as the spectators crammed to see. After about twenty minutes the coals had been extinguished and the **Anastenárides** moved around to the edge of the fire. The music changed and they took hands and began to dance around the fire, some of their family members joining in³⁰. After circling the fire once or twice, they proceeded inside as the spectators applauded.

Once inside, the **Anastenárides** continued to dance for another thirty or so minutes. The musicians played **MikroKostandínos** and everyone sang along together, shouting the words. The mood was one of celebration. Once the music stopped and the dancing ceased, those **Anastenárides** who had walked in the coals went and washed their feet and replaced their shoes. The spectators dispersed and we prepared the table for the meal. A large cloth was put on the floor in front of the Icon shelf (**stasídhí**), surrounded by cushions for us to sit on. The food was placed in the middle of the cloth and **Pétra** and **Pávlos** served the meal after the **Pappús** had made the blessing. When the meal was finished and the plates blessed we cleared the floor and the

²⁹Moving anticlockwise is common in Greek dancing and the *Mantilátos Khorós* ('Kerchief Dance') which they perform after the firewalk, is performed in an anti clockwise direction.

³⁰They danced the *Mantilátos Khorós*.

*Anastenárides sang and danced again. Later in the night, small bags of sultanas and chickpeas (**stafídhēs ké straghália**) were handed out and the money collected from the candles and given as offerings was counted and allocated accordingly³¹. At about midnight most of us returned to our houses, the **Pappús** remaining at the **Konáki** to safeguard the Icons.*

*The next day everyone again gathered at the **Konáki**. Some of the male **Anastenárides** went visiting a number of houses in the town with the kerchiefs (**Simádhia**). Many people of the town welcomed the **Anastenárides** into their homes to bless their houses and in return, they offered them coffee and sweets and a monetary offering to the kerchiefs (**Simádhia**)³². Later in the day the **Anastenárides** danced and sang together. Lunch was served informally in the kitchen, a few people eating at a time. There was no firewalk on the Sunday and so there were no tourists present. On the Monday night another firewalk was held, (no animals were sacrificed) and at the end of the night we shared another meal and celebrated the completion of another festival (**paniyíri**).*

³¹ This gift of sultanas and chickpeas, which also often contained small lollies, was referred to as *kérasma* (lit. 'treat').

³² When Lagadhás was smaller and prior to the Balkan wars in Kostí, the kerchiefs (*Simádhia*) and the Icons were taken around to every house in the village. As the kerchiefs and the Icons are believed to be Holy and carry supernatural power (*dhinamis*) it was accepted that they could bless the homes which they visited.

Elements of the Ritual: the *Kurbáni* sacrifice or sacrilege?

Reading the folklorists, one has the impression that the practice of blood sacrifice was almost exclusively limited to the Greek populations of north-east Thrace and Asia Minor prior to their forced departure from these lands imposed by historical vicissitudes in 1914 and 1922 — a custom that the refugees would continue to practice in their new homes in Greece (Georgourdi 1989:259 n.1)³³.

Ideally, the animals used in the *Anastenária* should have particular characteristics; the animals should be white, over three years of age, preferably seven, but definitely no more than nine (Mihail-Dede 1973). As well, its body should be unblemished and not tagged or interfered with in any way. Danforth notes that the lamb had to be black and male and “unlike other newborn lambs it was not weaned from its mother until it was taken to be sacrificed by the Anastenarides the following May” (1989:67)³⁴. In 1994 a black calf, a black kid and a white lamb were sacrificed; in 1995 a white kid, a black calf and a white lamb³⁵. One story tells of earlier days, when the *Anastenárides* would choose a baby animal and leave it in the mountains to graze until the time of the festival. During that time, wolves or other animals never touched it and the animal grew happily and healthily. On the day of the Saint’s celebration, the animal would come down from the mountain unshepherded to the place where it would be killed. The story claims that the animal

³³ Georgourdi (1989) acknowledges that this assumption made by folklorists is inaccurate, as animal sacrifice actually appears to be widespread in Greece, Mihail-Dede (1973:160) also noted that animal sacrifice “is a widespread practice in Thrace”. John Campbell (1964) explained how the Sarakatsani sacrificed sheep (*thisiázun* [lit ‘sacrifice’], *kanún* [‘do’]) on certain important feast days; for saint Dhimítris and Saint George, at Easter, Christmas and also for the Dormition of the Mother of God; “Other occasions when sheep are slaughtered are similarly religious as well as social events, weddings, baptisms, or the dedication (*tazimo*) of an animal to a Saint if men or sheep fall sick” (Campbell 1964:352). Interestingly, the Sarakatsani also used the word ‘Kurbáni’. He notes that preferably, the animal sacrificed should be male and “clean”, meaning a lamb or a ram, which has not mounted a ewe. Campbell also wrote that it is believed that the sacrificial sheep knows its fate to which it goes willingly, without a struggle (*ibid.*). This parallels the stories I heard regarding the sacrificial animals in the *Anastenária*. Also like the *Anastenárides*, Campbell noted that the Sarakatsani believed that those who share in the flesh of the sacrificed animal are sharing blessed meat; “are participating in a form of sanctified communion” (*ibid.*). It is wide practice in Greece to kill animals on feast days and share the meat with family and friends.

³⁴ See Georgourdi (1989) for a discussion on the types of animals used in sacrifice in Greece and any particular characteristics deemed favourable or otherwise. She also describes the dressing of the animals with flowers and candles prior to sacrifice and their function as a gift, a *táma*.

³⁵ Danforth (1989:68) writes that once during the festival in Lagadhás they sacrificed a young bull instead of a lamb.

never struggled because it knew it was an offering to the Saint³⁶. People still say that the placing of a garland of flowers on the animals' head signifies re-birth³⁷.

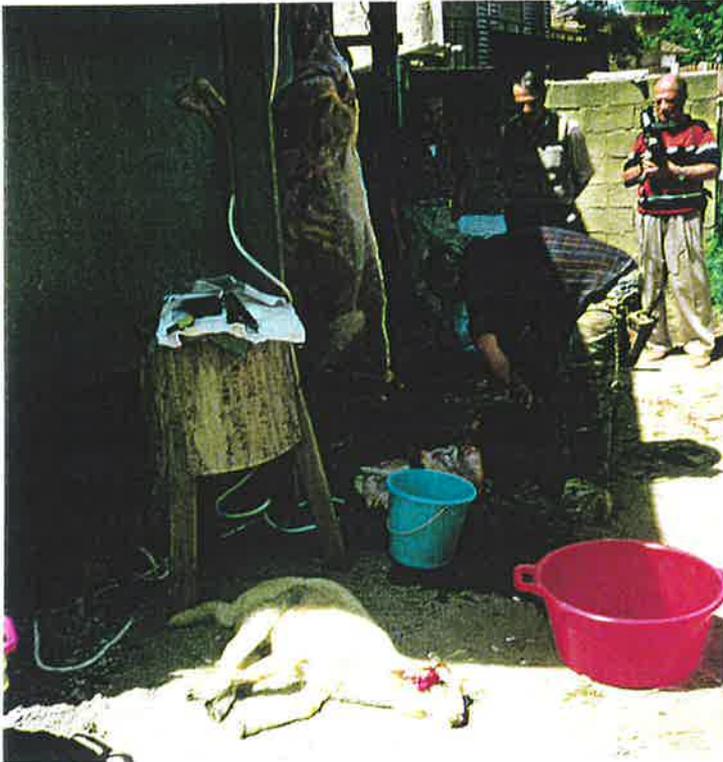
The animal is sacrificed for the "good of all" (as explained by an *Anastenáris*) and is seen to bring good luck. After it has been killed and the body cut up, a small amount of the meat is given to each of the *Anastenáride* families as well as others involved in the ritual. I was also given a small amount. The rest is cooked and eaten in the *Konáki* at the end of the night³⁸. Because of its association with Saint Constantine, the meat is believed to be beneficial to those who receive it. It signifies the reciprocal nature of the relationship between humans and Saints, between the *Anastenárides* and Saint Constantine: "To be sure, the Kourbani establishes a communication between men on the one hand and God and his saints on the other (Georgourdi 1989:199).

In my observation of the ritual in 1994 and 1995, the animal sacrifice was very low key. There were few spectators: many of the *Anastenárides* did not participate in or observe this part of the ritual. I am not suggesting that this element of the ritual has become unimportant but perhaps is underplayed in the same way that the *Anastenárides* do not like to over emphasise the fire walking; these are elements of the ritual that are associated with the pagan.

³⁶In 1994 and 1995 when I witnessed the killing of the animals, there was a definite struggle by all of the animals.

³⁷On May 1 many Greek houses have a wreath made of fresh flowers placed on the front door. I was often told that this is to signify and celebrate the beginning of Spring; re-birth.

³⁸The meat is boiled, not roasted. Georgourdi (1989) notes that boiled food was often considered to have more value, particularly if sacrificed meat.



The butcher at work in Lagadhás.
The lamb and kid have yet to be killed.



Later, three *Anastenárides* cut the
meat of the sacrificed animals in order
to share it amongst the community
and prepare the meals for the festival.

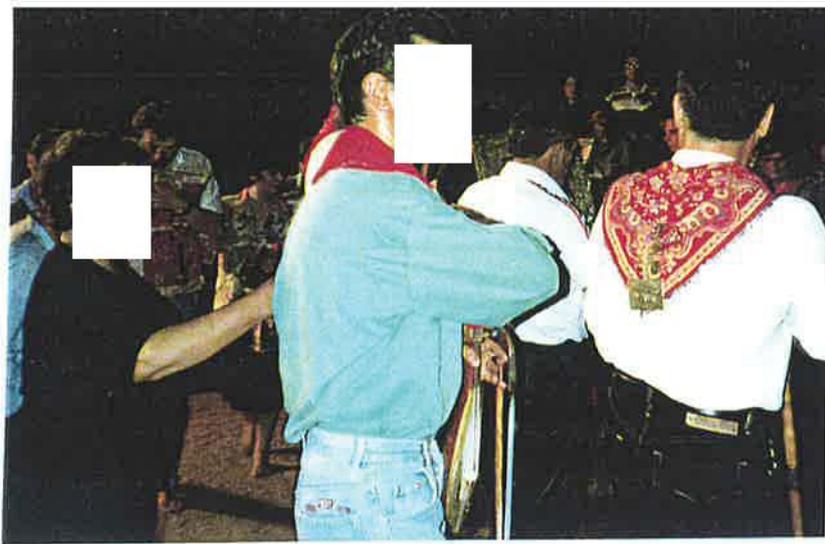
The *Pappús* lighting the fire



Before entering the fire, the *Anastenárides* circle the fire three times, holding the Icons and the sacred Kerchiefs.

The crowd grows as the fire is watched over by *Rénos*.





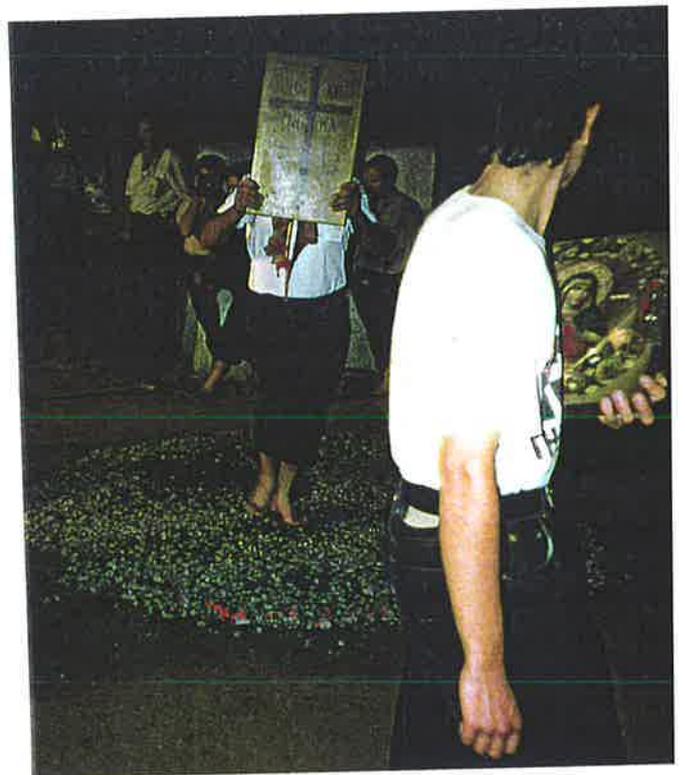
Circling the coals at the end of the firewalk



The musicians lead the procession back inside the *Konáki* after the firewalk



The musicians, with Sacred Kerchiefs tied around their necks, make their way back inside the *Konáki*



The *Anastenárides* dancing on the coals



Back inside the *Konáki* after the firewalk, the *Anastenárides* dance with their Icons



Preparing the 'table' at the foot of the Icon table at the end of the festival

The *Anastenária* in Lagadhás

Even when all groups are united, the total number of *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás only makes up a very small portion of the local population. However, when the ritual is publicly performed every May these few individuals attract hundreds of people to Lagadhás³⁹. Thus, they are responsible for generating community revenue and increasing business and tourist interest in the area. For many of the older residents in the town the Icons were the major attraction of the *Konáki*, as this woman Explains: “The Icons of the *Anastenárides* are old and very sacred. I come to pay respect to the Icons”. Others regarded it as entertainment or an important event for the town. One man in his forties, who had come with his children said: “The *paniyíri* is famous in Lagadhás. It is a remarkable thing that they do, walk on the fire. We like to come and watch the firewalk and see all of the foreigners. My wife likes to pay respect to the Icons, but she is more religious than I am”.

The actual performance details of the ritual have altered little since the *Anastenárides* first came to Greece and settled in Lagadhás (and other towns). There have been some changes in the ritual duties and the overall position of the ritual in the wider community has been significantly amended. In Kostí, (prior to the exchange of populations in 1923 when the *Anastenárides* settled in towns in the north of Greece) it had been up to the local priest to perform those duties, which are now enacted by the *Pappús*. These include the blessing of the sacrificial animals (*kurbáni*), the blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*), and the blessing of the participants, the spectators and the meal at the end of the *paniyíri*. The *Anastenárides* maintain that the ritual performance in Lagadhás omits a few of the original components, but they are adamant that the basic format of the *paniyíri* is the

³⁹ On January 18, for Saint Athanássios' name day, very few spectators attend. In 1994 and 1995, there were several locals of Lagadhás, *Anastenárides* family members and friends, but few others. This is partly because the festival is not advertised like in May and also because it falls in the heart of winter and so there are few tourists in Greece, let alone in Lagadhás. In July 15 for Saint Pantelímon's name day, although it is summer, again, there are few spectators. This festival is not advertised either and a firewalk would normally not occur. In the two years I was there, however, a firewalk was performed. A discussion of why this was so can be found later in this Chapter.

same. One *Anastenáris* explained this transformation: he said that now the firewalk itself has become the focal point of the ritual and even though it is very important, there are other ritual duties which are equally as important:

Many of the *Anastenárides* have become excited with all of the attention. They are forgetting that there are other duties. Hardly anyone knows how to read dreams any more; no one really goes to the *Anastenárides* for advice anymore. They spend less time together and not enough time in the *Konáki*, but that is largely because it is no longer in the house of the *Pappús* and because the *Anastenárides* are scattered, dispersed (*skorpízane*) (An *Anastenáris* from Lagadhás 1994).

When asked about transformation of the ritual, the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás pointed out some of the changes: there is no Holy water spring (*Ayiasma*) in the town (there is one in Ayía Eléni and in Kelkíni); the *Konáki* (belonging to the *Anastenáride* group with whom I was associated) is no longer attached to the home of the *Pappús* as it was before (the other group in Lagadhás do have a *Konáki* in the home of their *Pappús*); the ritual has become commercialised; it is advertised and performed in front of local and, more significantly, foreign, tourists; and it is filmed, photographed, documented and discussed. Also significant are the consequences of the decline in the number of *Anastenárides* who have either patrilineal descent from an *Anastenáride* or descent from a resident of Kostí, or both. Currently, the geographical distribution of the performers effected the ritual; not all of the *Anastenárides* lived together in the same town or village and this effected both the community and the ritual performance and, therefore, group celebrations became less frequent. Several *Anastenárides* had moved to Thessaloniki for work and it became difficult for them to attend every celebration.

Many stories of past festivals were recalled during the times spent at the *Konáki* and through these conversations what local people regarded as the most significant changes in the festival became clear. In the wider context it is the interest of mass tourism and the schisms in the community that affect the ritual. For the *Anastenárides*, it is the decline in

the number of *Anastenárides* able to interpret dreams and diagnose illness, which was acknowledged⁴⁰.

Faith Or Magic? The Phenomenon of Firewalking⁴¹

The phenomenon of firewalking is not unique to the *Anastenárides* of Northern Greece. It occurs across the world in various forms⁴² and in fact, has become a recent trend amongst New Age healers and self-development groups in America, Australia and other western countries⁴³. The analysis of firewalking as a physiological and as a cultural phenomenon requires an understanding of the relationship between the mind and the body and the body's existence within its social world. The conflicting positions taken by medical science and the social sciences also need to be examined. As individuals and institutions attempt to explain the phenomenon of firewalking they engage in a field of contestation where they aim to legitimate their disciplines and theories⁴⁴. The scientists, (psychiatrists, neurologists, physicians and physicists, etc.) through their way of viewing the world, explain the ability to firewalk through the language and understanding of biology and physics. Folklorists, anthropologists, and others not coming from the world of science, have explained the phenomenon with theories phrased in terms of belief systems, positive thinking, altered states of consciousness, hypnosis and embodiment. They are all theories that compete for validity and supremacy and, in doing so, affect the way in which the *Anastenárides* themselves come to think about the ritual.

I briefly acknowledge the most recent discussions on the body, those which deal with the phenomenon of technology, its position in social life and its relationship with humans

⁴⁰ As the *Anastenária* has dynamically evolved, many transformations have occurred without much attention being given to them.

⁴¹ The word 'magic' in Greek is '*magía*'. The word for 'magician' is '*maghos*'. Most Greek people do not consider belief in and practice of the Evil Eye magic. The casting of spells is, however.

⁴² Firewalking has been claimed as being performed in Argentina, Bali, Bulgaria, China, Fiji, India, North America, Singapore, Spain (Lang 1990), Sri Lanka and Tahiti. See Vilenskaya and Steffy, (1991) and Sternfield (1992), for more detail on firewalking around the world.

⁴³ See Remick (1984), Levin and Coreil (1986) and Danforth (1989), for a discussion of firewalking and new age healing in America.

⁴⁴ See Bourdieu (1977, 1983, 1986) for his concept of field.

(Bloomfield and Vurdubakis 1995; P. Harvey 1997; Haworth 1990, 1997; Ingold 1986, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997; Pickering 1997). Identifying objects as *existing* in the world, as humans do, and seeing them and technology itself, as part of society, as participants, forces us to again reassess the body's position in the world. This section is an attempt to look briefly at those various positions, to juxtapose them and to discuss the problem with which anthropology is faced when approaching studies of the position of the body in society and therefore also the problem of the union of nature and culture⁴⁵. I begin with a brief account of a firewalk performance:

At about 5p.m.the music started and some of the Anastenárides began to dance. There were only a few spectators gathered at this stage besides some immediate family members and myself. Mikháli changed the incense in the holders as the Pappús initiated the dancing. He shook the Icons vigorously, clapping his hands together and making short sharp noises, moving back and forth with one or two steps, and shaking his head. Mikháli went back to his seat and started to clap furiously; also shaking his head, but he did not get up and dance at this stage. The music became very lively and many of the Anastenárides had begun dancing, singing along to MikroKostandínos. Pirros, a young Anastenáris from Mavroléski but who lives in Thessaloniki, burst into the room and immediately joined those dancing. His movements were more expansive than most of the others and he made loud sharp hisses and cries. Tassia began to dance, burying her face into a ritual kerchief (Simádhi) that was sitting on the Icon shelf (stasídhi). She told me later that the kerchief (Simádhi) had called her, "it always does". Then quite suddenly, Rénos, Tassia's husband, started shaking in his seat, shaking his fists and his head and began making loud crying noises. He appeared very troubled. This went on for a few minutes until the Pappús gave Tassia the kerchief (Simádhi) that she wanted and soon after he appeared to calm down. Dancing continued over the next two to three hours with breaks every thirty or so minutes.

At about 8p.m., I saw the Pappús talking with Pétros and Mimos next to the Icon shelf (stasídhi). Rénos was standing near the doorway, after being outside and

⁴⁵ This Chapter has been published as a paper in *TAJA* 1998, 9:2:194-209.

preparing the ground for the fire piling the wood, ready to be lit. I asked Panayiotis, the musician, what was going on and he said that it was time to light the fire. I was surprised at how early it was but I had been told that the fire takes a while to burn down to the coals which were needed for the walk. By this time a very large crowd had gathered and the local police were there to keep an eye on the spectators, keeping them away from the fire. Things seemed very organised and pre-planned tonight as on Saturday many of the *Anastenárides* had commented that it all went too quickly was over too soon and that it felt disorganised. I had noticed that the periods of dancing as well as the breaks were much longer than on Saturday.

At 8.30 everyone proceeded outside, musicians and *Anastenárides*. The *Pappús*, *Mimos*, *Dhimítris* and one of the *Anastenáris*' relatives (who is involved with the group but doesn't dance or walk on the fire) led the group outside, holding large white candles (used on special days in the Church also). The sign of the cross was made over the wood, incense was waved over the area and then the *Pappús* lit the fire.

For the next hour or so there were another two sessions of dancing as *Rénos* watched over the fire. The crowd grew as there were a lot of people coming and going, moving from one *Anastenáride* group to another, anxious for one of the groups to start the firewalk⁴⁶. A German couple asked me when I thought the firewalk would start. Before I could answer, *Pétros* said, "When we are ready. When the Saint tells us. Maybe it will be one hour, maybe four" ("*Póte ímaste étimi. Póte ó Ayiós más lí. Mípos thá íne mía óra, mípos tésseris*"). As he walked away, *Pétros* gave me a wink. I felt pleased that he considered me part of them enough to share 'insider knowledge' although I really knew no more than the German couple.

The mood seemed intense tonight everyone was excited. At about 10p.m, the *Anastenárides* proceeded outside: led by the *Pappús*, and two other men, all holding large white candles. Those who were going to enter the fire already had their shoes and socks off, the men with their trouser legs rolled up. The musicians played the 'tune of the road' (*ó skopós tú dhrómu*) as they made their way to the fire which was now a smooth bed of glowing coals. The fire was immediately outside of the

⁴⁶ Due to the split in the *Anastenáride* community, there were two firewalks being performed publicly this year.

Konáki and there was not a great amount of illumination so the glow of the coals was noticeable. *Mimos* made the sign of the cross over the fire three times with the Icon handle and one by one the *Anastenárides* entered the fire. *Pétros* did not dance tonight; he told me later that he did not have an open road, (“*dhén iha ánikhto dhrómo*”)⁴⁷. *Pávlos* stood at the edge of the fire rubbing his feet into the coals, putting an area out before moving to another. *Rénos* kept an eye on the coals, spreading them out with a long branch. I watched him as he was preparing the fire and I was watching him now, putting coals on his hands and extinguishing them, moving a cluster of them around with his fingers, although he did not enter the fire with his feet. *Tassia* and *Tom* moved slowly across the fire often stopping momentarily in the centre, running on the spot. *Mikháli* stamped heavily on the coals, sending sparks flying, and often entered with *Mimos*, dancing around for a few seconds before crossing to the other side.

The fire seemed to take a long time to put out tonight which was worrying me as I had been told by an *Anastenáris* that when the fire takes a long time to stamp out it can mean that there was not a clear path, that sin was involved⁴⁸. After all of the coals were out the *Anastenárides* joined hands, those who had walked on the fire and those who had not, as well as some of their family members who are not *Anastenárides*, and danced the Kerchief Dance, (*Mantilátos Khorós*) anticlockwise, around the extinguished fire. Some spectators gathered close to the fire, leaning down to touch the ashes to feel the heat. The *Anastenárides*, family and friends, proceeded inside. The music kept playing inside and the *Anastenárides* danced in front of the Icon shelf (*stasidhi*), singing *MikroKostandinos* very loudly until the music finally slowed down, signalling the end of dancing. The Icons were put back onto the shelf and everyone stopped and relaxed. Most

⁴⁷Many *Anastenárides* used this imagery to describe entering the fire. “Having the road”, meant that the Saint had prepared a path for you and made you able to enter the fire. See Danforth (1989) for similar examples.

⁴⁸In Orthodox theology, evil is seen as existing from the Fall of Adam and Eve, providing humans with the free will which can lead them into evil. “The source of evil lies thus in the *free will* of spiritual beings endowed with moral choice, who use that power of choice incorrectly” (Father K. Ware 1979:75). From Adam and Eve’s Original Sin, humans have been given an environment where “...it is easy to do evil and hard to do good” (*ibid.*:81). Popular Greek belief sees sin as an offence against God, Mary and the Saints, and also in terms of a gross offence against one’s fellow humans. The *Anastenáride*’s often spoke to me of goodness, as opposed to evil, as being when one is a good spouse, child and parent, when one prays and thanks God, shows respect towards the Saints, and compassion to fellow humans.

of them went outside to wash the soot off their feet and freshen up.

I thought that the feeling tonight was high and energetic but Sotiris, one of the musicians, mentioned to me that he thought it was a little flat even though he and the other musicians had tried to lift it by intensifying the music. He said that it hadn't had the very special atmosphere that it used to for about three years now, when the trouble really began between individuals and groups⁴⁹.

*I went outside for some fresh air, before helping the women prepare the table for dinner (*trapézi*), actually a large cloth laid out on the floor in front of the Icon shelf⁵⁰. Khristos, a man who lives in Lagadhás and who videos the ritual celebrations every year came up to me and asked me how I thought the night had gone. As we were walking back inside he said to me, "you know tonight they walked in the fire unharmed but tomorrow you could burn them with your cigarette. The *Anastenárides* are not magicians who can do tricks on the fire, but here when we celebrate the Saints they are special, they are blessed by Him [the Saint] and are able to do that [walk on fire]" (Taken from field notes May 1994).*

Explaining the Phenomenon: "believe and don't resist"

Being able to walk on the fire unharmed is seen by the *Anastenárides* as an act of faith. Saint Constantine protects them from being burned because of their faith in and devotion to him. Although they openly acknowledge the transmission of the power (*dhinamis*) of the Saint, passed on to the Icons and to themselves, and express it as receiving the power of the Saint, they often said to me that it is a matter of faith (*pístis*) one must believe. Many of the *Anastenárides* to whom I spoke played down the fire walking, explaining that it is not the only characteristic of being an *Anastenáride*. Several of them referred to people in

⁴⁹See Chapter Five for more detail on the schism in the *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás.

⁵⁰*Trapézi* translates to 'table' but is used here to refer to the meal and/or the place where the meal is laid. Although I never witnessed or heard of Greek people eating in this way in their homes, it is significant that this occurs in the *Konáki*. In many parts of Turkey, there is no table for eating and meals are always shared and eaten on a tablecloth on the floor (see Long 1996). Importantly, several of the words used in the ritual life of the *Anastenárides* are Turkish in origin.

other parts of the world who perform similar rituals; they maintained that it is but one part of their celebration, one part of their devotion to Saint Constantine.

When I asked what made them able to walk unharmed on the fire, what makes them different from other people and whether or not others could also walk on the fire, they returned to faith (*pístis*) and explained the reciprocal relationship between a person and the Saint. In return for belief and veneration, a Saint grants protection⁵¹. A few *Anastenárides* explained to me that different people across the world are able to walk on fire unharmed for various reasons, but for all firewalkers it is a belief in something. For the *Anastenárides*, it is the faith they have in the Saint's protection.

Interestingly, while belief was seen as an important characteristic for an *Anastenáride*, several discourses were employed by the *Anastenárides* to explain the phenomenon. There were the official discourses used to explain their ability, those sanctioned or constructed, usually by folklorists but also by older *Anastenárides*, as well as the personal discourse of each individual. Most *Anastenárides* provided explanations that included a combination of *pragmatic*, in Turner's sense of the word (official articulation) and personalised meaning. One afternoon when I was talking to Tom about the fire, he smiled and said to me, "Aren't you an *Anastenárisa*. Don't you believe?" (*Esis. dhén ise mia Anastenárisa, thén pistévis?*). He smiled, and asked me if I thought I could walk in the fire. I told him that I didn't think I could, the Saint had not spoken to me and I did not share the same belief, the same faith. He suggested that I listen more carefully. Mikháli explained to me one day: "It's such an amazing feeling, when you are in the fire. It's like you are flying, nothing can compare to it. At night after the festival I just want to get home, kiss my sons and my wife goodnight and fall asleep with my heart full of joy". After a successful firewalk during a ritual celebration, when everyone was together in the *Konáki*, I felt an atmosphere of joy,

⁵¹See Chapter Two for further detail on the relationship between Saints and people.

of celebration, although I had no previous experience of the ritual with which to compare⁵². I had arrived after the division in the group had occurred.

Psychotherapy or Celebration?

An 'inner struggle' experienced by some *Anastenárides* prior to walking on the fire has been documented by Mihail-Dede (1972, 1973), Christodoulou (1978) and Danforth (1989) and included in psychological discussions on tranced states (see Firth 1967; Ludwig 1968; Obeyesekere 1970; Kapferer 1991). Mihail-Dede (1973:157) explained, "when an Anastenaris is in ecstasy, he suffers but he does not suffer because of only certain ills or because of his own ills but he suffers for all of the ills and pains of mankind". Mikháli (an *Anastenáris*) claims that it can be very difficult to be taken by the Saint and to walk on the fire. He explained, there is a "struggle" which only lasts a few minutes, you must let go of yourself and not resist, don't try to be in control, and soon it will ease and you will feel free". He found that during the period just prior to entering the fire and during the firewalk itself, his entire body feels like ice: his body goes cold and feels almost numb. He described one festival when he did not enter the coals: this was because he was only cold from his head down to his knees and the rest of his legs felt warm. This was a way of telling him, he explained, that he did not have a path that night; he could not enter the coals. One *Anastenárisa*, who did not walk on the fire, never spoke of her feelings or experiences to me, but she often looked troubled, even stressed during most of the ritual performance (in the *Konáki* and during the firewalk). When I asked why she seemed to suffer (*ipoféri*), no one would give me an answer. Danforth (1989) has discussed this 'suffering' in some detail, and he argues that it is part of the experience of transition to a comfortable relationship with the Saint. "Initially the trance experiences of many Anastenarides are extremely difficult" (Danforth 1989:91). The point which is said to

⁵²I came to understand a successful firewalk as one when the fire was put out in moderate time, approximately fifteen, twenty minutes, depending on the number walking. It was also important that no disagreements or disputes occurred and that there were no problems with the spectators or officials. The participants themselves explained that a successful firewalk for them individually occurred when they had an 'open road', a 'clear path'.

often ease the *Anastenáride* is when they are given a kerchief (*Simádhi*) or an Icon to hold; “It is impossible for you to know how much an Anastenarissa suffers until she takes the icon in her hands. Then she dances satisfied and pleased” (Kavakopoulos 1956:283, in Danforth 1989:92). One evening, during the 1995 festival for Saint Constantine and Saint Helen in the *Konáki*, when the music was playing and several *Anastenárides* were dancing, Tassía (an *Anastenárisa*), who was sitting on the bench near the Icon shelf (*stasídi*), began to shake. She got up and started to dance but she was half bent over and trembling. As she moved she kept going towards a particular kerchief (*Simádhi*) which was placed on the end of the Icon shelf (*stasídi*). The *Pappús* seemed to take little notice even though she started to cry out and her body trembled. Quite unexpectedly, Tassía’s husband, Rénos, (the fire keeper) began to clap his hands together loudly, crying out and shaking in his seat. On no other occasion had I seen Rénos make any sound in the *Konáki*, nor behave physically as he was then. The *Pappús*, after a little encouragement from another *Anastenáris*, handed Tassía the kerchief that she so obviously wanted, and she became quiet. Rénos also became still and after a few moments, left the room and went outside. Later that evening Tassía explained, “That *Simádhi* always calls me. I won’t be thinking of it and I feel it, beckoning me. At that time I must hold it, I need to be given that particular *Simádhi*”. Several others agreed that similar things happen to them. One *Anastenáris* explained that there was one particular Icon of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen that always called him and he suffered terribly if he did not hold it⁵³. When I asked why Rénos had reacted so, Tassía explained, “He could feel my suffering and he was helping me. He is my husband and he wanted me to have the *Simádhi*. He was suffering too”.

An *Anastenáris* from Ayía Eléni (he himself does not enter the coals) who, importantly, is also a psychiatrist, described the entering a tranced state as difficult for some people, while

⁵³Mihail-Dede (1973:159) noted that the Icons importantly, “summon their favourites to dance and firewalk”.

others experience no trauma. Most *Anastenárides* did not articulate their experiences with such terms however. Notions of trance, altered states of consciousness and of hypnosis were not used by the *Anastenárides* in my experiences. The experience was more frequently described as being ‘taken by the Saint’ or as ‘feeling the Saint’. Others said that they danced *for* the Saint who then guided them and protected them in the fire. When I introduced the idea of possession, one *Anastenárisa* explained: “it is not like we are possessed (*katalavánume*), that can have bad meanings. We are called by Him, the Saint calls us (*más kali*)”. There is, however, an awareness of a particular state required for entering the coals, articulated by “having the road”⁵⁴. This phrase operates as an encompassing concept, as each *Anastenárisa* manifests this particular state in individualised and different ways on each experiential occasion⁵⁵. Yet this experiential difference is always glossed within the phrase, ‘having an open road’⁵⁶.

For Mikháli, it is a physical manifestation; his body goes like ice. For another *Anastenáris*, initially there is “something inside my head and a feeling in my body like an awkwardness. When I have the road, I feel joy, I feel free and light, like a feather”. Mihail-Dede (1973:157) argues that the expression of the ‘ecstasy’ experienced by the *Anastenárides* “depends on the particular emotional and moral world of the *Anastenaris* who achieves ecstasy”. This parallels the explanation of Thétis, as well as an *Anastenáris* from Ayía Eléni and other *Anastenárides* more generally who described the different manifestations of the ‘tranced state’ or the ‘ecstasy’.

The introduction of private experience, that is of the influence of the individual life and living behaviour of the *Anastenárides*’ ability to achieve ‘ecstasy’, constantly reinvokes the

⁵⁴ See Danforth (1989:17, 21, 39, 131 etc.) for similar examples of references to an ‘open road’.

⁵⁵ In his read of this Chapter, Bruce Kapferer suggested that the *Anastenárides* are a “shifting virtual reality”. Their experience of the ritual is dependent on the specific context, and therefore, always new.

⁵⁶ This is what Bourdieu (1977, 1979, 1984) means by the “generative dimension” of habitus. Habitus is never fixed. Rather, as positions within fields change, so do the dispositions that constitute the habitus. As Harker (et al 1990:12) explains, “...habitus is a mediating construct, not a determining one”.

mortality of those who walk on fire. This human frailty prevents the walkers from achieving a 'saintly' status and thus, avoids blasphemy⁵⁷.

Part of my discussion on the performance of the *Anastenária*, deals with such notions of trance (Sansom 1998). I am uneasy with the generalised use of this term within most of the literature written on the *Anastenária* which categorises the behaviour of the *Anastenárides* whilst dancing in the *Konáki* and during the firewalk, as tranced behaviour. Whilst there may be a shift in the consciousness of a performer during the ritual, in my experiences in Lagadhás, behaviour was extremely varied between individuals and with individuals, between performances. There appeared to be specific differences between the degree of consciousness, or lack of it, both between performers and between the performances of the same person. The line that is so often drawn between trance and non-trance, like performance and non-performance, is much fuzzier than is usually depicted.

The Significance of Healing in the *Anastenária*

The *Anastenária* has been convincingly represented as a healing ritual, specifically as an example of religious healing: "The *Anastenária* is concerned with healing in the broadest sense. It is both a religious ritual and a form of psychotherapy" (Danforth 1989:50)⁵⁸. Following in the path of interpretative anthropology, with particular emphasis on the work of Geertz (1973), Danforth argues that, "Religion generally, and religious rituals concerned with healing in particular, attempt to deal with the problem of human suffering by placing it in meaningful contexts in which it can be expressed, understood, and either eased or endured" (*ibid.*:51)⁵⁹. Whilst I agree with Danforth's interest in the cultural context of illness and healing I disagree with the presentation of the *Anastenária* (in its

⁵⁷ Importantly, being burned also has significance. A discussion on the understandings and consequences of burning appears later in this Chapter.

⁵⁸ See also Christodoulou (1978) and her discussion of 'suffering' and 'nevriká'.

⁵⁹ See Geertz (1973), Douglas (1975) and Rabinow (1979).

current form at least) as primarily a healing ritual⁶⁰. Making connections between religious healing and somatization, Danforth writes that the symbols which are employed in the *Anastenária*, serve as models *of* and models *for* a sick person's social, psychological and physiological condition (*ibid.*:55). He argues that the power of ritual healing like the *Anastenária*, lies in its ability to alter (reorganise or reconstruct) "the conceptual worlds" of people who are ill⁶¹ (*ibid.*). I argue differently. Whilst the 'cultural context' of the ritual performance cannot be ignored in an examination of the meanings of the ritual, it is the internal that has to be examined, or the internalisation of the external.

Danforth's discussion of religious healing is predicated on the idea that involvement in the ritual is made up of individuals who all require healing and who are therefore ill. Danforth writes "Kostilides also recognise that many of the *Anastenarides* are not 'serious' or 'stable' people, and they know that no one becomes an *Anastenarissa* unless she has problems" (*ibid.*:80). He argues that many of those involved in the ritual are drawn into it because they consider their suffering to be either caused by the Saint or able to be cured by the Saint⁶². I would suggest that this type of argument constitutes a rationalist paradigm that ignores individuals' internal experience and understanding of the ritual and the world. Similarly, Christodoulou (1978:96) writes, "Firewalking itself is considered to be a cure for some persons who were physically ill because the Saint had

⁶⁰Danforth (1989:52) argues that "...illness is a symbol that expresses in a culturally patterned form a wide range of meanings including fear, stress, tragedy, conflict, and alienation". He also claims that, "Healing, like becoming sick, is at once a cultural, social, psychological, and physiological process" (*ibid.*). See also Kleinman (1986) for his discussion on somatization.

⁶¹See Csordas (1983) who writes of the power of ritual healing. See also Levi-Strauss (1967) who saw a similar method of healing, where he argues that a "symbolic language" enables people to restructure their experiences.

⁶²Having discussed this problem with Danforth in 1996 and 1997, he explained that during his time in Greece, this was in fact the way in which the ritual was understood and that my contrary experiences struck him as unusual. We agreed that perhaps this is another aspect of the ritual, which has transformed with time and that perhaps as the type of participants involved in the ritual has altered, healing has become a less important and significant theme. There were several other differences which we also noticed; there was a considerably higher number of men involved in Lagadhás than in Ayía Eléni (something which he had in fact noticed when he was undertaking fieldwork), the size and dynamics of the communities in each respective place differed enormously and many of the older *Anastenarides* had passed away since Danforth undertook fieldwork, perhaps resulting in many of the original elements of the ritual either dying or diminishing.

wanted them to firewalk, but they either resisted the Saint's bidding or were prevented, usually by a spouse". Here Christodoulou specifies, "some persons" — an important point.

Below, I cite a few of the experiences of *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás. All of the examples are *Anastenárides* either talking about another or are observations I made myself. Interestingly, individuals did not want to talk about their own experiences in relation to any type of suffering. Other anthropologists (ie Danforth 1989) do appear to have been told personal stories about their 'suffering', but I would suggest that it is no longer encouraged to engage in this type of discussion publicly. From my experiences, the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás appeared hesitant to discuss issues of illness and suffering, unless it was about others and, therefore, perhaps a form of gossip. One of the musicians suggested to me that they were trying to "alter the image of the ritual", to "get it away from anything that appears suspicious or strange, or too folk" (spoken in English). He went on to explain that focusing on things that made the *Anastenárides* appear weak or sick was consciously avoided these days because "people are so ready to call them crazy" (spoken in English).

Case Study: Number 1

Thétis told me a story about Tom's involvement in the ritual. He claims that Tom had been ill for a long time. After consulting numerous doctors and specialists, he was not getting any better. Tom had been attending the festivals since he was a small child and so was very familiar with the *Anastenárides*. After some time, Tom's mother sent for Thétis, (the grandson of the original *Pappús* in Lagadhás) whom she believed may have been able to diagnose her son's illness. When Thétis visited Tom, he warned him that Saint Constantine was causing his suffering. The Saint was calling him to dance, he claimed, and that to get better he must attend the festival and dance for the Saint (see Christodoulou's quote above). Tom attended the festival the following night and entered the fire. He was unharmed by the burning coals and soon his illness ceased and he was cured. He has been an *Anastenáris* since. He was nineteen. Tom declined to discuss his first involvement in the ritual. Thétis also informed me that Tom's illness that he was suffering in 1995 was also caused by the Saint who was upset at the division in the group and with Tom's separation from himself. Thétis explained, "Sooner or later Tom and the others will realise. Actually, Tom knows already, [that] they are wrong to go off on their own with their Icons and split the group. This is not how the Saint wants it to be". Tom however, had been seeing his general practitioner and a specialist regarding his illness. Interestingly, Thétis did not first enter the fire because of any 'suffering' from the Saint.

His family, prominent *Anastenárides* had encouraged him, to join in the firewalk, but he claims he did not feel ‘called’ to do so until he was sixteen. At that time, he went to the festival and began dancing with the others and just entered the fire. He was unharmed.

Case Study: Number 2

The wife (neither herself nor an *Anastenárisa*, nor her family) of an *Anastenáris*, told me that when her husband was thirteen, he went to the *Konáki* for the festival of Saint Helen and Saint Constantine. Both his parents are *Anastenárides* although they did not walk in the fire. His wife explained that for some time he had been suffering from headaches and bad dreams. That year when he went to the *Konáki*, he entered the fire and became an *Anastenáris*. He continued to attend the *Konáki* and be involved in the festivals, dancing in the *Konáki*, but he had not entered the fire again. In 1995, the same man re-entered the fire, the first time in thirteen years.

Case Study: Number 3

One *Anastenárisa* in the group with whom I was involved does appear to ‘suffer’ during the dancing and firewalks. She never dances in the *Konáki* or enters the fire like the others, but stands or sits quietly, trembling, her head bowed, mouth open as if in pain. Much of her behaviour is similar to that of the other *Anastenárides* just before they go to dance (although not all of them act in this way) but she appears to find no relief and no comfort. Her ‘suffering’ does not ease. Thétis explained to me that she is also suffering from the Saint but cannot move past that, cannot be healed. He suggested that it was because she was doing something wrong, offending the Saint in some way. Interestingly, this woman attended Church far more regularly than any of the other *Anastenárides*.

Case Study: Number 4

One of the sons of an *Anastenáris*, who had been himself walking on the fire and dancing in the *Konáki* since 1993, the year before I arrived, was suffering from ‘emotional problems’ according to an *Anastenárisa*⁶³. He was very quiet and awkward and was often criticised for not remaining at the *Konáki* after the ritual and for not being more involved. The first time I had met him and his brother, also an *Anastenáris*, I was informed that he had been called to do his military service and was very troubled: he did not want to go. Two weeks later, he arrived at the *Konáki* with bandages around his wrists, apparently he had tried to cut his wrists — an unsuccessful suicide attempt. An outsider to the group explained to me that he had severe psychological problems and that he was ‘disturbed’. Someone in the group, however, suggested to me that this was not an unusual thing for a teenager to do to try and get out of, or defer entering the army. Once again, Thétis suggested that the boy was suffering and that it was because he had the gift from the Saint but that he was not treating it properly and that he needed to be more mature and respectful of his ability. The following year, he entered the army for his service and when I saw him on leave, he appeared much happier and more relaxed.

⁶³See Danforth (1989) and his discussion on *nevriká* (derived from *névra*, meaning ‘nerves’). Danforth (1989:77) explains that *nevriká* fits “within the general category of illnesses with naturalistic explanations”. He explains that it “is said to involve a weakness or malfunctioning of the nervous system, which is understood as a network of nerves spreading throughout the body and controlling bodily movements and sensations. In relatively mild cases common symptoms of *nevriká* include headache, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, trembling, dizzy spells, fatigue, loss of appetite, inability to sleep, and lack of interest in work” (*ibid.*). More serious cases, he argues, can include “temporary or partial paralysis, hallucinations, incoherent speech, or any unusual or uncontrolled behaviour regarded as deviant” (*ibid.*). For a more detailed discussion see Danforth (1989:77-79; 81; 84; 98; 123-124).

Danforth (1989) recounts several stories told to him by *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni regarding 'suffering' from the Saint. One story describes an *Anastenáris*' mother who frequently used to faint whilst working in the fields. While many people attributed this symptom to the Saint her husband refused to let her dance in the *Konáki*. The same *Anastenáris* recalls a story about himself: he went to Australia to work for a few years but after three months he became very ill. He had trouble with his feet, preventing him from walking and his stomach became very painful. The man concluded that he should not have left home and it was only by returning that his good health was restored home because, he says, the Saint was watching over him and because he was a *Kostilis* (of *Kostí*).

Danforth cites several other examples of stories told to him which involve the curing of *Anastenárides* by the Saints as well as stories which tell of the Saints and Icons, making *Anastenárides* do particular things, or act in a particular way. One story attributes the suffering of a woman to the Icon of Saint Pantelímon that her father had offended⁶⁴.

Whilst I have cited a few examples of suffering and possible healing, and related the role of the *Anastenárides* Saints to healing, the overwhelming majority of *Anastenárides* with whom I was involved, did not have such experiences⁶⁵. During the moments when individuals began to dance, however, some appeared to be 'suffering' (*dhohimasía*) but this usually passed and many of them revealed no such signs. I asked one of the younger *Anastenarisses* whether or not the Saint inflicted suffering. She replied, "Suffering? No! Sometimes for some of them when the Saint calls them it is hard to let go. But it is joyful and the Saint loves us, he does not want to punish us. For me, I am happy, very happy

⁶⁴It is interesting to note that both Saint Pantelímon and Saint Athanássios, whose Days the *Anastenárides* celebrate, are related to healing. The *Anastenárides* denied that this was particularly significant however. They acknowledged that these Saints are some of the more popular Saints in the Orthodox religion.

⁶⁵The son of one *Anastenáris* had been born mentally retarded. Aged in his thirties, he had also been diagnosed with a type of cancer. Thétis suggested that this might be the work of the Saint. Another *Anastenáris* suffered a heart attack during my time there. He was in his sixties but still worked long hours on the land, smoked and had small children. His illness was never articulated or explained as being related to 'suffering from the Saint'.

when I am here in the *Konáki*. If people commit sins or do harm to others God is watching and he will judge you". They associate the ability of the Saint to cause suffering with offence.

Presenting the ritual as a healing ritual, as a *rite de passage*, whilst appearing almost obvious, disregards the link the *Anastenárides* make between the Icons and their own heritage as *Anastenárides*. As I have argued in Chapter Two, the *Anastenárides* consider themselves to be linked to Saint Constantine through a hereditary line passed on through the Icons; this grants them access to a power that allows them to walk on the coals unharmed⁶⁶. This line of descent is perceived to stem from the original *Anastenárides*; it was acknowledged that many *Anastenárides* did not belong to this line directly, as they had no familial connections to Kostí or the descendants of the first Icon of the Saint. Yet it was nevertheless referred to as the legitimate beginnings of the community. It seems that a combination of belief and of being *chosen* is what makes one an *Anastenáride*. Rather than the ritual acting as a healing ritual, that illness and suffering are explained within the community in terms of the Saint and His power: "What the illness is, is inextricably connected with its particular mode of cultural understanding" (Kapferer 1991:323). The ritual is able to function, then, in a healing capacity, in the same way that other Orthodox Christians may look to Saints, and Mary and God Himself, for a cure to an illness. It is not unusual for Orthodox Christians to turn to a Saint, to venerate or make an offering (*táma*) for a matter regarding health. Incidents such as Tom's illness which it is claimed he suffered prior to becoming an *Anastenáris*, were seen as perhaps being cured by the Saint, but were not often explained as being

⁶⁶ I first read of this in Danforth (1978) and also in some of Kakouri's (1965) work on the *Anastenárides*. It was later verified by some of the *Anastenárides* as the beginnings of the ritual. It was made clear to me, however, that they were aware that this line had been somewhat weakened as some *Anastenárides* had no line to Kostí and therefore to the Icons and also pointed out the fact that new Icons had been bought.

caused by the Saint⁶⁷. Whilst Thétis considered the Saint to be the cause of much of the physical suffering of the *Anastenárides*, and while Danforth noted many examples of *Anastenárides* suffering ill health, in particular nervous disorders (*nevriká*), the *Anastenárides* with whom I was associated did not explain all suffering as caused by the Saint. They denied that the ritual was a healing ritual. Phenomenological understandings exist not only within particular points in time and space but also within particular relations and thus fields of enunciation, legitimation and contestation. It is in this broader political, social and economic context, that the effects of such factors can be seen to coincide with the transformation of the meanings associated with this ritual. The region has changed radically in the last few decades, as urban development, particularly of regional services, such as medical resources; the consequences of unemployment are felt; the emergence of tourism as an economic resource; and, most significantly, the appropriation of cultural forms by the commodity market forces. It is this play between material factors and cultural/symbolic meaning, I would argue, that is either ignored or undervalued in other accounts of the *Anastenárides* ritual⁶⁸.

Fire as Evil, Fire as Holy: the religious symbolism of fire

There are a number of references to fire and firewalking in the bible, both in the New and the Old Testaments. Some depict fire as evil and others depict fire as a positive Holy force. In the story of the Fall of King Tyre (600BC), Ezekial claims that attempting to walk on fire will be punishable by God as it is a form of hypocrisy. God was displeased with Tyre, Ezekial argues, for trying to be God-like. There are just as many references which give examples of faithful Christians being protected from fire by God (see the Book of Daniel; the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 43; Proverbs, 6:28). There are numerous

⁶⁷ Thétis explained that the Saint was calling Tom and therefore, the Saint was causing the suffering. Interestingly, however, Tom and his family, and other *Anastenárides* to whom I spoke, did not claim that the Saint caused Tom's illness.

⁶⁸ Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus are useful in such a discussion as they constantly ground cultural meanings within everyday practice.

examples of Saints handling burning coals, walking on fire and of other miraculous feats involving the invulnerability to burning fire and heat (M.R. Coe 1957, Sternfield 1992). One story tells of how, in 1062, Peter Aldobrandini of Florence, walked down a narrow path surrounded by burning flames. He completed the walk unscathed; not even a hair on his head had been burnt. He was canonised as St. Peter Igneus, the patron Saint of firewalkers, and his action was seen as a miracle. Similarly, St Anthony has been depicted as standing in fire unharmed; Saints Gregory of Tours, Catherine of Siena, Francis of Paula and the Blessed Giovanni Buono have all been cited as either walking on, handling or entering fire and all were seen as being protected by God, and were, therefore, Holy people.

It is in terms of this type of symbolism that the *Anastenárides* explain their ability to walk on fire; Saint Constantine protects them. There have been several stories passed down which explain the *Anastenárides*' ability to walk on fire. Only one *Anastenáris* actually related one of these stories to me and when I relayed them to other *Anastenárides*, they all smiled and explained that they were stories, like fairy tales. They explained that they were unimportant, as what mattered was that the Saint protected them, that it was from him that they received their protection from the fire. I first came across these stories through Danforth's book (1989), but subsequently saw them written in other accounts of the ritual (Mihail-Dede 1972-3). A significant feature of the stories is that they are all situated within Greece's historical past, particularly two of them. They refer to the war against the Turks and Christianity's war against Islam. This positions the *Anastenárides* within Greek history, links them with the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church, both of which are important in the construction of the identity of the *Anastenárides* and to the ritual's position as a Christian ritual. These stories, like the songs sung during their ritual performances, articulate not just the *Anastenárides*' Greek identity, but importantly also demonstrate that the areas in and around Kostí are

'Greek'⁶⁹. As Kostí and the surrounding areas now fall on the Bulgarian border, the *Anastenárides* have been implicated in demonstrating the "Greekness" of land in the Balkan region that lies outside of Greek borders. As previously mentioned, this is not a problem for the *Anastenárides* but in the current political climate, as Greece finds itself at odds with FYROM over historical legitimacy, any opportunity to lay historical claims of Greek dominance in the region is seized by Greece and conversely by pro-nationalist Macedonians in FYROM⁷⁰.

I shall relay them as I first heard them; one story tells of a fire that broke out in one of the Churches in a village in eastern Thrace, possibly Kostí. As the villagers looked on, they claimed that they could hear cries of help coming from within the Church. The cries were said to be coming from the Icons, trapped inside the burning Church. The Icons told the people that if they went into the Church and saved the Icons they themselves, would not be burned by the flames. The villagers went into the Church, saved the Icons and were not burnt. Thus their ability to walk on fire was established. Another story tells of the time when Saint Constantine was defending a city where the Turks had set fire to all of the boundaries, thereby trapping all of the people inside. Saint Constantine walked through the fire and made a safe exit for the Christians. Another similar story, which I was told in Lagadhás, tells of Saint Constantine fighting the 'infidels' in Thrace, near Kostí, when his enemies, fearing defeat, lit a fire through the forest. All of the villages around Kostí were destroyed, trapping Saint Constantine and the villagers. Saint Constantine heard God telling him to pass through the fire and make a path for the villagers. He did so and was unharmed. Danforth (1989) also relates several similar stories⁷¹. Danforth (1989:87) refers to the symbolism of victory over fire and argues that it is closely related in this context, to the victory over one's enemies. As Constantine was

⁶⁹ See Part Two of this Chapter for detail about the songs.

⁷⁰ These historical/political interpretations of the firewalking ritual are not necessarily the interpretation used by the *Anastenárides*.

⁷¹ Danforth (1989:85-87) relates many stories told by *Kostilídhēs* about the origin of the firewalk. In fact, many of the stories presented by Danforth are the same as those I collected.

victorious over his enemies, through victory over fire, so too, he argues, can the *Anastenárides* be victorious over illness and suffering through victory over fire. He writes of the *Kostilídhēs*' comparison of the *Anastenárides* to "soldiers fighting a battle" (*ibid.*:127) and posits them as doing "battle against the fire", victorious over it when the fire is extinguished and they themselves are unharmed (*ibid.*). This type of symbolism is important to Danforth's representation of the *Anastenária* as a healing ritual. He argues that the passing over the fire "represents a desired transition from bad to good, from a negative state of illness and misfortune to a positive state of health and good fortune" (*ibid.*:129). During my time in Lagadhás, however, I was not aware of the fire representing such metaphors, nor was it ever explained to me or even indirectly expressed in this way.

Fire (*fofiá*) in Greek carries much of the same symbolic references as it does in English. Bachelard (1964) points out the contradictory associations of fire. He refers to the "essential ambiguity" and "profound duality" of fire, acknowledging that it is a symbol of evil, but also of good, of destruction and vitality, with pleasure and with pain (Bachelard 1964:55). It has positive connotations, referring to the home and warmth and protection. Several of the Christian references to fire as evil are also found in Greece. Hell is associated with fire and on several occasions, I heard the expression "May God protect you from fire" (see also Danforth 1989:127). Fire features in other religious celebrations. On the eve of the festival of St. John the Baptist (24 June, the time of the summer solstice) people traditionally jump over bonfires lit in the streets. Bonfires are often lit to celebrate particular religious days; the Epiphany and at Easter to symbolise the burning of Judas. The flame from the Church at Easter is also significant; people light their candles and carry the flame home with them. This flame is used to light the lamp that is usually placed on their Icon shelf and remains alight until the following Easter. Candles are often left burning for forty days in the room where a person has died. This may relate to notions of protection, as it is also believed that the devil cannot pass

through fire, so the burning flames protect the house, its occupants and in the case of a death, the person's soul, from the devil (Campbell 1964:334)⁷². Fire has also been interpreted as a symbol of transformation; "through fire everything changes" (*ibid.*:57). Danforth (1989:131) argues that the *Anastenárides* undergo a transformation from suffering to health and from anxiety to joy, which is, the "essence of the therapeutic process of the Anastenaria".

The extinguishing of the coals as symbolic of the extinguishing of evil, has been suggested by Danforth (1989) and in newspaper articles on the ritual. The fire is seen to represent evil and evil spirits that the *Anastenárides* destroy when they put out the fire.

The religious aspects of this phenomena of their ability to walk unharmed on the burning coals, returns to the belief that man functions with two energies; favourable and adverse. As the barefoot *Anastenarides* put out the burning coals, they extinguish the unfavourable aspects (Taken from *Tá Néa* May 24, 1994).

The *Anastenárides* to whom I spoke in Lagadhás, however, did not see the fire as evil, as an enemy to be destroyed. Some *Anastenárides* maintain that this type of symbolism was constructed after the event; people created such explanations to appease the Church. Others reasoned that perhaps this was how some *Anastenárides* may have felt about the fire, but this interpretation did not represent the meaning generally associated with the ritual⁷³. Tom argued that the *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni do not extinguish all of the coals during their festivals, but actually leave some burning. He concluded, therefore,

⁷² Danforth (1978) cites other references to fire in everyday life in Greece, presenting the symbolism of fire as both dangerous and purifying. He notes that after a baptism, it was common for the Godfather to tell the mother of the child to protect the child from fire and water. Danforth (*ibid.*) also refers to the belief that on after seeing a woman within the forty day period after childbirth, one should "touch fire" and "rinse with Holy water" in order to avoid possible evil.

⁷³ Danforth cites examples of people being burned during the *Anastenária*, both *Anastenárides* and others. The stories told to him as to why *Anastenárides* had been burnt all referred to offending the Saint. Danforth (1989:189-90) cites an example of an *Anastenáris* being burned in Ayía Eléni one year because he had not followed the Saint who had told him during a dream to attend the festival in Lagadhás that year. It was claimed that another *Anastenáris* was burned one year after re-entering the fire to show off for television cameras.

that any type of symbolism accorded to the putting out of the coals was fictional. Likewise, the significance to being burned is contextual⁷⁴.

Science to the Rescue

Various attempts have been made to understand how the *Anastenárides* are able to walk on the burning coals unharmed. Scientists, psychiatrists, anthropologists and folklorists have come to a number of different conclusions. Their discussion can be related to the even larger amount of research that has been undertaken on the role of the body and the relationship between mind, body and society. Specific studies on the relationship between pain, disease and healing and their physiological, psychological and social causes (Foucault 1967; Danforth 1989; Kapferer 1991; Taussig 1992) have proved interesting and relevant to the study of the body as socially constructed. There still remains, though, a void in the explanation of how and why individuals are able to walk on burning coals unharmed. This, however, need not be answered in a context of its own⁷⁵. What is important is how the *Anastenárides* understand and explain their ability to walk on burning coals unharmed and also, how they conceptualise their inability to do so. What is needed is a reflection on the position of the body in the negotiation of self and a discussion of the socialised body as well as a comparison with the material provided by the discourse of science.

Various scientific explanations have been given for the ability to walk on fire; from mass hallucination, to the application of chemicals to the soles of the feet, through to pain deadening drugs. Callused feet and autohypnosis have been cited, as have applied analgesia, a bio-chemical modification of skin surface by hydration and the creation of the Spheroid State of sweat droplets. Physicists have undertaken (and continue to do so)

⁷⁴ A discussion on the different understandings of burning appears later in this Chapter.

⁷⁵ I acknowledge that the ability to walk on burning coals unharmed is relevant to the performance of the *Anastenária* and, therefore, also to the *Anastenárides*, themselves. This is mainly because the attention they receive is precisely due to this ability.

research and trial firewalks to explain the phenomenon largely by means of conductivity⁷⁶. D. Willey, a physicist from the United States, has performed numerous successful firewalks and concludes that hardwood and charcoal are excellent thermal insulators. He claims that during firewalks, the thermal conductivity of coarse charcoal is very low and that of skin or flesh is only about four times greater. He concludes:

It would seem then, that a firewalk of short length is something any physically fit person could do and that it does not need a particular state of mind. Rather, it is the short time of contact and the low thermal capacity and conductivity of the coals that is important, and it is not necessary for the feet to be moist nor callused, although either may be of slight benefit (Willey 1995:2).

This 'low conductivity theory' as well as the 'Leidenfrost effect' (based on assuming the feet's protection from burning by sweat droplets formed on the feet and acting as a barrier)⁷⁷ both fail to account for firewalks performed on elements such as stone⁷⁸. They are also inadequate when explaining firewalks that include contact with coals for a long period of time. In January 1995, in Lagadhás, I witnessed two *Anastenárides* dancing on a

⁷⁶During the 1930's the University of London's Council for Psychical Research organised two firewalks to study the phenomenon of firewalking. They were both performed successfully, with no burning, and they consequently concluded that the secret to firewalking lay in the low thermal conductivity of the burning wood and that the contact time was very short. In Autumn 1985, B.J Leikand and W.J McCarthy published a paper in the *Sceptical Inquirer*, which also argued that firewalking was possible because of the low thermal capacity of the coals and the limited contact time.

⁷⁷Johann Leidenfrost, a Polish physicist, argued that at temperatures between 200 and 500 hundred degrees sweat droplets on the feet enter into a spheroidal state, turning into balls of liquid, separated from the skin by a layer of vapour. This means that there is a layer of moisture in a spheroidal state, then a layer of vapour, separating the skin from the burning coals. In this way, it has been argued, the skin is protected. M.R. Coe (1957:110) also used this theory to explain the phenomenon of firewalking; "No paranormal explanation is necessary for fire-walking and related behaviours with incandescent objects; protection is afforded by the spheroidal condition assumed by liquids. With glowing coals, a combination of the spheroidal condition, cutting off oxygen, liquid absorption, and skin thickness operated to prevent a person from being burned".

⁷⁸There is a firewalk in Fiji where they walk on hot stones. This however, is still contested by some physicists. Dr. J. A. Campbell, a physicist from the Physics Department at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, who has undertaken and held firewalks himself, questions the conductive ability of the stones used in firewalks in Fiji. In response to an Anthropologist's critical reply to his rather broad statements on firewalking, Dr. Campbell retorted, "But what is the bottom line of firewalking? If your living tissue reaches a temperature of about 50 degrees Celsius it is chemically altered and you sustain a serious burn. The same applies to Fijian firewalkers. The trick is that it can only be done on materials with the right properties, for example charcoal and certain stones such as occur on the volcanic island of Beqa" (*Campus News* October 20, 1994).

small bed of coals for a period of at least sixty seconds⁷⁹. According to studies undertaken on the firewalks in Lagadhás and on accounts by *Anastenárides*, the average temperature of their fires is approximately 400 degrees Celsius. It is said that human skin chars at 325 degrees and second-degree burns occur at 160 degrees.

In the 1970's Christos Xenakis, a neurologist from the Max Planck Institute studied the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás. He argued that they were "not in a trance, but in a high state of self-induced concentration. Through movement, music and visualisation, combined with a special way of walking". He concluded, "firewalkers can somehow produce a state in which they are insensitive to pain and, even more miraculously, unaffected by burning temperatures" (Xenakis 1977, in Sternfield 1992:111-112). For ten years Xenakis and two fellow researchers, equipped with a range of technical apparatus, examined the *Anastenáride's* firewalk, using tele-EEG's, tele-ECG's and blood tests⁸⁰. They also filmed the firewalk. They found the ECG to be normal but during the preparation period the EEG had low voltage theta rhythms, which suggests, they argue, a highly relaxed state of consciousness usually associated with dream states. The apparatus gave a normal reading during the firewalk. Neurological, psychiatric and laboratory tests of blood, urine and electrolytes, were all normal. Xenakis concluded, "present knowledge is not adequate to explain the phenomenon" (Xenakis 1977, 223:309).

The Greek psychiatrist, Vittoria Manganas (1983), argued that the skin has superconductive abilities. Arguing that the *Anastenárides* had been subjected to all possible tests without any conclusive resolution of the issue, she set out to prove, through kirlian photography, that firewalking ability is related to an increase in bioenergy and the formation of a bio energetic protective field around the body (Manganas 1983:82). Kirlian photography is a form of high frequency photography believed to record visually the vital

⁷⁹Margrave (1995) claims to have witnessed an individual in the United States remaining on burning coals for at least fifty-five seconds. Neither of these theories can explain how this individual did not get burned.

⁸⁰An EEG is an Electroencephalogram, which measures brain waves, and an ECG is an Electrocardiogram, which measures the heartbeat.

force field around animals and plants; “Appearing somewhat like the halo around the sun, this force field apparently dims when an organism becomes ill and disappears altogether when the organism dies” (Sternfield 1992:113). This type of photography has not been generally accepted in the scientific community because alternative research claims that the small electrical charges used to enhance the streamers or corona images may in fact be causing them.

Manganas took photos of eleven *Anastenárides* hands and feet during preparation for the ritual, during the dancing and after the firewalk and during everyday life and compared them to those of people in special states such as hypnosis, meditation and autogenic training (self induced forms of hypnosis). Manganas concluded that in all the above conditions, including fire dancing, there was “an increase in the corona discharge ... compared to the corresponding rest conditions ... the kirlian photos of the feet show a remarkable increase of the length and density of the streamers and sparks of different colours. This is not dependant on the mechanical act of dancing, since the same image was given while at rest” (Manganas 1983:82). She concluded therefore, that during firewalking there is an increase in bioenergy and also the formation of a kind of bioenergetic protective shield. Following Inyushin’s (1968) argument that in special extreme conditions a person’s “biological plasma” can be increased, voluntarily or involuntarily, Manganas argued that it could also occur in a high frequency field. Thus, during firewalking, she concluded, this plasma protects the feet from burning because of, “the charged particles or free electrons that form and produce a state of superconductivity of the skin” (Manganas 1983:82)⁸¹. This line of argument was criticised by some but found interesting by others within the scientific field.

⁸¹See Margrave (1995) who also refers to kirlian photography in his discussion on firewalking. He argues that all human beings have a ‘life energy’ which is not only internal, but which envelops the body. Like a protective field, this ‘life energy’ can be detected, he argues, through kirlian photography.

Other lines of inquiry were taken, many focusing on firewalker's mental and emotional states. Blake (1985) concluded that in order to walk on fire unharmed, "a healthy anxiety is necessary and appropriate, coupled with a strong belief in powerful outside forces" (in Sternfield 1992:115). Similarly, physician A. Weil suggested that firewalking is possible evidence of "mind-induced physical immunity" and concluded that successful firewalking is the result "of using the mind in certain ways ... and so allowing the brain and nerves to alter the body's responsiveness to heat" (Weil 1983:249). He came to these conclusions after he himself successfully walked on fire. He believed that this field of inquiry would be helpful in the prevention and curing of disease.

Following this line of argument, Sternfield believes that firewalking and fire handling are the "nexus of fear and faith, of flesh and fire, a crossing point where varying blends of these elements yield astounding results" (Sternfield 1992:149). He sees it as an expression of faith, of mind over matter, where the performers can reach an altered state where they increase their immunity to the effects of fire. Danforth (1989) clearly demonstrates his position with his own participation in an American firewalking workshop, where he successfully crossed a bed of burning coals. He follows an acceptance that belief and mind-strength are instrumental in the ability to firewalk and that a search for meaning and identity play important roles in the construction and maintenance of such rituals.

Sternfield (1992) who argues that firewalking and fire handling is made possible through 'belief', includes in his argument an acknowledgment of a type of field of immunity, something which we have the power to create, through belief, which acts as a protective shield. He refers to "bioluminescence", claiming its relation to such phenomena as the *baraka* of Sufis, the *ch'i* of the Chinese and the *prana* of the Indians. Perhaps one might also include, as a similar phenomenon, the *dhinamis* of the *Anastenárides*. This "energy field" which he claims we can activate through faith, concentration, focus and attention, is a means of psychological empowerment. Similarly, Margrave (1995) (<http://heartfire.com>

/firewalk/pages/experience.html) argues that all living beings have a 'life energy', an animating force, which is "the organising, anti-entropic essence of life and it is composed of consciousness" (*ibid.*). He also compares it to *baraka*, *ch'i* and *prana* and claims that during a firewalk, the fear which is experienced, increases the 'life energy', which then interacts with our physical body in some special way and so damage to the body is precluded. The *Anastenárides*, somewhat differently, believe that they are endowed with the *dhinamis* (supernatural power) of the Saint, transmitted to them through the Icons (it requires more than this, however, otherwise everyone who comes into contact with the Icons would be able to walk on fire unharmed). Sternfield's argument is closely aligned, (although perhaps different in terminology) to the way the *Anastenárides* themselves articulate their ability to enter the fire unscathed.

The Question of Altered States of Consciousness

Observers of the *Anastenária* have widely documented that the performers are in a state of trance during their passage through the fire and that it is this altered state of consciousness, which allows the body to be removed from the experiences of normal pain⁸²:

Besides faith, the Anastenarides undergo a conditioning through certain movements, by playing their music, by inhaling incense ... This type of in group solidarity and unity that characterises the Anastenarides facilitates the development of specific group psychology and dynamics among themselves and serves as mysticism, exaltation and ecstasy for all members. All the above conditioning assists the Anastenarides in reaching a transcendental state and triggers certain internal states in their psychological dimension which apparently ... [cause them] not to feel the pain and not to burn their skin... (Vilenskaya 1991:104).

Interestingly, however, Vilenskaya seems to contradict her 'theory', or at least to confuse it by earlier stating "[these] individuals ... use their religious belief system to protect the skin of their feet from burning and they are persuaded that nothing will happen to them as

⁸²See Mihail-Dede (1972, 1973), Christodoulou (1978), and Danforth (1989).

long as their faith lasts” (*ibid.*: 103). She then goes on to explain the additional “conditioning” that they require⁸³. Similarly, Mihail-Dede (1973:154) claims that the *Anastenárides*’ “ecstasy” which they achieve is the “result of deep faith” and through the correspondence which they maintain between the “demands of man and the fulfilment of the demands by the Saints”. She goes on to explain that “self concentration and prayer” are the second stage of the “psychological process” necessary for the “dancer and firewalker to get the <message> from Saints Constantine and Helen” (*ibid.*:155). They also must have performed religious duties through the year and lived “according to the pattern given by the two Saints” (*ibid.*)⁸⁴. Regardless of what actually protects the *Anastenárides*, it is without dispute that during the ritual, both during the preparatory stages in the *Konáki* where they are involved in dancing and singing, as well as during the firewalk itself, they do appear to be, at intervals and in differing degrees, in some type of altered state of consciousness. Ludwig (1968:194) states, “possession behaviour, like any other form of cultural behaviour, is learned”. This is an important point, as I too would argue similarly, whilst acknowledging that the *Anastenárides* are not possessed by the Saints in the same way that a person has been documented in examples of demon possession (see Kapferer 1979) and also in spirit possession (see Garbett 1993, 1995). Christodoulou (1978) and Danforth (1989) have also argued that during the performance of the *Anastenária*, in the *Konáki* dancing and on the fire, the *Anastenárides* are experiencing an altered state of consciousness. The *Anastenáris* from Ayía Eléni who is a psychiatrist (and whom I have mentioned earlier) and does not himself walk on the coals, explained to me that during the dancing in the *Konáki*, there was a state of *ékstasis*, (ecstasy) and of a type of *ípnosis* (hypnosis). Importantly, however, he explained that for each individual, this is expressed differently, in different degrees and on different levels. He explained that this state can be very disturbing to pass through.

⁸³See also Pressel (1974:194) who writes of the ‘techniques’ used to ‘disassociate’ oneself.

⁸⁴Mihail-Dede (1973) notes that the prayers said by the *Anastenárides* are the same as those said in the Orthodox Church.

For some people this state can cause much stress. Ludwig (1968:194) states that altered states of consciousness are those:

...mental states, induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological manoeuvres or agents, which can be recognised subjectively by the individual himself (or by the objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in terms of subjective experience or psychological functioning, from certain general norms as determined by the subjective experience and psychological functioning of that individual during alert, waking consciousness.

Danforth (1989) argued from his field experience, that during the festivals (*paniyiria*) whilst in altered states of consciousness, many *Anastenárides* behaved in a way which was in opposition or conflict to their normal social position⁸⁵. For example, and in particular, Danforth presented the behaviour of women, arguing that it was often in opposition to behaviour normally expected by women: “Through participation in the Anastenaria women have opportunities for the exercise of power that are not available to them in most secular contexts” and “In the Anastenaria women are able to act as men because they have acquired the supernatural power of Saint Constantine” (Danforth 1989:99)⁸⁶. From my personal experience, I did not feel that there existed any type of ‘inversion’ of normal socially accepted behaviour, nor was there a type of freeness or openness where all social order ceased or was ignored⁸⁷. On the contrary, I felt that constructed behaviour which was apparent in everyday life, such as gendered behaviour, remained during the rituals, or, rather, was replaced by constructed behaviour appropriate to being an *Anastenáride*.

⁸⁵ See also Wagner (1977) on his discussion of Daribi mediumistic hysteria. He argues that there is a shift in the self, a shift in the interference in the sense of the self. To be a medium, one has to be a self and to also manipulate that self, to be reflector and reflected at the same time. Kapferer (1979, 1991) following Mead also speaks of a shift in the self, or a loss of the self during demon exorcism.

⁸⁶ Danforth (1989) believes that this transformation in gender roles is possible mainly because a male Saint possesses the *Anastenárisse*. He gives the examples of women dancing individually, women being interviewed by reporters, etc. and of women assuming behaviour and treatment which is usually accorded to men (1989:95-103).

⁸⁷ This type of inversion and ‘freeness’ resonates with Turner’s (1969) liminal phase, which he argues occurs during all rites of transition. The liminal phase, Turner argues, occurs during the part of a transition rite when the participants are ‘betwixt and between’, neither what they were before nor what they are about to be. During the liminal phase there exists the possibility for an inversion or a loss of previous social order, in the form of titles, status and socially expected behaviour.

With a somewhat different understanding, Kapferer (1991) in his discussion of the way in which individuals suffering from demon possession often achieve a tranced state, or move in and out of a tranced state during exorcisms, argues that during such tranced states, the individuals are removed from their consciousness, their awareness of self. He argues that during the rituals, everything is organised in such a way, and certain processes occur which negate a construction of the self-acting in the everyday world, so the objective self is denied and thus lost. Interestingly, however, earlier in his book he tells of the possession of three women. During their tranced states, the women began to dance and “symbolised in their bodies their different locations in the shifting realities of their experience and their particular agonies” (Kapferer 1991:xv). So while they may lose an awareness of their objective selves, they are revealing, in dance, through their bodies, their objective, inscribed selves. The body *hexis* is the deepest level of embodiment and it is the hardest to change⁸⁸. I found a similar situation in Lagadhás when the *Anastenárides* were dancing in the *Konáki* and crossing the fire. The body movements of individuals, revealed a great deal about their socialised selves. Mikháli, for example, a successful journalist in the city, danced with large, loud movements, taking up a lot of space. Pávlos, on the other hand, an older farmer living in Lagadhás, danced with small, quiet movements, moving within a small area of the floor. Their embodied selves were not lost, their objective selves were revealed through their body ‘hexis’. Similarly, as explained above, their articulations of their bodily experiences during and before walking on the coals are quite varied (Sansom 1998).

⁸⁸ Bourdieu (see especially 1984) argues that the body’s physical expression incorporates and reveals value. That is, in speaking, sitting, walking, gestulation, eating etc. the body incorporates and expresses value.

Trance as Learned Behaviour

Altered states of consciousness, trance and possession are central to a discussion of firewalking but have rarely been addressed in their capacity as *culturally learned behaviour*⁸⁹. That is, like all social behaviour, possession behaviour is learned. This is an important point and leads to my criticism of the use of these terms in relation to the *Anastenária*: they are often applied too generally, used as a gloss and little attention is given to the individual and contextual particularities⁹⁰. Behaviour observed during the festivals has overwhelmingly been documented as typical of possessive states. In his discussion of the *Anastenária* as a healing ritual, where he argues that the participants move from a condition of illness to health, Danforth (1989:59) differentiates possession from trance⁹¹: “The distinction between trance and possession is an important one...Trance refers to a particular physiological or psychological condition, while possession refers to a belief system, explanatory theory, or cultural interpretation placed upon various conditions that may or may not include trance”. Possession then, is learned and so the behaviour prior to and during the ritual, follows a constructed form in the same way that everyday practice does⁹². Whilst I agree that all behaviour is learnt, I think that one needs to be wary of applying the concept of possession to the *Anastenária*. Possession suggests, as I explain in reference to Kapferer’s work on demon possession a little later, a negation of self. I would argue, that during the *Anastenária* such a generalised assumption of behaviour is inappropriate. For the *Anastenárides* to claim that they had become the Saint would be sacrilegious, blasphemous, and at no time did they articulate or infer that this was the case⁹³. I do however adhere to the argument that different bodies will behave

⁸⁹These altered states of consciousness are referred to largely by psychologists and psychiatrists as disassociated states. See Pressel (1974).

⁹⁰Csordas (1990:32) similarly argues that “physiological explanations in terms of trance and altered states of consciousness, or catharsis and nervous-emotional discharge, do not take us very far unless we are willing to accept trance and catharsis as ends in themselves rather than as *modus operandi* for the work of culture”.

⁹¹See Walker (1972) and Henney and Goodman (1974:3-5), who make a similar distinctions between trance and possession.

⁹²See also Pressel (1974) and Crapanzano (1977) on a discussion of possessive behaviour as learned.

⁹³Danforth (1989:95-103) cites examples when *Anastenárides* blamed certain actions of theirs or their behaviour during the rituals on the Saint, in particular women. This suggests a type of possession, but in my experiences no such explanations or inferences were made.

differently during altered states of consciousness as their embodied everyday socialised self is not lost totally during ritual. Wallace (1966:140) argues that, on an individual level, possession trance functions as an “avenue to identity renewal”. Much like most of the New Age thinking and the new firewalk workshops’ dialogue, this points to a self-renewal, a self-empowerment, a type of inner growth and self revelation which can be achieved from firewalking. I would argue, slightly differently: possession trance actually has its own understood behaviour, and this learnt behaviour is embodied, in the same way as it is in other identity construction. Putting this notion to work in the case of the *Anastenária*, one could argue that it is this embodied state of consciousness, or altered consciousness, and the identity of the person in this position, which perhaps enables the *Anastenárides* to walk on burning coals, unharmed. This type of discussion has to include an acknowledgment of some sort of ‘belief’ theory. It is different, however, in that rather than seeing it as a belief in their ability to walk on the fire unharmed, which grants the *Anastenárides* the mental power to overcome normal pain sensation, one could argue that the body, as being culturally grounded, has embodied the constructed identity of an *Anastenáride* during ritual: perhaps it is this which enables the body to walk on fire unharmed. Following a similar line of thought, Kapferer (1991) in his discussion of demon possession in Sri Lanka, argues that the predisposed belief in possession actually dictates the occurrence of possession. For example, women are more likely to be diagnosed with possession as they are in contact with those substances and spend time in those places which are believed to be associated with demons (the handling of uncooked foods, babies’ faeces); “Women, I argue, are subject to demonic attack as a function of their cultural typification, which places them in a special and significant relation to the demonic” (*ibid.*:128), and, “They are likely to comprehend their experience of disorder, or to integrate to their experience the disorders which attach to others, as the result of demonic attack because of the way their being is culturally constituted” (*ibid.*:153)⁹⁴.

⁹⁴See also Obeyesekere (1970) who examines the relationship of mental illness and the cultural idiom in which symptoms are expressed.

In a re-working of Mead's (1934) notion of the individual and the self, Kapferer (1991) argues that during demonic possession, there is a loss of self-consciousness, a negation of awareness of self⁹⁵. The objective self is lost and the patient becomes "submerged within a personal subjective reality" (Kapferer 1991:276). That is, throughout the ritual, the 'I' and the 'Me' appear but by the climax of the exorcism, the 'Me' is submerged into the 'I'. For deity possession, in rituals like the *Anastenária*, Kapferer suggests that perhaps the opposite occurs; the 'I' collapses into the 'Me' "which is then totally subsumed in the other as deity" (Kapferer 1991:278). Whilst this initially seemed applicable to the *Anastenária*, by arguing that the *Anastenárides* take on the Other in the way Kapferer suggests, but here as the Saint, (not deity), I do not believe that the 'I' totally collapses, nor does the 'Me' become totally subsumed in the other, the Saint. What I would suggest, is that this process partially occurs: the self ceases to be the focus, self consciousness is altered, reduced, and whilst remaining fluid, an altered state of consciousness occurs. Depending on the individual and the particular moment, the degree to which the self is negated may increase and decrease. Andrew Strathern (1995) in his discussion on 'consciousness', calls for an approach which ceases to perpetuate the "false dichotomy" of the psychogenic and sociogenic. Also interested in discrediting the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, Strathern (*ibid.*:118) argues that trance and spirit possession are examples of "embodied mentality" and that consciousness, the body and embodiment all "represent a domain of ideas where the psychogenic and sociogenic meet and overlap"⁹⁶. In this way, the *Anastenárides* do not cease to be one thing and become another, but rather, the self shifts, consciousness shifts, as do their bodies with their consciousness. Like Schutz (1972) and

⁹⁵In a similar argument, likening possession to hypnosis, Walker (1972) follows the work of Gill and Brennan (1961, 1967) who argue that during hypnosis, a person is temporarily and within strict limits, controlled by another. There is an altered state of ego functioning; that is, there must be a loss of the sense of self, the loss of individualism.

⁹⁶In this article, Strathern uses the work of Rossi and Check (1988) who argued that consciousness is a process of self-reflective "information transduction", *i.e.*, reflecting a state dependent learning. Their work is premised on brain-centred experience and so collapses the mind/body dichotomy. Strathern concludes, "Matters acted out through the body on embodied knowledge are also linked with brain transduction processes" (1995:129). This is not entirely dissimilar from arguments presented in medical anthropology on "mindful bodies" (see Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1987).

Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964), who claim that we are neither self-conscious nor conscious of our bodies, I argue that consciousness and self-consciousness are constantly shifting in social practice, creating different levels of 'self-awareness'. Feher's (1989:13) discussion of bodies with relation to religion is not dissimilar to those mentioned above: he writes of a type of body "that members of a culture endow themselves with in order to come into relation with the kind of deity they posit to themselves". Do the *Anastenárides*, then, endow themselves with a body able to endure the effects of burning coals, or is it that through possession, they are able to transform their identity to one which includes the phenomenon of firewalking?

It was the lack of unified behaviour and the ease with which the *Anastenárides* appeared able to break their mood, their 'tranced state', which caused me to inquire about these notions of trance and possession with regards to this ritual. Vilenskaya (1991:110-113) also noted an inconsistency in altered state behaviour. She recalled the comments of a reporter in Lagadhás when watching the ritual performance;

The reporter turned to me with another question. We first saw dancers in the Konaki apparently in a special, altered state of mind, in ecstasy. Then most of them broke this state — they chatted with the spectators, explained, gave directions. How can they go into hot coals afterwards? I expressed an opinion that perhaps because it's not their first fire dance. Since most of them repeat the ceremony year after year, for many years — they are able to quickly re-enter and re-access this particular state. The body and mind 'remember' the state, and it probably can be achieved automatically and almost instantaneously, much as I experienced personally during the Tony Robbins seminar.

She concludes, "From 25-30 dancers, roughly about two thirds appeared to be in a state of ecstasy and one third did not" (*ibid.*:111). She provides no explanation as to what state the other third were in and how they also walked on the coals unharmed. These types of observations are common and I myself was at first unsure as to how to gauge or assess the

state of the performers. Conclusions like Vilenskaya's, however, are both generalised and also assume a clear and definite behaviour associated with altered states of consciousness.

One *Anastenárissa* in Lagadhás often interrupted her dancing in the *Konáki* (not in the fire) with breaks; often she would change into her slippers after she had been dancing for a few minutes, or simply remove her shoes and then continue dancing, barefoot. At other times she would stop to speak to someone or to get a drink. Another *Anastenáris* would often break his dancing and resume it swiftly and without any change in his physical movements: he would not slow his dancing and then stop, but might cease dancing in the midst of what appeared to me to be an intense moment of movement. Similarly, in 1994, when an *Anastenáris* arrived at the *Konáki* from Thessaloníki, he went straight from his car into the *Konáki* and was dancing as he passed through the door. His movements as he entered the room took the guise of intense dancing, a level of intensity which most *Anastenárides* only achieved after a long period of dancing. Just as abruptly, did he stop to greet everyone. On another occasion, during procession outside to begin the firewalk, an *Anastenárissa* stopped to talk to a relative and also stopped and jokingly asked me to take a good photo of them on the fire.

Embodiment: the body and world united

Even supposing that behaviour in the *Konáki* is learnt and embodied and therefore performed in an unreflected upon manner, there still remains the problem of the ability to firewalk. That is, how do we accommodate in our discourse, this degree of embodiment? Can it allow for embodiment that is physically transformative, an embodiment that alters the biological effects of fire? A discussion of the relationship between biology and culture needs to be addressed. We are presented with a phenomenon which physicists and biologists have attempted to explain but which still occupies the interests of all disciplines. The *Anastenárides* believe that Saint Constantine protects them. New Age firewalkers and healers argue that the mind has the power to overcome fear and pain. Conditioned through

concentration, the body is able to walk on burning coals unharmed. This discussion of the relationship between mind/body/culture was addressed by Heidegger (1962) (see also Merleau-Ponty 1962), who disagreed with the notion of the body being posited as a solely biological entity, or an empty social object, an objective entity. In an attempt to develop a better understanding of the relationship between mind and body, Heidegger developed the concept of “*being in the world*” (*dasein*) and argued that being, *dasein*, is what in its social activity, the body interprets itself to be. So the body, is as it is interpreted to be. The act of human being is, therefore, self-interpretative⁹⁷.

Bourdieu, building on the phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty’s work, also argues that the relationship between the social agent and the world is not that of a subject and an object, but one of “mutual ‘possession’ — as Bourdieu (1989a:10) recently put it — between habitus, as the socially constituted principle of perception and appreciation, and the world which determines it” (Wacquant 1992:20). Both Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu reject the dualities between body and mind. Instead, they see them as connected, each generating the other (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:20): Bourdieu (1992:20) argues, “The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body”, whilst, similarly, Merleau-Ponty (1962:401) states, “Inside and outside are wholly inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself”⁹⁸. Merleau-Ponty sees cognition as *embodied action* (see Haworth 1997:94), and stresses the role which pre-reflexive and reflexive thought plays in directing action. He argued that ‘being-in-the-world’ could not be divorced from the material aspects of our bodies (see Morton and MacIntyre 1995:11)⁹⁹. Perception, he claimed, is dependent on a lived body: as the body is active, perception and movement

⁹⁷ Morton and MacIntyre (1995), see this connection between body and mind in a similar way, but articulate the link as an identity.

⁹⁸See also G. Mead (1934) who argues that the social comes before the individual so the notion of self is constructed from the body’s interaction in the social world.

⁹⁹ I am not arguing that the body is merely a template for an encompassing symbolic universe. The body is also ‘active’ in the world.

cannot be separated¹⁰⁰. Similarly, Lambek (1993) argues that embodiment makes knowledge experientially real¹⁰¹. Bourdieu's work differs somewhat, however, in that his approach as a sociologist, rather than as a phenomenologist, leads him to further investigate the objective social structures and their conditions of operation (Waquant 1992:20). Bourdieu's praxeology also negates the regularity assumed in Merleau-Ponty's theory. Bourdieu does this through his concepts of field and habitus and the logic of practical living, which he argues, cannot be precise and contained.

Emotional experience has been examined in a similar approach, (see especially Kapferer 1979b, 1991, 1995a) in relation to the body; "...emotional experience is a process which is at once in the world and embodied, 'physical', 'psychological' and 'sociological'" (Kapferer 1995a:147-8). While Kapferer agrees with the social construction of emotion and the body, he criticises the tendency (Lutz 1988; Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990) to disembodiment experience and locate it externally¹⁰². In the project of examining the role and position of consciousness¹⁰³, Kapferer argues that consciousness, as a process from being-in-the-world, is rooted in the body, is embodied, and so is experienced as a "motion of the body" (1995:149). Through the process of intentionality (that being "the directionality of all action, that action has a trajectory" (*ibid.*:135), Kapferer argues that the body and the world are united¹⁰⁴. Applying Kapferer's notion of consciousness as "rooted in the body", we can perhaps explain the *Anastenárides*' bodily behaviour as intrinsically connected to their consciousness. During the ritual, their bodies, or bodily actions and limits are altered

¹⁰⁰ For more detail on this area of discussion, see B. Turner (1992). See also Goffman (1961, 1971), who saw the social self as presented through the social body, and somewhat differently, M. Douglas' (1970, 1973) famous work on the body as a metaphor for society.

¹⁰¹ See A. Strathern (1995:130) who also argues against the mind/body dichotomy and claims that the "value of the concept of embodiment is that it can encompass both the psychogenic and the sociogenic.

¹⁰² Similarly, Lyon (1995) argues that emotion is embodied at the same time that it is socialised.

¹⁰³ See *Questions of Consciousness* (1995), Anthony Cohen and Nigel Rapport (eds), where Kapferer argues that all living beings are conscious. He argues that consciousness is formed through being-in-the-world and through interaction with others; "...individual consciousness emerges in a field of consciousness" (*ibid.*:134). See Kapferer (1997), for an interesting discussion of consciousness.

¹⁰⁴ Johnson (1993:4) in his introduction to Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*, suggests that the notion of *habitus* was "conceived as an alternative to the solutions offered by subjectivism (consciousness, subject etc)" and also as an alternative to structuralism's tendency to reduce the agent to someone who enacts rather than produces or transforms.

as their consciousness alters. Thus, as the self's position and focus shifts, the body responds.

Haraway (1991), in her work on the gendered female body, also states that the body cannot be an objective object because biology itself is "situationally determined" (Csordas 1994:287, on Haraway). Haraway (1991:10) argues, "Neither our personal bodies nor our social bodies may be seen as natural, in the sense of existing outside the self-creating process called human labour". She sees the body as an *agent* (*ibid.*) rather than an object and places an emphasis on *location*, different, unequal positions amongst a web of connected possibilities. This focus on position, or *location*, allows for an acceptance of the different standpoints that different embodied *agents* may have at different times. Similar to Bourdieu's notion of field, (initially introduced in 1966 and elaborated throughout his subsequent work), where Bourdieu also envisages the body as a type of *agent* which moves into different positions, Haraway differs, however, by assuming that this view of the development of the body from *object* to *agent*, is a contemporary cultural transformation of the 20th century and thus, a relatively new phenomenon. Costall (1997), in his work on technology, discusses the idea of attributing agency to objects. Likewise, Pickering (1997:46) refers to technology and objects as playing a significant role in "human cultural evolution", suggesting that technology and objects are very much part of our embodied self, Merleau-Ponty's *embodied subjectivity*. Moving away from the clear distinction between objects and people and criticising the great void in the study of *things*, these ideas not only encourage a closer examination of objects but necessarily also bring into question humans' relationship to them, and to the skills associated with them. Similarly, Tim Ingold's (1986a, 1986b, 1993, 1995, 1997) interesting discussion of technology requires us to examine action, the skills that the body performs, and acknowledge them as *embodied*. In doing this, we are moved to accept that technology is part of our habitus (in Bourdieu's sense), and therefore cannot be separate from ourselves. Thus the separation between objects, body, culture and mind becomes more blurred.

If we consider exactly what is meant by embodiment we need to focus on the social as well as the relationship of mind and body. If, as Heidegger (1962) argues, we embody subjectivity, how exactly is this done, and why is it different for different people? Bourdieu argues;

The child imitates not “models” other people’s actions. Body *hexis* speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, because linked to a whole system of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values: in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult — a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience (Bourdieu 1977:87).

Not only does a child imitate but is also physically shown, instructed and reminded of aspects of the socialised body; how to eat, cough, sneeze, sit, etc. These principles as embodied, are outside of consciousness, except in times of *breakdown*, to borrow Heidegger’s term, and so become taken for granted and unreflected upon, but are reproduced in practice¹⁰⁵. The body is “a living memory pad” (Bourdieu 1990:68). The properties and movements of the body become “socially qualified” (*ibid.*:71). The *Anastenárides*, (like other Greeks), physically demonstrate to their children how to act. Children are physically taken to the Icons and shown how to venerate (*proskini*) and offer respect to them. The children imitate, but the parents and other adults also deliberately demonstrate how to behave. So the way in which the *Anastenárides* use their Icons, their behaviour towards them as well as their behaviour towards each other and in the *Konáki*, whilst dancing, singing and eating, constitutes a major part of their habitus: the socially

¹⁰⁵See Leder (1990) who speaks of the ‘Absent Body’, arguing that the body is phenomenologically absent from awareness of everyday bodily activity. I suggest that this touches on Bourdieu’s notion of activity being (most of the time) not reflected upon and lying beyond consciousness.

embodied, that which is a taken for granted, way of doing things¹⁰⁶. But what about the firewalk? Is this not something performed outside of a person's habitus, even if the way in which they perform it is? How far does the body *embody* the habitus? How do we explain that connection between the mind and body?

Csordas (1990), in his efforts to create a working paradigm of the body, discusses the body in relation to his research on ritual and healing. In this paper, he examines "multi sensory imagery as an embodied cultural process" and looks at speaking in tongues as "embodied experience within a ritual system and as a cultural operator in the social trajectory of the religious movement" (Csordas 1990:8). In reference to Durkheim's (1915) notion of the sacred as "operationalized by the criterion of the 'other'" (Csordas 1990:34, on Durkheim), Csordas suggests that as 'otherness' is not a characteristic of objective reality but of human consciousness, there is no limit to what can be considered 'other' as it is dependent on "the conditions and configuration of circumstances" (*ibid.*). It is through establishing a working paradigm of embodiment, Csordas argues, that one may be able to establish the instances of this otherness. In this way, trance and what is experienced during the *Anastenária*, can be seen in terms of the creation of sacred objectifications through the exploitation of the preobjective (Csordas 1990:39). For the *Anastenárides*, that moment when they are 'taken' by the Saint is experienced spontaneously. The particular manifestations of these experiences share common forms however, because the participants share common elements of their habitus: their behaviour is operating at the level of "preobjective intersubjectivity" (*ibid.*:17).

¹⁰⁶It must be made note of here that not all *Anastenárides* are exposed to the behaviour of an *Anastenáris* from childhood. Some individuals, such as those who marry an *Anastenáris* or *Anastenárisa*, learn how to become an *Anastenáris* or *Anastenárisa*, through mimicry and simulation. Through this process certain ways of behaving, of responding and viewing the world, are embodied, become taken for granted and then unconsciously performed. In Bourdieu's terminology (see 1992), they have differing trajectories, and perhaps histories, but gradually come to share parts of their habitus. By trajectory, Bourdieu (1984) is referring not to the position one may have in a field, but how one arrived at that particular position; personal history.

Foreigners 'Stealing the Show': explaining *others* ability to firewalk

Important to a discussion of the how the *Anastenárides* understand their ability to walk on burning coals unharmed, is an examination of how they understand being burned and, therefore, an examination of the significance of not being burned. In 1994/5, I did not hear of any foreigners or non-*Anastenárides* asking or attempting to enter the fire during the festivals¹⁰⁷. This has occurred on other occasions, however. Danforth (1989:214-217) recalled such an incident in May 1985.

*An American 'stole the show' at the firewalk that took place yesterday in Langadas*¹⁰⁸.

Together with the Anastenarides of the region an American crossed the glowing coals three times without suffering any burns at all.

The forty year-old-man from Maine said he had taken part in similar firewalks in other countries.

After receiving permission from the Anastenarides the American, whose name was Ken, passed quickly over the burning coals three times in his bare feet.

The third time the Anastenarides told him to remain on the coals with them longer, but he declined and left.

It should be noted that before he took part in the firewalk the American made the same movements around the fire as the Anastenarides did.

As always a huge crowd watched the Anastenaria in Langadas. Among them was an Italian who took part in the firewalk last year but suffered severe burns on his feet.

This year the Italian watched the Anastenaria from a safe distance.

Whilst 'Ken' (Ken Cadigan) was allowed to walk on the fire with the *Anastenárides*, he was not allowed to dance inside the *Konáki* and was discouraged by several *Anastenárides* (so I was told) from entering the fire. Danforth writes that Ken believes an *Anastenáris* tried to get him burned in the fire, by holding him still in the fire and stepping on his foot, not wanting a non-*Anastenáride* to prove that firewalking was possible for anyone

¹⁰⁷ Vilenskaya (1991) in an interview with Mihail-Dede in Lagadhás, learnt that during the previous year, a Polish man entered the fire without being asked and the *Anastenárides* were very upset. Mihail-Dede explained, "Last year we had a man from Poland who danced on the fire, but he upset the rest of the dancers — they started crying and they were very upset and distressed" (in Vilenskaya 1991:109). I am unsure whether or not he was burned.

¹⁰⁸This is taken directly from Danforth (1989:214), who cites from the newspaper *Thessaloniki*, May 22, 1985.

(Danforth 1989:214-217.). Danforth writes that Ken informed him later that he had in fact, been burned by the *Anastenáris* stepping on his foot.

When I discussed these incidents with the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás, I was often greeted with a faint amusement. One *Anastenáris* said, “So what? We are here for the Saint, it is a religious and spiritual celebration. I think that if people come and run on the coals to show that they can do it, it is very selfish and disrespectful”. Another said, “But he did get burned. He was only protected from being badly burnt because the Saint was watching and did not want to spoil the firewalk for all of the *Anastenárides*. The Saint let him walk so the festival could continue”. When I asked this *Anastenáris* why the Italian man who had walked on the fire the previous year had been burned, he said that he did not know. He thought that it may have been because he did not ask us, he did not come to the *Konáki* and join in like the American¹⁰⁹.

Thétis, in a conversation with Vilenskaya (1991:106-8), explained,

If one is a good Christian and one believes very strongly, he/she may do it [firewalk]. The problem here is that we dance on fire because we have faith. If you dance [addressing Vilenskaya], it would probably not be exactly faith, but you concentrate within yourself, you get the power not to get burned, and that's it. There's quite a difference between you and me.

He explained that what differentiates the *Anastenárides* from other firewalkers, even Christian ones, is that the *Anastenáride's* faith begins with Saint Constantine as well as the fact that they have “a special way of dancing” that other people do not know (in Vilenskaya 1991:106-108). Interestingly, Thétis claimed to believe that his power to firewalk could be extended to an outsider¹¹⁰. On one occasion he said that none of the *Anastenárides* from

¹⁰⁹Some people in Lagadhás told me stories about foreigners walking on the coals during the festivals in different places. These stories were always contested. When an example was given of someone burning, different reasons were given and disagreements always surfaced over whether or not burns actually occurred. Danforth (1989:189-90) had similar experiences, concluding, “a burn is a cultural construct” (*ibid.*:190) and the interpretation of burning is thus flexible and culturally dependent.

¹¹⁰ See Chapter Two for a discussion on the transmission of supernatural power.

Brodívo (as well as those with no heritage from Kostí or Brodívo) had the ability to firewalk. He explained that when they were altogether, as one group in the early days, he and his family guided them into the fires. Even now, he explained, Brodívo does not have a fire, “Those from Brodívo never had a fire, they only danced. When they came here and we all settled here together, we started celebrating the festivals as one group. We guided them into the fires, we showed them how, all of them”. Whilst this opinion cannot be taken without the context in which it was said, by a self-exiled member of the group, it reflects his belief that people are able to be taught and can be shown and guided as to how to walk on the burning coals unharmed.

Mihail-Dede (1972-3:109) also acknowledged other people’s ability to walk on coals but explained some of the problems with outsiders being involved in the dance.

We do not deny that others can walk on fire. But this fire is especially for the believers in Saints Constantine and Helen. Other’s don’t know the special way they must dance in order to coordinate with the rest of the dancers and not to disturb them. Whenever a foreigner joins the group, the whole thing is turned into a circus — everybody starts laughing. And trying to do it on your own, without being in rhythm with the others — you weren’t trained this way — you may get burned. Fire is fire — it’s 400-600°C.

While the ability to walk on burning coals unharmed is seen by the *Anastenárides* as a gift from the Saint, as something which sets them apart from others, there did not appear any dilemma when dealing with other people’s similar abilities. While some individuals, employed some degree of ‘secondary elaboration’ on some occasions, (such as explaining that the Saint allowed Ken not to be burned so as not to disrupt the festival¹¹¹) on the

¹¹¹Similar explanations were provided by an *Anastenáris* to explain why several women and a few men, who he argued were not real *Anastenárides*, but who walked on the fire in Lagadhás and considered themselves

whole, most *Anastenárides* accepted that many other people were able to walk on coals unharmed¹¹². What they expressed as important was the ritual as a whole and the meaning that it holds for them. It is a meaning which foreigners cannot share. Like them, I see participating in the *Anastenária* to prove that one can firewalk, rather futile.

Interestingly, however, not all of the *Anastenárides* enter the fire. Nor do those who enter the fire do so at every festival. Both Mikháli and Pétros declined to walk the fire on certain occasions during my stay. Pétros told me that he did not have a clear 'path', an 'open road'. He said that he knew when the Saint was taking him into the coals, "when I am free and know that I can enter. Tonight I have no road". When I spoke to an *Anastenárisa* about this and asked her if not having the 'road' meant that you had offended the Saint in some way, she replied, "Possibly. For some it is because they have committed a sin, or behaved in a bad way. But for others, it is not their fault. It is difficult to be taken and to let the Saint guide you. Perhaps someone who does not go onto the coals has not made the path with the Saint. It is hard to say". So whilst sin was always a possibility for someone's inability to enter the fire, it was never considered a reason during my time in Lagadhás. Someone getting burned whilst in the fire, however, could be understood to be caused by sin, but also to be caused by entering the coals without the guidance of the Saint. So burning is seen as punishment and as exclusion: "If you are not burned, you are accepted as an *Anastenaris*; you are healed. If you are burned, however, your status as an *Anastenaris* is denied; you are humiliated and rejected, and you continue to suffer" (Danforth 1989:189). Danforth (1989:189-192) acknowledges, however, that this is not a clear-cut definition and various explanations are provided to make sense of contradictory evidence. He cites such examples and concludes, "These examples illustrate the flexibility

Anastenárides, did not get burned. He explained that the Saint did not want to embarrass their husbands and the rest of the community. See also Danforth (1989:197) for a similar example.

¹¹²By 'secondary elaboration', I refer here to Evans-Pritchard's (1976) use of the expression. In his study of Azande witchcraft and in particular, belief in their oracles, he coined the term 'secondary elaboration' to explain the way in which the Azande are able to account for what appears to be contradictory evidence in oracle results. See Evans-Pritchard (1976), especially Chapter Nine.

of the interpretative system of the *Anastenarides* and show how it can be manipulated to account for what seems to be the obvious empirical fact that some people are burned when they walk on the fire and others are not” (*ibid.*:189-90)¹¹³. He notes that for the *Anastenárídes*, being burned or not burned is never explained in physical terms (such as the condition of their feet), but rather in terms of their relationship with the Saint, the other *Anastenárídes* and with what sort of person they are. The *Anastenárídes*’ ability to walk on the burning coals unharmed has then, a cosmological meaning. It is within Orthodox Christian belief that Saints are able to perform miracles and influence the lives and behaviour of humans. As discussed in Chapter Two, this usually occurs in the context of a reciprocal relationship of veneration and protection between human and the Saint. It is believed, then, that Saint Constantine has the power to grant an individual the ability to perform *super*-human feats. It is he who protects the *Anastenárídes* when they enter the coals. If someone is burned, it is human error or human offence against the Saint. During my time in Lagadhás, I was not aware of any *Anastenáríde* (or anyone else) being burned. I watched carefully as they left the fire and danced afterwards in the *Konáki*. If there were small burns experienced, that is, burns small enough to conceal the pain or discomfort, they were not spoken of¹⁴.

Importantly, even with the increasing scientific evidence which aims to explain the phenomenon, as well as the *Anastenárídes*’ knowledge that many people are able to

¹¹³I disagree with some of Danforth’s comments regarding notions of inclusion and exclusion with regards to the ability to firewalk. He writes (1989:192): “The ability to walk through fire without being burned, an ability all *Anastenarides* must possess...”. There were several *Anastenárídes* in Lagadhás who did not enter the fire, who called themselves *Anastenárídes* and were called and referred to as *Anastenárídes* by the rest of the *Anastenáríde* community. The *Anastenárídes* in Lagadhás told me on several occasions that an *Anastenáríde* does not have to walk on the fire to be an *Anastenáríde*. This does not mean that the ability to walk on the coals is not an important symbol of the community, it is, but I would argue that it is not essential to being an *Anastenáríde* or to belonging to the *Anastenáríde* group. Perhaps as the boundaries of the group have altered, being able to firewalk unharmed is no longer emphasised as essential.

¹¹⁴Danforth (1978) noted that the definition of a burn is contested and, therefore, what constitutes a burn is questionable. Perhaps a small degree of discomfort is not understood as a burn and so on. This is quite possibly true for the *Anastenárídes* in Lagadhás also. Their conceptions of a burn may have differed from mine and from each other. Whilst, in discussions with them on the topic of burning, we appeared to hold similar understandings of burn classifications, it is quite likely that the understanding of a burn was contextually specific.

firewalk unharmed, their ritual and their position within it is neither threatened nor belittled.

Following an understanding of the body as socially organised and determined, leads to understanding sickness and cure in terms of the social, by assuming its connection to a particular cultural understanding of it. Phenomena that affect the physical body are not only biological but are also signs of social relations, which are, as Taussig (1992) demonstrates, 'disguised' as 'natural' things¹¹⁵. Bourdieu, in his discussion of gendered domination (see Bourdieu and Waquant 1992), also acknowledges the process by which relations are constructed, legitimated and reproduced, through biological inscription which is also socially inscribed. In such a way, the body is generative of social meaning but we still try to explain its functions and malfunctions (and relations with the opposite gender) in terms of biological science and here lies the dilemma. The *Anastenárides* do not make sense of their bodies separately from the social world, which they construct and inhabit. They do not explain their ability to walk on fire with science (except those few who have been educated in such discourse and at times expressed such a position), but in terms of religion and the Saints. These are both strongly connected to their social relationships and thus to an understanding of their selves. I have not attempted to provide a definitive answer as to how the *Anastenárides* walk across burning coals unharmed. My task is to examine the problem facing anthropological discussion at the moment, that of the relationship of the social body and the biological body. We are presented with the contradiction of continuing to explain the phenomenon of the body, which we claim is socialised, with an understanding still grounded in biological inscription. How do we break away from this problem without becoming lost in obfuscating phenomenological and psychological discourses?

¹¹⁵See Taussig (1992) and B. Turner (1992) for excellent discussions of illness and cure and an understanding of the body.

“We Are Not Magicians”: interpreting dreams and performing miracles

The majority of residents of Lagadhás are not involved in the *Anastenária* but many attend the *Konáki* at some time during the festival to greet the Holy Icons. It has been documented (Mihail-Dede 1972-3; Christodoulou 1978; Danforth 1978, 1989) and related to me by some of the *Anastenárides*, that many people also often came and saw an *Anastenáride* for assistance regarding physical or emotional problems, trouble with their crops or animals, even marital and other personal problems¹¹⁶. Mihail-Dede (1973:154) claims that the *Anastenárides* had the capability of “miraculous curing, mediumship of great variety, rain making [and] interpretation of dreams”. She claims that they are a “special group of people that offer services to the whole community they live with ... they can find a current of water, find a criminal in the community; they try to cure the sick, pray to God for the common good and above all they present excellent examples of heroism, love of country, as well as, pious living” (*ibid.*).

The *Anastenárides* are also believed to have the ability to interpret dreams and so were often sought after for this purpose¹¹⁷. The reading of dreams in Greece is not uncommon. There are particular visions and colours which are said to mean particular things and many Greek people (mainly women) whom I know have at some time or other made reference to the meaning of a dream¹¹⁸. On occasions I heard the *Pappús* and a few of the older *Anastenárides* discussing the interpretation of dreams, but this practice appeared to have decreased, at least in Lagadhás. On one occasion the *Pappús* explained to me that he could never read his own dreams, only other peoples. The most accounts I heard regarding dream interpretation and healing, came from Thétis, the former *Pappús*' son. I was told by Thétis and by another *Anastenáris* from Ayía Eléni that none of the

¹¹⁶ Remember Tom's mother calling on Thétis when Tom was unwell.

¹¹⁷ See especially Christodoulou (1978) who provides a great deal of information and examples of different types of dreams and dream interpretation. She cites the ability to be able to read dreams and to tell the future through dreams as a main characteristic of an *Anastenáride*.

¹¹⁸ The reading of coffee cups is also popular in Greece where many people (again I only know of women performing cup readings) are believed to be able to read the future of a person from the sediment remains of their coffee cup. Greek coffee leaves a thick muddy sediment on the bottom of the cup and after being turned upside down after drinking, the patterns and shapes left are read and interpreted. This is not something performed by the *Anastenárides* but one *Anastenáris* was said to be able to read cups.

Anastenárides in Lagadhás were able to cure illness or heal. Neither did they believe them capable of the successful interpretation of dreams¹¹⁹. According to Thétis, there are two or three *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni, Kelkini and Mavroléfki who are gifted and ‘know how’ to perform these duties. He told me that the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás have not been taught the proper ways and they have not bothered to learn these important things. Tom once told me that it is not something you go around advertising. Because an *Anastenáride* has a close connection with Saint Constantine, he or she may be able to guide a person in times of trouble: “We are not magicians. Some of the older *Anastenárides* are gifted with the ability to see things clearer than other people. They may spend a lifetime serving the Saint and serving God. They are pious, good people who may have the ability to help others in one way or another”.

Thétis was very happy to recall his own dreams as well as other peoples’ that he had read. Thétis said that he had often dreamt of the future and had predicted several major events in Greece’s recent history, for example he claims to have dreamt of the junta and the dictatorship in Greece before the event. I present a few that he recalled.

Dream One:

When I was young, I had several opportunities to travel, especially to Germany and France. One night I had a dream that the Priest in our local church begged me to stay in Lagadhás, not to go away. The Priest told me that I was the only one who could look after him. At first I did not understand the dream, the Priest had twelve children of his own, why did he want me to stay? A short time afterwards I understood. It was just after the first time that I entered the fire that I understood. The Priest in my dream was the Priest from the Church of Saint Constantine here in Lagadhás and I realised that it was the Saint who had come to me in my dream asking me to stay and care for his Icons.

Interestingly, Thétis told me that his mother had the same dream.

Dream Two:

This dream was said to have occurred in Paris in 1976 when Thétis was visiting his brother who was living there at the time.

¹¹⁹ See Christodoulou (1978) and Danforth (1989) who both refer to the decline in dream reading.

It was during winter and time for the festival of Saint Athanássios [January 18th]. I dreamt that my brother and I were there, walking on the coals, dancing with everyone else. Then I dreamt of a particular Icon, which lives in Mavroléfki. I dreamt that it was in Lagadhás. The next morning I rang home and sure enough someone had brought that Icon to Lagadhás for the festival. I was right. I had been there, my spirit had been there¹²⁰.

Dream Three:

An *Anastenárissa* who lives in Lagadhás but is not associated with my group visited Thétis when I was at his house one day. She explained to Thétis that she had been having terrible dreams, dreaming of a madman who was being restrained by people with black wire. She had also been dreaming of black buffalos and a black hearse. Thétis explained to her that all of these things symbolised a threat, and enemies. He said it was because of the division in the group and that people who were once family, were now opposed to them. When the woman left Thétis told me that she always came to him to read her dreams. This was because Thétis had dreamt of her husband's death several months before he fell ill and died. When he had told them about his dream, she was sceptical but after her husband fell ill, she realised that Thétis was right and so has never doubted him since.

Dream Four:

Thétis once relayed the dream of an *Anastenárissa* in Kosti who said that she had dreamt about the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás. In her dream all of them had green marks on their backs which Thétis and the woman interpreted as meaning that the Saint has marked them all and is watching them, keeping an eye on them¹²¹.

Dream Five:

The one dream that the *Pappús* told me about was the dream he had of Saint Varvára (Barbara). He said that she had come to him in his dream and asked him to celebrate her feast day. She had complained to him that no one was celebrating her day and that she wanted him to get the *Anastenárides* together and mark her day. Every year since the *Anastenárides* go to the *Pappús*' house in Thessaloniki and celebrate Saint Varvára's Day. The *Pappús* also bought an Icon of her after the dream.

Dream Six:

The night before the May festival in 1995, Tom had a dream that he told me about the following day. He dreamt that he had gone to the *Konáki* the next day and when he went inside, the Icons were gone. He said that for the rest of the festival, while the Icons were inside the *Konáki*, he was going to sleep there, as he believed it was the Saint telling him to guard them in case they get stolen.

¹²⁰ Both of these dreams are also cited in Christodoulou (1978), also told to her by Thétis.

¹²¹When I asked what the significance of the colour green was, Thétis explained that it was not the colour that was important, but the fact that they were marked.

While there were several examples provided of the interpretation of dreams, it is clear from reading previous documentation on the ritual and the community and from speaking with older *Anastenárides*, that the reading of dreams, like the diagnosing of illness, is far less common than ten or twenty years ago¹²². Importantly, most of the dreams relayed to me were old. The decrease in these practices might be due to the fact that the older generation of *Anastenárides* has passed away, taking their knowledge of these skills with them. One *Anastenáris* explained, “Many of the young ones have not learnt these things. If they are not careful, they will be lost. Not many people who have the knowledge and the skill are still alive and these things will be gone forever”. A man who attends the festival most years explained it differently, “Many of these types of practices have decreased all over Greece, not just for these people. The country is more modern now, people are more educated. They visit doctors more often and do not rely on their own superstitions. They are aware that if they practice these types of things, people may not take them seriously. They are not Saints, they are people”.

Chapter Four examines the aesthetics of the ritual performance. Looking specifically at the songs, music and dances in the performance of the *Anastenária*, I present their significance to the generation of meaning in the ritual and to the achievement of altered states of consciousness. Introducing the generation of identities that are discussed further in Chapter Five, I acknowledge the role of the aesthetics of the ritual performance in the construction of identity.

¹²²An *Anastenáris* from Lagadhás and another from Ayía Eléni, both told me that the reading of dreams and other practices, which the community was known to perform, are more common in Kelkíni and Ayía Eléni. It was explained that some of the oldest *Anastenárides* lived in these villages. This is significant as it relates to the competition between the towns and villages where the ritual is performed over ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’.

4

Aesthetics of Ritual Performance

Introduction

The aesthetic elements of the *Anastenária* are essential to its performance. They are also critical in their role in the achievement of altered states of consciousness; they are exhibitions of identity, both intentionally and unintentionally articulated. For the *Anastenárides*, their songs, dances, and Icons are not only important parts of their ritual performances but also revelations or symbols of their identity. Identity is not only constructed in ritual behaviour but also occurs in everyday practice. The ritual performed by the *Anastenárides* constitutes another form of practice. It acts as a forum in which the players are able to consciously exhibit certain images of identity. Through the ritual process, different identities are being constructed, and participants are able to *act* on the world as they move in and out of different social situations¹. This section examines the aesthetics of the performance of the *Anastenária* and discusses the role they play in the achievement of altered states of consciousness, their significance for the construction of identity and their importance for the generation of the meanings of the ritual².

¹See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion on the construction of identity.

² Work on dance in anthropology has produced a number of theories on the role of dance in society. Dance has been seen as acting as a type of release, as cathartic (Gluckman 1959; Lewis 1971). Functionalist studies have presented dance as enforcing or producing social control (Radcliffe-Brown 1922; Blacking 1979). Dance has also been claimed to create transformations and achieve self-generation (A. Strathern 1985). It has also been held to be active in boundary display, through competition and thus also as responsible for creating and reproducing identities (Mitchell 1956; Rappaport 1967). Victor Turner (1969) saw dance as ritual drama whilst Gell (1985), by applying structural analysis to the study of dance, viewed dance as a communicative display, concentrating on what he saw as the 'gap' between dance and 'non-dance'. I would argue somewhat differently; dance as social action, needs to be examined in its specific cultural frame and within its particular spatial and temporal site. See Garbett (1970:215) who argued that social situations are a "temporally and spatially bounded series of events abstracted by the observer from the on-going flow of social life" (see also Gluckman 1958). See also Cowan (1990:18) who writes of dance as "a medium and as a context of social action". Cowan refers to notions of embodiment and asserts the possibility of some degree of reflexivity of our own bodies and bodily action, with particular reference to public dance "events".

Dance and the Relationship to Altered States of Consciousness

Dance is an important part of the ritual performance of the *Anastenária*. The dance of the *Anastenária*, regardless of rhythm, is an example of *Antikhrístós Khorós*³, a dance performed individually or in pairs, but never in a group or a circle⁴. The *Anastenárides* dance movements in the *Konáki* consist of taking one or two steps, forwards and backwards, their heads often bowed or looking ahead at the Icon shelf (*stasidhi*) or the Icon they may be holding. Their arms are held at their sides, often swinging gently around their bodies, palms facing the ground, or pushing out in front of their bodies or faces, facing outwards⁵. They always dance individually⁶. The dances of the *Anastenárides* fall into the category of *sirtós*⁷, ‘shuffling’, ‘pulling’ or ‘dragging’, circular dances as opposed to the more lively, leaping dances, ‘*pidhiktós*’⁸. After the firewalk, the *Anastenárides* and some family members and friends, perform a different dance. They join hands, led by the *Pappús* and dance the *Mantilátos Khorós* (‘Kerchief Dance’) around the fire before returning to the *Konáki*.

Throughout Greece, dancing plays an important part in celebrations such as weddings, baptisms, ritual dates such as Saint’s days and so forth⁹. Spatially and temporally bound, dance embodies social action and so reveals and reconstructs socially ordered behaviour,

³It is also sometimes referred to as *Kharsílamas*, meaning ‘face to face’, from *karsí*, meaning ‘opposite’.

⁴There are varying views on the styles of this dance. Crossfield (1948) claims that it stems from an ancient Greek *Pyrrhic* (lit. ‘victory’) dances, the vestiges of which were preserved by the Byzantines. He writes that it was popular around Marmara, Constantinople. He claims that in the Balkans, a line was maintained in the dance, but it was also performed as a ‘couple dance’. In both instances, the dancers faced each other, performing opposite moves.

⁵There were differences in dance techniques. Some of the *Anastenárides* actually moved around the room, covering most of the floor and engaging eye contact with spectators.

⁶The exception to this was on the rare occasion during the firewalk when two or three of the men danced together on the coals, arms around each other. I witnessed this occurrence twice in Lagadhás.

⁷Crossfield (1948) claims that the *sirtós* was usually performed at religious rituals, and was popular around the coastal areas of Greece and on the islands.

⁸These ‘shuffling’ dances are generally found in plain areas whereas the ‘leaping’ dances are found in more mountainous areas. See Crossfield (1948), Petrides (1974) and Raftis (1985), for a discussion on Greek dances. See Raftis (1985) in particular for a discussion on the tourist shows of Greek dancing. He also looks at dance as a regional identifier in Greece.

⁹See Burkert (1985), Chapter One in *Greek Religion*, for a discussion of Greek dance, with particular reference to its beginnings.

such as gendered behaviour¹⁰. Danforth (1989), in his work on the *Anastenária*, discusses the metaphoric meanings associated with dance. Some of these meanings appear to be contradictory. That is, dance is associated with happiness and joy but can also refer to obligation, domination, consequence and pain: “She dances him any way she pleases” (*tón khorévi ópos théli ekini*), refers to her control and manipulation; “I did it and I danced” (*tó ékana ké khórepsa*), comments on paying for one’s actions (1989:93)¹¹. While Danforth’s examples are strictly from his experiences with the *Kostilidhes* (those from *Kostí*), I witnessed very similar expressions in and around Thessaloniki and in the southern areas of Kalamáta, in 1994 and 1995, as well as with Greek migrants in Australia¹².

With direct reference to the *Anastenária*, Danforth argues that this is the medium through which the control of the Saint over the *Anastenárides* is experienced. That is, the saint calls them to dance, creating the suffering which many of them experience in the initial stages of dancing in the *Konáki*, before they are handed an Icon or kerchief (*Simáधि*)¹³.

Embodied Emotion

Social conceptions are embodied and exhibited during dance and trance; our ways of seeing, understanding, acting and responding to the world, which exist beyond our consciousness, are expressed through our bodily actions. Emotions are embodied and also learnt in the same way. In dance, these embodied emotions are given shape. But these

¹⁰See Cowan (1990) on her study of dance in northern Greece, where she specifically examines the social construction of gendered behaviour.

¹¹ See also Cowan (1990) who cites similar examples of dance symbolism. She also notes that the Greek word for dance, *chorós* (although her transliteration differs in her spelling as *horos*) works in a similar way to the English word in that it can refer to the action, an actual performance, a part of a performance, a particular choreography and so on. This is important in that in many anthropological studies on dance, it has been noted that there exists no word for dance, as it does in the English language.

¹²Cowan (1990:19-21) also found similar expressions and metaphors being used in her time in the north of Greece.

¹³Danforth (1989) places a great deal of emphasis on the suffering of the *Anastenárides* during the ritual. He refers to a transition of suffering to joy, of illness to health. Danforth argues that the *Anastenárides* are suffering from the Saint when he first calls them and that their movement and dance are often disjointed and symbolising confusion and pain, until they are united with an Icon or *Simáधि*. Then their dance turns into one of grace and joy. I found that this was not necessarily true for all of the *Anastenárides*. Only on occasion, with the same individuals, did I feel that the way in which they were dancing resembled suffering. Several of the *Anastenárides* actually seemed to be dancing joyfully from the beginning.

shapes also follow a particular learnt form. As Kapferer (1991:269) states, dance is a “culturally recognisable modelling of emotion or feeling”. He sees it as a “feeling form”, modelling the reality of experience (*ibid.*). While the body reveals our unconscious understanding of the world, it is during ritual that this process of embodiment is brought into a greater degree of reflexivity. Cowan (1990) refers to this as “ritualised embodiment” but argues, that because of the deliberateness of ritual, its performative nature, individuals come to be more reflexive of the body *hexis*. Bodily movements are most often performed beyond the grasp of consciousness. Cowan argues, however, that during the performance of the dance, reflexivity is more likely.

Kapferer’s (1979, 1991) work on performance emphasises dance’s ability to make the meanings of a ritual communicable and meaningful to the spectators. With reference to emotions, Kapferer argues that in a great deal of ritual activity, expressive behaviour in the form of emotional display is “structured and regulated in ritual performance” (1979b: 153). The significance of this is that these emotions strive to evoke an emotional response from the audience and to link these emotions to the ritual’s meaning and form (*ibid.*). In this process, the internal is externalised, largely through music and dance; (Kapferer’s ‘feeling form’); ‘intersubjectivity’ is created amongst and between the performers and the spectators. Cowan also acknowledges the existence of intersubjectivity in dance, (1990:24) (somewhat differently from Kapferer) and argues that dance, as performance and experience, allows for a reflexivity. It is this reflexivity which allows for the intersubjectivity. Similarly, I argue that members of the audience and possibly the performers, share similar ways of acting and responding to the world, similar areas of knowledge and experience, for example Orthodoxy, which makes it possible for a shared understanding of the meanings expressed and felt in the dance. This degree of sharedness will vary between individuals. The commonality of understanding it would differ between local and foreign audience members and between performative occasions, as what becomes

foregrounded as significant during a performance of a ritual form will vary with each expression.

The performance of rituals such as the *Anastenária*, has a specific purpose and form which is largely understood in varying degrees by the performers (and spectators). While this 'common sense' creates a shared understanding of the experience, I am not suggesting a homogeneous shared knowledge or response: Individuals can experience both varying responses, shared meaning. Taussig (1987) criticised Kapferer's notion of intersubjective experience, arguing that it is predicted on the assumption that ritual is a totalising medium. Taussig is wrong here. Kapferer's central argument is that the emotions felt in the ritual through the music and dance, are internalised and through their outward expression via the body in dance, are externalised, objectified and shared with the audience¹⁴. Whilst there are shared understandings as individuals share parts of their habitus, which may presuppose the experience and expression of emotions, they are not superficial presentations of a scripted form because the emotions and meanings are always internalised and thus individualised before being expressed externally within performance. During this externalisation emotions are reproduced, but always with the possibility of their transformation: the objective is internalised, thus subjectified, to be reinvoked as an external form and shared with the audience. This is the premise of much of the phenomenological discussion of the position of the self in the social world (Merleau Ponty 1962, Heidegger 1962 and elaborated by Bourdieu 1973, 1977, 1992). Their argument is based on the belief that the self internalises the social world, which is then externalised in practice.

¹⁴ This differs from Durkheim's (1915) view on emotion in ritual, (with particular reference to mourning rites), where he does not see emotion as spontaneous and individual, but rather as normative and customary.

Kapferer (1991) acknowledges the way in which intersubjectivity is manipulated¹⁵; the audience is brought into and out of relation with the performance and the performers. Through 'distancing', created by breaks and through deliberate involvement of the audience the spectators are moved in and out of the context of the ritual: the ritual performance controls the intersubjective experience¹⁶. During the dancing sessions in the performance of the *Anastenária*, the distance between the audience and the performance is reduced: they listen to the music, are surrounded by the dancing, and like the performers, if they are in the *Konáki*, are censed and blessed by the *Pappús*. When the music ceases the audience becomes distanced. The performers disperse and the spectators are no longer included. During the firewalk itself, particularly recently with the erection of separating fencing and official seating for the spectators, the audience is once again distanced from the ritual performance, the participants and the experience of the participants. The degree of distancing varies from person to person, as it is not only a spatial distance, but also one, which is dependent on shared elements of subjectivity (i.e. intersubjectivity). For those spectators who are Orthodox Christians, they may share some degree of experience with the performers as they receive the protection from the coals by the Saints. The relevance of the Icons and the celebration of the Saints' Days may also grant them the ability to share some degree of intersubjectivity with the *Anastenárides*. This is not a definite consequence, however, as I met several Orthodox Christians who felt remarkably separated from the *Anastenárides* and the performance because their understanding and experience of Orthodoxy was in opposition to the behaviour shown by the *Anastenárides* towards the Icons during the ritual. Many also felt that the firewalking was incongruous with Christianity. Many *Anastenárides* and non-*Anastenáride* Greeks who had been involved in, or who regularly attended the festival, often expressed to me that the ritual was better before it became a popular tourist attraction. One man explained, "You used to be a part

¹⁵ Schutz (1970:163) writes that intersubjectivity is "A category which, in general, refers to what is (especially cognitively) common to various individuals".

¹⁶ The audience is not directly involved in the performance of the *Anastenária* as in the demon exorcisms, which Kapferer writes of, however.

of the ritual, involved in it. Now because there are so many people around and the police have to come, and fences have to be put up, it is not the same. I don't feel a part of it anymore, I feel separate. I cannot speak for the *Anastenárides*, but it is hard now to think of it as a religious experience, with all that noise, all those cameras”.

What is particularly interesting about the *Anastenária*, however, is that the performers themselves experience this distancing at certain times during the ritual. They become in a sense, although in a different degree to the other spectators, audience. As they disengage themselves from the ritual performance to get a drink, change their shoes or speak to someone; they are watching the ritual, as opposed to being involved. Similarly, for those who do not enter the fire during a festival, although they are participating in some degree (they participate in the procession to and from the fire, in the dance after the firewalk and remain around the fire during the performance) and are spatially separate from the rest of the audience, they are still able to watch the ritual performance as opposed, or in addition to being watched. The distancing allows for reflexivity: going away from the action enables the performers to reflect on the performance in a way not possible if they were directly engaged in it as performer. Tourist presence may also create a distance for the performers. As the man explained above — that the inclusion of tourists and the erection of fences and so forth have left him feeling “separate”, not a “part of it anymore” — so too perhaps do the *Anastenárides* themselves, feel isolated from their own ritual.

Expressive Behaviour: the internalisation of objective forms

The significance of dance in the communication and reproduction of ideas and forms lies in its role as expressive behaviour. Kapferer, in reference to the demon exorcisms in Sri Lanka, argues that expressive behaviour like that found in dance “constitutes a sign/symbol system which operates as a vital link between the ideas presented in ritual form and statement and the ‘actual’ internal and mental and emotional state of the

patient” (1979:158)¹⁷. Following Susan Langer’s (1953), work on gesture as “vital movement”, Kapferer reflects on the gesture as being both subjective and objective. In the *Anastenária*, there exists certain set dance movements, similar expressions and understood gestures which signify being ‘taken’ by the Saint. This does not mean that these gestures are externally performed and un-felt by the participants. On the contrary, they are externalised feeling which has been internalised and felt through the music and through the body in dance. Or, perhaps more accurately, in the process of internalisation and externalisation, what is being revealed (and also experienced) is the result of some point along the possibilities of both extremes (of the internal and the external), albeit always shifting. This is why although there are set movements for the ritual performance, there are a host of individual variations, many of which arise from the habitus of the person. These possible variations can be understood in terms of the dynamic relationship between the habitus and the field which allows for individual responses to changing circumstances, whilst providing the individual with a set of possible responses.

In understanding dance as a vehicle for the expression of feeling and emotion, Kapferer (1979:159) refers to Langer’s conception of ‘virtual gesture’. Virtual gesture is movement free from time and space, “free symbolic form which expresses the imagined, the idea” (*ibid.*). In being a “free symbolic form”, dance is able therefore, Kapferer argues, to create new realities. As “pure motion” Kapferer (*ibid.*) sees dance as an elaborate gestural movement, which acts as a vehicle for feeling and emotion. Following Langer’s (1953) notion of “virtual gesture” as independent of a specific situation, or individual experience, Kapferer (1979:159) articulates dance as “the organisation of virtual gesture”. He argues that dance “frees” the body from everyday physical restraints (e.g. gravity) and whilst gesture is organised in dance, it is at the same time, emotional, and allows for mental states to be externalised and made visible: “Dance links the body as

¹⁷ See also Wagner (1984) on ritual as being communicative.

the centre for, and the expressive medium of, individually felt emotion into the symbol system of gesture, converting individual expression as sign into symbol recognised and realised by others” (1979:173). Kapferer, in advance of previous positions, argued that emotion was not only expressed in ritual, but also *felt*. In this way, he acknowledges the relationship between the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective. They are always, in a sense, different degrees of the same thing. Subjectivity and objectivity are constituted constantly by each other and they are, therefore, variations of each other. It is this point which differentiates Kapferer from Langer, as he does not view ritual as free of form or structure.

Kapferer (1979:163) points out, dance movement, gesture and emotion are not free of ritual form but are regulated by it. This is necessary for the communication of the ritual’s meanings as if the participants are able to act with total freedom and extend beyond the boundaries of the ritual form; the purpose and success of the ritual will be jeopardised. In the *Anastenária*, the *Anastenárides* watch over each other for inappropriate behaviour¹⁸. On one occasion during the crossing of the coals, a young *Anastenáris* was being closely watched and subtly directed around and across the coals. It was noted that during a previous ritual performance, he had been walking “wildly” across the coals, without any “control over his body, over his movements”. One *Anastenáris* explained to me “We all care for each other. If it is difficult for someone, we help to guide him or her. In the same way we guide new *Anastenárides*”.

Emotion as expressed in ritual activity (and also structured within it) can act, as previously explained, as symbol or sign; it is communicative. In this role, it also has the ability to be transformative (Kapferer 1979:164). Not only can expressed emotions transform the

¹⁸ Gilson (1973) notes that during the *dhikr* ritual performed by Muslims of the Hamidiya Shadhiliya order in Cairo, there is an attempt at maintaining unity of the ritual form. Similarly, Kapferer (1979) explains that the exorcists control the patients during demon exorcisms in Sri Lanka, making sure that they keep within the guidelines of accepted behaviour.

actual stages of the ritual, but also signify and effect transformations of the patient: in the case of demonic possession, from sickness to health. In the *Anastenária*, there are certain bodily movements, externalised displays of emotion, which signify those moments (in many circumstances) when the Saint calls the participants. The gestures of the *Anastenárides* communicate to the audience and to those *Anastenárides*, who may have temporarily become spectators also, the meaning of the various stages of the ritual and signify, through the externalisation of internalised emotion, through their body in dance, their experience. This experience and the meanings and emotions surrounding them are already structured, but through the constant subjectification of them prior, during and after their expression, they are reproduced and reaffirmed while being communicated to the audience. Extending Kapferer's notion of the transformative possibilities of these expressed internal emotions, I argue that in the process of internalisation, in the subjectifying of these experiences and emotions, there always exists the possibility of transformation in their reproduction. If the externalisation of emotion is not controlled or in its internalisation creates an alternative understanding for the performer, then in its externalisation it will not be reproduced in the same forms. Rather, it may vary in its reproduction and thus may transform the meaning or form of the ritual or a part of it. One of the musicians told me that during the festival the year prior to my arrival, one of the younger *Anastenárides* had crossed the fire too quickly and impatiently, "he was creating attention for himself, trying to catch the eye of the cameras". This year, the musician explained he had been spoken to and the others knew to watch out for him. An *Anastenárisa* explained, "We must guide the younger ones. Sometimes they find it hard to know what to do - they are still awkward. The festival is a celebration for the Saint, not for the cameras, but with so much attention and so many people around, it is hard for them".

As discussed earlier, Kapferer distinguished trance from the construction of self in everyday life. He argued, as we saw, that the subject is denied during trance. I argue in the case of the *Anastenária*, that there is a shift in a consciousness of self: reflexivity is

reduced and the subjects fail to see the self as an independent object of their experience¹⁹. With reference to dance and music, what is important is that it is these elements which Kapferer (1991:273) sees as regulating and dictating this shift in the consciousness of self. Through dance, and aided by music which dislocates the dance from everyday time structure, bodily action becomes “symbolic form”, as opposed to “restricted form” (Kapferer 1979:161)²⁰. All of this affects a possible shift in consciousness, which may also occur during the ritual performance of the *Anastenária*.

¹⁹ This follows G.H. Mead's (1934) notion of the construction of self.

²⁰ A great deal of the work done on altered states of consciousness acknowledges the role played by music, dance and other elements, such as incense and drugs. In particular, the role of “rhythmic stimulation” (Walker 1972:15), particularly drumming, has been cited as a central feature in the creation of altered states. In the *Anastenária*, incense and drums are part of the ritual. The drum was not always played at the rituals of the group with whom I was involved due to the availability or lack of, the musicians who could play the instrument. This would suggest that the drumming was not crucial to the participants being able to successfully perform their ritual.

“Singing and dancing is in the blood of the Thracian people” (Mihail-Dede 1973:157): songs and music in the *Anastenária*

Looking specifically at the central song used in the *Anastenária*, *MikroKostandinos*, (Young/Small Constantine)²¹ I discuss the role of the songs used in the ritual, their relationship to achieving altered states of consciousness. I also examine the way in which they, like other elements of the ritual, are involved in the contestation and negotiation of identities. The Greek folk songs were meant to be sung and are most definitely linked with music (Watts 1988:16). They are monophonic: sung by one singer or by several singers in unison. Many of the songs were also danced. Greek music, differs from both Western and Oriental music although it shares elements with the latter. For example the most common rhythms of Greek music are 5/8, 7/8 and 9/8, (although it has been recorded that Greek dances can also follow a 5/4, 3/8 and 2/4 rhythm), unlike Western rhythms of 2/4, 3/4 and 6/8. The music of the *Anastenárides* follows two rhythms; each employed for particular parts of the ritual. The ‘tune of the dance’ (*ó skopós tú horú*) is played at a 2/4 rhythm and is played when the *Anastenárides* are in the *Konáki* dancing. The ‘tune of the road’ (*ó skopós tú dhromú*), 7/8 rhythm, is played during procession to and from the fire and to and from the *Konáki* when carrying the Icons (that is to light the fire, to bless the animals before sacrifice, and when moving the Icons from someone’s house to the *Konáki* and back again). The music was always played by a lyre and was often accompanied by a two-sided drum (*dhaúli*) and a *gháidha* (similar to a bagpipe). The inclusion of these last two instruments depended on the presence of those musicians who played them. At the larger festivals (May 21, January 18) all three instruments were played.

²¹See Megas (1961), Mihail-Dede (1978) and Politis (1978) for more information on this song and other folk songs in Greece. Danforth (1989) also describes many other songs, which he came across during fieldwork with the *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni.

Musical score for the 'Tune of the dance'. It consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The lyrics are: 'Ο Κωσταν - τι - νος ο - - μι -'. The second staff continues with: 'κρος, ο κρος, ο Κωσ. ταν - τι - νος ο μικρος, ο - -'. The third staff includes the word '(ΟΡΓΑΝΟ)' and the lyrics: 'μι - κρο. κω. σταν τι. νος.'. The fourth staff concludes the piece.

Music to the 'Tune of the dance'

Musical score for 'The Music to the 'Tune of the Road''. It consists of seven staves of music in 7/8 time. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of '♩ - 152'. The piece includes first and second endings, marked '1.' and '2.'. The score concludes with the instruction 'D.C.' (Da Capo).

The Music to the 'Tune of the Road'

All of the songs sung during the rituals of the *Anastenárides* are Thracian folk songs. They deal with notions of Greek national pride and victory over Greece's enemies; "All the songs we sing before the dance are war songs, in honour of the victories we had in combating the Byzantine Empire. We celebrate these victories" (an *Anastenáris* as quoted in Vilenskaya 1991:107). I have seen inconsistent translations of these folk songs and there are a number of versions. Below, I cite two of the most common versions of the main song, *MikroKostandinos*. The song was most usually sung in parts and never did I hear the entire song sung at one time in Lagadhás, but only a few verses and the chorus repeated²². This folk song and others sung by the *Anastenárides*, while recognised and claimed as the song of the *Anastenária*, are importantly, traditional rural Greek folk songs.²³ What has transformed however, is a debate between folklorists and the *Anastenárides* over claim to the songs²⁴. Folklorists have tried to disprove the song as belonging uniquely to the *Anastenárides*, and while the *Anastenárides* themselves never denied the fact that the song is an old Thracian folk song, most of them claim the characters of the song to be that of the Saints Helen and Constantine²⁵. This is the source of contention between the two. By claiming that the characters in the song are the Saints Helen and Constantine the *Anastenárides* are able to link the ritual and their community to Greek history and therefore Greek Orthodoxy, via the Saints.

²²Most of the *Anastenárides* were familiar with the entire song and also with several alternate versions.

²³The songs sung by the *Anastenárides* are documented as being Thracian folk songs, which have been sung, in rural Greece for hundreds of years. Many of them tell stories of Greek history and references can often be found to the Turkish occupation of the country. During a Thracian festival held in Thessaloníki I heard the song *MikroKostandinos* being sung by a group of performers, not connected with the *Anastenárides*.

These are two versions (of many) of *MikroKóstandinos* as sung by the *Anastenárides* in

Lagadhás:

Version 1

*Kostandinos the young, young Kostandinos,
His mother cared for him when he was
young: he got engaged when he was young.
He was young when he was sent off to war.
At night he saddled his horse; at night he
shod it.
He put on silver horseshoes and golden harsh
nails.
He mounted his horse like a brave young man.
By the time he bid farewell, he'd gone forty miles.*

*When he'd gone forty-two miles, a shrill voice
was heard:*

*"You're going away Kostandis, but where are
you leaving me?"*

*"I'm leaving you first in the care of God and
then in the care of the Saints,
And last but not least I'm leaving you in the
care of my mother."*

*"What will God do with me? What will the Saints
do with me? What will your mother do to me
while you're away?"*

*"Take care of my wife mother! Take care of
my wife!*

*Feed her sweets in the morning, feed her
sweets at noon;*

*And in the evening make her bed so that she
can lie down and go to sleep".*

*But that wicked bitch! That daughter of a Jew! he
sat on her stool and cut off her hair so*

She'd look like a man.

*She put a shepherd's hat on her and gave her
a shepherd's staff.*

*Then she gave her ten mangy sheep
And three rabid dogs.*

*She gave her strict orders; she spoke to her
harshly: "Go up into the mountains where the
peaks are high,*

*The water is cold, and the shade is cool.
If the sheep don't multiply and number one
hundred, if they don't multiply and number one
thousand,*

*And if the dogs don't multiply and number
seventy-two, then don't come back down the
plains.*

Version 2

*Konstandinos the young one, ageless
Konstandinos,
betrothal in his early youth his mother had
arranged,
word came for him to join the war while he
was still unaged.
Still is the night and saddle he lays on his
horse,
horseshoes of silver he prepares and golden-
made nails,
reins eighteen the horse's neck embellish,
and in his hand pearl-studded crop fearfully
he is steering.
Onto the stallion he leapt, a fearless young
man,
he looked the same as St. George or St.
Konstandinos' son.
Before he left this thing he asked from his
beloved mother:
—Merciful mother, take good care of my
bonny bride,
morning and noon serve her the best, sweet
lullabies sing her.
He spurs the horse and forty miles off he
goes,
before they bid him farewell another forty-
five.
But she, a wicked bitch and of a Jewish
mother,
with scissors sharp the bride's locks is
pruning
and shepherd's cloak on her sleek limbs is
putting.
Ten sheep, not one more, about to die she
gave her,
along with dogs in number three which they
could hardly drag their feet.
And orders strict she gave her, thus sternly she
instructs her
—The highest mountain you'll seek, peaks
virgin and untrodden,;
where shade is plentiful and thick, the water
crystal clear.*

Take them and water them at all the watering places, But don't take them to the Jordan River

Because it has snakes and vipers that will come out and eat you".

She went up into the mountains loaded down with tears.

"Christ and All Holy Virgin Mary with your only begotten Son, May your blessing reach me here, high in the mountains".

Soon there were one thousand sheep, one thousand five hundred.

There were seventy-two dogs, and then she went down to the plains.

She took them and watered them at all the watering places.

She took them to the Jordan River, and there she rested them.

Then Kostandinos passed by and greeted her: "Good morning, shepherd". "Welcome Kostandinos".

"Whose sheep are these? Whose goats are these? Whose dogs are these with the golden collars?"

"They belong to Kostandinos the young too young Kostandinos. His mother cared for him when he was young:

he got engaged when he was young.

He was young when he was sent off to war".

He gave his horse a kick and went to find his mother.

"Where is my wife, mother? Where is my wife?"

"Your wife died three years ago".

"Show me her grave so I can go and mourn her death".

"Her grave is covered with weeds and cannot be found".

He seized her by the waist and put her on his horse

He gave his horse a kick, and she became two pieces.

The sheep to thousand you must raise, the dogs to seventy-two, and only then you can to plains descend.

To every spring show them the way, their thirst in each to quench the

Jordan river just avoid, from it stay away,

for its inhabited by wolves, a million snakes shelters.

And while she goes hopelessly sobs and to the Lord thus prays:

—Oh Holy Mother, Jesus Christ solace and blessing send me.

They did and every sheep bore five or ten, fifteen hundred in total

and when the dogs seventy-two became to plain down she came.

Long time passed and Konstandis his mission carried out.

On coming back to native land numerous flock he finds,

a shepherd with a stick and cap encounters on the way.

He stops and waves and this he asks:—A nice day to you, good man, one thing, if you will, tell me

these sturdy dogs to whom belong, who is so rich with such a flock?

—All these belong to Konstandis, to little Kostandinos

he married in his early youth, wife he had his own

'tis he who owns all these dogs

and master is of this huge flock. Dear Konstandi, I know you, for it is me you married

do you recall the wish you asked of your beloved mother?

—Merciful mother, take care of my bonny bride,

morning and noon serve her the best, sweet lullabies sing her.

Onto the horse he takes her and in his arms he holds her the road take for his house, they find his mother weaving.

—Dearest mother, I greet thee, but now my wife call me, oh, how I long her pretty face after so long to see.

—My wretched son, your wife is dead, your pretty, lovely bride.

—The way show me to the tomb with bitter tears to bathe

—Alas the path I do not know, weeds overrun the grave.

Kapsoumenou in her role as a socio-linguist and social anthropologist specialising in folk music and poetry introduced me to the debate over the *Anastenáride*'s use of the song²⁶. It is stated by the *Anastenárides* that the characters in the song are the Saint Helen and Saint Constantine, but this assertion has been and still is, disputed. Theologians and folklore scholars have argued that the words of the song reveal that the characters are in fact not the saints Helen and Constantine. Mihail-Dede (1978), Beaton (1980) and Danforth (1989) have argued that the song is a very old Thracian folk song, which the *Anastenárides* adopted and 'Christianised for their ritual. Maria Mihail-Dede argues that the song has been adapted by the *Anastenárides*;²⁷

MikroKonstantinos is a hero often mentioned in the songs of the Acritan circle. In the Acritan cycle of songs, which are about Digenis Acritas, MikroKonstantinos is mentioned as the brave young brother of Digenis' mother and as a kind of war trainer of Digenis.²⁸ We find him mentioned in the songs of the post-Byzantine times and in those songs sung during the Turkish occupation of Greece. However the *Anastenárides* know nothing about the hero of the Acritan songs. They insist that their hero is Saint Constantine himself when he was young. But one need not be particularly attentive to see that this belief is false. The interpretation cannot be accepted either chronologically or historically (M. Mihail-Dede 1973:156).

²⁶Kiria Kapsoumenou is based at the Anthropology Department at the Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece. Her main area of interest is the folk music of Greece.

²⁷See also Watts (1988:22) who argues, "The song of MikroKostantinos is sung at a specific part of the ritual of Anastenaria and has come to be closely associated with it".

²⁸The earliest written records of a Greek folk song tradition are a few belonging to the Akritic cycle and the manuscripts belonging to the *Epic of Digenis Akritis*, the earliest dated to the 14th century. These songs grew from the legends of the Akrites of Byzantium, and were often specifically about the lives of the men who defended the eastern frontier region of the Empire (known as *klisuri*), which was under permanent military occupation. It was these Akrites who were often attached to or in charge of the troops in such areas (Watts 1988). "They could be described as the border barons of these areas and were engaged in permanent, free looting warfare against the invaders" (Watts 1988:51). The heroes of the songs are referred to as *andreoméni* (lit. 'Brave', 'strong'), but the most common hero comes under the name of Digenis. Watts (1988) also includes the folk song *MikroKostantinos* in the group of Akritan songs (*Akritikós*). For a detailed discussion on the history and types of Greek folk songs, see Watts (1988).

Referring here to Saint Constantine combining the cross with the sword, Mihail-Dede (1973:156) claims that the song is a symbol for the “purest Greek conception and feeling of the relationship between religion and freedom of one’s country”. She argues, “In these songs [MikroKonstantinos and others sung by the Anastenarides] heroism and religious feeling are combined characteristically for the Greek idiosyncrasy”[sic] (1973:153). The variety of versions of the song mention how “the heroic, just and noble young man fought the enemies of the Greek Christians and how he saved their lives and properties and protected the women from slavery and rape” (Mihail-Dede 1973:155). She argues that the Kostandinos in the song is a humanised version of the Saint, claiming that ‘MikroKonstandinos’ was selected as he is “really a carbon copy of St. Constantine the Great: Heroic, chaste, just, devoted to the great ideals of Church and state, even guided by the Saint and his Holy mother as these themselves had been guided by the Supreme Couple, the Holy Virgin and Her Son” (1973:156). Beaton (1980) agrees with Mihail-Dede, arguing that none of the details of the ceremonies of the *Anastenária* correspond with the details of the narrative. The name of the hero is the only similarity and even then, the Kostandinos of the song is not specifically equated with the Saint, nor is there any mention of Saint Helen. The behaviour of the mother in the song, he argues, can in no way be linked to Saint Helen. Romaios (1968), who regards the ritual as Dionysian in origin, has suggested that the song was originally not about Kostandinos but about Digenis (spelt by him as Diyenis), whose name he attempts to derive from Dionysis. The Akritic folk songs rely a great deal upon the legends surrounding the lives and deeds of the Akrites of Byzantium for their content (Watts 1988)²⁹. These songs are referred to as *Akritika* (‘of the frontier’) and the hero of many of them was Digenis. These songs do not describe the particular raids or battles performed by Digenis and other heroes but, rather, their lives and individual deeds. Kostantinos, like Andrónikos, his father and Tsamádos his son, was also

²⁹It has been suggested (Beaton 1980 and Watts 1988) that these songs were actually written, transcribed, some time after this period, and may have even have an origin contemporary with the event.

cited in these songs (Watts 1988:52)³⁰. The songs often discuss the “Akritic ideal and code of conduct”, but the accuracy of the events being traced to actual historical events is questionable (*ibid.*:27). “These songs create a setting in which the human, divine, magical and supernatural elements blend in harmony and on almost equal terms” (*ibid.*).

There are only three Christian references in the song; when Kostandinos entrusts his wife to God and the Saints, when his wife prays to Mary and Christ and when the flocks of sheep increase by divine intervention. As there are many versions of the song, they do vary in the number of Christian references, however. “This makes it very unlikely that the Christian references either have special importance in the version of the song used or composed by the *Anastenarides*, or are an essential ingredient of the song throughout all its versions, as one might have expected had its inspiration been specifically Christian” (Roiados 1968:21). On discussing the origins of the song with several of the *Anastenarides* in Lagadhás, I received mixed responses. Miháli said that he had heard the dispute before but thought that it was not at all important and was just people’s way of trying to de-legitimise the ritual and separates it from the history of the country. He said that it was not in the least surprising that it was an old Thracian folk song, as the *Anastenarides* came from Thrace. Vassíli’s brother told me that I was very misinformed and that the character in the song was most definitely the Saint³¹.

Danforth (1989) argued that the songs sung by the *Anastenarides* carry important symbolism for the participants and so are active in the transformation from sickness to health, from weakness to power, which he argues, occurs during the ritual³². Following

³⁰Watts (1988:52) also refers to a few women who appeared as central figures in these songs, *Ligeri* and *Lioyemiti*.

³¹Danforth (1989) also found that all of the *Anastenarides*, to whom he spoke, emphatically claimed that the Kostandinos in the song was Saint Constantine when he was young. Many *Anastenarides* also claimed that the wife of Kostandinos in the song, is in fact Saint Helen, and not the mother. By linking the wife in the song with Saint Helen, not the mother, Saint Helen is disassociated with evil and wrongdoing.

³²Watts (1988:22), in his discussion of Greek folk songs, notes the role of songs in the releasing of “pent-up emotions”.

Lévi-Strauss' (1967:195) notion of a "social myth", Danforth (1989:104) argues that the songs are a type of "symbolic language" and act as a "model of" negative situations and a "model for" positive, powerful situations (*ibid.*). Similarly, Mihail-Dede (1973:157) remarked that the *Anastenárides*, whilst walking on the burning coals, became "little MikroKonstantinos, singing and dancing and stepping through the fire as the Greek heroic ideal orders". This type of national and patriotic symbolism, I would argue, possibly had a great deal more significance in the decades after the *Anastenárides*' arrival in Lagadhás (and other towns in which they settled). Perhaps these meanings have transformed as the younger generation with a different history has emerged, as I was more aware of an emphasis on the characters of the songs than on the themes. For many of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás, I would argue that *MikroKostandinos* was no more than the important song of the ritual and the names of their heroes, Kostandinos and Eléni, were the focus of their interest. Thétis had commented as had a senior *Anastenáris* from Ayía Eléni, that the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás did not know the songs or the history of the ritual. They accused them of singing parts of the song and of not fully understanding the meanings. The themes of loss and separation that Danforth (1989) recognised in the songs appear now to no longer have the same relevance as they did for the first generation of the *Anastenárides* in Greece. Perhaps this is why my understanding of the role of the song differs from that posed by Danforth.

What exactly is being argued about is not as important as the fact that there is debate. The folk song, *MikroKostandinos*, has become involved in the negotiation of identity in a similar way to the Icons³³. *MikroKostandinos* can perhaps be viewed or conceptualised as a form of cultural capital, able to be put to productive use in various fields, both by the *Anastenárides* and the other agents with whom they are positioned against³⁴. For the

³³For the Church and the *Anastenárides*, the Icons are an important form of both economic and symbolic capital.

³⁴In a similar way these songs were used as cultural capital in the production and negotiation of a Greek national identity in the late 19th century: "...the study of the songs, beliefs and customs of the peasants gained impetus in an effort to establish the continuity of Greek culture back to classical times" (Watts

Anastenárides, the songs are used to negotiate and authorise their position as Greeks and their ritual as being Greek. For those who are positioned against the *Anastenárides*, it can be used to undermine the *Anastenárides*' position by proving the song's heritage is not in accordance with the *Anastenária*. Stokes (1994) argues that in modernity (following the work of Giddens 1990), there is a separation of place from space, a dislocation. This creates the need for people to 're-locate' themselves and music, Stokes argues (1994:4), is a way to do this: through music, places can be 'reconstructed'. In this way, Stokes continues, music performance can provide the means by which identities are constructed and mobilised). Perhaps the first *Anastenárides* to arrive in Lagadhás were able to use their music to relocate their place in their new space; "Music does not then simply provide a marker in a prestructured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed" (*ibid.*).

Although others have cited a number of other songs sung during the *Anastenária* (Mihail-Dede 1972-3; Beaton 1980; Danforth 1989), there was only one other song of which I heard being sung in part on more than one occasion; *Down at [the Church of] Saint Theodoros (Káto stón Ayía Thodhóro)*³⁵. This was often sung to the faster rhythm of the 'tune of the dance' or the 'tune of the fire'. The music often increases in speed and intensity as the dancing continues. Directly below are cited a few lines which I heard sung in repetition in Lagadhás:

*Down at [the church] of Saint Thodhóros,
Down at [the church] of Saint Thodhóros,
At [the festival of] Saint Constantine*

1988:2). See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of the role of folklore in the construction of a Greek national identity.

³⁵ Often after a festival, after a meal had been shared, the musicians would play several songs, which I had not previously heard. Some of the *Anastenárides* would sing along. Sometimes in the breaks during festivals, the musicians would congregate in the spare room of the *Konáki*. There they would play different pieces of music and at times, some of the *Anastenárides* would join them in the room and sing along.

Χρόνος 4" λεπτά
κάθε 4 μέτρα.



Κάτω στον Άγιο

Θο. δωρο, κάτω στον Άγιο

Θο. δωρο στον Άγιο Κων. στην τινο

ΕΡΘΟΣ

The Music which accompanies *Káto stón Ágio Thodóro*

Danforth (1989:107-8) cites a slightly different and longer version:

*Down at the church of Saint Thodoros, at the church of Saint
Pandeleimon,
A festival of Saint Constantine was taking place.
The festival was large, but the crowd was small.
There were twelve rows of dancers and eighteen wrestling arenas³⁶.
A wolf seized a child from inside the wrestling arena.
The child was young and called out to his mother:
"Do you remember when you sifted ashes instead of flour
and shouted: 'Buy pure flour!'"?
Do you remember when you killed the snake on the sill
And shouted: 'Buy fish from the sea!'"?*

"Movement in Time": the role of music and song in ritual

Kapferer (1991:256) has spoken of music as a "temporal art", referring to what he sees as its possession of its own internal time structure. Resonating with much of Langer's (1953) argument that music has the ability to disassociate one from everyday life, Kapferer (1991:256) maintains that music is "movement in time": time which is measured in its own beat rather than through clock time. Unlike Langer who sees music as creating an 'Otherness', as being 'free from the world', Kapferer states, "*music demands the living of the reality it creates*" and does so, because it is directed to a subject (1991:258, original italics). Comparing music time to 'originary time' as opposed to 'objective time', Kapferer explains that music time constitutes a continuing flow of 'nows', of instants, none of which are fixed at any moments; it is "perpetually in flight" (1991:257). This differs from 'objective time', which is forward moving. Unlike 'originary time' which is pre-reflexive, 'objective time' is "a temporality imposed by consciousness" (*ibid.*)³⁷. This time is measured by its beat, dictated by the drum, and

³⁶Danforth notes (1989:108) that "wrestling contests were traditional events at village festivals in many parts of Greece". He also refers to 'Akadimia Athinon' (1962:390-392) and Schortsanitis and Haritos (1959:536-537) for other versions of this song.

³⁷ This position differs from Lévi-Strauss' (1970) work on music where he sees music time as static; "music immobilises time" (1970:16).

rather than actually creating time, music “establishes intervals of duration” (1991:257)³⁸. In this way, music time is reversible and able to be manipulated (*ibid.*).

In the *Anastenária*, music time is measured by the varying beats of the drums and it is the drumbeat, which begins ends and controls the intensity of the music throughout the ritual. Not only does it have its own time; it also dominates objective time by controlling the length of dancing periods and the length of the breaks. As there are two distinct rhythms used in the ritual, the ‘Tune of the Road’ (*ó skopós tú drómu*) at 7/8 rhythm, and the ‘Tune of the Dance’ (*ó skopós tú horú*) at 2/4 rhythm³⁹, the music time varies during the performance. As the drums control the beat, which measures the time, this time can be manipulated easily. Often the *Pappús* or another senior *Anastenáris* would signal the musicians (through a nod or eye contact) to slow the music down marking the completion of a dance session, or to intensify the music, make it faster, to increase the intensity of the dancing. Likewise, the musicians often explained to me after a festival that they had tried to ‘lift the feeling’ by intensifying the music, or had tried to control the intensity of the music in order to sustain the feeling for a longer period, extend the dancing period.

Developing Leach’s (1961) discussion of secular time versus sacred time, Kapferer (1991) unites ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ time. Not unlike the distinction between objective and originary time, Leach argued that during ritual there is an alternation between secular (everyday) time and sacred time. Sacred time interrupts secular time. Kapferer extends this discussion, arguing that inner time (*i.e.* music time) exists with outer time⁴⁰. Inner time, as internalised time, is not controlled by an external objectivity. I agree with Kapferer. There is not a subjectified, internalised time existing separately from an objectified, externalised

³⁸ See also Husserl (1964), Schutz (1964) and Dufrenne (1973) for a discussion on music and time.

³⁹ The ‘Tune of the Fire’ (*ó skopós tis fotiás*) is also played at 2/4 rhythm.

⁴⁰ Kapferer (1991:261) defines inner time as “the qualitative check spelling movement of time as process” and outer time as “movement as the passage through time receives objectification”.

time. Rather, two types of time exist in a dialogic relation with each other. During the playing of the music in the *Anastenária*, the drums measure the musical time, but they also decide when to re-enter into objective time through breaks. In the same way as the consciousness of the performers in the *Anastenária* shift, so the objective and originary time alternate. I would argue in fact, as Kapferer does, that consciousness shifts in time with the change from originary to objective, or ordinary time.

Music is experienced in the body, “It is in the body that music is heard” (Kapferer 1991:259). In this way, it is also through the body that music is expressed and thereby communicated. The music is internalised; the meanings of the music are experienced through the body and then also expressed, externalised through the body. In ritual, like the *Anastenária*, this externalisation occurs through dance. Earlier I used Mead’s argument to explain the possibility of altered states of consciousness occurring during the *Anastenária*. There I suggested that there is a shift in the consciousness of the participant, a shift in the level of self-reflexivity⁴¹. I argue here, that this shift is largely affected or controlled by the music: “Music, for those cast into its realm, has the tendency to deny reflective distance” (Kapferer 1991:189). This occurs, Kapferer argues, because of the “capacity of the musical object to enter directly into the experiencing subject and to form a unity with the subject” (*ibid.*).

This Chapter examined the aesthetic elements of the ritual performance. With reference to the songs, music and dances of the ritual, I argued that they assist in the achievement of a shift in consciousness of the performers, and perhaps in some degree, in the consciousness of the spectators also. This introduces my argument, discussed in detail in the following Chapter, that the ritual is involved, like all social practice, in the production of identity.

⁴¹ Mead (1932) recognised the temporal structure of self-reflection. See Joas (1985:192) for a discussion on Mead’s work in this area. “In self-reflection the actor does not turn back upon himself in a frozen present – as in a mirror – but reflects upon the future possibilities in the present conditions, which issue from the past” (*ibid.*).

The connection I make between self and identity presupposes their interdependence. If the ritual alters consciousness, reflexivity is also altered, which may then in turn, affect the identity being projected.

The next Chapter is specifically devoted to a detailed analysis of the production and negotiation of identity, particularly for the *Anastenárides*. As their ritual has transformed into a tourist attraction and has taken on alternative meanings to previously uninvolved individuals and groups, the *Anastenárides* themselves have necessarily been affected. Pursuing the concepts of public and private, I examine the concept of self as different from identity, arguing that, like public and private, the self and identity are mutually formed. I detail the public performance of the ritual, to consider the extent to which the publicity and attention which the ritual receives, has effected the identity of the *Anastenárides*.

Contested Identities

Introduction

This Chapter examines the production and negotiation of the various identities revealed by the *Anastenárides*. The *Anastenárides* produce a number of different identities, some individual, others collective. With particular reference to the ritual's role as a cultural product, I argue that the generation of a particular identity is dependent on the social situation, the dynamics of the relationship between those individuals and groups involved and also on their specific habitus. In my discussion on the production of identity, I implement Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1985, 1992) relational concepts of habitus and field. I argue that individuals' particular habitus, their way of conceptualising and responding to the world, is the source of an identity. The habitus is both dynamic and generative; it is made up of sets of dispositions, inclinations, presuppositions, assumptions; that is the different forms of knowledge that predicates an individual's distinctive way of thinking, feeling and acting. This knowledge is always both fluid (structuring in Bourdieu's terminology) and taken-for-granted (structured), in that it depends on the social context and the particular consequences of a social situation (on the particularities of the field), as to how it is brought into play at different times¹. In an attempt to define these moments or areas of social action, these specific situations, I apply Bourdieu's concept of field. Bourdieu's field, is neither spatially or temporally fixed but, rather, dynamically constituted by the positions and relationships between those individuals and groups/institutions, who are engaged in practice within it at particular points in time. Bourdieu argues that as meaning is fundamentally a contested issue, fields are constituted

¹ I am not suggesting that each identity has a different habitus. Rather, different aspects of the habitus are mobilised in different situations (ie fields).

by “force”, with cultural and social positions and of particular types of capital constituting both the medium of exchange and the stakes fought for². The position and capital being sought may differ in each field, as will the individuals involved and their relationships with each other³. As the *Anastenárides* enter into different fields and as their positions change within these fields, the identities that are generated will alter⁴. Through the use of this notion, I explore the different identities that are produced by the *Anastenárides*.

Before addressing these different identities and their relation to each other, I examine more closely the way in which identities are produced: the dialogue between the subjective and the objective, the self and the identity. Identity has overwhelmingly been considered as objective, while the self has been perceived as subjective and this division has directed much of the work undertaken on identity (Descartes 1968). I critique this distinction between the subjective nature of self and the objective nature of identity. I argue instead, that the two are united in the construction of each other and therefore, the self and identity are both objectively and subjectively defined. Referring to the work of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu, I argue that there is a reflexive return to the self, a constant dialogue between the self and identity. In this way, identity and self, whilst different, are mutually dependent on each other's production.

² Bourdieu's (1986a) definition of capital includes material things as well as less tangible things such as prestige, status, authority (i.e. symbolic capital). It also includes what he defines a cultural capital which encompasses culturally valued taste and consumption patterns (see Mahar et al 1990:13). For Bourdieu (1977:178), capital includes “all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as *rare* and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation”. Capital must exist in a field, to give meaning to the field but also because its value is intrinsically linked to the habitus and therefore also the field. Capital can also be a basis of domination, albeit at times not recognised as such, and importantly, capital is convertible. See Chapters Six and Seven for a discussion of the transference and conversion of capital.

³ Bourdieu (1977) uses the term ‘agent’, rather than ‘actor’ when referring to individuals and institutions positioned in particular fields. Using the terms ‘agency’ and ‘agent’ shift the implication from the individual as merely playing a role as the word ‘actor’ suggests. Bourdieu sees agents as constructing their social world and as actively determining their position within it. In this thesis I tend not to use the term ‘agent’ when referring to the *Anastenárides* as it de-personalises them.

⁴ Fields are defined by “a system of objective relations of power between social positions which correspond to a system of objective relations between symbolic points...” (Mahar et al 1990:9). Bourdieu explains that “in highly differentiated societies, the social cosmos is made up of a number of such relatively autonomous social microcosms, i.e. spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are *specific and irreducible* to those that regulate other fields”(1992:97 original italics). In this way, there exist different fields, individually constituted by their own logics.

In Part Two of this Chapter I discuss the construction and maintenance of difference, arguing that categories of distinction, which are learnt and embodied through life, are what differentiate one person's identity from another. This *taste* (of distinction) as Bourdieu (1984) calls it, is something that is acquired through individual histories but as it is actively engaged in practice, has developed over a collective history. These distinctions are constituted through practice in the dynamic relationship between field and habitus and provide each of us with a way of understanding and acting on the world. In the same way, they also provide us with a way of making comparisons and acknowledging difference. I contrast Bourdieu's (1984) concept of distinction with Derrida's (1978) *différance*, in order to examine the classificatory systems, which determine the way in which differentiations are made. The *Anastenárides* distinguish themselves and others through such systems of classification. This process of classification works reciprocally: individuals and groups, through classifying others, are at the same time being classified and are re-establishing their own position. Through opposition, these sets of distinctions, the understanding of difference polarises, legitimates and reproduces identity.

Individuals, who come from the similar socio-economic or religious backgrounds, are likely to share certain sets of distinctions, certain ways of thinking about, classifying and responding to things. Likewise, differences between individuals, expressed in different ways of behaving made apparent in practice, also produce identities: through practice, individuals and groups assert their differences (and non-differences) in opposition to each other and in doing so, reaffirm and legitimate them. As these distinctions, our way of understanding and responding to the world, may alter during social practice, so too may the identities that we produce alter. The *Anastenárides*, through their shared habitus, share some of these ways of understanding the world and so in particular instances may produce similar identities. In other situations, which may be located in other fields, however, they may in fact be positioned against each other, producing quite different identities.

Without premising the priority of identity over self, but acknowledging their dialogic relationship, Part Two of this Chapter examines those particular identities that are produced by the *Anastenárides*. I introduce the notion of consciousness and criticise those theoretical positions, which ultimately depend, explicitly or implicitly, on role theory (Linton 1936; Merton 1968; Goffman 1971). I argue instead, that on any occasion, individual identity depends on the habitus of the individual engaged, their biographically distinctive life world and the particular social situation in which they are involved, its logic, aims and consequences. This understanding of the production of identities necessarily rejects roles as identities. For when the social world is perceived and structured through the habitus, then identities cannot be deliberately played as roles or changed like masks, since such conceptions depend upon the separation of the self and identity.

The following section addresses those identities constructed for the *Anastenárides* by others. Introducing the Federal, State and Local Governments, the Orthodox Church, tourists, academics, particularly in the discipline of folklore, and journalists, I argue that they have all been important at some time or other, in the construction of the *Anastenárides*' identity. Arguing that the emergence to prominence of Greek folklore is related to the validation of a new political and national identity, I continue with a more specific presentation of how the *Anastenária* itself has been portrayed through folkloric discourse as being a remnant of Greece's past. I examine the effects this has had on both the ritual and the local community. I also address the phenomenon of nation building and show how the Greek government, in its aim to construct and re-construct a Greek national identity, affected the identities assumed by the *Anastenárides* and, in doing so, politicised culture and ethnicity.

Many of the postmodern arguments on identity (see for example, Kellner 1992, 1995), problematise and compare 'modern' conceptions of identity with the postmodern. Tourism

and the commodification of the ritual have had an effect on the production of the *Anastenáride* identities. These transformations have quite dramatically forced an increase in self-reflection and an awareness of 'otherness'. This has had an affect on the relationship between the self and identity in the process of internalisation and externalisation of the objectiveness of difference. In this process, the *Anastenárides* have been brought to reflect on their identity as *Anastenárides*, Orthodox Christians and as Greeks. This has occurred largely as a result of, or in conjunction with, the commodification of the ritual. As the ritual has become more widely documented and represented, so too has the identity of the performers. Consequently, the *Anastenárides* have become involved in not only a politicization of their identities, but also in its contestation. This contestation has been constituted and articulated by the discourses of legitimation and tradition. What tourism, recent political and economic changes in Europe and the development of the European Union (including the forthcoming Maastricht Treaty) have also done is provide a whole range of new categories of Others. This, as Boissevain (1994:52) argued, has increased the need of people to redefine the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. I argue, however, against the assumption that this introduction of various new Others has provided the individual with a wide choice of possible identities from which to choose (Kellner 1992). In criticism of many postmodern positions taken on identity, I argue that whilst mass consumption and tourism have affected the construction of identity, there exists no enduring cultural texts to which individuals can refer in order to commonly exchange their identity. Nor are there uniform points of reference to view any text. Rather, discourse about identity occurs in practice, in particular contextual moments, and is dependent on positions, relations and other contextual particularities existing within a particular field.

Talking to the *Anastenárides* about Themselves

The core *Anastenáride* group with whom I conducted my fieldwork in Lagadhás is made up of about twenty-five people although they do not all live in Lagadhás: approximately six reside in Thessaloníki⁵. On my arrival in Lagadhás in 1994, the *Anastenáride* community had recently suffered a division. This had followed an earlier schism when the group had moved away from the former senior *Anastenáris*' (*Pappús*) house where the *Konáki* had been. They had decided that it would be better if they had a *Konáki* separate from anyone's house, thereby reducing the likelihood of the owner of the house assuming authority. In the ensuing arguments, the son of the former *Pappús* refused to agree to change the site of the *Konáki*, which had been in his house since the arrival of the group in Lagadhás. Consequently, the group left on their own and began building their own *Konáki*, on neutral land, on an empty block about 250 metres from the former site. During this period, arguments erupted again over leadership. Another split occurred, dividing the community into two separate functioning groups, with some individual *Anastenárides* remaining on their own, refusing to participate in either group. The splits in the *Anastenáride* community in Lagadhás have divided family and friends⁶. It was the group who remained at the new *Konáki* with whom I stayed and became friends and so my involvement with the other group of *Anastenárides*, necessarily had to be minimal⁷.

The *Pappús* and his family

The *Anastenárides* use the term *Pappús* to refer to the leader, usually the eldest of the group and always a man. *Pappús* means grandfather in Greek and it has been claimed (Danforth 1989) that the *Anastenárides* also refer to Saint Constantine as *Pappús* also. In my experience, however, I did not hear the *Anastenárides* refer to the Saint in this way. The *Pappús* of the *Anastenárides* is responsible for the initiation of most of the rituals. He is the official ritual leader of the group who is usually responsible for decision making and the distribution of the Icons to other *Anastenárides* during the rituals. The *Pappús* of the

⁵This number is not static as due to the split in the *Anastenáride* groups in Lagadhás, some individuals move within groups. Members from other towns also join in on the festivals in Lagadhás.

⁶I have been informed that the *Anastenáride* communities in Ayía Eléni and in Melíki have also undergone divisions of some sort after disagreements between individuals.

⁷On one occasion after visiting Thétis, the son of the former *Pappús*, Mikháli advised me that it was not wise to visit there, even though he understood that I needed to listen to everyone. From what I gathered, some individuals had not been happy about my going there and so I did not visit Thétis again.

Anastenáride group with whom I was involved in Lagadhás is very old and was often assisted by other male *Anastenárides*. The *Pappús* (or *Arhianastenáris*, chief/head *Anastenáris*) of the group and his wife live in Thessaloníki as do their five adult children (four girls and one son; see genealogy, page 212)⁸. They are both in their 80's and retired. The *Pappús* has been an *Anastenáris* for over sixty years and his wife, for about fifty. Originally from Brodívo, the family moved to Lagadhás during the exchange of populations in 1923. About ten years ago they moved to Thessaloníki to be closer to their children who had all moved to the city for work and to attend University. The *Pappús'* wife and sister are *Anastenárisse*s as are two of their daughters. The *Pappús* and his wife are economically comfortable, their children are professionally employed and they all live in middle to upper class suburbs of Thessaloníki.

I had heard and overheard a few comments made (always by people on the outside of the group), suggesting that the *Pappús* was not necessarily "the best man for the job". He was quite old when I was there, rather overweight, and everything appeared an enormous physical effort for him. The fact that he no longer lived in Lagadhás and no longer walked on the fire were also brought up as problematic, although never articulated publicly. "The chief is elected for life by the members of the group in a democratic way. He loses his position if he proves himself to be undeserving of the office. Not so much his incapability, as much as his moral inefficiency would lead to that" (Mihail-Dede 1973:161). This is largely why the *Pappús* remains in his position even though he is not performing all of the duties as desired: he has not offended against any moral injunction. The *Pappús* is considered to be the leader of the group in several ways. Because of his age, he is usually considered wiser in ritual affairs, as the one who knows best and whom you go to for advice. The *Pappús* initiates most of the ceremony and is the one who performs the *Ayiasmós* (blessing of the water), the blessing of the Icons and of the people. It is he who hands the Icons to the other *Anastenárides* during dancing in the *Konáki* and for the firewalk. He always leads the processions. Two or three of the older male *Anastenárides* often assisted the *Pappús* in the *Konáki* and performed the ritual duties in his absence.

Most probably because of his age, I found that the *Pappús'* position was largely symbolic. Others undertook much of the organising and real responsibility for the performance of the ritual, and he was always supported and assisted during the festivals (*paniyiria*). One man associated with the *Anastenáride* community told me that the *Pappús* was not a good 'front man' for the community as he did not "carry the position with the dignity it required". He explained that the chief should be a respected spokesperson, "people should look up to him like a Priest". He went on to explain that there were other men who could carry the position better. On several occasions when the men were talking together, quiet smiles were exchanged after the *Pappús* spoke. One particular evening when the men were speaking about how the festival (*paniyiri*) used to be ten years ago and were discussing the performance of the ritual in the main square, the *Pappús* commented that Ayía Eléni was very touristy and performed like a show (*théama*, lit. 'spectacle') now. Pétros laughed and said, "and Lagadhás isn't?" As the *Pappús* responded, Pétros, who at this stage was standing behind the *Pappús*, smiled and shook his head. Several of the others smiled and looked to the ground. Publicly, however, the *Pappús* was always spoken of with the greatest respect, and necessarily so, as he is the titular head of the group.

With the introduction of the Folklore Society and individuals who are involved in the organisation of the ritual, the responsibilities of the *Pappús* are no longer absolute: he is

⁸ *Arh/i* translates as 'origin'; 'principle'; 'authority'.

not the only one to make decisions. Tom explained to me one day that it was hard for the *Pappús* as he was old and the job was getting too hard for him. He said that when the *Pappús* was ready, another would take his place. "It is an important position", Tom told me, and "not anyone can become the *Pappús*". I asked one of the musicians if Rénos, another senior *Anastenáris* was to be the next *Pappús*, but he explained that he could not because he did not walk on the fire. "Neither does the *Pappús* now", I replied. The musician answered that the *Pappús* was too old to walk on the fire now, but that he used to walk. I had been told by Thétis, the former *Pappús*' son, however, that the *Pappús* had in fact never walked on the fire prior to coming to Lagadhás as he was from Brodívo and no one walked on the fire there. Apparently when the *Pappús* and his family were fleeing Brodívo he wanted to take his Icons with him but his uncle who was a Priest would not allow him and so the Icons remained. This was another reason why, I had been told, he could not walk on the fire in Lagadhás on his own. Thétis explained that he and his family had guided the *Pappús* and his family in the fire. When the group was all together, Thétis claimed, the *Pappús* walked on the fire.

One evening during a festival, everyone was waiting to re-start the dancing and music. The *Pappús* had been resting in the bedroom and had not yet reappeared. The musicians began to play slowly and someone went to get the *Pappús*. He returned, shirt not tucked in, slippers on and looking half-asleep. As he sat in the chair at the end of the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*) after censuring the Icons and the people in the room, a man from Mavroléfkí whispered to me, "At least he could have tidied himself up, look at him". Another time when the *Pappús* was performing the blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*) outside in front of the Icons before the sacrificing of the animals on May 21, when it came time to bless the people gathered, instead of lightly sprinkling the crowd with the water, he fiercely shook the Holy water across the crowd several times, so we were all quite wet. Pétros said quite loudly, and obviously quite annoyed, "not like that, it is not done like that". That was the only time I heard anyone speak critically to the *Pappús* in public. Despite the obvious periodical antagonism towards the *Pappús*, his position was not contested. It was accepted that sooner, rather than later, another would take his position. The *Pappús* explained to me one day that being an *Anastenáride* was an important honour, and it was no wonder that people wanted to come and see them walk on the fire. "They come to see the Icons", he explained, "but also to see us".

The *Pappús*' wife always attended the festivals with her husband and always walked on the fire. She danced occasionally in the *Konáki* but because of her age and her heavy weight, it was difficult. Whenever she crossed the fire everyone looked on cautiously as she ran across so heavily and with such energy it often looked as if she was going to trip and fall. Two of the *Pappús*' daughters attended the festivals regularly. They always danced the most and often initiated the singing of the songs. Both of them entered the fire when I was in Lagadhás. The eldest daughter did not attend all of the festivals but did make it to most of them. She also danced and walked on the coals. The *Pappús*' youngest daughter and his son are not *Anastenárides*. During my time in Lagadhás his son never attended a festival but in May 1995, his daughter came with her husband. The *Pappús*' younger sister also attended the festivals and both danced and entered the fire at all of the celebrations during my time there. She lives in Thessaloníki with her husband and two sons who did not attend the festivals at all during my time in Greece.

Tom

Tom is a younger *Anastenáris*, about 33 years old, and is a central figure in the group. Neither his parents or grandparents are *Anastenárides*, nor is he able to trace descent back to Kostí or Brodívo. His grandparents were from Anatolía, Thrace⁹. He is a greengrocer (*manávis*) in Lagadhás, running a small greengrocery on a street off the main square with his parents. They own a small piece of land on the edge of the town where they grow tomatoes and a few other vegetables (corn, eggplants). Tom lives at home with his parents in one of the older houses in the town, a single story house with a small front and back garden. He also owns his own car, a sporty but rather old, red Lancia. In 1994/5, when I was in Lagadhás, Tom had been quite unwell¹⁰. He had lost a great deal of weight and his mother informed me that he had problems with his digestion and was unable to keep food down, and hence his extreme weight loss. By the time I left in late 1995, he had put on some weight and generally appeared in better health.

Tom has been an *Anastenáris* for fourteen years although he has been attending the festivals since he was a small child. Thétis told me the story of how Tom first became an *Anastenáris*. On the occasions when I had asked Tom himself, he used to give me general answers, appearing not to want to explain in detail. According to Thétis, Tom had been most unwell for a long time. Despite medicine and doctors, he did not seem to be getting any better. One night Tom's mother went to the house of Thétis and asked him if he would come and see Tom. Thétis told me that he went to Tom's bedside and spoke to him for a while, and instructed him to come to the *Konáki* that night for the *paniyíri*. Thétis told me that Tom did go to the *Konáki* that evening and it was then that he first entered the fire. Thétis explained that the Saint was calling Tom, but because he had been ignoring the Saint, he was suffering. After he became involved with the *Anastenárides* and walked in the fire, he was cured. Thétis explained Tom's more recent illness as punishment for his part in separating the group and moving away from Thétis. He assured me that sooner or later the group would be back together again, and reunited under his guidance.

In all of the time that I was in Lagadhás, Tom was not romantically involved. He spent time with the other *Anastenárides*, especially with Súli and his family as he is their Best Man (*Kumbáros*) and Godfather to their first child (see genealogy B, page 213)¹¹. He is a quiet man, older than his years in some way but it is not unusual for a man his age to be still living with his parents as he is as yet unmarried. His mother was quite involved in the festivals (*paniyíria*), helping in the kitchen but his father only came to the *Konáki* during the main festivals on May 21 and on January 18, which was also Tom's name day (*eortí*). Tom was the person whom I saw the most frequently, although never alone. When I visited his house we always sat with his mother as well, if not his father also. She would give me a drink and a sweet and wait on both of us: Tom never served me. Again this was expected behaviour, as Tom and I were not dissimilar in age and both officially single. Not to mention that I was a foreign woman (considered by them as a young girl) and they really knew little of my family or myself. As time went on, this chaperoning relaxed a little

⁹Tom and his family are important for this analysis as none of his family are *Anastenárides* and can show no lineage to Kostí or Brodívo.

¹⁰Thétis, who had fallen out with Tom and who was no longer actively participating in the ritual life of the community, told me that was the way the Saint was punishing him for being involved in the division of the group. He said that the Saint was making Tom think, bringing his behaviour to his attention.

¹¹In Orthodox marriages, the *Kumbáros*, best man, or *Kumbára* (female), is the person who performs the *stéfana*, the marriage wreaths which are used to 'crown' the Bride and Groom during the wedding ceremony. This person will become Godparent, with their spouse, to the couple's first born.

and there were times when we were left in the room alone for a short time. Tom was wary of my questions and I think very cautious in his answers. Often when someone was speaking candidly at the *Konáki* he would look in my direction as if to suggest such information was not for my ears.

As well as taking a lead role in the organisation of the festivals, Tom played the lyre. He had been taught by one of the older and most well known musicians. Along with a few other *Anastenárides*, Tom collected the Icons from people's homes before the festivals and assisted in making sure everything was organised in the *Konáki* for the *paniyiri*. He was very involved in the group and was the person to whom I was directed when arriving in Lagadhás. He had been to Kostí with Miháli before and they had also gone to Bulgaria together to buy Icons. Tom seemed rather fragile, although he never complained or was lazy. He danced a little awkwardly and crossed the fire gently.

Miháli

Miháli lives in Thessaloníki but is originally from Melíki, a town west of Thessaloniki where some *Anastenárides* settled in the period after the Balkan wars. He is in his early 40's, an *Anastenáris* for about fifteen years and is married with two small sons. Only on one occasion over a period of two years did his wife attend the ritual and on no occasion did his sons come to a festival. He is a successful journalist in Thessaloniki and owns a large apartment in the reasonably new and affluent suburb of Kalamaría. Miháli's wife is also professionally employed and well educated and they are socio-economically well off. Miháli's parents live in Melíki in an enormous house, recently built under the instructions of Miháli and it is filled with very valuable antiques and artwork.

Miháli was the first *Anastenáride* whom I met. Mistakenly, I was under the impression that he was a journalist interested in the rite and did not realise that he was actually an *Anastenáris*. He was very eager to introduce me to the *Anastenárides*, and insisted that it was very important to get to know the ritual in Lagadhás. He said that he understood that I needed to speak to a lot of people and that I would want to know a lot of things. However, it was better, he suggested to advertise and report the ritual in a good light. "Don't get blinded by the unimportant things".

As he owned the oldest Icons in the group his position was very important. Every year before the main festival in May, Tom and some of the other *Anastenárides* from Lagadhás journeyed to Miháli's family home in Melíki to collect his Icons and return them to the *Konáki* in Lagadhás for the festival. I never witnessed Miháli assisting the *Pappús* or assuming seniority in the group, but because of his Icons and his position professionally, he was an important member of the community. Individuals outside of the community, suggesting that a bit of money can buy you a position in the group, had made insinuations about Miháli. He had been criticised as being pretentious and a 'fake'. He did, however, cross the fire during the festivals without being burned. During dancing in the *Konáki* and on the fire, Miháli's movements were exaggerated and expansive. He is a very tall man and so always stood out in the *Konáki*. He explained to me that once you feel called, you must answer: "When you are called you must go". I learnt, first from photographs taken in Ayía Eléni by another anthropologist in the early eighties, and later by a member of the *Anastenáride* group in Ayía Eléni, that Miháli had been involved in the community in Ayía Eléni before going to Lagadhás. It was explained to me that Miháli had first been led by *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni, but due to what was described as his desire to have

influence, he moved to Lagadhás. Mikháli never spoke to me about his involvement in Ayía Eléni.

I often met with Mikháli in Thessaloníki in or near his work, as I was interested in obtaining newspaper articles as well as speaking with him. His ability to speak English also proved to make life easier for me when discussing certain things that I found difficult to understand in Greek. During the festivals in Lagadhás when he was there also, he often came to me and asked me what I thought. In May 1995 he suggested that I go and see the other group in Lagadhás so I could make comparisons. After I went for a short walk with two of the musicians to the other *Konáki*, Mikháli greeted me on my return with an array of questions, "How many Icons did they have?" "How many people were there?" "How many animals were there?" and so on.

Pávlos, Rénos, Yiánnis and their Families

The other *Anastenárides* in this group consist basically of members belonging to three families. Pávlos, Yiánnis and Rénos are brothers whose family comes from Brodívo (see genealogy B, page 213). All three live in Lagadhás and are married with children. All of their wives are *Anastenárisse*s. Rénos, sixty seven years old, and an *Anastenáris* for over fifty years, and his wife, Tassía, sixty years old and an *Anastenáris* for twenty years, own a small area of land in the town (approximately five acres which equals approximately twenty *strémmata*) where they grow tomatoes, eggplants, lettuce, capsicums and corn. These are used for subsistence but are also sold. They live on the ground floor of a two-story house. Their daughter, Pétra, who is very involved in the group, her husband and their three children, live in the storey above them¹². Their building is about thirty years old, very similar to many of those in Lagadhás. Rénos is the eldest brother and the only one who remained working on the land.

Yiánnis, in his early sixties, and an *Anastenáris* for forty years, has retired comfortably from his job in one of the fabric factories. He has a good pension and often told me that he had encouraged his brother Rénos to leave the land and come and work in the factory as it was better hours and easier work, not to mention the benefits of earlier retirement thanks to their pension scheme. His wife, Dhora, almost sixty, has been an *Anastenáris* for fifteen years. He and his wife live below his son, Súli, thirty four years of age, who has also been an *Anastenáris* for fifteen years, and his wife (who is not an *Anastenáris*) and their two young daughters, on the ground floor of a modern apartment building. Súli makes cured meats, particularly salami, and his business was expanding when I was there in 1995. Súli's sister lives on the third floor with her family, but is not an *Anastenáris*. Tom is the best man (*Kumbáros*) to Súli and is therefore also Godfather to their first child.

Pávlos, the middle brother, an *Anastenáris* for thirty years, is also retired from his job in the same factory as Yiánnis and lives with his wife, an *Anastenáris* for fourteen years, and his eldest, adult son (who is mentally retarded and was very ill when I was there in 1994). Next door lives his younger son, his wife and their two children, who are not *Anastenárides* but are always present at the festivals.

¹²Interestingly, when Pétra's daughters were writing down some information about their mother for me, they wrote that she was not an *Anastenáris*, even though other *Anastenárides* explained to me that she was. An *Anastenáris* said that even though Pétra did not dance in the *Konáki* or walk on the fire, because she was part of the group and did service for the Saint, she was an *Anastenáris*.

Pétros, Mimos and their Families

Pétros and Mimos are also brothers who live in Lagadhás but whose family is from Kosti¹³. Pétros, at fifty-six, is married and has three children¹⁴. His wife is not an *Anastenárissa*. He is also a farmer (*aghrótis*) who owns a small piece of land where he grows the same type of produce, predominantly tomatoes. The tomatoes, like those grown by Tom's family are sold to the large tomato cannery in Lagadhás. He lives in an older house in the town. His grandson by his eldest daughter [from his first marriage] has just become involved in the festivals (*paniyiria*) by learning the lyre (*lira*) and playing with the other musicians (see genealogy C, page 214). As yet he has not danced nor entered the fire. In the summer of 1995 Pétros suffered a minor heart attack and became the centre of everyone's concerns.

Mimos, born in 1953, has been an *Anastenáris* for twenty years. He is a contracted builder (*ikodhómos*) and lives in a medium-sized apartment with his wife, not an *Anastenárissa*, who works part time as a seamstress. He has two sons, who are both *Anastenárides*, and two daughters who are not *Anastenárisse*s (see genealogy D page 214). His two sons, Yiórgos and Leftéris, are seventeen and twenty respectively and are the youngest *Anastenárides* in the group (apart from Pétros' grandson). His wife and daughters do not involve themselves in the festivals and only attend the major celebrations. *Anastenárides* and others involved in the group implied on several occasions, that Mimos would be the next *Pappús*.

Vassilí

Vassilí is one of the sons of the previous *Pappús* in Lagadhás. He is in his late forties and has been an *Anastenáris* for twenty-five years. His elder brother, Thétis, (whose house is where the old *Konáki* used to be) is separated from the group. Vassilí is married to a Swiss woman and has two children, a son and a daughter. He and his family lived in France for about fifteen years but returned to Lagadhás about four years ago where he now runs a small restaurant (*tavérna*) in the centre of the town. They live in a very modern, stylish apartment and I noticed that his wife was always very well dressed. Neither his wife nor children are *Anastenárides*.

Non-Anastenáride Members of the Community: assistants, organisers, photographers and musicians

There are others who appeared at some of the festivals from other towns whom I have not included here¹⁵. There are also a few individuals who are involved in the group in different ways. Dhimitris is the representative for these *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás. He is the head of the Thracian Folklore Society in the town and does most of the negotiating with the local Council and the Church¹⁶. He owns a jewellery store in the town and is a man of

¹³They have another brother living in Lagadhás with whom they are estranged. He is the *Pappús* of the other *Anastenáride* group.

¹⁴Pétros' first wife died and his second wife, with whom he has recently had a baby (1993), is considerably younger than him, about the age of his eldest daughter.

¹⁵Two *Anastenárides*, a father and son, came from Mavroléfkí for the *paniyiri* in Lagadhás in 1994 when I was there because there was no *paniyiri* being held in their town due to the confiscation of their Icons by the Church several years ago. They did have a small *paniyiri* the following year. There were also several unfamiliar faces at each *paniyiri* in Lagadhás who were from other villages and towns. Some of them were *Anastenárides* who lived far away.

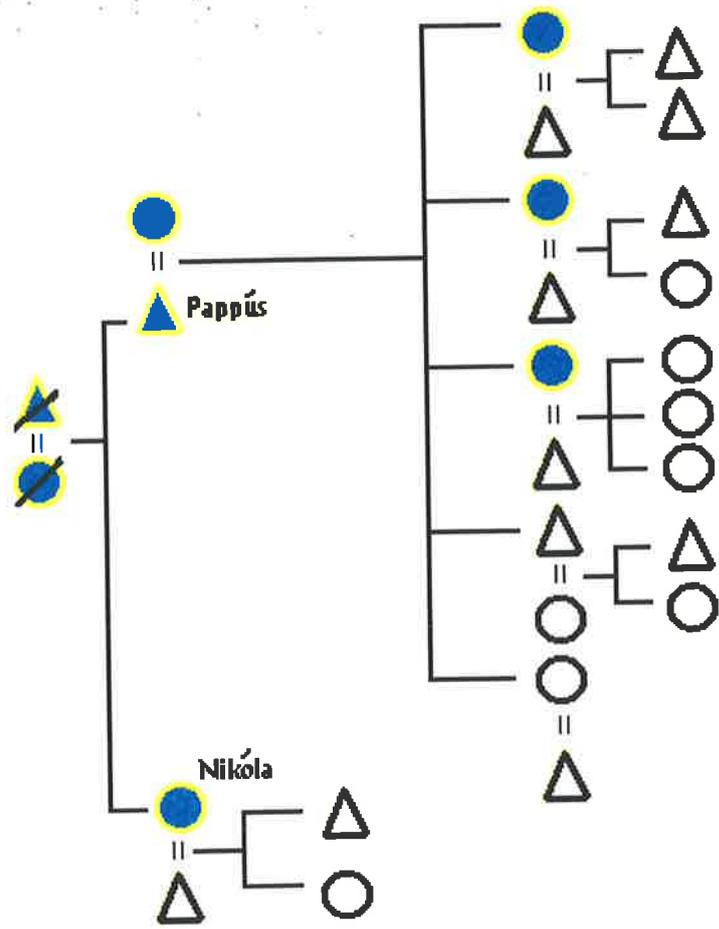
¹⁶Tássos Réklos, a psychiatrist who lives in Thessaloníki, is the founder and the first president of the Folklore Society. His family is from Ayía Eléni and his grandmother was an *Anastenárissa*. He established the Society for the *Anastenárides* to maintain their autonomy and to retain the Thracian folk life celebrated in their rituals. It is a body which can formally negotiate with the state at a local level.

considerable influence and relative wealth. Kóstas and Khrístos are two young men in their thirties, married, who live and work in Lagadhás. They attend the *paniyíri* every year, all of the celebrations and video the events, giving the *Anastenárides* copies. Other relatives of *Anastenárides* are also involved in various ways. Tom's mother, Pétra's two daughters and other individuals often assisted in the kitchen or the cleaning.

The musicians who play during the *paniyíria* are very important both to the ritual performances themselves but also to the community and the dynamics of the group. During the period of my fieldwork there was a slight change in the line up of the musicians. When I first arrived, there were three men specifically there to play the music and who did not walk on the fire or dance with the Icons. The eldest of these three was said to be the finest Thracian musician who could play the *líra* (lyre) like no other. By the time May had come around I noticed that he was not present at the *Konáki* and I found out later that he had agreed to play for the other *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás¹⁷. Tom, who had been learning to play the *líra* under this man's instructions, took over his position. Panayíotis, a young post graduate student of about thirty years, played the *dhaúli* but could also play the other instruments. He was finishing off his military service when I first met him and undertaking postgraduate studies on the Muslim minorities in Greece, towards a degree in socio-linguistics. He lived in Thessaloníki and came from a fairly affluent family. Sotírís, in his forties, was a radiographer in Thessaloníki and had an enormous interest in Thracian folk music. He played the *líra*, the *dhaúli* and the *ghaidha*. Both musicians had an interest in and knowledge of Thracian folk music and history.

¹⁷I was informed that he changed groups because of a disagreement with an *Anastenáris* over federal politics as well as arguments over power within the group, and importantly, money. The musicians are payed a small fee, a gift, as one musician explained. He told me that the musician who had moved to the other group was demanding more money and was offered it by the other group.

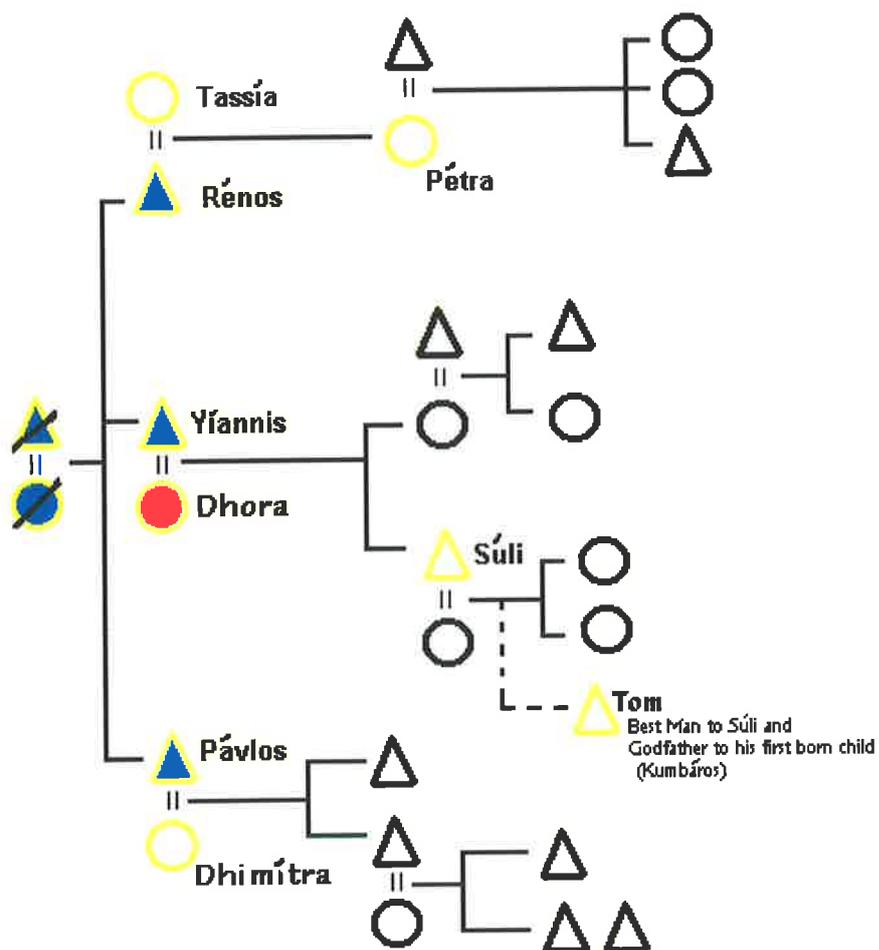
Genealogy A: The Pappús and his family



Key

△ ○ Anastenáide
 △ ● From Brođivo
 △ ● From Kostí
 ~~△~~ ~~○~~ Deceased

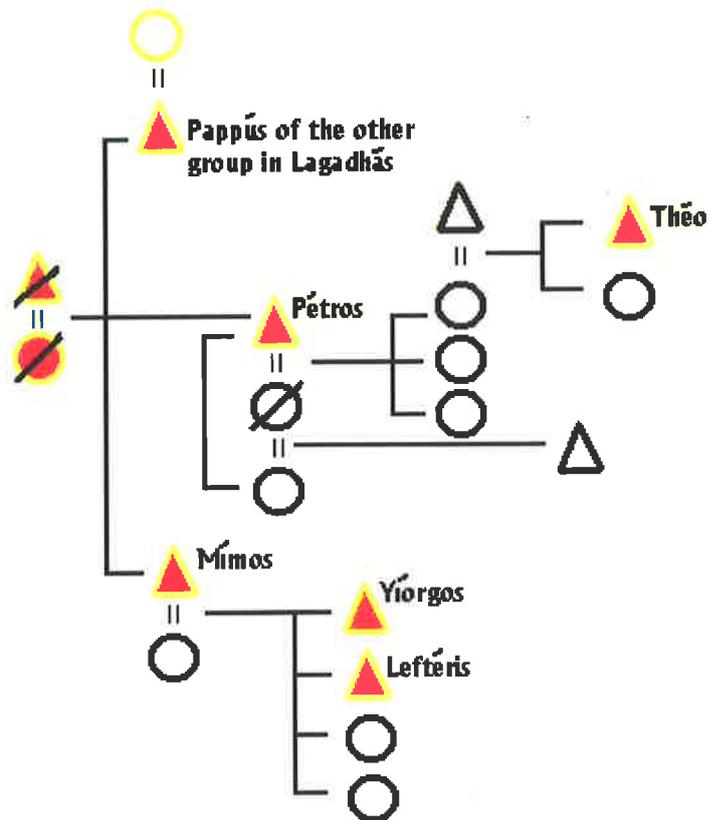
Genealogy B: Pávlos, Rénos, Yíannis and their families



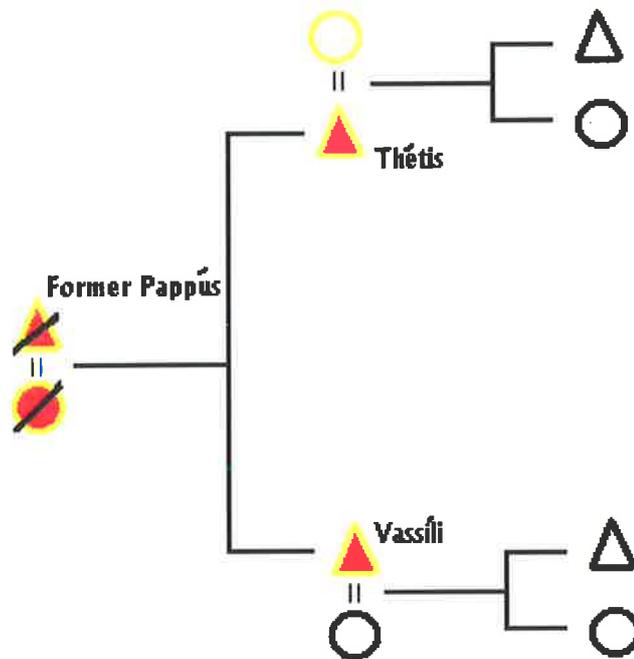
Key

△ ○ Anastenáride
 △ ○ From Brođvo
 △ ○ From Kostí
 ~~△~~ ~~○~~ Deceased

Genealogy C: Pétros, Mimos and their families



Genealogy D: Vassili, Thétis and their families



Key

△ ○ Anastenáride
 △ ○ From Brođivo
 △ ○ From Kostí
 ~~△~~ ~~○~~ Deceased

The *Dhodhekhás*: community or hierarchy

Mihail-Dede (1972, 1973) wrote that the *Anastenáride* communities are organised with the *Pappús* as the head, supported by a twelve-member committee, called the *Dhodhekhás* (the Twelve). Mihail-Dede (1973:161) acknowledged that the “Dodecas is not in fact elected formally. The *Anastenárides* who are respected for their morality, prudence and experience quite naturally and informally get elected for the Dodecas”¹⁸. In Lagadhás in 1994/5 this situation was even more informal. There were those few *Anastenárides* who were responsible for particular duties but they were not advertised, nor advertised themselves as being part of a special ‘twelve’ and their roles were not rigid. The *Pappús*, Tom, Rénos, Pétra, Pávlos and Mímos all seemed to have relatively set duties to perform. Tom seemed to be in charge of a lot of the organising and collecting of the Icons. He had also learnt to play the lyre and was a main musician of the group, especially during the smaller festivals when the professional musicians were not available. Rénos was in responsible for the fire; Pétra for the kitchen, the buying of candles, incense and other items needed in the *Konáki*. She was also in charge of looking after the money collected for the candles and as offerings made to the Icons. Pávlos was given the task of putting together and distributing the small bags filled with chickpeas, sultanas and sweets (*kérasma*) on the last night of the festival and helping with in the serving of food after the festivals. Mímos appeared as the assistant to the *Pappús*. He always held the oldest Icon during the processions and the firewalk and was the one who blessed the fire before they entered. It is he who always entered the fire first in 1994 and 1995. Mímos also took the place of the *Pappús* at the end of the Icon shelf (*stasídhi*) and distributed the Icons and kerchiefs (*simádhia*) if the *Pappús* was absent or tired. Pétros and Pávlos also assisted the *Pappús* in this way. Tassía, Dhora and the other *Anastenárisse*s from Lagadhás assisted in the domestic chores: Dhora usually did the dishes at the end of the meals, helped by

¹⁸Mihail-Dede (1973:161) noted that while the members of the *Dhodhekhás* offered their services usually in the form of a special duty, “their main duty is the interpretation of the signs of the Saints, of the dreams of the *Anastenarides*, etc. They are the confessors of the *Anastenarides* and the advisers to what must be done when something goes wrong either with the health or the work of an *Anastenaris*”.

Tom's mother (not an *Anastenárissa*) and myself during my time there. Miháli's role seemed to be that of the provider of many of the Icons. The other *Anastenárides* fulfilled various duties and helped all of the others with theirs. The recent division in the group would have split the original *Dhodhekhás* as several senior *Anastenárides* now resided in the other group in Lagadhás, and others were no longer actively involved in the community. Mihail-Dede (1973:161) cites a comment made by the former *Pappús* in Lagadhás; "We are like a cooperative society. Each of us has a special duty that must be fulfilled so that we can altogether serve the Saints properly".

The *Anastenárides* behaviour in the *Konáki* and towards each other, were not markedly different from those outside of the *Konáki*. This social world is still very much defined by gender: the women were the ones who made the coffee and the food and saw to the cleaning up. The behaviour of the *Anastenárides* towards each other followed a hierarchical pattern: the older *Anastenárides*, whether men or women, were treated with respect by the younger ones. A younger *Anastenáride* will kiss the hand of an older one on greeting them, regardless of gender¹⁹. If they are of about the same age and status in the community, they will kiss each other's hands. This respect shown to older *Anastenárides* can be seen in the *Konáki*; they are offered seats, served first and always looked after. One evening in May during the festival, an older *Anastenárissa* from another town arrived at the *Konáki*. All of the others came to greet her, kissing her hand. During the evening, she was carefully looked after and treated as a special guest.

This hierarchy does not dominate the relations between the *Anastenárides*, however, and their behaviour towards each other was more directed by everyday gender and family relationships. The *Anastenáresses* assumed the behaviour and performed the duties of women (cooking, cleaning up, etc.), while the men carried out the jobs considered more

¹⁹When an Orthodox Christian greets an Orthodox Priest, they normally kiss his hand. The way in which this is done, is exactly the way in which *Anastenárides* kiss each other's hands.

masculine (maintenance, seeing to the fire, cutting up the meat from the slaughtered animals, etc.). Tom, a young single man, was often fussed over by the women. On the occasions when his mother was not at the *Konáki*, the other women often assumed maternal roles towards him. He remarked to me one afternoon when the women were all asking him if he had eaten, "I have many mothers here, always fussing". Similarly, Panayíotis, the musician, as a young single man, was also 'mothered' by many of the older women. The treatment of guests by the *Anastenárides* in the *Konáki* also followed the behaviour assigned to houseguests in Greece. A coffee or drink was always offered, along with a sweet or some other type of food. For the first few months in Lagadhás, I was never allowed to help the women with the dishes or any other work. My status was still that of a guest, and it took some time for me to begin to be allowed to assist with the chores in the *Konáki*. As I began to help make the salads and do the dishes, my position changed from being a new guest to a more familiar part of the community (although still a guest of some sorts). Whenever in their homes, however, I was always treated as a guest, even if perhaps a more familiar one.

Part One: Identity versus Self

As discussed in the Introduction to this Chapter, identity and self, although separate, are mutually dependent on the construction of each other. Whilst I argue that the self is internal and private, and identity is public and external, they are both dialogically and dynamically constituted by the other. Identity, as externally projected, is not necessarily a deliberate, consciously calculated determination, but can also be, simply being. The self then reinterprets this being through reflexivity, in viewing the self as an Other (see Mead 1934; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Heidegger 1962). Heidegger, with his use of the term *dasein*, 'being in the world', argued that 'being' is what in its social activity the body interprets itself to be²⁰. He redefined the subject thus: as a "situated mode of being (*Dasein*) enmeshed in a setting made up of human and non-human components" (Dallmayr 1984:ix). The act of be-ing is thus self-interpretative. In the same way, identity is formed. It is by self-interpretation that we inscript on ourselves different identities. That is, our identities are the outward expression of our selves. Merleau-Ponty, continuing with this concern with intersubjectivity, arguing against the dualities of Mind and Body, claimed that "Inside and outside are wholly inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself" (1962:401)²¹. Likewise, Bourdieu (1992:20) argues that "The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body"²². He sees subjectivity as the *sense* we make of the world and of the self, according to the language we have. A person's identity and a person's self, cannot, therefore, be treated as separate entities through an objective/subjective dichotomy. Likewise, what identity is revealed at a certain time is

²⁰Heidegger (1962;1978) rethought the work of Husserl (1931), who aimed at finding the link between the ego and alter ego, between subject and fellow-subjects (Dallmayr 1984:ix).

²¹Descartes (1968) saw the soul and the mind as equated and understood the body as quite separate from the mind. He did not view the body as belonging to the essence of the human being, but saw it as a machine. Whilst he believed the mind to have thought and self-consciousness, he did not acknowledge the relationship between the mind and body. See Brian Morris (1991) for a summarised account of Descartes' rationalist mind/body dualism. Hegel (1961, 1967) was one of the first to go beyond this dualism, and argued that the human subject is not just a conscious being but is an active agent in the world.

²²See also Csordas (1990) and his discussion of both Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu's theories on the self, with particular interest in the body and embodiment. He also includes a discussion of Hallowell's (1955) earlier thoughts on the self.

relevant to the context in which the individual is engaged²³. George Mead (1934), critical of dualistic theories, also argued that the notion of self is developed through the body's interaction in the social world. People's selves are formed through the action of being engaged in the social world and are, therefore, dependent on social relations. The self, he writes, "arises in the process of social experience and activity" (*ibid.*:135). For Mead, the 'Me' is the social identity of which the 'I' becomes conscious in the course of a person's psychological development in childhood. The 'I', as the "active, primitive will" of the person, seizes on the 'Me' as the reflection of social ties²⁴. Through being reflexive, the self is able to be both subject and object, but one's own experience of self must be in first seeing the self as an object, which is made possible through communication, *i.e.* knowledge and language. The 'I' is then, in a sense, that with which we identify as ourselves. In acquiring this sense of self, Mead argues, a person also internalises what he calls a "generalised other" (*ibid.*)²⁵. This generalised other is the organised community or social group from which the individual forms their self:

So the self reaches its full development by organising these individual attitudes of others into the organised social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of social or group behaviour in which it and others are all involved..." (Mead 1934:158)²⁶.

²³Both Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu use the notion of embodiment to collapse the dualities. Merleau-Ponty approached embodiment in relation to perception, using the pre-objective, arguing that the body is in the world from the beginning; "...consciousness projects itself into a physical world and has a body, as it projects itself into a cultural world and has its habits" (1962:137). Bourdieu, also dealing with the pre-objective, looked at embodiment in the discourse of practice, and through the concept of habitus, which transcends Mauss' understanding of it as a collection of practises, dealt with the "psychologically internalised content of the behavioural environment" (Csordas 1990:11, on Bourdieu), the "*socially informed body*" (Bourdieu 1977:124, original italics).

²⁴G.H. Mead (1934) does imply a separation of 'Me' and 'I', however, on the grounds of consciousness. Bourdieu does not, seeing it rather, as both calculation and practice.

²⁵This position implies 'free choice'. I prefer Bourdieu's position, which recognises that your identity can be imposed via positions within a field of relations. For Bourdieu, choice is constrained by the habitus and the positions held within a field. Bourdieu (1977) moves away from the phenomenological emphasis on lived experience and the emphasis on the subjective position. Bourdieu's (1977:3) aim is to "make possible a science of the dialectical relations between the objective structures ...and the structured dispositions within which these structures are actualised and which tend to reproduce them".

²⁶G.H. Mead (1934) cited three steps in the development of self. The first was through child's play, the second through organised games and the third was the generalised Other. Through reflexivity, two aspects of the self emerge; the 'Me' and the 'I' and there remains a dynamic relationship between the two. For a criticism of Mead's theories, see Goff (1980) and Joas (1985).

Mead differs from other work on notions of self (Baldwin 1890, 1891, 1911; Cooley 1909; Tarde 1899, 1903; Wundt 1902, 1904, 1912, 1916), who all presupposed antecedently existent minds or selves to get the social process under way. Mead argued that mind and self are without “residue social emergents” (Morris 1950:xiv, on Mead), but that it is language which provides the mechanism for their emergence. That is, the mind is socially constituted through language and then through language the self becomes conscious of itself and thus appears as an object²⁷. Through language, Mead concludes, the biological individual transforms to the minded self²⁸.

Arguing that the self is the internalised aspect of identity, the interiorised subjective perception of the self, then we can see identity as the objectification and externalisation of elements of the self²⁹. It is through action that this revelation occurs, however, and so identity is the product of interaction³⁰. An identity, I argue, is produced at the intersection of different categories.

²⁷This is also Bourdieu’s critical argument.

²⁸Whilst I consider Mead’s hypothesis to be highly useful in explaining the relationship between the self and identity, I, like others, am uneasy with his understanding of the *generalised other*. His *generalised Other*, the universalisation of the process of role-taking, follows a functional Durkheimian model which presupposes a homogeneity of the social. What needs to be understood, I argue, is that there is a plurality of others, not one single homogenous Other from which to copy and compare.

²⁹See also Gasche (1986:14), who argues that “...self-reflection marks the human being’s rise to the rank of a subject”.

³⁰See also Berger (1969) who argues that the individual externalises their subjective experiences through social action and then this externalisation is objectified and becomes a reality. It is then reappropriated and internalised. Through action with others, he argues, this is constantly reproduced and reappropriated.

Part Two. Making Distinctions: questions of *différance*

It takes at least two somethings to create a difference...Clearly each alone is — for the mind and perception — a non-entity, a non-being. Not different from being, and not different from non-being. An unknowable, a Ding an sich, a sound from one hand clapping (Bateson 1979:78)

Social identity is defined and asserted through difference (Bourdieu 1984:172)

Certainly, the generation of schemes of classification and of social distinction in the practise of social relations is an essential ingredient in the formation of social and individual identity (Lash and Friedman 1992:4).

Individuals classify things in order to make perceptions and judgements, and these judgements dictate the parameters of identity. What it is necessary to understand is how these sets of classifications are established, how they differ culturally and perhaps socio-economically (see Bourdieu 1984) and how they are used in the negotiation of identity³¹.

Pétros' grandson, Théo, had only begun playing the lyre in the *Konáki* the year before I returned to Australia (1995). Previously, he had only attended the larger festivals and had never participated. He had stayed mostly outside, playing with the other children and running off to the sideshows. This year, he was inside the *Konáki* playing the lyre, which he had been learning from Tom. On the Saturday night of the May festival in 1995, after everyone had proceeded inside the *Konáki* after the firewalk and once the music and dancing ceased, Théo went to go outside to see two of his friends. After he had been outside for a few minutes, Pétros went outside to call him in, to play some more music. Although his friends had asked him to go with them to the sideshows, as his Grandfather (flanked by two *Anastenárisses*) stood next to him asking him to come and play more music, he returned inside and began to play with the other musicians. "Our young *Anastenáris*", Pétros shouted.

Whilst examining the photos I had taken of him during the previous festival, Mikháli commented, "This one is very good. I like this one. As I walked around the coals that

³¹Cynthia Mahmood (1992:1), in her discussion on Friesland culture, examined the role of categorisation in constructing social realities and suggests that anthropology's "difficulties with the categorisation of cultures stem from an inadequate understanding of the cognitive dynamics of categorisation itself".

night, before entering them, I felt a sudden peace - a calmness. This I can see here on my face. Next to me here in the photo, you see what he [another *Anastenáris*] is doing — everyone is different. Just as we are different in so many other ways, here too we are different”.

Tom explained to me one day, “When I am working in the shop, I am thinking about work. I am a greengrocer (*manávis*). Then one afternoon, you come into the shop and ask me a question about the *Anastenária*, about the fire, and then I answer thinking specifically about it. When you are made to explain something, to think about something, or when you are actually doing something, you see it in a different way. This does not mean that when I am not thinking about being an *Anastenáride*, I stop being one. What it means to me may be different from someone else. Think about it for yourself. Sometimes you must feel very foreign here, out of place, but some times more than others. Like when you don’t understand what people are saying, or when you don’t know where to wait in the bank. And perhaps other times, you feel like the same, you don’t notice that you are different. That is how it is for me too”.

One night in the *Konáki*, during a meal after a festival, Panayiotis, the younger musician, began to talk to me about my study in English. As we were sitting in the middle of the group, our conversation was obvious. He began talking to me about what he was studying, also a Post-Graduate student, until Sotiris, the other musician, who could speak a little English, began interrupting loudly saying “Students, talk, talk, talk, yes, no, thank you. Speak Greek”. Then Pétros came over to us, smiling and addressing Panayiotis, said in Greek, “Excuse me foreigner (*xéni*) where are you from?” One of the women told them to stop making fun, and said to Pétros teasingly, “Panayiotis went to University for something. You are jealous that your fingernails are dirty and your tongue is lazy”. Everyone laughed and I said that Pétros was right, we should speak Greek if I wanted to improve my language. Panayiotis, like Mikháli and Sotiris, who is a radiographer at a major hospital in Thessaloníki, was well educated and travelled, unlike many of the *Anastenárides*.

On another occasion when eating together in the *Konáki*, Pétros became highly amused at the way in which I was serving the salad, “I’ll die of hunger Yiana! Don’t be so delicate (*leptá*)”, and then later when I was struggling with my knife and fork on my lap, he called across the table, “With your hands, or you will die of hunger!”

One afternoon at Tom’s house, I declined an invitation to eat lunch with them, but later helped Tom’s mother clean up. Tom jokingly remarked, “What a cheap wife you will make Vanghélis [my partner whom he had met], you hardly eat, you drink water, you don’t smoke and you even like cooking”. Later in the year, when Vanghélis returned for a visit, Tom’s mother was asking us why we did not stay in Greece and marry there. Tom joined in “I’ll be your *Kumbáros* (best man), I have had practise”.

The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás shared a great number of things in common; they are all Greek, all Orthodox Christians, they share the same language, the same political and economic structures, the same food and most of them share the same place of residency. Some of them share similar family histories (many are actually related to each other), the same place of origin, similar occupations and all of them share their participation in and association with the *Anastenária*. At the same time, however, there are always many individualising avenues; some of the *Anastenárides* have moved to Thessaloníki, or are from other towns, some are professionally employed whilst many work on the land. Their economic positions are varied and their family lives differ. The *Anastenárides* probably share parts of their habitus, albeit in differing degrees, and thus, have similar ways of thinking about much of their world. These unconscious ways of thinking about and acting on the world also work with a whole series of classifications and schemata of difference. We learn what we are, therefore, also by what we are not: things (and people) are ultimately distinguished from what they are not, that is, in opposition to others³². These differences and this order, which we impose on our social world, is an order, which is already established in the mind (Derrida 1978, Bourdieu 1984). *Différance* then, to use Derrida's term for those constant and already present schemata of difference, precedes Being³³.

³²See also Schwartz (1975), Boon (1978) and L. Dumont (1980) with his "complementary opposition" and Cohen (1985), who argued that social identities are constituted in opposition, in relation to others.

³³*Différance*, Derrida argues, is polysemic and encompasses all the meanings of the Latin word *differ*, to defer, meaning to temporise and to differ, meaning not identical, 'other'. Derrida (1978:11) claims that *différance* is inscribed in things and so produces difference. By referring to Saussure's work on language and signification, Derrida argues that all differences are historically constituted as a "weave of differences" (*ibid.*:12). Like Heidegger, Nietzsche and even Freud, Derrida questions previously assumed theories on consciousness. He argues that consciousness exists within the system of difference: consciousness must be seen as a "determination" and as an "effect", within a system of difference and therefore, cannot be seen as the 'core' of being (in M.C. Taylor (ed.) *Deconstruction in Context, Literature and Philosophy* 1986:409). It is important to note here that Derrida's notion of *différance* has been criticised (see Habermas and Wood 1984). Wood (1984) accuses Derrida of being inconsistent in his use of the term and he also has a problem with Derrida's use of *différance* as "producing effects" in order to eliminate transcendental causation.

Bourdieu's notion of distinction is similar to Derrida's *différance*, where Bourdieu, (following Kant), argues that taste establishes and marks differences through a process of distinction³⁴. It is a classificatory system, unconsciously acquired that we impose on the social world and thereby reproduce it. The opposition consequentially created by these distinctions is reified when individuals and groups with different sets of classificatory systems are engaged in social practice³⁵.

I suggest that it is in opposition, rather than at peripheral boundaries, where identities become realised³⁶. I argue that the *Anastenárides* have call to reflect on, articulate and negotiate their various identities in a number of different social situations where they are positioned oppositionally with other individuals and groups, ie, within fields. It is here that, in opposition to agents such as the Church, the local Council and each other, and in the pursuit of a particular outcome or specific capital (economic, cultural, symbolic), they come to construct and negotiate identities. These sites of opposition carry with them their own logic: what is being sought and the means by which to seek, are known by those involved. The particular individuals or groups who enter into these sites necessarily share some forms of knowledge, some elements of their habitus, which allows them access into the field as well as an understanding of the dynamics of action which are required to retain and improve their position. Importantly, it is within these fields, in opposition to others that individuals and groups generate identities. Depending on the particularities of the

³⁴Following Kant, Bourdieu (1984:175) sees taste as "the source of the system of distinctive features which cannot fail to be perceived as a systematic expression of a particular classifications of conditions...". Taste, argues Bourdieu, allows individuals to differentiate and appreciate.

³⁵This differs from the notion of narrative, which has been seen as the form of consciousness in which individuals organise experience (Crites 1971). Whilst narrative is historically constituted, its temporality differs from Bourdieu's understanding of habitus, which is the model I am following here, in that the dispositions of the habitus which organise experience for the individual, are usually not reflected upon and therefore lie beneath consciousness. Cohen and Rapport (1995:8) in their discussion on consciousness, refer to the notion of narrative, seeing it as "a lasting if selective chronicle of the temporal course of experience, fixed in memory". Memory, placed in consciousness, differs enormously from the sets of dispositions, which lie beyond our consciousness, as in Bourdieu's habitus. Cohen and Rapport (1995) accuse Bourdieu of alienating consciousness, but I would argue that consciousness exists in all social action. Consciousness need not be reflected upon. Bourdieu's "feel for the game" allows for a consciousness, but accepts that this is not necessarily reflected upon.

³⁶I disagree here with Barth's (1969) idea of boundary maintenance, although I acknowledge his and Cohen's (1982, 1985, 1987) contribution to the discussion of community identity construction.

fields and the dynamic relationship between the field and the habitus, these identities will vary. Thus, multiple identities are possible, not in the form of scripted roles, but identities which are generated dynamically dependent on the social situation and on the state of the particular field in which they are located³⁷. Each identity is not separate from the self, is not created out of nothing. Instead, each identity reflects the mobilisation of an individual's different habitus in a particular field setting: the self is externalised and objectified in practice, and identities are thus produced. It is practice, practical living and being, which generate a particular identity. Identity must be seen, I argue, in terms of positions and position taking; its constitution and transformation lie in practice. Within areas and relations of contestation over issues of meaning or significance or procedural methods, people adopt an authority predicated on an understanding of their legitimacy and thus credibility. As individuals engage in organisational struggles, they attempt to impose their definitions through weight of their authority, be it economic, political, cultural or symbolic³⁸. In the dynamics of these struggles and the relationships between these dynamic positions, identities are produced, reproduced and transformed. The *Anastenárides* generate their identities in this way³⁹.

Journalist or Firewalker?

Mikháli's situation is particularly interesting. He is a successful journalist with a major newspaper in Thessaloníki; he also occasionally lectures at tertiary institutions, presents a radio show and at the same time, is an *Anastenáris*. Whilst particular identities are generated in particular situations, Mikháli never ceases being any one of these things, and in fact, his position as a journalist may actually enhance his position as an *Anastenáris* and

³⁷The notion of roles (see Linton 1936, Merton 1968, Goffman 1971).

³⁸This is what Bourdieu (1983) encompasses in within his differentiation of types of capital.

³⁹Bhabha (1994:1) argues that we need to address "those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences". In examining identity, the 'in-between spaces' and the overlapping of differences must be considered. In this way, we can see that identity is an on-going negotiation, performed in action, and that the representations of difference are not pre-given or static. So for example, an individual does not stop being an *Anastenáride* but what it means to be an *Anastenáride* may change over time and in specific circumstances.

vice versa. During the festivals in Lagadhás, Mikháli participates in the celebration in the same way that the other *Anastenárides* do. He dances in the *Konáki*, venerates the Icons in the same way, walks on the burning coals and shares a meal and conversation with everyone else. Endowed with economic capital, which has enabled him to purchase old and therefore powerful, Icons, Mikháli holds an important place in his *Anastenáride* group. His position as a journalist on 'cultural matters' also grants him prestige and authority on the interpretation and performance of the ritual.

During the May festival of 1994, Mikháli was present as an *Anastenáris* and it was this identity which was being generated. Because of the field in which he was engaged, his position within it and the relationship between his habitus and that field, his identity as an *Anastenáris* was generated: particular aspects of his habitus were mobilised, generating a particular identity. He was not taking photos, holding interviews or writing notes. There were no important people around with whom he needed to talk and in fact he made it quite clear that he wanted to avoid the glare of those journalists and photographers documenting the ritual who knew who he was;

I do not like the attention, particularly of my position, my occupation. It draws attention to me because I am a journalist. People know me, but when I am here at the *Konáki*, during the festival, I am an *Anastenáris*, I am like everyone else. Some others like the attention, but I prefer to be unnoticed when I am here.

During the festival for Saint Athanássios in January, however, his position changed. Early in the evening, as the fire was being prepared in the corner of the *Konáki*, the Mayor and some of his colleagues arrived. Chairs were provided for them in front of all of the other people standing and several of the *Anastenárides* came to greet him. That night Mikháli's parents were at the *Konáki*. As the Mayor went to take his seat, he noticed Mikháli who was in fact coming to speak with him. They greeted each other and, in conversation,

Mikháli introduced the Mayor to his parents. Immediately, several people were moved from their chairs so Mikháli's parents could be seated alongside of the Mayor. During the night, although Mikháli participated in the festival and entered the fire, he spent much time talking to the Mayor and also to Dhímítris, the Head of the Folklore Society. Whilst Mikháli never ceased to be an *Anastenáris*, his position as a journalist and as a man with power, was highlighted.

On several occasions Tom actually articulated his various identities, explaining that at certain times he is aware, conscious of being an *Anastenáris*, whilst at other times, he is a greengrocer, or a godfather. Often I would visit him and his mother in their shop, sit with them for an hour or so if they were not busy. In the shop Tom was not actively exhibiting himself as an *Anastenáris*. In the *Konáki*, however, his *Anastenáride* identity was generated, evident in the way in which he treated the Icons, his dancing and walking on the coals and his mere presence and participation in the ritual, generated.

Individuals generate different identities, negotiated within different fields. The self, however, does not turn off and on certain parts of itself, but depending on the characteristics of a particular field, different identities are generated⁴⁰. The generation of a particular identity does not suggest the existence of a different habitus, however. Rather, different aspects of the habitus emerge in different field contexts. The *Anastenárides'* identities will, therefore, alter depending on the nature of the field they are in (ie they are dependent on the field situation). In the religious field they are involved in a struggle for

⁴⁰ Buckley (Buckley and Kenney 1995:23-27) also arguing that identities are socially constructed, suggests that the host of identities which an individual may have, are negotiated within different "worlds" of social interaction where one will therefore act differently, and "play" a different part. While this follows a similar line of thought to mine, in an understanding of "worlds" as likened to Bourdieu's "fields", it is still left in the inflexible shadow of role making. It does not explain how or why people move from one world to another, nor does it explain by what means people make sense of the identities generated through practice. A. Cohen (1994), like Buckley (1995), writes of the idea of a "unified self" which individuals strive to create and maintain and which is present in all social interaction in all "worlds". This notion of "unified self" has some similarities with Bourdieu's habitus, although habitus, as an unreflected upon but generative structured set of dispositions, differs from what I term the self.

the acknowledgment of religious authority, or legitimacy. Believing themselves to be endowed with the supernatural grace of the Saint, they are in opposition to other religious figures such as the Orthodox Priests. The Orthodox Church and, therefore, the Priests, occupy the dominant position. The *Anastenárides*, however, are able to engage in a symbolic struggle against them because not only are they Orthodox Christians, but they are also religiously legitimated through their contact with the Icons, their ability to walk on burning coals unharmed and also through the attention which other Orthodox Christians pay them. As they are all Greek Orthodox Christians, they share parts of their habitus and this intersubjectivity allows them to compete against each other for positions of religious power and authority⁴¹. Whilst engaged in this struggle the *Anastenárides* generate their identities as Orthodox Christians, but also as *Anastenárides* as their particular type of religious celebration differs in many ways from that of the Church⁴².

But how are these “structured dispositions” which constitute the habitus formed? By what means are the habitus produced? How can those sets of dispositions shared by the *Anastenárides* be analytically separated out and examined? In the *Konáki*, as in Orthodox Churches, children are taken to the Icons and physically persuaded to kiss the Icons on the Icon shelf (*stasídhí*) and make the sign of the cross. Súli’s youngest daughter was only two when I first went to Lagadhás. When she came to the *Konáki* with her mother or father she was always carried up to the Icons, usually by her paternal grandmother (an *Anastenárisa*), but also by her parents. She was leant towards the Icons and told to kiss, which she did, and then her arm was taken and whoever was holding her would move her arm to make the sign of the cross. In this way individuals are taught *how to be*: action becomes embodied, naturalised, and thus taken for granted. In the same way, children are instructed how to eat, sit and talk. Young children are told over and over how to behave,

⁴¹ I would like to acknowledge Bruce Kapferer’s helpful comments and ideas on intersubjectivity here.

⁴² I am not implying that the generation of a particular identity negates the existence of other identities. In the context of a particular field certain elements of an individual’s habitus (which is in itself dynamic) are revealed.

and through that, and importantly through mimicry, develop ways of behaving which are inculcated and embodied.

During a festival one year, I was standing outside of the *Konáki* with Pétra's son, Urípidhes, who was about eight years old at the time. The Icons were being taken back inside the *Konáki* after being taken outside for the blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*) and for the sacrificing of the animals. As the *Pappús* walked by with the incense holder, all of the adults waved the smoke towards themselves and made the sign of the cross three times. Then as the Icons were taken past them, they made the sign of the cross three more times. I watched Urípidhes wave the incense towards himself as the others did and cross himself three times. Unlike them, however, he did not make the sign of the cross when the Icons passed us. His sister, who was standing on the other side of him, nudged him and made the sign of the cross whilst frowning at him. He quickly copied, making the sign of the cross, then looked at me and shrugged his shoulders. Later that evening, I saw him with a small infant inside the *Konáki* during one of the breaks. He was lifting the child up to the kerchiefs on the Icon shelf (*stasidhi*), showing the child how to kiss them. Then he held the child against his legs and took her hand, showing her how to cross herself. The lesson was interrupted when Urípidhes decided to show her how to light a candle.

In the *Konáki* one evening after the meal had been completed and the dishes cleared and taken into the kitchen, I offered to help wash and clean up. I started filling up the sink to do the dishes. After about ten minutes, I noticed three or four women standing over my shoulder. I asked them what the matter was and one of them laughed and said, "Is that how they teach you to wash the plates in Australia?" By then her daughter had come into the room and asked what was going on. Her mother explained that they were going to show me how to wash the plates properly and laughed. Her daughter put her head over my shoulder, looked into the sink and smiled. "It really doesn't matter Yiana", she told me, "but we do it like this", and she proceeded to unplug the sink and instruct me. After doing the dishes in Greece for eighteen months, where everyone seemed to clean in the same way, I find myself only washing up in their way and feel the same annoyance when I see my mother or sister washing them in another way.

On another occasion, I was at Súli's home with his wife and children. I had been walking to the *Konáki* and on passing their apartment, Súli's wife, who was standing on the balcony at the time, called out for me to come up for a coffee. While she was making the coffee, I played with her two young daughters. The eldest girl, about four years old, told me that she was going to make me a coffee and a sweet. As she started to pretend to stir the coffee, her mother came over and told her that she was stirring it too slowly and it would spoil. For the entire *game*, the mother stood over her child, instructing her how to pour the coffee, how to serve it, not to forget the glass of water which always accompanies Greek coffee and the eating of sweets. As we were about to take a sip of our imaginary beverage, Súli's wife reminded her daughter to toast to our health, *stín í yíá más* ("to our health").

While *Anastenárides* have their own individual habitus, as they have different socio-economic statuses and different histories, they do share certain similar sets of dispositions and may also share similar trajectories, which may have started, however, at different points. Miháli's socio-economic position, his profession and the fact that he is not from Lagadhás and does not reside in Lagadhás, means that there are identities which he may reveal in certain situations which will not be shared by other *Anastenárides*. Dhimítris, as the Head of the Folklore Society, and his consequent relations with the Mayor, identifies him as different from the other *Anastenárides*, particularly when the Mayor is present in the *Konáki*. The different starting points explain how it is that the wife of an *Anastenáris* or an unrelated individual may be able to become an *Anastenárisa* even though she or he may never have been involved in the ritual before. The way the *Anastenárides* explained the involvement of former *outsiders* into the ritual was through the power of the Saint. According to them, the Saint chooses those who become *Anastenárides*; he will accept the person; it is not for other people to judge. For those women (and men) who became *Anastenárides* after marriage, having no prior involvement with the ritual or the community, they learnt and gradually embodied those ways of behaving unique to the *Anastenárides* from a different point to those who were brought up in the community. However, as Greek Orthodox Christians, they already share with the *Anastenárides*, particular ways of viewing and making sense of the world, as well as sharing certain ways of behaving. They may make sense of and respond to practices in a similar way. They speak the same language, eat the same food and share the same social, political and economic systems. Their food, music, dress and recreation are also similar and importantly, they are all Orthodox Christians. This means that they share a belief in the Icons, Saints, Church doctrines and sacraments. Before becoming an *Anastenáride*, therefore, an Orthodox Greek person already shares certain areas of knowledge, has 'things in common', with the *Anastenárides*. In this way, a common identity as an *Anastenáride*, is constructed. Greek, Macedonian and Orthodox identities are also formed in a similar way. This does not mean that these identities are not contested. On the contrary, on

several occasions, Thétis told me that one or two of the *Anastenárisses* were not really worthy of that title, as they were not from an *Anastenáride* family. This was contradicted, however, by Thétis himself, who claimed that it was the Saint who chose a person to become an *Anastenáride*.

Another way in which shared identity can be extended or transferred is through God parenting. Tom, as the *Kumbáros* of Súli and his wife and therefore the Godparent to their first child, has been permanently connected to his family. Tom is now part of Súli's family who, importantly, descend from *Anastenárides* from Brodívo. In this way, Tom is brought into the original lineage of the *Anastenárides* and although he himself negated this as a prerequisite to becoming an *Anastenáride*, it positions him further *inside* the community (see genealogy B page 213)⁴³.

Gender also dictates different ways of behaving. An *Anastenárisa* for example, will reveal gendered behaviour for that of a woman, different to that of a man. Although I did witness some of the men assisting with a few of the duties associated with the preparation of the meals after the festivals (preparing the chickpeas and serving the meat), it was always the women who cooked the meal and cleaned up afterwards. Less obviously, the women, through their bodily expressions, the way they danced, sat, ate and interacted, were clearly distinguishable from the men. Although Danforth (1989) suggested that being an *Anastenárisa* enabled the women to at times behave in ways which would not normally be acceptable female behaviour, from my own experiences, their embodied selves as women, were revealed at all times. This applies to the men also⁴⁴.

⁴³ See Herzfeld (1982b) and Karakasidou (1997) who both make reference to the importance of "endocommunal spiritual kinship" (Herzfeld 1982b:295). This kinship is created through Godparenting and developed over several generations. They both note that sponsors can be sought for a variety of reasons; land ownership, wealth, social position and so forth.

⁴⁴Bourdieu (1984:185-193) provides an interesting discussion of the different eating habits of men and women (noting class differences also). He presents how taste, even for types of foods, is dictated by those structured dispositions which make up our habitus, revealing gendered and class distinctions. Fish, for example, is considered an appropriate food for women by the working class, he argues; "...not only because it is a light food....but also because ...it is one of the 'fiddly' things which a man's hands cannot cope with

Part Three: Communities and Ethnic Groups

The *Anastenária*, a Token Ethnic Survival: Kostí and its place in the negotiation of ethnic identity

With the increasing interest in the *Anastenária*, largely as a result of the advertising of the ritual as a tourist event, the *Anastenárides* have been required to reflect upon, articulate and defend their identity as *Anastenárides* and as Orthodox Christians. While folklorists, anthropologists and other inquiring minds, probe and ask questions, the *Anastenárides* consciously and constantly, have to explain their identity. The difficulties experienced with the Orthodox Church in Greece have forced the *Anastenárides* to legally defend their position as Christians and the continuing debate has politicised, as well as publicised, their identity both as *Anastenárides* and as Orthodox Christians.

The *Anastenárides* have long been identified as Thracian refugees who practise a Christianised version of an ancient firewalking ceremony, "...the Anastenaria, a northern Greek ritual...is performed by a group of Thracian refugees from Eastern Thrace, known as Kostilides, who settled in Greece in the early 1920s" (Danforth 1989:4). Danforth, in fact, argues that the *Anastenária* is actually a "symbolic expression of the collective identity of the Anastenarides" (*ibid.*:6). He claims that the *Kostilidhe* community and, therefore, a *Kostilidhe* identity, is celebrated, defined and maintained, through the performance of the *Anastenária*. Similarly, Christodoulou (1978:iv) speaks of the *Anastenárides* as a "displaced people" and argues that the firewalking "...functions to define ethnic boundaries of the Anastenaria" (*ibid.*:v)⁴⁵. Christodoulou remarked on the *Anastenáride*'s distinctiveness: "The Anastenaria perceive themselves and are perceived by those around them as a group distinct from the other groups who live in the same area" and saw their ability to trace ancestors from Eastern Thrace as providing a clear boundary to

and which make him childlike..." (*ibid.*:190). It also requires, Bourdieu argues, a way of eating which is in contradiction to the masculine way of eating. This is only one example of the revelation of gendered behaviour. It can also be seen in the way men and women sit on a chair, blow their noses and so forth.

⁴⁵Christodoulou (1978) uses the plural noun, (as in Greek), *Anastenária*, to refer to the group (more than one) of *Anastenárides*.

their distinctiveness (*ibid.*: 16). Acknowledging the importance which one's place of origin (*kataghoi*) plays in the construction of Greek identity, Christodoulou argued that it was the *Anastenárides* link to Thrace which they saw as distinguishing them from the rest of the local population⁴⁶.

Lagadhás town's population, like most of the towns and villages in the surrounding area, is made up of locals (*dópii*), people from Eastern Thrace (*Thrakíotes*), from the Podos (*Póndii*), Asia Minor (*Mikrasiátes*) and Greek refugees (*prósfives*). Whilst these are ways in which people are distinguished, there are many other internal distinctions made and one needs to be careful therefore, of constructing homogenous ethnic identities⁴⁷. I would argue that ethnic identity is not an emic term, but one, which is, used heuristically (see Karakasidou 1997:21). Even if considering the original *Anastenáride* families in Lagadhás as all being Greek refugees, it still needs to be acknowledged that these Greek refugees did not consider themselves a homogenous group but had various idioms of identity; local, regional, national and religious⁴⁸. The *Anastenária*, whilst being an Orthodox celebration has also had local, national and with the advent of tourism, global significance. At the same time, these identities are not static, but constantly negotiated. What is important, I argue, is the objectification of these identities, not just their reification. During the performance of the ritual, and in other practice, what are the *Anastenárides* conscious of showing and hiding and why does this differ for different people in different circumstances?

It had been explained to me by academics and also by one of the musicians that the *Anastenária* was a 'token ethnic survival', an effort to express and maintain a link to an

⁴⁶*Topikismós* (allegiance to birthplace) has been seen as an important part of Greek life. See Campbell (1964).

⁴⁷See Karakasidou (1993b, 1997) who conducted fieldwork in the Lagadhás Basin. She calls for an examination of group formation, rather than of ethnic groups.

⁴⁸ Karakasidou (1997) also acknowledges the various idioms of identity referred to by the Greek refugees. She also notes that the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 made Greek Orthodoxy an important principle in defining national identity.

old culture. By performing the ritual, it was explained, the participants attempted to maintain links with their homeland (*patridha*, fatherland). Interestingly, however, not all of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás can actually trace ancestry to Kostí, and some not even to Brodívo. In fact, a few of them are not even descendants of *Anastenáride* parents or grandparents⁴⁹. Even more importantly, at no time did an *Anastenáride* express such an understanding of the ritual: the performers of the ritual (other than that particular musician) never suggested that the ritual was a ‘cultural display’ or an ‘ethnic play’. It was always articulated as a religious celebration.

Danforth and Christodoulou both referred to characteristics which distinguished the *Anastenárides* from the rest of the community: the use of their Thracian dialect and Thracian dress as well as their position as refugees (*prósfíyes*).

The *Anastenária* provide an opportunity to understand ethnicity. Physically, they are indistinguishable from the general population of Northern Greece. However, the group sets itself apart from the surrounding population in various ways. The older members of the *Anastenária* retain most of the characteristics of the older culture. They speak Thrakiotika, the Thracian dialect of Greek, and dress in their native costumes. (Christodoulou 1978: 160-161)

In Lagadhás none of the *Anastenárides* with whom I was involved continued to speak a Thracian dialect or wear traditional Thracian dress, and there were mixed responses to questions regarding the position of refugees held by the first *Anastenárides* in Greece⁵⁰. One *Anastenáris* explained, “We are Greek, all of us, only from different parts of Greece”. Others explained to me that during that period after the Balkan wars when there was an enormous movement of people going to and fro across Greece, Turkey and the Balkans,

⁴⁹This is important in the debates over authenticity and levels of authenticity. Ancestry to Kostí and having the link to previous *Anastenárides* is seen as the best option even though this was frequently negated as being important.

⁵⁰Once when attending the house of the former *Pappús*, I met an older *Anastenáris* who spoke a Thracian dialect.

everybody felt like a stranger, “only those who stayed still felt at home”. Overwhelmingly, however, when any *Anastenárides* spoke retrospectively of the first *Anastenárides* in and around Thessaloníki, they used the word for refugees (*prósfiyes*). This term, however, differed from foreigner (*xénos*), so while they may have been known as refugees, they were still Greek.

The most common answer I received on asking the *Anastenárides* what identifies an *Anastenáride* was the necessity for belief in the Saint and His power. Tom told me once, “If one believes, one is an *Anastenáride*”. In interviews which I have read in earlier ethnographic accounts (Mihail-Dede 1972, 1973; Christodoulou 1978; Danforth 1978), descent from Kostí and a patrilineal line to an *Anastenáride*, were always deemed to be the two main requirements to becoming an *Anastenáride*. In Lagadhás, however, the *Anastenárides* do not all share a common place of origin, common occupations or the same socio-economic positions: four of them could trace descent to people who lived in Kostí, ten to Brodívo and the rest, had either married an *Anastenáride*, or were from other parts of Greece. Mikháli explained to me, “An *Anastenáride* is not just someone who walks on fire, or someone who was born into the community, but someone who has faith, someone who believes and whose spirit is open”. Likewise, Tom told me, “If you have the nature to hear the Saint calling you, well, then you are called”. The original *Pappús* in Lagadhás is quoted as saying (in Mihail-Dede 1973:162), “Hereditary right is not necessary for one to join the group or be appointed to the office of Archianastenaris. The door is open to anyone who would be called by the Saints”. Mihail-Dede (*ibid.*) noted that “there is no effort to attract anybody to join, not even to members of an Anastenaria family”. One *Anastenáris*, whose family did come from Kostí and whose parents and grandparents were *Anastenárides*, told me that whoever is worthy of the position can be an *Anastenáride*: “It requires one to be a good person, to be honest and care for the good of mankind. It is a respectful position, although we are not respected

now as we once were". In conversation, however, and particularly in conversation which dealt with telling the history of the ritual, preference to people coming from the town of Kostí kept creeping in. It was acknowledged as important as it was the source of the ritual and also the beginning of the hereditary line to the Icons.

Tom explained that Kostí is important as it "gives us a place to look back to, to see where the ritual began". Although his family originally came from Thrace, he can trace no ancestry to Kostí. Other *Anastenárides*, however, some of those who could trace ancestry to Kostí, echoed Tom's views: "Being from Kostí does not make you an *Anastenáris* and being an *Anastenáris* does not mean that you are from Kostí. That is where it began, where the ritual started, or as far back as we can know". In some of the stories used to explain the beginnings of the *Anastenária*, Kostí features. In Chapter Three, I related how in one of the stories, a fire broke out in a Church in Kostí. In another, the infidels were attacking the area around Kostí. Thétis once told me that there is a rock in Kostí where it is claimed that Christ's footprints are imprinted on the surface. It is believed that he walked through the village. These types of references are important for the *Anastenárides* as they legitimate their history as Christian and as Greek. I would argue that Kostí is an important symbol for all of the *Anastenárides*. Tom explained; it provides a beginning, a place of origin, and so gives the ritual a history⁵¹. For some *Anastenárides*, it is also their families' origin, where they came from, but this is no longer true for the entire community. For this reason, the ritual cannot be understood (at least, not anymore), as a symbol of Thracian ethnic identity. What is more important, or more

⁵¹Danforth (1989:195) noted that after 1950, with the ritual being publicly performed, the *Kostilidhe* community opened up. By the early 1960s only half of the *Kostilidhe* marriages in Ayía Eléni were endogamous and another 25% were marriages with Thracians within Ayía Eléni. By 1976, more than half of the *Kostilidhe* marriages were exogamous with respect to their *Kostilidhe* community and to the village of Ayía Eléni. Danforth writes that this was seen as a major problem to the *Kostilidhe* community who feared that this would threaten the continuance of the ritual. Likewise, the migration of many *Anastenárides* to Thessaloníki and other large towns, for work, was seen as a threat to the ritual's and the community's continued existence. This situation is neither unique nor unusual and is similar to what occurred in Lagadhás.

commonly articulated as drawing the *Anastenárides* together, is their Orthodoxy, their Greekness and their belief in the specific power of Saint Constantine and Saint Helen and the Saints acceptance of themselves: “Greekness and Orthodoxy are the two most important elements in the tradition of the Anastenaria” (Mikháli in the newspaper, *Thessaloniki*, May 1994).

Each *Anastenáride* explains their identities in distinctive ways that also have familiar resonances, as they single out from their generalised knowledge that which has most significance for them, at this time. An *Anastenáris* explained; “We are all [the *Anastenáride* community in Lagadhás] family. Most of us are family in one way or another and those who are not, are connected another way. Most importantly though, we are all here for the Saint, we all believe and come together to celebrate”; “Yes, we are a separate group (*omádha*) because we are *Anastenárides* and we walk on the fire. But within that group, there are differences”. The behaviour of the *Anastenárides* toward each other supported this opinion. Each *Anastenáris* was on relaxed terms with each of the men, laughing and joking with each other, and caring for them by making sure they were fed and so on. The grandchildren and children of the *Anastenárides* were treated with intimacy and affection by the entire group, making it hard at the beginning to work out to whom (grandchildren, in particular) they belonged. Their behaviour towards each other was that of a close family.

Place remains important to the discourse of identity, however, and while the importance of *Kostí* to *Anastenáride* identity is constantly contested, it still remains a significant and central focus of identity articulation and reference⁵². Depending on the context of the

⁵²Danforth (1989:197) noted that although the boundaries of the *Kostilidhe* community have become more permeable, and the definition of who can become an *Anastenáride* has changed, there still remained the traditional belief that participation in the ritual was hereditary (*klironomikós*) and that really, only *Kostilidhes* should become *Anastenárides* as they were the direct descendants (*akrabades*) of the original *Anastenárides*. Danforth noted that many saw this hereditary link as being passed on through blood. In my experiences, however, there appeared to be no emphasis placed on the need for a shared substance within the community. Shared belief and participation were the emphasised qualifications.

conversation and to whom it was being asked, Kostí's relevance to becoming an *Anastenáride* varied. People are always immersed in an environment and world, and similarly, environment and world are always immersed in people (Heidegger 1975)⁵³. Places are constituted, in conjunction with language, (another important Heideggerian theme) in memories and experience and the *Anastenária*, believed to have been first performed in Kostí, constitutes the place of Kostí for them now, especially as for many it is from where they came.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the Council of Lagadhás has been attempting to unite all of the different 'ethnic groups' in the town, to create a Lagadhás 'ethnic identity'. They have gone about this by presenting all of the different groups as being united against the threat to Greek Macedonia. As the *Anastenáride* groups have become divided and compete against each other for support and recognition of their ritual performances, they may have also begun to relate and refer more to the villages and towns where they currently live. That is, their identity as coming from Lagadhás, as opposed to Ayía Eléni and so on, may have become I would argue, equally as relevant as their identity as *Kostilidhes*.

***Kostilidhes* or *Anastenárides*: the construction of ethnic identity**

In much of the work done on ethnicity in anthropology prior to the appearance of Barth, there was an emphasis on the external identifiers of ethnic identity. Barth (1969) saw ethnicity as situationally defined and placed an emphasis on what he believed were permeable, ethnic boundaries. Although applying elements of the structural-functional tradition, Barth moved away from the structural-functional model by emphasising the role of the individual, whom he saw as being both active and purposeful in social action. His position shifted in the 1980s with his interest in cultural pluralism, where he addressed what he considered both the important role of

⁵³See Seamon and Mugerauer (eds) 1985, *Dwelling, place and environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*, for interesting discussions of place from a phenomenological point of view.

history (as an on-going process of events which shape the 'now' and as the construction of past traditions) and of the present, in the formation of ethnic identities. His "individualistic voluntarism" (see Jenkins 1994:198) had been heavily criticised (see Paine 1974, Evens 1977) but in his more recent work Barth (1984, 1989, 1994) de-emphasised his previous interest in the role of the individual and moved towards the idea of "a Weberian acknowledgment of the unintended consequences of action" (Jenkins 1994:198)⁵⁴. He acknowledged the importance of the relationship between history and the present. Somewhat differently, Glazer and Moynihan (1975:7) argue that "...as against class-based forms of social identification and conflict — which of course continue to exist — we have been surprised by the persistence and salience of ethnic-based forms of social identification and conflict". They see ethnicity as referring to the distinctiveness of culture, religion, nationality, language and perhaps even physical attributes, which have a common meaning to certain joined individuals. An understanding of why these elements have a shared meaning and why particular meanings are generated at particular times, however, is not explained.

Epstein (1978:xiii), argues that ethnic identity is in fact a "psychosocial process", one which has a dual nature; there is a 'we' aspect and an 'I' aspect of identification. Epstein argues that by creating an 'I' identity, we are immediately implying a 'they'. Similarly, Erikson (1993:18) argues that "The first fact of ethnicity is the application of systematic distinctions between insiders and outsiders; between us and them". In this way, Erikson assumes that ethnicity is constituted through social contact. An ethnic group, therefore, like all forms of social identity, can exist by its differentiation from and its relationship to, one or more other groups. Similarly, although with a definite emphasis on internalised definitions, De Vos

⁵⁴ This resonates with Bourdieu's model of social action where the habitus provides one with a *feel for the game*. People exhibit identities most of the time, without conscious intention.

(1975:9) argues, “An ethnic group is a self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by the others with whom they are in contact”⁵⁵. The ethnic group must be then, in a sense, relative, as its members partially define themselves in comparison with other groups, but it is also objective, as it is dependent on the conceptions of its members for its definition. The conception of an ethnic group being defined in opposition, in relation to the Other, explains the changes in the collective representations of the group. As its members change and the Other changes, so too must the identity of the group. As outsiders, non-*Kostilidhes*, become insiders, so the definitions must change.

Schein (1975) also refers to the flexibility of ethnic identity, arguing that “ethnic organisation may vary according to context and who observes it”⁵⁶. Ethnic identity, its meaning, and importance vary in time and space” (*ibid.*:83). She argues that ethnicity is fluid, multi-dimensional and changeable which must be seen as a process rather than a constant (*ibid.*). She acknowledges the existence of not only cross-cultural differences in the construction of ethnic identities, but also similarities, as well as intra-cultural diversity, in particular varying class relations. Karakasidou (1997:20), with specific reference to Greece, argues that all forms of identity, not just ethnic, are “fluid, historically rooted” constructions, where boundaries constantly shift and change. I agree with these understandings of ethnic identity, which are in opposition to fixed notions of ethnicity defined in terms of boundaries and ideas of homogeneity⁵⁷.

⁵⁵De Vos (1975) argues that ethnic identity is essentially subjective and so is defined by the subjective or emblematic use of any aspect of culture to differentiate themselves from other groups (*ibid.*:16). Brass (1991) makes similar claims, following De Vos’ understanding of ethnicity. Brass (1991:19) argues that “ethnicity is to the ethnic category what class consciousness is to class”. Likewise, Moerman (1964:1219) refers to ethnicity as an “emic category of ascription”. I would argue that this position, like that of De Vos, denies the importance of external definitions and distinctions in the production of identities.

⁵⁶There are similarities to Mitchell (1969) who sees social identities as situational. My criticism of his work lies in his assumption of forms which, as if scripted, individuals turn to in different situations.

⁵⁷A. Cohen’s (1982, 1985, 1987) work on the notion of community discusses the problem of classifying people as belonging to a particular group or community. Cohen (1985) argues that communities imply both similarities and differences and so therefore are a *relational* idea. His particular interest is with the boundaries of communities which, he argues, encapsulate “the identity of the community and, like the

As another example of social identity, ethnic identity must be examined with regard to both the internal and external forces and processes, which are significant to its construction and definition⁵⁸. These processes play an important role in the production and reproduction of all social identities. Jenkins (1994) emphasises the importance of the relationship between the internal and external definitions of identity in social practice. In separating groups from categories, Jenkins argues that categories are externally defined whereas a group is defined internally, by the “nature of the relations between its members” (Mann 1983:34). In this way, groups define themselves, Jenkins argues, but social categories are identified and defined by others. With regard to ethnic identity, Jenkins believes that this distinction between groups and categories and the role of internal and external definitions and distinctions in the production of identity means that ethnic identities can be seen on many levels. With this in mind, Jenkins (1994:202) refers to the nominal and virtual elements of social identity⁵⁹. Social identity, he argues, can be a meaning or an experience, or both. One of these elements may change without the other. This distinction is an important one. The *Anastenária* has not changed in name but perhaps the virtuality, the experience of it has transformed over time, and significantly with the influence of tourism. Similarly, notions of being a *Kostilidhe* remain, as do notions of the *Anastenárides* as constituting a homogenous ethnic group, despite the fact that they do not share the same places of origin. In the same way that all social identities are produced, ethnic identity is mutually formed. In the

identity of an individual, is called into being by the exigencies of social interaction” (Cohen 1985:12). Cohen acknowledges the permeability and transience of the boundaries and argues that they are “perceived” (and therein lies their existence) rather than necessarily physical (although they can be physical).

⁵⁸In his later work, Barth (1984, 1989) also emphasised the two processes of internal and external definitions in the production of ethnic identities, seeing them as mutually defining.

⁵⁹I would suggest that Jenkins is guilty of slipping into role theory models in his discussion of self and public images. I would argue that Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus protect us from having to rely on notions which imply the existence of scripted texts which individuals refer or relate to.

course of social action, internal and external definitions and distinctions meet and identities are produced and reproduced.

Shared Symbols and Contested Boundaries: the *Anastenárides* as a community

Unlike Durkheim (1964), who was interested in bonds and solidarity as uniting and creating communities (particularly in the form of religious festivals), Cohen argues that a community exists while its members believe that they share commonalities; “community exists in the minds of its members and should not be confused with geographic or sociographic assertions of ‘fact’” (Anthony Cohen 1985:98)⁶⁰. Unlike an Aristotelian model for identifying *cultural* groups, where to belong to the group, all features of the *culture* must be held by all members, there has been a development tending towards the theory that individuals in a community are united through a *believed* cohesion in opposition to an Other⁶¹. “...the sense of social self at the levels of both individuality and collectivity are informed by implicit or explicit contrast. Individuals are said to define themselves by reference to a ‘significant Other’; likewise, ‘self-conscious’ cultures and communities” (Cohen 1985:115)⁶².

Whilst I share similar attitudes to those of Cohen in regards to the *construction* of identity, I differ in what I consider to be my definition of identity. That is, Cohen argues that communities are formed through individuals being united through a belief in the sharing of certain symbols. He acknowledges that these symbols may

⁶⁰Cohen (1985:17) refers to the subjective, arguing that it is possible to have different interpretations of a community and its symbols, because of people’s own subjectivity. That is, “People oriented to the same phenomenon are likely to differ from each other in their interpretation of it” (*ibid.*). However, he goes on to explain that people may not be aware of this difference. Whilst they may “tailor” behaviour subjectively, they are still able to find “common currency” (*ibid.*).

⁶¹Wittgenstein (1953), moving away from an Aristotelian model, talked about belonging to a culture or ethnic group, through ‘family resemblances’. That is, members only needed to share some of the features believed to be representative of the group. Rosch and Mervis (1975) followed the idea of ‘prototype features’, where they argued only some of the members needed the features and others could belong around these prototypes members. Handler (1988) in his study of the Québécois, argues that culture is rhetorical. On finding no collective expressions of Québécois culture, he concluded that nationalism creates culture; Québécois culture is politically constructed.

⁶²See also Dumont (1980) in his discussion of caste as ‘complementary opposition’.

have individual meanings for different people, but that there is a belief in something shared. Whilst I agree with this up to a point, I argue that collective identities are formed through individuals sharing certain elements of their habitus and importantly, are formed through social action. This assumes that collective identities constitute a much deeper level of unity than Cohen's communities. Cohen seems to disengage the subjective from identity, in that although he acknowledges the subjectivity of individuals and hence why there are individual interpretations of symbols, he assumes that a community can exist and thus its members share a collective identity, without sharing any deeper level of connection. Identity, as I understand it, as the externalisation of the self, assumes a deeper level of meaning. The collective identity of the *Anastenárides*, I argue, is embodied, is reliant on the habitus, and so relies on more than just a belief in shared symbols⁶³. Cohen, like Barth, denies the importance of the relationship between external and internal forms of distinction, but instead, focuses on the role of internally organised ideas and an internal shared belief in symbols and boundaries. Whilst he acknowledges the role of differentiation and argues that boundaries are oppositionally positioned, I would argue that he has an overwhelming preference for internalised group definition.

⁶³I have a similar problem with the work on identity put forward by Kellner (1992) who also seems to assume that identity is something one can assume on a rather superficial level.

A Model of and a Model for: the Anastenária as producing identities and maintaining meaning amidst transformation

..religious practise exploits the pre-objective to produce new, sacred objectifications, and exploits the habitus in order to transform the very dispositions of which it is constituted (Csordas 1990:39).

..ritual is a social practice where ideas are produced in a determinant and dominant relation to action, and it is a practice where action is continually structured to the idea (Kapferer 1991:3).

A. Cohen (1985:50) refers to ritual as a “symbolic device” able to heighten boundary consciousness; “...both in its social and psychological consequences, ritual confirms and strengthens social identity and people’s sense of social location: it is an important means through which people experience community”. Likewise, Durkheim (1915) addressed the role of ritual (and religion) in providing means for the consolidation and expression of a society’s organisation⁶⁴. He argued that the social created the sacred by appearing as something other and separate from the individual and through creating this otherness, was able to establish complete moral authority (see Csordas 1990:33)⁶⁵. Geertz (1973), following Durkheim, argued that religion acts to “establish long-standing moods and motivations” (Csordas *ibid.*).

With reference to the *Anastenária*, Danforth (1989) saw the ritual as a symbol for identity, in this case for the identity, he argues, of the *Kostilidhes* and following Geertz (1973b: 93), argued that the “Anastenaria is both a model *of* and a model *for* the community of Kostilides” (1989:169)⁶⁶. Similar to Victor Turner’s (1969) application of Van Gennep’s (1960) *three stages* (separation, margin and reaggregation), in his discussion of ritual,

⁶⁴See also Malinowski (1948) who addressed the psychological effectiveness of ritual.

⁶⁵Csordas (1990:33) criticises Durkheim’s theory of reductionism, arguing that his mistake lies in “restricting the human experience of otherness to the category of the social”.

⁶⁶Geertz (1973:93) argues that “cultural patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves”.

Danforth argues that the *Anastenária* ritual reproduces the *Kostilidhe* community. He claims that it reaffirms the ritual and allows for transformations to occur smoothly, without disrupting the symbolic meaning of neither the ritual nor the community itself⁶⁷. Danforth suggests that the *Anastenária*, as a constant referent to the past, provides the *Anastenáride* community with a way to cope with external transformations⁶⁸. In this way, an *Anastenáride* identity is reproduced. Likewise, as minor elements of the ritual performance change and new meanings are developed (through the commodification of the ritual), some symbols remain constant, enabling the ritual to maintain significance for the community and hence confirm and reproduce their social identity as *Anastenárides*.

I argue somewhat differently. In our practices we reproduce those sets of dispositions which constitute our habitus: ways of viewing and responding to the world. By imposing these structures on the world through practice, we reproduce them and in the case of the *Anastenária*, establish something shared. Through the constant process of internalisation and externalisation in practice, the world is given meaning. Through action, these meanings are produced and reproduced, whilst the possibility for transformation always looms. In this way, the ritual form may remain constant, as if unchanging over time, but the meaning of this expressive form can shift, even be transformed. These transformations may occur due to the modification of dispositions over time. This is an improvement on the familiar understanding of Geertz's *model of* and *model for*. It is preferable in that the dispositions, as structuring structures (Bourdieu 1977), although acting in some ways similar to Geertz's model, join subjective and objective realities. The *model of* and *model for* are therefore internalised and so are not external organisers of social action in a

⁶⁷Danforth (1989) argues that the ritual itself is a ritual of transformation; one of illness to health. He sees the *Anastenária* as a healing ritual. See also Crapanzano (1977).

⁶⁸This is much like Turner's (1967:30) application of Edward Sapir's (1934c) condensation symbols which contain meaning and emotion other than that which they superficially signify. In Sapir's article "Symbols" (*Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, xiv, New York, Macmillan) he introduces and identifies "referential" and "condensation" symbols. "Referential" symbols, not unlike Jung's *sign*, are predominantly cognitive and refer to known facts. "Condensation" symbols, on the other hand, are "saturated with emotional quality" and strike "deeper and deeper roots in the unconscious" (Sapir 1934c)

functional sense. During the *Anastenária* then, identities and their meanings, action and social relations are reproduced and possibly transformed⁶⁹.

Different from social action which occurs in everyday life, however, the *Anastenária*, as ritual, provides greater possibility not only for the production and generation of meanings, but also for their transformation. This is possible for several reasons. During the *Anastenária* the symbols invoked are multi-vocal, they are complex and are capable of manifesting themselves in different fields; “[ritual is] a multi-modal symbolic form” (Kapferer 1991:3). The possibility for these meanings to become so powerful and efficacious lies in the fact that during the ritual performance, emotion is generated, providing energy and power that can be channelled into a particular symbolic meaning. During the ritual, this particular symbolic meaning is generated and produced and then possibly re-integrated into everyday life; “rituals act practically on the world” (Kapferer 1991:325-326). It is during ritual performance that symbols can be most effectively empowered and in their polysemy lies the possibility for a variety of meanings to be generated. In this way, the firewalk may have been symbolic of the *Kostilidhe* community, but perhaps in more recent years, symbols of Christian identity have become more powerful. As the wider and local political fields have changed (as well as the changes in the religious and cultural fields) and as the internal structure of the fields alter, different meanings are revealed. The acceptance of Tom and other *Anastenárides* into the community who do not share all the original characteristics required of an *Anastenáris* (i.e. descent from someone from Kostí; parents who are *Anastenárides*), has had an effect on the various meanings generated by the ritual. Understanding the ritual as a celebration of *Kostilidhe* identity becomes dated. The dynamics and the logic of the field have changed and so the meanings generated will have changed also. The polysemy then, lies not solely

⁶⁹ See also Kapferer (1997:180) who argues against the Suniyama, a major exorcism ritual in Sri Lanka, being a ‘model of or model for’ reality. He argues instead, that the Suniyama “is its own reality and is lived as such. It does not model the external dynamics of the processes of everyday life but is a magnification of them” (*ibid.*).

in the ritual as symbol, but in the particular context or field: different meanings are revealed dependent on the situation, whilst all meanings remain relevant. This is why the *Anastenária* can remain a popular Christian celebration despite the transformations that it experiences.

***“The Greekness of our Macedonia”*: Macedonian identity, the *Anastenárides* as Greeks**

During 1994/5 the issue with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia reached a crucial point⁷⁰. Enormous rallies were held, stickers, posters and flags could be seen everywhere denouncing what Greece saw as a claim to Greek heritage: *Makedhonia ine Elleniki*⁷¹. The *Anastenárides* often spoke to me about the situation, always pleased that I was appeared sympathetic to Greece’s position. With the ritual’s history in Thrace and now living in Macedonian Greece, the *Anastenárides* were in an interesting position. Having their Thracian identity accentuated in order to differentiate them, they were now important symbols, examples of Greek Macedonians. Although Kostí now lies within the Bulgarian borders, Greece took this opportunity to reflect on the history of its borders. One *Anastenáris* explained, “Perhaps we will be left with the Peloponnese. Or maybe Crete. All of the Balkan area was Greece’s once and bit by bit they have taken our country. Now they want more. My grandparents’ village is now in Yugoslavia, my parents’ village, in Bulgaria. Soon my village will be home to the Skopians”. I never heard the *Anastenárides* or other Greeks from the north of the country, refer to themselves as Macedonian. They were living in Macedonia, a part of Greece, but they did not articulate themselves as Macedonian. Even the slogans for the rallies were about Macedonia being Greek and for the Greeks, not about the people themselves being Macedonian. Interestingly, however, the *Anastenária*, whilst being advertised as an

⁷⁰The term ‘Skopians’ to refer to the people of FYROM have been coined by Greece in reference to FYROM’s capital city, Skopje. Skopje was used to refer to FYROM by Greek people. Karakasidou (1997) noted that these terms were used in a derogatory manner.

⁷¹Danforth (1995:12-13) writes, “From a Greek perspective international recognition of the republic of Macedonia constitutes a threat to the cultural heritage of the Greek nation as well as the territorial integrity of the Greek state”.

authentic Greek ritual, became increasingly specified as an authentic *Thracian* Greek ritual. Here, Thrace, as part of Macedonia, a region in Greece, was emphasised. An article in the magazine section of a weekend paper in Thessaloníki on May 27, 1995 read, “Ayía Eléni, Sérres, is a small town of Macedonia...” and in another newspaper, *Tá Néa*, May 24, 1994, “The Anastenária, performed at Lagadhás and Ayía Eléni, Sérres, ...brought to Macedonia by Greek refugees from Eastern Thrace”. As I have stated earlier, within Lagadhás itself, a Greek Macedonian identity was encouraged and articulated by the local Council, where they explained in an article about their town, that the citizens of Lagadhás were united, as Greek Macedonians, in their defence of a Greek Macedonia.

Part Four: The Role of the State and Folkloric Discourse in the Construction of Identities

It is regrettably, a commonplace to talk of 'Modern Greece' and of 'Modern Greek' as though 'Greece' and 'Greek' must necessarily refer to the ancient world (Clogg 1992:1).

The tendency of folklorists and historians to presume that places are “trans-historical phenomenon rather than human construction” (Handler and Segal 1993:3), has created the assumption that a present place’s past *naturally* occurs in that same place. This attitude reinstates and confirms the contemporary identity of a place and so historical reference to the present day is an effective nationalistic tool. As Handler and Segal state, “In its most established form, then, historical scholarship is complicitous with nationalistic propaganda for it construes modern identities as trans-historical facts rather than social constructions” (Handler and Segal 1993:3). They argue that “conventional narratives of history preserve, or fix, contemporary identities and thereby reify and naturalize the identities and social groups of the present” (*ibid.*). I suggest that discourse about folklore provides a means by which the state can appropriate tradition for its own purposes (Kaneff 1992). In the process of nation building, academics and intellectuals helped to shape public discourse and national consciousness⁷². The problematic introduction of terms such as ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’ in folkloric studies is the inevitable discourse of a discipline that presents present-day rituals as revised relics of the past. From the 18th century, in an attempt to create a new Greek identity, the present became articulated with the past which then became the folkloric tradition (see Herzfeld 1986, Cowan 1988, Karakasidou 1994b)⁷³. I argue that this identity created from

⁷²See Karakasidou (1994) for a discussion on the role of academics and intellectuals in shaping recent national consciousness in Greece, with particular reference to the ‘Macedonian issue’.

⁷³Clogg (1992) talks of ‘*progonopleksia*’, which he translates as ‘*ancestoritis*’ and says that this obsession with past glories is characteristic of Greece’s “cultural life”.

the folklorist's history of *Hellas*, is not to be defined or located in a particular time or space (as for example, it has been expressed as developing after the period of Turkish occupation) but is rather, an aspect of a particular political field which emerges at different times in response to particular political circumstances. I do this by acknowledging a number of similar situations which have common political features to the period from the beginning of the 18th century to the 1920s, which Herzfeld (1986) and others have referred to; the inclusion of Greece in the EEC and its consequential problems; the repeated confrontations with Turkey as exemplified particularly by Cyprus; the confrontation with the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia; the economic problems faced by the Government and the decreasing numbers of tourists to the country, a major blow to the country's primary industry of tourism⁷⁴.

Folkloric Discourse

As Wilson (1973:819-20) has suggested, folkloric studies on the continent of Europe "were from the beginning intimately associated with emergent romantic nationalist movements....to discover historical models on which to reshape the present and rebuild the future". Folkloric discourse formed a large component of the discourse of the emerging nationalism. The Greek struggle for independence of 1821 to 1833 was legitimated by the presentation of a Greece directly linked to its Hellenic past. With the establishment of the Modern Greek state in 1830, Greek national ideology, as Kofos (1989) has pointed out, developed on the basis of national continuity; "It stressed classical Greek roots but also traced, from Byzantium, through Turkokratia, to independence, the survival of the Greek nation, the Greek language, Greek customs and, of course, Greek Orthodox religion" (Kofos 1989:232)⁷⁵. An image of

⁷⁴Danforth (1995:18) writes, "Intellectuals and scholars from disciplines such as history, archaeology, linguistics, literature and folklore, create the 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1977) from which a national culture is formed".

⁷⁵Herzfeld (1987:102), in his discussion of *disemic formulation*, argued that there are two sides to the modern Greek identity; the Hellenic and the Romeic: "These ostensibly historical images, the Hellenic and

cultural continuity was developed and presented to the Greek population by the academics of the time. The discipline of folklore addressed sensitive public issues, and emphasised and acknowledged foreign influences which, it was argued, had been forced upon the Greeks, corrupting their culture. This folkloric ideology was initially constructed and directed by external influences: there were other European classicists and folklorists who were interested in the Hellenic past. From the beginning of the 18th century, Greek folklorists began to make a case for the essentially Hellenic nature of European civilisation (see Herzfeld 1986) and in 1813, F.S.N Douglas, a British aristocrat, in fear of Russian expansionism and its possible effects on British trade, acknowledged the resemblances between ancient and modern Greek culture⁷⁶. In 1830, with a similar fear of Russian expansionism, the Austrian “pamphleteer, historian and liberal pan-German nationalist of Tyrolean origin” (Herzfeld 1986:75), Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer, denied the national identity of Greece as having any claim to a classical ancestry. He argued that “the Classical Greeks’ heritage could not possibly have survived successive Slav and Albanian invasions during the Byzantine era” (*ibid.*: 76). Greek scholars reacted to this claim and probably started one of the most intense periods of folkloric discourse in this phase of European history. The exploration of Greek folk songs, for example, for evidence of a concept of ‘nationality’ being a popular area of inquiry (Manousos 1850; Zambelios 1852, 1859; D’Istria 1867).

Nikolaos Politis is arguably the most important individual in Greek folkloric studies. As Herzfeld has stated, “Politis did not so much revolutionise, as *constitute*, the discipline by organising his predecessors’ ideas and goals into a comprehensive

the Romeic, inform the respective ideals of *self-representation* and *self-knowledge* (or *self-recognition*)”. See Herzfeld (1986, 1987) for a more detailed discussion of the *disemic formulation*.

⁷⁶Although Douglas linked Modern Greece, through language and custom, to ancient Greece, he opposed Greek independence. He saw any threat to the Turkish government as an invitation to Russia to make claims on the area. If Russia developed a position in the area, British trade would most certainly be affected (see Herzfeld 1986:75).

taxonomic system” (Herzfeld 1986:97, original italics)⁷⁷. Sharing a like approach to that of Politis, the modern folklorist Kakouri, has pursued similar themes. She writes, “the Anastenarides have preserved into our own times a most ancient form of worship: certain features may be easily discerned as belonging to the past, while others have been kept alive as being virtually linked to the present day” (Kakouri 1965:13). Throughout her extensive publications on the *Anastenária* Kakouri has presented the ritual as belonging to the type of ecstatic worship which involves a *thíasos* (theatrical company or cast/troupe) which is a form of Thracian group worship which exactly corresponds to the Dionysiac religion of antiquity. She suggests that these Dionysiac rites were able to survive as a result of geo-physical conditions, such as remoteness, which in turn meant an ignorance of anything outside one’s own village community (Kakouri 1965:54). By indicating similarities between the *Anastenária* as it is performed today and the Dionysiac rituals held to have been performed before the birth of Christ, Kakouri concludes that the two are directly related. She argues therefore, that the *Anastenária* is a Christianised ‘survival’ of a Dionysiac rite. On the other hand, another folklorist, Maria Mihail-Dede, argues against the similarities between the *Anastenária* and Dionysiac worship. Nevertheless, she still situates the ritual within Greece’s past. She argues that “...no elements of the ancient cult of Dionysis can be noticed in the Anastenari as exclusive characteristics of its essence” (Michael-Dede 1972:167, author’s/journal’s translation). She continues by stating that there is “evidence that the main features of the custom were shaped in Byzantine times” (*ibid.*). She asserts that it was the behaviour of Saint Constantine, (an apostle according to the Greek Orthodox Church), as the protector of Christians, together with the similar behaviour of Saint Helen which have played a decisive part in the formation of the

⁷⁷Politis created a new type of Folklore naming it *laoghrafia* in 1884. The discipline remains under that name today in Greece. He dealt with the notion of cultural continuity, combining elements from the emerging field of anthropology, from archaeological and archival research, classical philology and historical reconstruction. His work dealt with possible parallels between modern and ancient Greece and incorporated cross-cultural perspectives.

Anastenária. The Greek Orthodox Church asserted similar attitudes to Kakouri's immediately after the first public performance of the ritual in 1947. The president of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece informed the Bishop of Sérres that the *Anastenária* was "an idolatrous survival of the orgiastic worship of Dionysos [that] must be abolished using all the spiritual means at the disposal of the Church" (Danforth 1989:135). Even more strongly, four years later the Bishop of Thessaloniki claimed that the *Anastenária* was "in complete opposition to the beliefs and forms of worship of the Christian religion" (*ibid.*).

Within Lagadhás, the discourse of *laoghrafía* has been adopted by the *Anastenárides* themselves, or at least by those who publicly represent the community. Cowan (1988b) has previously recognised local discourse's relationship with the national rhetoric; "...to show that folkloric discourse — a discourse oriented to the problems of *national* identity and legitimacy — enters in both direct and diffuse ways into *local* discourse.." (Cowan 1988b:246, original italics). The Thracian Folklore Society in Lagadhás, (*Thrakiki Laoghrafiki Etairía*), originally set up to protect the interests and property of the *Anastenárides* as well as liaise with the local Government, Church, police and academics, is headed by *Dhimítris*, a jeweller in the town. Whilst he, himself, did not present the *Anastenária* as an ancient ritual, the Society is very much concerned with Thracian history and the preservation of it. Several of the *Anastenárides*, however, did in fact speak of the *Anastenária*, as relating to Greece's classical past. One younger *Anastenáris*, in particular, actually showed me several books of ancient firewalking and other *archaic* Greek festivals. The irony that has developed from the folkloric discourse in Greece is striking. The attraction of tourists is ambivalently both criticised and encouraged. Accusations that the ritual performers are simply aiming at producing a spectacle are made against a backdrop of claims of 'authenticity'. At the same time, the ritual performances are advertised as part of ancient Greek

culture. The financial benefits and the area of study it opens are also in opposition to containing the ritual as a local, restricted, rural celebration. However even the conception of tradition articulated by the *Anastenárides* is not simply part of their collective local memory (Cowan 1988b: 252). Rather, it has also been developed under the influence of academic and journalistic discourse.

Foucault's (1972) description of the discourse of tradition and of historical discussion, indicates the frame in which these discussions arise and their consequent influence on their interpretation and application: "...historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge" (Foucault 1972:5). The past, in being documented or studied in the present, is immediately the victim of manipulation and possible distortion. In the case of the folklorists and the creation of a national identity, the past is reflected upon, referred to, with little or no acknowledgment of the differences and contradictions and with emphasis on the constitution of consistency⁷⁸. This discourse, by relying on the manufacturing of historical continuity, has subsequently also affected the discourse at a local level and consequently had some affect on the presentation and construction of identity for the *Anastenárides*.

The ideologies we call nationalism and the subordinated sub national identities we call ethnicity result from the various plans and programs for the construction of myths of homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity that characterise all nation building (Williams 1989:429).

Barth (1994:20) similarly acknowledges the role of Governments in the construction of national identities, but also in the construction of ethnic identities. He refers to state policies and the legal creation of bureaucracies, which can affect the way in which identities are formed. He argues that we need to see the state as a participator in the

⁷⁸See also Verdery (1991) and her discussion on the role of intellectuals in the construction of national identities.

construction of identities, thereby including in our analysis on identities, a micro, median and macro level of understanding.

The *Anastenárides*, therefore, construct their identities in relation to those constructed for them. Likewise, the way in which they articulate the meanings, the history and the transformations of their ritual is also influenced by those definitions constructed by others. Identity is, therefore, a generative process. Identities are constituted temporally and contextually and, therefore, are dynamic in form.

Conclusion

The *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás present a number of individualistic and shared identities in different situations: they are Greeks, Europeans and Orthodox Christians as well as *Anastenárides*. Many consider themselves Thracians and, (at least in the early part of the century), refugees. They are all gendered persons, siblings, spouses, parents, farmers, factory workers, and so forth. In practice, whilst they never cease to be any of these, particular identities or a particular identity is revealed and emphasised. Whilst acknowledging that the *Anastenárides*, like all individuals, have more than one identity, some individual, others collective, I have eschewed the popular use of such concepts as 'role' and 'mask' used to explain the co-existence of these different identities. Instead, I argue that during the actual relations of practical and public life, as individuals enter into different situations or fields, different parts of the habitus become relevant and, thus, active. In this way, because each day engages a range of "fields of forces", a variety of identities may be generated by that person. Identity becomes linked in with particular relations: what is at stake at a particular point of time and the dynamics between the positions taken up by others engaged by the specific issue are relevant. It is through the positions taken up in various fields of struggle (Bourdieu 1983), that individuals and groups re-establish the distinctions whose processes of construction lie beyond their consciousness and so deem them natural. These classificatory schemes, with which

distinctions are constructed, define individuals' social being and thus define what it is to be 'Us' as opposed to 'Them'. On each occasion and in each situation, the conditions are different and it is this that is the basis of difference between discourses expressed in terms of 'role', and those expressed in terms of habitus. Identity then, is the outcome of the expression of the self that is negotiated through self-reflection; a subjective reflection on the values, ideas and knowledge acquired through one's life circumstances.

At the same time, the *Anastenárides* have had identities constructed for them, some deliberately. The Greek Government and academics, particularly the discipline of folklore, have sought more than once, to construct a national Greek identity based on Greece's past. As a consequence of this constructed national identity, rituals such as the *Anastenária* have been presented as remnants of Greece's past, an ancient Thracian ritual. The *Anastenárides* have been affected by these constructions, presenting them as performers of an ancient rural celebration and influencing their identity as Greeks, Christians Thracians and *Anastenárides*. To return to Handler and Segal (1993:3), "contemporary narratives of history" have impacted on contemporary identities.

Chapter Six examines the transformations that the ritual has undergone particularly as a result of tourism and reflects on the impact tourism has had on the construction of the *Anastenárides* identities as Greeks, Christians and in fact, as *Anastenárides*. I introduce the tourist interest in the ritual and the effects which tourism has had on the ritual as well as the community. I examine the phenomenon of tourism, and consider the arguments presented on the revitalisation of public rituals and celebrations. Looking at tourists as guests and enemies, I return to a discussion on notions of public and private. Addressing the *Anastenária* as a cultural product, as undergoing commodification, I seek to understand to what extent this has affected or transformed the ritual's meaning to the performers and spectators and therefore examine to what extent tourism has influenced and been involved in the production of identities for the *Anastenárides*.

6

The Commodification Of The *Anastenária*: the effects of tourism in Lagadhás

Langadas is an unremarkable village for 362 days of the year. It is what happens there on the other three which is making it increasingly a tourist attraction...Buses run out to Langadas from a small bus station in Odissios, just off Metaxas square in Thessaloniki at 20-minute intervals, and take tourists back to the city after the dancing (Crossland and Constance 1982:144)

Introduction

In this Chapter, I address the phenomenon of tourism and examine the *Anastenária* in terms of a commodity, as a cultural good (Bourdieu 1979). Paying attention to the increase in tourist interest in rituals such as the *Anastenária*, I examine the transformation of the ritual, arguing that as a *cultural product*, the ritual must be examined in both its local and wider frames, whilst acknowledging these as interconnected¹. Introducing the revitalisation of public celebrations (Boissevain 1992), I argue that the *Anastenária* is not a revitalised ritual. Since the arrival of the *Anastenárides* in the north of Greece, the ritual's performance has been constant and only interrupted because of opposition from the Orthodox Church. I address the way in which the ritual has been able to sustain itself and argue that the interest of tourists and the ritual's economic value (as helping to attract tourists) have had an effect on the ritual's popularity. With particular emphasis on the tourist and the impact of tourism, I recall the participation and influence of the tourists in Lagadhás and examine the relationship between the *Anastenárides* and the tourists. I

¹This refers to my discussion later in the Chapter about the public face of private meanings and the interpretation of rituals.

briefly examine the anthropological literature on tourism and the tourist, (much of which interestingly points to the similarities between anthropologist and tourist (see Crick 1985). I consider the high level of external interest in the ritual and the way in which it is marketed and drawn into the business of national tourism. Acknowledging the problems which arise from making distinctions such as 'insider'/'outsider', 'host'/'guest' and creating homogenous collectives such as 'tourists' and 'Greeks', I present the opposing and varied groups and individuals who attend and are involved in the ritual. I refer to Sallnow's (1987, 1991) discussion on Christian pilgrimages and his critique of previous anthropological pilgrimage studies which argue for the existence of 'communitas'². I similarly argue that the *Anastenária*, like the pilgrimage sites which Sallnow refers to, accommodates a diverse range of individuals, many of whom have quite different reasons for being there and different understandings, expectations and responses to the event:³

...the pilgrimage shrine while apparently emanating an intrinsic religious significance of its own, at the same time provides a ritual space for the expression of a diversity of perceptions and meanings which the pilgrims themselves bring to the shrine and impose upon it. As such, the cult can contain within itself a plethora of religious discourses (Sallnow 1991:10).

I introduce the idea of the ritual as a commodity and examine the way in which the commodification of the ritual has transformed the performance and the lives of those involved. Looking at notions of supply and demand and value as defined through

² Victor Turner's (1969) concept of *communitas* originally sought to explain the mode of being when distinctions and everyday titles were shed during rituals of transformation. It refers to that egalitarian relationship between individuals who are freed from everyday structure, roles and hierarchy. This state [of *communitas*] occurs during a moment of 'anti-structure'.

³ I am aware of the differences between the *Anastenária* and the pilgrimage sites that Sallnow refers to. In Lagadhás there is a performance by a group of individuals and it is not simply a Holy place. The Icons however, do act as a pilgrimage site and it is not uncommon for Orthodox Christians to visit particular Icons for veneration or to pledge a vow, (*táma*). Bowman (1991) in his study of the different Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem, noted that the Orthodox Christians were most often overwhelmingly interested and concerned with the Holy Icons, rather than the places themselves.

exchange, I examine the ritual as a product and resource that can in some ways be bought and sold.

Bourdieu (1993) asserts that in the field of cultural production, cultural products like the *Anastenária*, are produced, circulated and consumed. I argue that tourism lies within the field of large-scale production that is in constant opposition to the field of restricted production where academics, ‘cultural experts’ and the *Anastenárides* themselves, are positioned⁴. Within this field of cultural production, symbolic and cultural capital are competed for; at the same time these products exist within the broader field of power⁵, where economic capital is the preferred asset⁶. In the following Chapter I look more specifically at the different forms of capital, particularly the Icons, and the way in which particular agents make use of their capital in various fields⁷. Referring back to the role of folkloric discourse in Greece, I acknowledge the influence that the construction of a national Greek identity has had on the ritual. I address the role of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Greek Government [the State] and academics, all key players in the field of cultural production and refer to my previous discussion of the role of folklore in the construction of the ritual. The Orthodox Church, in seeking to de-legitimise the *Anastenária* as a religious celebration, competes with the *Anastenárides* for religious authority. The local and state Governments, with shared as well as independent agendas, encourage the commodification of the ritual, seeking to make economic profit as well as

⁴Bourdieu (1983) argues that two sub-fields that are dynamically opposed; the field of large-scale production and the field of restricted production, constitute the field of cultural production.

⁵ Bourdieu (1992:76) writes that “The field of power is a *field of forces* defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between form of power, or between different species of capital. It is also simultaneously a *field of struggles for power among the holders of different forms of power*”. The field of power is different from other fields. It is on a different level from the others as it partially encompasses the other fields (see Bourdieu and Wacquant 1991). Wacquant (1992:18) writes that the field of power “should be thought of more as a kind of “meta-field” with a number of emergent and specific properties”.

⁶Bourdieu (1993:75) defines symbolic capital as “economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognised, hence legitimate, a ‘credit’ which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees ‘economic’ profits”.

⁷ Here I am referring to Bourdieu’s concepts of economic capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital. See my Introduction for a definition of these terms.

improve their position in the wider field of power. Being 'ideologically' supportive also endows the local and state Governments with cultural capital. By publicly supporting the ritual and other rural celebrations, the Government improves its position within the cultural field which automatically improves its electoral popularity. Also engaged in the field of cultural production are the academics, legitimated to speak on as well as to judge, the effects of tourism on the ritual and the degree of authenticity of each ritual performance. Important to this discussion is the effect which those institutions and individuals have had on the ritual performance. Referring to the negotiation of an *Anastenáride* identity, I argue that the *Anastenárides*' engagement in the field of cultural production has necessarily had an effect on the way in which they perceive themselves.

Central to this analysis is an examination of the terms 'authenticity' and 'tradition', as well as the problematic distinctions made between self and other, public and private, and insider and outsider (host and guest). The field of cultural production relies heavily on the discourse of authenticity and consequently, those individuals and groups who are involved in this field are also drawn into this discourse. Whilst I acknowledge the existence and logic of the use of the terms of 'authenticity' and 'tradition', I am critical of their accuracy and purpose. I do not attempt to engage myself in such discourse and do not suggest at any time that the *Anastenária* is 'authentic', 'traditional' or otherwise⁸. Following on from my discussion in the previous Chapter regarding the problematic use of distinctions such as inside and outside, public and private, I argue that the relationship of tourist and 'host' can not be examined effectively using such distinctions. The relationships will vary as the dynamics of a field changes. I also acknowledge the danger of making generalisations when referring to 'tourists' as a whole group, aware that within that collectivity, exists

⁸ Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) distinguished between 'invented' and 'genuine' traditions. I disagree with this position and the false dichotomy between true and false traditions that it requires. I prefer Handler and Linnekin's (1984) argument that all traditions must be seen as 'symbolic constructions', their meaning always defined in the present. In this way, tradition can be seen as interpretation and as being continually produced.

individuals who differ from each other significantly. The same type of collective assumptions have been made regarding Greek hospitality and the more general title of 'host'. To avoid this type of generalisation, I present some of the different kinds of tourists and the different types of reactions they received in particular situations.

The *Anastenária* Revitalised?

In Greece, as in many parts of Europe, public celebrations have been increasing since the 1970's (del Ninno 1981; Manning 1983; Boissevain 1992). This revitalisation, it has been argued, was in response to a number of factors: modernisation, the growth of leisure and consumption in contemporary societies, general democratisation, the decreasing power and influence of the Church, a rise in the standard of living, increased secularisation, return migration, an explosion in media and mass tourism. This revitalisation has been said to take several forms; invention, re-animation, restoration, revival, resurrection, re-traditionalizing and folklorizing, and in many cases, is consciously done in a manipulation of tradition for political or financial ends (Cowan 1980)⁹. Boissevain argues against the claim that tourism as a phenomenon on its own has caused the increase in the performance of rural rituals. He moves on from Manning (1983), following MacCannell (1976) who as I do, sees the resurgence of public rituals as "cultural productions", but unlike me, believes them to be representative of the modern world. Boissevain (1992:8), in contrast to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), claims the resurgence in public rituals occurred largely because of the tapering off of mass migration to the cities which witnessed instead, in the 1970's, return migration or at least an increase in return travel to people's homelands. These return trips often coincided, deliberately or otherwise, with major community celebrations¹⁰. Boissevain also argues that increased secularisation and industrialisation, and the increase in the standard of living in much of Europe, resulted in a decrease in

⁹See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion on the role of folklorists.

¹⁰See also Margaret Kenna (1993) and her discussion of return migrants and tourism development in the Cycladic islands.

community interdependence, leading to the consequent isolation of people. This led, Boissevain suggests, to an increase in the desire for people to come together, and, therefore, to an increase in the need for public events such as feast days (*ibid.*)¹¹. He argues that migration also made populations aware of their own identity, creating a desire to mark off their communities from others and defined these boundaries through rituals which provided a sense of belonging and acted as a celebration of 'them' against 'us'. There was also a rise in the dependency on the state, both economically and socially, a general democratisation, a media explosion and the arrival of mass tourism, all of which Boissevain sees as relevant, but none as solely responsible for the increase in public ritual¹². Somewhat differently, Crick (1989:197), focusing on the impact of mass tourism, looks at the disappearance as well as the possible increase in public rituals. He suggests that some rituals have died as a result of tourism, while others by contrast, have survived because of it. Christodoulou (1978) in her study of the *Anastenária*, argues that the ritual has been able to maintain itself *because of* tourism¹³: the economic capital which it brings into the local and wider economy, encouraged the Government (state and local) to patronise the ritual and consciously preserve it. I disagree with the consequent assumption of this argument, that the ritual would not have survived without tourism and the interest of the Government. I do acknowledge, however, the obvious effects these phenomena have had on the ritual and its participants.

The *Anastenária*, as situated within the wider frame of Greek social life, has unarguably been affected by the increase in tourism and the consequent involvement of the Government. Social, economic and political changes have impacted and will continue to

¹¹ This argument is clearly functionalist.

¹² Boissevain (1984, 1992), specifically on his work on the revitalisation of public rituals in Malta, also acknowledges the increase in pageantry but argues that this is not a ploy to lure tourists nor is it a reflection of a lapse in the meaning of these rituals to the performers.

¹³ See also McKean (1976), Swain (1978) and importantly, who argue that tourism maintains the performance of public rituals and protects them from being outlawed by perhaps the Church.

impact on the performance and sustenance of the ritual and, without doubt, have been involved, if not responsible for, the 'production' and 'manufacturing' of the ritual. I maintain, however, that these phenomena are not solely responsible for the continued existence of the *Anastenária*. One can only speculate whether or not the ritual would have died without tourism and the transformation of the ritual into a tourist product. This type of conclusion assumes that there is little other meaning or value in the ritual besides economic, which is a naive and superficial conclusion. What can be concluded, however, is that the ritual has become a cultural product with a market value: it has been commodified. Consequently, its performance, (at present anyway), is dominated by local Government and mass tourism. Differing from many of the public rituals which Boissevain and others refer to, the *Anastenária* is not performed by all members of the local community, it is not something which everyone can be a part of. Without the *Anastenárides*, relatively small communities within each respective town and village, there would be no ritual performances. The Government's interest, inspired by the economic rewards of tourism, has eased the opposition of the Orthodox Church to the performance of the *Anastenária*. However, the Church remains vehemently opposed to the ritual's use of the Icons and their display of firewalking in honour of Orthodox Saints. It is rather powerless to act against them, however, without the legal support of the Government¹⁴.

"Tourism receipts are one of the main elements of strength in the Greek economy and constitute nearly 5% of the GNP (Gross National Production) (OECD 1987:5)...Greece receives over 6.5 million tourists annually (*ibid.*) [and] of these, nearly 3/4's arrive between May and September..."(Kenna 1993:77)¹⁵. In 1991 it was recorded that a total of 8.03 million tourists visited Greece, with receipts totalling to US\$2,566 million. The

¹⁴See Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion on the relationship of the Orthodox Church and the *Anastenárides*, with particular reference to the use of the Icons.

¹⁵There has been a reduction in the number of tourists visiting Greece however, as destinations like Asia, Turkey and the recently open Eastern European countries, have become more popular.

Akropolis and other great archaeological sites, the monasteries, coastlines and particularly, the islands, have been the main attractions to Greece for tourists. In more recent years, trekking in Greece's mountains and more 'rural' holidays geared towards the younger market have been popular, as have been trips which include 'authentic' displays of Greek culture. The *Anastenária* is one of these; "By the 1970's the Anastenaria had become a major tourist attraction in Ayia Eleni and Langadas" (Danforth 1989:201)¹⁶. The ritual features in the *Blue Guide to Greece* (Rossiter 1977:557), in travel guides and books on Macedonia and Greece, in calenders which list cultural events (*ibid.*) and in tourist pamphlets found in hotels, information offices, train stations, etc. Books and articles have been written by foreign anthropologists (Christodoulou 1978; Danforth 1989 and mentioned in many other books) and folklorists (Romaïos 1944-5; Mihail-Dede 1972-3), documentaries have been made, and every year the Greek newspapers and television stations feature articles and presentations on the ritual¹⁷. Internet sites on Greek tourism, culture and Greek history, refer to the ritual. In particular, several tourist companies advertise trips to Lagadhás for interested tourists. In May 1995, a popular current affairs program on one of the major Greek television stations presented a special feature on the ritual. Interviewed were an academic theologian from the University, a representative from the Orthodox Church and several *Anastenárides*. The discussion centred on the problems between the Church and the performance of the ritual, with the talk show suggesting that it was time the Church ceased its disapproving position. The show appeared at prime time and was repeated again the following afternoon.

¹⁶Christodoulou (1978) noted that in 1976/7, 2000 spectators were present at the performance of the ritual on May 21st. At that time tickets were being sold and special seating had been erected for the spectators. In 1994/5 when I was in Lagadhás, it was slightly more small scale, mainly due to the split that had occurred in the group, resulting in separate performances in the town.

¹⁷I first came to learn about the ritual through a videocassette of a taped current affairs show on Greek television, sent to a friend of mine who lives in Australia, by his relatives in Thessaloníki.



The police attempt to keep the growing crowd behind the fences and away from the fire



The Politicisation of the *Anastenária*: the relationship between sacred and secular power

With the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in Greece in 1971, which included the Departments of Antiquities, Arts and Letters and of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, rituals like the *Anastenária*, took on political significance. Political, economic and cultural forces appropriated the ritual, with an emphasis on the discourse of tradition and legitimation. As national rhetoric and a Greek identity were largely constructed and legitimated through the discourse of folklore, rituals like the *Anastenária* were presented as eloquent symbols of such continuity¹⁸. With the election to power of PASOK in 1981, 'culture' became even more politically significant. Greece was encouraged to look inwards and concentrate not only on her own economic development, but also on the consolidation of a unified Greek identity (see Konsola 1988). It was around this period that the Thracian Folklore Society (*Thrakiki Laoghrafiki Etairia Lagadhás*) was established in Lagadhás¹⁹. The Society is the official negotiator between the *Anastenárides* and the local Government, not unlike the 'cultural brokers'²⁰ Bourdieu (1993:75) talks of when referring to art dealers and publicists²¹. The Society has, in the past, funded the public performance of the ritual, through approaching local Government and private institutions²². When the ritual was performed publicly and tickets were sold, the Folklore Society received the money that was

¹⁸See the previous Chapter for a discussion on the role of folklorists in the creation of a national Greek identity. I am not suggesting that all Greek people shared this notion of Greek identity. On the contrary, it was a conscious political attempt that was supported by academics, in particular, folklorists.

¹⁹The Folklore Society of Ayía Eléni was set up in the spring of 1971 and its primary concern was to regain possession of the *Anastenáride's* Icons that had been confiscated by the Church (see Danforth 1989:137-145). The Society assists in the organisation of the performance of the ritual and deals with the problems caused by the increase in the number of spectators. Article 11 of its constitution relegates the Society as responsible for the investigation, study and preservation of Thracian folklore.

²⁰See also Greenwood (1989:179) who refers to 'cultural brokers', *i.e.* the tourism industry and those involved in the manufacturing of 'ethnic tourism'.

²¹Danforth (1989:138) noted that the Folklore Society in Ayía Eléni also managed the financial affairs of the group. This may have been the previous, temporary situation in Lagadhás also, but during my time there (1994-5), the *Anastenárides* themselves appeared to manage their own finances.

²²Christodoulou (1978) states that the National Lottery and the Ministry of Tourism provided funds towards the cost of the performance of the *Anastenária* at one time.

collected and banked it. This money was then used to help individuals, families and the entire community in Lagadhás (Christodoulou 1978)²³.

In 1994/5 as tickets were not sold (in my group's performance)²⁴ this income was not available. Funding was more officially distributed to the Thracian Folklore Society from the local Government's Federal allowance for 'cultural expenses'. It is economising such as this that led to disagreements amongst the *Anastenárides* and divisions occurred. It was the spending and distribution of funds that led to conflict within the *Anastenáride* community. One *Anastenáris* told me that one of the musicians had left the group to play for another group as he felt that he was not being paid enough for his services²⁵. In 1995, the Mayor of Lagadhás offered the *Anastenárides* from the group with whom I was involved, 60,000 *dhrahmas* (Aus\$3,600) to perform the fire walk outside, in the main square with seating for the spectators and professional lighting. This was how the ritual had been performed in previous years but since the completion of the new *Konáki* and the division in the group, this year the Mayor was aware that some coaxing might be needed. This money was to cover all of the expenses of the performance with some left over for the Thracian Society and therefore also the *Anastenárides*²⁶. The Mayor argued that performing the ritual outside allowed for better organisation, greater control of the crowd and was more comfortable for the spectators. The offer, however, was refused. This came

²³Christodoulou (1978) claimed that this money was often used to provide dowries for some of the poorer girls in the village and was also used on one occasion to buy a rubbish truck for the town. In 1976/77, tickets were being sold for fifty *dhrahmas*. Two thousand tickets were sold and so approximately US\$5000.00 was collected over three nights. On top of that, the Ministry of Tourism donated US\$5000.00 and the National Lottery donated \$834.

²⁴As there had been a division in the *Anastenáride* group in Lagadhás, there were two groups performing the ritual in 1995. The other group, whose organisation was assisted by the local Council, performed the firewalk outside in a main street.

²⁵I was also told that this particular musician did not get along with the head of the Folklore Society as they shared opposite political views. I was also told that he had been interested in improving his position in the hierarchy of the group, wanting a more influential role. An *Anastenáris* who claimed that this musician was actually asked to leave because of this reason told me this story.

²⁶This money could have been used towards the mending of older Icons, the purchasing of new ones, furniture or another items for the *Konáki* and perhaps for a trip to Kostí. Danforth (1989) noted that money collected at the festivals was sometimes used to send the *Anastenárides* to Kostí for a holiday and to celebrate Saints Constantine and Helen's day there as it fell on the 6th of June, the old calendar. Danforth (1989) also stated that money was also used to put up *Anastenárides* visiting from other parts of Greece during the festivals.

as no surprise to me as I had heard the *Anastenárides* on several occasions, discussing the performance of the ritual for that year. The pros and cons of both possibilities had been discussed and it seemed quite apparent that those with the most influence in the group had pretty much decided that the firewalk would be held next to the *Konáki*²⁷. As previously mentioned, during the year prior to my arrival in Lagadhás, there had been a disagreement in the *Anastenáride* community. A dispute had erupted between a senior *Anastenáris* and the head of the Folklore Society (over politics according to one informant) and also between several individuals over matters concerning the performance of the ritual and over seniority. I was also told that personal disagreements had evolved all resulting in the group eventually dividing. What emerged was the existence of two practicing *Anastenáride* groups in the town. One group, the one with whom I was involved, built and remained, at the new *Konáki* and had the support of the Folklore Society. The other group based themselves at the home of their new *Pappús*²⁸. As my friends had refused the Mayor's offer, he promptly took it to the other *Anastenáride* group. They accepted. This was a significant moment as the Mayor had up until then, been closely aligned and supportive of the first group and his offering of money to the other group was taken as an insult. None of the *Anastenárides* actually voiced their disapproval to me, but it became quite obvious in conversation and through the comments made by others, that they were most unhappy. As the *Anastenáride* group whom I was with did not sell tickets in the two years that I was present in Lagadhás (1994/5), income generated from the ritual was minimal. In a sense, however, they won in another way. The advertising and 'selling' of the ritual and the involvement of mass tourism and economics had been severely criticised from the start. Criticised, that is, mainly by academics, in particular folklorists, but also by journalists, theologians and other 'purists' who argued that the ritual was losing its meaning in terms

²⁷ Mikháli, in particular, the individual who owned most of the Icons, had made it quite clear that he disliked having the firewalk in the main square. He argued that it was too much of a show, too commercial and it was right to have it next to the *Konáki*. His position is particularly important as being a journalist and folklorist, he was very aware and involved in the discourse of tradition and authenticity.

²⁸ As mentioned earlier, the division separated family members.

of its authenticity. Many blamed this 'destruction of the ritual' on the Folklore Societies, which were largely run by wealthy businessmen. An extract from a Greek newspaper article written in 1984 revealed how many people felt about the changes occurring to the ritual that clearly pointed the blame at the Folklore Societies.

The Folklore Society of Ayia Eleni in Serres...has literally castrated the Anastenaria as it is celebrated there. There are many villages in northern Greece where the Anastenaria comes alive each May 21, but the way this happens is not everywhere the same. On the one hand, the Anastenaria can be performed as a tourist attraction...On the other, it can be performed traditionally and purely. Many people have not even noticed this transformation of a traditional ritual into a tourist spectacle; some people have actually sought it out. The Folklore Society of Ayia Eleni is responsible for such a transformation ... [positioning] the Anastenarides as a manipulated and persecuted group, helpless against the Folklore Society officers who now control the ritual.

Miliadis claimed that the spectator is now forcibly separated from the performance and the ritual itself has died, making way for a show²⁹. This position beautifully exemplifies the struggle between authenticity and popular performance³⁰. An opposition between two sub-fields, the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale production (*ibid.*) constitute the cultural field³¹. The field of restricted cultural production involves "high art" as Bourdieu calls it (*ibid.*), serious and authentically legitimated art. In this field, economic production is not overtly sought after, but rather, the competition is largely symbolic and it is prestige that is sought. The field of large-scale production involves what is referred to as "mass" or "popular culture" and deals in economic capital. In the cultural field, as the "economic world reversed" (Bourdieu 1993) economic capital is viewed as negative whilst symbolic capital is positive (*ibid.*). The field is constituted by

²⁹This was taken from a Greek newspaper article written by D. Miliadis in May 1984, as quoted in Danforth (1989:148-9).

³⁰ That is, the fields of mass production and restricted production (Bourdieu 1993) exist in opposition to each other.

³¹ Whilst Bourdieu's (1993) discussion stemmed from an examination of the French art scene, I argue that the concepts of 'high art', the field of restricted production and the field of large scale production can be applied to the *Anastenaria* as there exists a contestation over being popular and therefore, less valuable.

internal, specific, interests, which Bourdieu terms “the autonomous principle” and external factors, Bourdieu’s “heteronomous principle”, and is structured by the distribution of available positions (*ibid.*:16). It is the struggles between these positions that constitute the dynamics of the field. Those sharing the concern of Miliadis, (folklorists, journalists, etc.) are granted prestige by being legitimated to speak on such matters. This prestige endows them with cultural capital. In an attempt to secure and generate this capital they are at pains to maintain the ritual as a closed cultural event. For them, the mass production of the ritual, the advertising and the tourist interest are all detrimental to the ritual’s worth, as opposed to the local (and also the state and federal) Government, who stand to gain economically (and also symbolically), from the production of and involvement with the ritual. Within these confrontations are the *Anastenárides*, who are also caught between the problematic relationship of having their ritual widely known whilst maintaining the respect of the ritual as an authentic performance. Public attention and appreciation of the ritual is a pleasant change from the persecution by the Church, but through the ‘selling’ of their ritual to tourism, they run the risk of being denied the prestige of authenticity³². None of the *Anastenárides*, with whom I was involved, suggested that the ritual had ‘lost’ its meaning. A few of them, however, appeared aware and at times articulated, the danger of allowing the ritual to become too ‘commercialised’. In May 1995, an article in *Thessaloniki*, a major newspaper in the North of Greece, describing the festival as performed in Ayía Eléni and in Lagadhás, claimed that it was a spectacle (*theáma*) and referred to the sideshows which follow the festival, as ‘small festivals’ (*mikri-paniyiria*).

³²Danforth (1989) claims that many of the *Anastenárides*, particularly women, are empowered by, and therefore enjoy, the prestige and public attention that they receive from their involvement in the ritual. Whilst this may be true to a point, I found that many of the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás were not eager to talk publicly about the ritual, nor to be made a fuss of. One *Anastenárisa* said to me, “This is for the Saint, not for *Antenna 1* (a television station in Thessaloniki)”. In this way she generates symbolic capital for herself by not wanting to receive material rewards or public recognition for her involvement in the ritual.

Such concepts of 'authenticity' and 'tradition' are just that, notions used to distinguish between the ideological significance and the analytical significance. I do not suggest that the *Anastenária* can actually be measured by authenticity. The ritual, whilst undergoing transformation as it has become a tourist attraction, still retains particular meanings for each individual. I do not suggest, as others have, (Danforth 1989) that the ritual unites the community and so has strong themes of identity. Yet it does have significance distinct from its role as a tourist event. As Sallnow (1987) pointed out, there can co-exist official and non-official discourses. Like his pilgrimages, which he sees as a "tangle of contradictions, a cluster of coincident opposites" (Sallnow 1987:9), so too does the *Anastenária* manage to have secular meaning and fill a secular role (a tourist attraction), whilst also providing a variety of more sacred (and other) meanings³³.

The *Anastenária*: a tourist spectacle in the field of large-scale cultural production

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on the cities, the islands and the villages of this Orthodox fatherland, as well as the Holy Monasteries which are scourged by the worldly touristic ware. Grace us with a solution to this dramatic problem and protect our brethren who are sorely tried by the modernistic spirit of these contemporary western invaders (An Orthodox prayer written during the 1970's, taken from Crick 1989:334).

Accounts from field notes:

May 1994

*As I walked from Tom's shop to the **Konáki**, I walked along the back way, passing the sideshows and the rides that were all set up by now. There were four or five show-rides and a host of other prize games, much the same as one finds in Australia, at our fairs and shows, stalls and caravans selling food and drink*

³³ See also Eade's (1991) on his discussion of the pilgrimage site of Lourdes. He acknowledges the transformations which have occurred at Lourdes, noting that "What actually emerges is a continually shifting mix between the older, popular beliefs and behaviours and the newer, more official ones, between what is now classed as 'superstition' and what the authorities deem to be religion 'proper'" (*ibid.*:65). Interestingly, many of the *Anastenárides* played down the actual firewalking, aware of the negative classifications of 'magic' which it encouraged. At the same time however, the tourism industry plays upon the firewalking. It is spoken of and advertised in opposing ways.

as well as tables selling an array of junk. The noise was amazing, all of the rides were playing English and American pop music really loud and many other stalls had Greek music playing. I wondered how we would be able to hear the lyre above all of this noise, considering how close we are to the street. I noticed a number of tourists wandering around looking somewhat lost.

When I got to the **Konáki** I saw Mikháli outside. He asked me if I had been past the show, and what did I think? When I told him I was concerned about the noise, he nodded and said that he hated the sideshows but there was little they could do about it. I noticed several unfamiliar faces when I entered the **Konáki**, as well as a professional photographer from Athens who introduced himself to me on seeing that I was a student [obvious by my bag filled with camera, video, pens and papers and cassette recorder].

By now [5pm] there was a huge crowd gathered inside and around the **Konáki**. Fences had been erected a few hours earlier, at the front of the block, on the edge of the road; about ten metres from the **Konáki** and around the western periphery. It was the first year in a while that the fire-walk was being performed outside of the **Konáki** and everyone seemed a little nervous about how the crowd would be contained. After a half hour or so, it was clear that we needed some assistance in getting the spectators away from the fire area and the **Konáki** as it was impossible to take one step in any direction inside, and outside was beginning to be the same. Someone made a call to the local police and within a few minutes four policemen arrived and began moving people behind the fences. It took them a while and things became heated at times when they tried to remove the grandchildren of one **Anastenáris**. This confusion created discussion between the **Anastenárides** as to whether they had made the right decision in having the fire by the **Konáki**. I was amazed at the crowd, I had not expected so many people³⁴.

After the firewalk I went for a stroll with Sotiris and Mikháli. We crossed through to the next parallel road where the sideshows and stalls were. An enormous number of people had gathered there now, mostly locals but as we made our way through the town, I saw that the restaurants were full of

³⁴It was extremely difficult to gauge exactly how many people there were watching the event as having two ritual performances, meant that people were moving from one to another constantly, creating a flow of bodies and making it hard to estimate the number. I would suggest that at one time, watching Tom's group, there would have been a maximum of approximately 600 people.

tourists. Sotiris and I shared a beer and I returned to the **Konáki** to help prepare the table for the meal.

May 1995

As I walked back to the **Konáki** in the afternoon, I had noticed that signs had been erected along the way, signalling the direction of the **Konáki**. This was not the only surprise though. The signs pointed to the other **Konáki**, not to Tom's [my] group. I was stunned. When I reached the **Konáki**, I noticed that things seemed to be more organised this year, the fences were up already, and two policemen had arrived to see if everything was all right and everyone appeared calmer than this time last year. I rushed up to Panayiotis and Sotiris who were sitting outside and told them about the signs. They didn't know. They told a few of the others who were sitting outside. Pétros made a comment about what money can do and Sotiris laughed. Panayiotis told me later that these signs had probably been erected by the council, or at least been encouraged by them as they were 'supporting' the other group this year. The Mayor's 'turn around' had clearly offended them.

One of the **Anastenáris'** grandsons and I went for a walk to see the signs again, threatening jokingly to turn them around to our direction, and have a peek at whether or not the other group had a large crowd yet. On our journey, we bumped into a group of German tourists who were standing by the sign looking confused. They stopped me and asked me in English if I knew where the **Konáki** was as they had got lost looking for it. I smiled and pointed towards 'our' **Konáki**. As I walked away one man who was obviously aware that there were two **Konákia**, asked me why I had suggested that one, was it better? I told him that they were the people I knew and that he was welcome to attend either. I asked them how they heard about the ritual and they told me that the hotel in which they were staying in Thessaloniki had informed them and had organised a bus that brought tourists from three hotels. One couple had also read about the ritual in a travel book in Germany. As we got closer to the other **Konáki** I saw four large tourist buses parked on the side off the road. We decided to turn back.

During the 1994/5 festival periods, the *Anastenárides* mostly appeared at ease with and used to the enormous amount of attention they were receiving. Only one or two individuals, older *Anastenárides*, appeared uncomfortable and troubled by the crowds

inside the *Konáki*. As the *Anastenáride* community was now divided into two groups, the crowd was consequently spread out. This was particularly noticeable in 1995 when the council supported the other group, and the bulk of the tourists had been directed towards the other performance³⁵.

It was interesting listening to the tourists make comments as they waited for the firewalk to begin. They were all impatient for the 'show' to start and continuously asked at what time would the firewalk begin: would the two performances be on at the same time and so on. Sotiris and I laughed as we watched many of the tourists going from one *Konáki* to the other to see who might light the fire first. One *Anastenáris* joked, "It is like watching a tennis ball, back and forth, back and forth. If they don't stand still they will miss both". Another *Anastenáris* started telling me about the time that they [*the Anastenárides*] turned away a tourist bus (*pullman*) from the old *Konáki*. He said that they refused them entry into the *Konáki* and asked them to park the bus elsewhere. An old Greek man from Athens told me that he attended the festival every year and went to at least two different places, in order to get the 'best' of the ritual. He had been in Kelkíni on Saturday and was telling me how beautiful it was there; quiet, more private and probably the most 'original example' of the *Anastenária*. He had come to Lagadhás this Monday because the people here are so hospitable, (*filoxéni*, lit. 'friends to strangers')³⁶, and also importantly, because in Lagadhás he was permitted to take photos: "I like to have some photos every year. This year I even have a video camera. It is my grandson's, he lent it to me". In Kelkíni, any photography, filming or audiotaping of the ritual is forbidden. This dichotomy constantly came up in conversation. The ritual was valued in terms of its 'authenticity' and the lack of tourist attention but at the same time, the amount of attention received provided another form of capital. This is the confrontational relationship between the field of large-scale production

³⁵ Interestingly, however, by the time that the firewalk began, many tourists had realised that there were two performances and were moving from one to the other.

³⁶ Many people told me that the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás were more hospitable and friendlier than in other places.

and the field of restricted production. This conflict has created divisions between the *Anastenárides* within different villages and also within the same communities. *Anastenárides* from different places and non-*Anastenárides* often made comments regarding the ‘authenticity’ and ‘tourist influence’ of each performance. During my time in Lagadhás there was constant discussion over the presentation of the ritual; whether or not to erect official seating and perform the ritual in the main street, or to keep the ritual more private. Positions taken on this topic were not, as I had expected, determined by age nor solely by the desire for, or enjoyment of, public attention and prestige accorded to otherwise unknown individuals, as Danforth (1989) has suggested³⁷. An older *Anastenárisa* explained to me, “It is a *paniyiri* [celebration], it is a time to celebrate. The more people the better”. Similarly, an *Anastenáris* commented, “People should come and learn about the *Anastenária*. By being involved and listening to the *Anastenárides*, they will come to understand the ritual and have respect for it. That is the way it should be. It is wrong to keep people out and act privately. That is what arouses suspicion and causes misunderstandings”. Mikháli told me once that the newspapers used to devote whole pages to the festival every year and even advertised its performance on a whole page. He explained that less space and attention was directed towards the ritual now, partly because people were used to it and also partially due to him. He explained that in the newspaper he worked for (*Thessaloniki*) he was in charge of that section and did not want to sensationalise the ritual too much. Interestingly, he explained the *Anastenárides* were upset by the decrease in attention and publicity. He said that they often asked him why he didn’t put more about them in the paper. Like Danforth, Mikháli thought that the *Anastenárides* enjoyed the recognition. According to Mikháli, in the years after the ritual was performed publicly, and up until recently when the group started experiencing internal trouble, the former *Pappús* used to invite people from all over the world, (academics, students, media

³⁷ I had originally expected that the younger *Anastenárides* would have been more tolerant of the attention of tourists than the older *Anastenárides*.

people) to witness and document the ritual. Referring to Thétis, Mikháli said, “He, in particular, used to like the publicity. He was happy when foreigners came to see the ritual”.

In 1994, mid-May, some of the *Anastenárides* went to Meliki, to the family home of Mikháli (his parents live there as he and his wife and children live in Thessaloníki) to collect Mikháli’s Icons and take them back to Lagadhás for the festival. Whilst sitting in the Icon room (*Konáki*) in Mikháli’s house they began to discuss the coming festival. Discussion centred on the place of performance. Clearly, Mikháli and one or two of the others thought that it was preferable to perform the firewalk near their *Konáki* (in Lagadhás), arguing that there was plenty of room and having it there prevents the ritual from becoming like too much of a show. It was time, he suggested that they tried to re-simplify the event, not get distracted by all of the fuss that goes with a public performance. Pétros laughed, suggesting, “that is how it has been for a long time, why change it now?” He pointed out that the other groups were all in the same position. Concerns were voiced about controlling the spectators and keeping them away from the fire if the ritual was performed next to the *Konáki*. The space in front of the *Konáki* was not particularly large (an L-shaped area of about 450 sqm) and was surrounded by residential houses on three sides. A small unsurfaced road ran along the fourth side, separating the *Konáki* from more apartments. This meant that the *Konáki* was positioned in a rather private area, out of the view of any passing traffic. No decisions were made formally that day, but it seemed rather clear that Mikháli would have his way.

Mikháli, as a journalist specialising in folklore and culture, was acutely aware of the discourse of authenticity and conscious of the criticisms made about the ritual in Lagadhás. The very first time I spoke to him, he said that it was most important that I come to Lagadhás. He warned me not to listen to the negative things that people say but to come to Lagadhás and see for myself how beautiful the festival (*paniyiri*) was there. On many

occasions he revealed his concern for the increasing tourist attention and the effect it was having on the various *Anastenáride* groups. He shared with me very early on his desire to have the ritual performed near the *Konáki*, claiming that he did not like the ‘show’ aspect of the festival. Similarly, he disliked the sideshows which followed the ritual and complained to me about the loud music accompanying one of the show-rides; “What a shame. Could you hear it [the sideshow’s music] inside the *Konáki*? It is terrible, far too loud, and hard for us because we are so close to them. It drowns out our music; the beautiful sound of the *gháidha* is lost. I don’t like it, I don’t like it all”. In this way, I was encouraged to present the ritual as he thought appropriate. Being aware of the criticisms made against the ritual in Lagadhás, that of it being ‘unauthentic’, Mikháli often attempted to ‘guide’ my understanding and eventual presentation of the festival and the community in Lagadhás.

Interestingly, many of the other *Anastenárides*, particularly those who lived in Lagadhás, did not display the same responses to the sideshows and other ‘modern’ elements surrounding the ritual. Rénos took his grandson out to the rides later in the evening for an ice cream, and a couple of the older men told me to go for a walk and see all the people. When I complained to Tassia about the noise coming from the ‘Round Up’, a show ride just in front of the *Konáki* (separated by an apartment block), she looked at me and smiled, “Are you getting old? You are far too young to be complaining of noise. Go and enjoy it”. The stigma of being involved in such a ‘show’ seemed to concern only those individuals who were involved or affected by the debate over authenticity. That is, for Mikháli, because of his position as a journalist and his involvement with the University. Perhaps also, for Yiórghos and Yiánnis, the musicians, due to their slightly marginal position and their involvement and interest in Thracian history³⁸. Yiórghos explained to me one day: “I

³⁸ Neither of them danced in the *Konáki* or walked in the fire. Neither lived in Lagadhás nor had familial connections with any *Anastenárides*. Both of them were largely involved because of their interest in Thracian history and music, and due to their musical ability.

feel sad for them [the *Anastenárides*] because they do not seem to know what they are doing any more. Such civilisations are dead now. The ritual cannot mean the same thing, it is just a re-enactment now". Most of the other *Anastenárides* in the group, however, seemed unperturbed by the constant dialogue over authenticity. This is not to suggest that they did not enter into this discussion, nor that they were uninterested. On a few occasions I heard Tom, Pétros, the *Pappús* and others, discussing criticisms which had been made about their festival in Lagadhás. They also made comments on other group's ritual performances, referring to stories that they had heard about how many people walked on the fire, who they were, how many tourists they had and so on. The *Pappús* once commented that the ritual in Ayía Eléni was "just a show". These conversations, however, had more to do with the competition existing between the different groups, than a general concern for the detrimental effects of tourism on the ritual.

Unlike Mikháli, most of the *Anastenárides* did not appear troubled or self-conscious of the attention that they received. That is because Mikháli's position as a journalist and his position in the academic field, is affected by his involvement in the *Anastenária*³⁹. Therefore, his position is precarious, jeopardised by his involvement in a ritual that has been criticised as becoming "popular culture". It is in Mikháli's interest that the *Anastenária* remain, or return to its position of "high art", that it is accorded with the prestige of authenticity⁴⁰.

³⁹ Mikháli, as a journalist and an academic, occupies a dominated position within the larger field of power; his status is high in terms of symbolic capital but considerably lower in terms of economic capital (Bourdieu 1993:15).

⁴⁰ See the following Chapter for a detailed discussion on Mikháli's position in various fields, where the Icons are used as capital.

Phoney Folk Culture

It has been argued that tourism is often responsible for the creation of a “phoney folk culture”, in which ‘authentic’ rituals are packaged and sold for tourists (Forster 1958:226). This discourse frequently underpins the field of large-scale production. It is the criticism of those representing ‘high art’, particularly the intellectuals and academics who, like Forster, deal in ‘prestige’, and oppose ‘popular culture,’ that is those endowed with the cultural and symbolic legitimacy to assess the ‘authenticity’ of an object or event. Turner and Ash (1951) go so far as to accuse tourism, a major force in the propagation of large-scale cultural production, of being the enemy of authenticity and cultural identity. Yet, ironically it is the ‘authentic’ and ‘traditional’ that the tourist seeks⁴¹. Whilst the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás are not granted access to political resources in an obvious way through presenting their ritual as ‘authentic culture’, they may be able to generate symbolic capital through their closer association with council or Government members and also economic resources for the performance of their ritual.

For the *Anastenária*, this dispute over ‘true’ and ‘false’ culture has extended to compare the various performances of the ritual in different towns. I was constantly informed by a variety of people, that the celebration in Lagadhás was less ‘authentic’ and ‘more touristy’ in Lagadhás and that Ayía Eléni was more ‘true’. Kelkini’s performance was seen as the most ‘authentic’ because of its closed nature where the sideshows were not permitted and photographs and videos are not allowed. The discourse of authenticity has become the way by which people discuss and judge the ritual. No longer the language of folklorists, the

⁴¹ MacCannell (1976) in fact, describes the tourist as a type of pilgrim, searching for ‘authenticity’. It is this ‘authenticity’ which is being sought is in fact being marketed as attainable, and as being found in rituals such as the *Anastenária*. As Urry (1990) argues, tourists of our ‘post-modern’ world are after ‘culture and nature’ and are no longer satisfied with the previous ‘sun and sand image’. Smith (1989) interestingly argues that this ‘packaged authenticity’ can be beneficial to the hosts, not only financially, but in some circumstances, also politically: “In many cases, being culturally authentic provides access to important political resources” (Smith 1989:183).

tourist industry has helped to spread and legitimate notions of authenticity, as if they were readable, tangible things.

The Tourist: friend or foe?

Valene Smith (1989:1) defines a tourist as “a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change”. The past fifty years (post-World War Two) have witnessed an increase in leisure time due to socio-economic transformations experienced by some of the more developed Western societies (Pi-Sunyer 1989). There have also been changes to shorter working weeks, extension of annual holiday leave, early retirement and increased longevity. Those factors, along with the decline in the practise of ‘saving’, the increase in credit purchases and increased consumerism (‘mass consumption’) as well as what Smith (1989) describes as the more common attitude of ‘living for now’, have seen an increase in the number of ‘tourists’ (*ibid.*). The study of tourism in the discipline of anthropology has developed significantly over the past few decades and much has been written on the impact, both negative and positive, of tourism on host countries⁴². Studies have also been undertaken on the motivations of different tourists and on the different categories of tourism (e.g. ‘ethnic’ tourism, ‘cultural’ tourism, ‘recreational’ tourism, etc.)⁴³. The relationship of tourist and host and the impact this has on the construction of identity, both local and global (see Pi-Sunyer 1973, 1979; Nash 1981; Graburn 1983a; Boissevain 1984; Cowan 1986a, 1988b; Kenna 1993, 1992) have also been addressed. All of the studies, however, agree on one point: tourism, by the late 1980’s, ceased to be an oddity and became big-business, developed by economic stimulus and is having an impact on cultures all over the world⁴⁴.

⁴²See Boissevain (1992) on tourism’s role in the revitalisation of local rituals and traditions. See also Crick (1985, 1989); Cowan (1986a, 1988b); Kenna (1992b, 1992c, 1993).

⁴³See Smith (1989).

⁴⁴Erik Cohen (1972:166) speaks of an “environmental bubble” which protects tourists from any experience of “cultural otherness”. Nelson Graburn (1989) also refers to the “tourist bubble” of mass tourism. Valene Smith (1989:9) similarly refers to the “tourist bubble” but argues that many tourists actually consciously want to “forsake the bubble and seek opportunities to meet and become acquainted with local people”.

Preconceptions, personal histories and individuals' habitus, must surely effect the way in which tourists think about the place to which they are going. Similarly, it must effect the relationship between the 'host' and 'guest'⁴⁵. Volkman (1990:102) argues that there exists a "tension between tourists' dependence on a constructed object and their desire for something like 'authentic' or unmediated experience". Volkman claims that all types of tourists or travellers "seek disruption, in the forms of rituals, of the maps their guides provide" and it is the experience of being there, the "bursting of the bubble" which really counts (*ibid.*). Cohen (1972) separates tourists into four different categories; the *organised mass tourist*, who resembles the Kontiki tour person, the *individual mass tourist*, who follows a similarly institutionalised holiday style, but does so individually, and two *non-institutionalised* types; the *explorer*, who seeks out different experiences than those publicly advertised, and the *drifter*, who usually stays away for longer and has no specific plan or itinerary. Similarly, Smith (1989:12) refers to seven different types of tourists; the *explorer*, the *elite*, the *off-beat*, the *unusual*, the *incipient mass*, the *mass*, and the *charter*. I would argue that while these categories may seem useful and even accurate, there is the danger of generalising tourists just as there is the danger of categorising through generalisations; identities of communities of people (religious identities etc). These categories are made up of people with varying life histories, varying ways of viewing the world. This must be kept in mind when referring to categories such as those developed by Cohen and Smith. Because with set tours, many of the destinations and what the tourists are shown and told is quite institutionalised and therefore formal and restricted, tourists who travel on set, organised tours are likely to be exposed to the same things and fed the same information. They will interpret that information and internalise their experiences quite differently, however.

⁴⁵ I use these terms with caution, not in the sense which they are used in Greece. Tourists are not viewed as guests, but as foreigners, (*xéni*) and as tourists, (*turistes*).

The spectators of the *Anastenária* in Lagadhás in 1994/5 consisted of people from Lagadhás, Thessaloníki, and other parts of Greece and from other parts of Europe. There were those who were holidaying in Greece and had included the *Anastenária* in their itinerary. Most of these tourists with whom I spoke informed me that they had learnt of the ritual from their hotels, or from tourist brochures. Other spectators included students and academics of anthropology, music, history and so on. There were some Dutch people who were involved in New Age healing and who held firewalking workshops in Holland. There were others who had heard of the ritual and had come out of interest. However, the majority of the non-Greek tourists were present at the *Anastenária* as a consequence of their holiday in Greece: they had not come to Greece specifically for the *Anastenária*. The majority of non-Greek spectators whom I saw in Lagadhás were German. There were also a few Dutch and English tourists as well. Most of them were middle-aged although there were a small number of young couples. The overwhelming majority had arrived by bus from Thessaloníki, as there was little extra traffic in the streets. The hotels were not booked out, confirming that a great number of them were returning by bus to their hotels in Thessaloníki later that night⁴⁶. Most of the Greek 'spectators' were from Lagadhás or Thessaloníki and were there (if not to document the ritual) because of links with the *Anastenárides*, either through family or friends. Those Greeks who had come from further away were there for a variety of reasons. Some had come to the festival because of a particular affiliation with Saint Constantine, to make an offering to the Saint (*táma*), to see the Icons or due to an interest in the ritual⁴⁷. The few hours between arriving in Lagadhás and the commencement of the ritual performance, tourists walked around aimlessly, not at all sure that they were in the right place, and even more confused by the fact that there were two places holding the

⁴⁶Many of the restaurants were busy later after the performance was over, clearly indicating that there were some spectators remaining over night in Lagadhás.

⁴⁷It was quite common in Greece for individuals and groups to make 'pilgrimages' to particular holy places. In this case it was not unusual for Orthodox Christians to visit the *Anastenária* to make an offering (*táma*) to the Saint or to ask a special favour. The coins, jewellery and *asimiká* (silver plaques given as offerings) hanging on the Icons of the *Anastenárides* are proof that many people have come to make an offering to the Saints. Danforth (1978) suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between *táma* (offering) and *kháris* (grace).

firewalk that year, within the same town. Those laden with cameras and videos (some also with tape recorders and notebooks, like myself) seemed more confident in the space, walking in and out of the *Konáki*, asking questions in their own tongue and seemingly unaware, or at least disrespectful, of the sanctity of the Icons' place. Many of the other foreign visitors seemed unsure, not knowing whether or not they were allowed inside the *Konáki* and desperately wanting to be instructed as to where they should be. I overheard some middle-aged English tourists saying to each other that if they had known that the fire was not going to start until so late, they would have stayed at the hotel in Thessaloníki for longer. One German couple, on seeing me go into the kitchen to get a glass of water (actually for an *Anastenárisa* who was dancing), followed me in and started to help themselves to a drink. An *Anastenárisa* who saw them in the kitchen asked me to tell them to leave. I explained that this was a private area and that they were welcome to look at the Icons but that was all. The *Anastenárisa* said to me afterwards, "Would you walk into a stranger's house and help yourself to their fridge? Amazing!"

The tourists in Lagadhás remained fairly marginal from the performance of the ritual and the performers. Whilst they were allowed to enter the *Konáki*, (at least until the area became too crowded when they were then all ushered out), they were placed behind an erected fence at the edge of the yard during the firewalk. Unlike other public celebrations that are performed in the streets or other public places of the town (like the carnivals in Pátras and Skíros), there is no spectator participation in a physical sense. The odd individual, like myself as ethnographer, remained on the *inside* during performances. In this way we were at least less physically separated. When the time came to move the crowd behind the fences (when it was becoming too crowded or the fire was about to be lit) there were always disagreements. One Dutch man, a folklorist and a photographer, so he informed me later, became quite upset when asked to move behind the fence; "I have been here before. I come often to this ritual. How can I take photographs behind all of those

people? I am not moving". After some discussion with the police and the head of the Folklore Society, he remained *inside*. He asked me later, on realising that I was also a foreigner (*xéni*), whether or not the fence was a good idea, didn't I think it spoilt the feeling? I tried to explain that it was dangerous to have so many people crowded around the fire, and it would have been difficult for the *Anastenárides* to move around. He was clearly unconvinced and far more interested in his photographs. Similarly, in May 1995, one photographer complained that the lighting was bad, and asked if the light inside could be switched off. Pétros laughed and asked him if there was anything else he would like? Apart from those who 'have a job to do', and necessarily come into contact with the *Anastenárides* and their space, most of the tourists remained clearly separate from the *Anastenárides* and their ritual. Likewise, the *Anastenárides* only spoke to a spectator to ask them to move out of the way, to refrain from smoking where they should not (one young woman brought a lit cigarette into the *Konáki*) or to sometimes answer questions (many spectators wanted to know when the firewalk would begin or where the other *Konáki* was). I noticed Dhimitris, the Head of the Thracian Folklore Society in Lagadhás, speak with spectators more. On one occasion, he was explaining the history of the ritual and the meaning of the Icons to a small group of German tourists, one of whom spoke Greek.

Amongst the spectators at Lagadhás (and also the performers) existed a collection of meanings and positions. Bowman (1991:120) wrote of pilgrimages; "Pilgrimages are journeys to the sacred, but the sacred is not something which stands beyond the domain of the cultural; it is imagined, defined, and articulated within cultural practice". In the same way, those who come to see the *Anastenária* have not left their culture at home as it were. They are there for a variety of reasons (perhaps even more so than pilgrimages, as it is a

performance that is also watched by some spectators who do not share in the sacred meaning of the ritual) and their motivations and responses are culturally defined⁴⁸.

The Public and the Private and the Negotiation of Identity

Regardless of what the motives of the tourists who come to see the *Anastenária* are, there is no dispute that they are outsiders penetrating the boundaries of the locals everyday, private lives. Or are they? If the *Anastenária* is advertised and marketed and the *Anastenárides* are yet to prohibit the presence of outsiders and spectators, then how can the tourists be blamed for infringing upon the lives of the locals? Interestingly, Boissevain (1994) notes that with the increase in the marketing of cultural tourism, “host populations are closing certain attractions to tourists or celebrating when tourists are absent” (Boissevain 1994:51)⁴⁹. He cites examples of tourists invading host populations’ privacy and predicts growing antagonism and friction with the growing market of cultural tourism. Regardless of who is to blame and what will eventuate, there is no arguing that the presence of tourists has an enormous effect on the *Anastenária* and the way in which it is coming to be thought of, both by the tourists, the general Greek population and the *Anastenárides* themselves. It is not so much the behaviour of the tourists watching the performance of the ritual which transforms the event, but the fact that their presence alone (just like the presence of the non-*Anastenáride* Greeks when the ritual was first performed in public after the Balkan wars), makes the ritual *public* and, therefore, open to being organised from *outside*. By providing an outsider audience, the ritual is then also going to be reviewed through a discourse of consumption, (*i.e.* in the case of tourism, through authenticity) and this causes the *Anastenárides* to reflect on their ritual in quite a different way. Similarly, the advertising of the ritual and the documentation of the ritual force them

⁴⁸ There is also the possibility of tourists behaving in a way that is consciously and deliberately different to their normal everyday behaviour. This however, does not mean that they are freed of their habitus and so their ways of viewing and perceiving things remain beyond their consciousness.

⁴⁹See also Boissevain (1991); Crain (1992); Poppi (1992).

to view the public presentation of what is to them also private. That is, the meaning of the ritual, its significance to the *Anastenárides*, lies not only in their private experiences but also in those social processes that are involved in its construction (Rimoldi 1997:104). I am not supporting the distinction between public and private, but rather, am suggesting that there is no longer a clear line between them⁵⁰. As self and identity are mutually formed, so too are the public and private lives of people mutually dependent. In this way, the *Anastenárides* 'private' understanding and experience of their ritual is affected by the 'public'.

Anthony Cohen (1994:166) argues that people in resistance fight for identities and that ritual provides a way for people to "reclaim their space": they are "performative gestures" where individuals are able to take back personal agency. With a somewhat different emphasis, Handelman (1990:3) describes public events as "occasions that people undertake in concert to make more, less, or other of themselves, than they usually do". Both of these positions make a severe distinction between the public and the private and presume, therefore, a type of Cartesian dualism of the private self and the public identity. Whilst I am not disclaiming the self as private and identity as public, as the two are mutually formed, I argue against the severing of the two as this necessarily presumes that the public does not invade the private. Rimoldi (1997) claims that through making public our private lives, our private lives are thus put in a vulnerable position, able to be controlled. She states, "It seems clear that increasingly, public events are less and less an expression of culture 'from below' and more and more are symbolic representations of the social relations or organisation and promotion" (Rimoldi 1997:111). If culture is becoming more and more a marketable, consumable item, which I argue it is, (see Bernstein 1991; Costa

⁵⁰My position differs somewhat from the conception that the ritual has entered into the public domain as my intention is to deny such public/private dualism. Volkman (1990:101), in discussing the process of tourism in the Toraja of Sulawesi in Indonesia, argues that the Tau tau (effigies) "have entered the domain of public culture, an arena, ...of contested meanings and debates". While I do not deny that the *Anastenária* is like "an arena of contested meanings and debates", I do not see this as an inside/outside, public/private issue.

and Bamossy 1995; Rimoldi 1997) then it becomes logically impossible for people to possess 'a culture'; rather they are consuming 'a culture'. The more cause culture becomes a product of consumption, the more the private life becomes public, and, thus, the more fragile the private becomes: "In whatever way individuals may experience events, or public space, administrative opportunism and marketing can powerfully affect their nature" (Rimoldi 1997:118). Rimoldi argues that "Profit, ideology, and social engineering in capitalist societies commodify even the most intimate and personal aspects of human life" (*ibid.*:103). I am not suggesting that the *Anastenária* has lost its meaning for the participants, only that its meaning can perhaps no longer be understood through its public performance. For the *Anastenária*, because it has become a tourist attraction and a *cultural product*, it is no longer just a celebration by the *Anastenárides*, of their Saints, Constantine and Helen. Its significance is much greater and varies for each performer and each spectator.

Tourists as 'Others' : dividing and uniting

It has also been argued that tourism effects the negotiation of identities as it provides yet more categories of *Others* (Boissevain 1994). Along with the influx of Pontian Greeks in Lagadhás and the lesser presence of Albanians and Serbians, tourists, collectively and individually, present the *Anastenárides* (and the wider community) with more *Others* with which to compare themselves. If, as I have argued in Chapter Five, identity is largely produced in opposition, then with more *Others* from whom to be distinguished, will we not, as Boissevain implies, witness an increase in 'local identities' and 'community identity'? Boissevain (1994) maintains that with the opening up of Europe this situation can only intensify. He acknowledges the fact that the 'revivals' of rural celebrations in Europe almost always were accompanied by a preoccupation with tradition and authenticity⁵¹, and that they also marked a "renegotiation of identity and a related realignment of boundaries"

⁵¹See also Poppi (1992).

(Boissevain 1994:8)⁵². While tourism increases the competition over 'tradition' and 'authenticity', and 'nostalgia' is commodified, Boissevain (1994:52) argues that tourism also has an effect on the creation or reaffirmation of boundaries. These boundaries may create solidarities but in doing so may divide previous ones. Boissevain (1992:149) argues that these types of rural rituals are vital in the reinforcement and negotiation of identity, particularly community and group identity; [they] "structure and project group identity". Referring to Turner's (1974a, 1974b, 1978) notion of *communitas*, Boissevain argues that during ritual performance, *communitas* brings the group/community together and so reinforces identity⁵³. Identity is produced, negotiated, and reproduced in opposition to others; with group identities, individuals may be united or divided, depending on the shared or different sets of classificatory distinctions which are generated by practice in the interaction between the habitus and a particular field setting. Because tourism introduces not only additional *Others*, but also, therefore, new relationships as well as conditions which introduce new fields of struggle, new alignments and divisions are possible. That is, people in fact may not be united and group solidarity may not occur. Rather, communities may be divided as occurred in Lagadhás⁵⁴.

This is evident in the major divisions that have occurred in the *Anastenáriide* community in Lagadhás. Arguments erupted over the performance and place of performance of the ritual and over the process of decision making. The community initially split away from the original *Pappús' Konáki* and then eventually the group divided again, leaving two active

⁵²See also Poppi (1992) who refers to Barth's notion of boundary maintenance.

⁵³Boissevain (1994) does argue later that the performance of the 'authentic' history of Europe is more likely to divide than unite communities as the "past of most European communities was characterised by class conflict, exploitation, violence and factionalism" (*ibid.*:52).

⁵⁴Sallnow (1991) points out that many applications of Turner's notion of *communitas* in pilgrimage studies were in fact unsuccessful as the ethnographers found that anti-structure did not exist in those instances. The theory failed to account for the far more complicated nature of pilgrimage sites and experiences. For a critique on Turner's theory of *communitas*, see Werbner (1977); Morinis (1984); Sallnow (1987). I would argue that there does not occur a division between communities and their *Others*. The commodification of the *Anastenária* and the consequent competitions regarding money and power, have meant that individuals have been set apart, rather than brought together.

Anastenáride groups and individual *Anastenárides* who would not align themselves either way. The divisions split friends and family members.

If, as I have argued, the production of identities occurs through differentiation and opposition, then identities are not only produced by individuals for themselves (and also by the self, as externalised), but also constructed for the individual by others, and vice versa. These *Others* are not a unified group posited against the 'host' population, which is also not a united whole. The *Anastenária*, as a cultural product is also involved in the manufacture of Greek culture, crucial to the country's primary industry, tourism. Hence, the ritual is involved in the wider field of cultural production, and inevitably, in the wider economic and political field. Poppi (1992:116), (following Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) and Handler and Segal (1993), argues that "folk practices" became central to the "creation of nationalist ideologies". Boissevain (1992) asserts that these rituals became "national assets" and the interest in the rituals shown by tourists helped to legitimate them, (in his case, in the eyes of the "Anglicised urban elite"). As the Greek Government with the assistance of the folkloric discipline, attempted to construct a national identity for modern Greece (see Chapter Five), so do people construct identities, collective and individual, for each other every day. Thus, as the tourists construct identities for the *Anastenárides*, (or rather accept the *Anastenáride* identity constructed for them in the tourist brochure or newspaper clipping, textbook, etc.) so do the *Anastenárides*, construct identities for the tourists. Just as the hosts are characterised and constructed, so too are the tourists⁵⁵.

The *Anastenárides* with whom I spent my time, spoke of tourists in varying ways. They all seemed to hold no grudge against their presence, but many shared a common cynicism with regards to their intentions. Tourists were often spoken of in terms of their national

⁵⁵See also Pi-Sunyer (1989) who noticed during his fieldwork in Catalonia, that with mass tourism, the categorisation of 'stranger vs. local' became the main way of informing social relations between residents and tourists. He noticed the construction of generalised national identities, although over time, witnessed a decline in the strict stereotypes.

identities; “the Germans do this..” and the “English are like that..”, but it was the *Anastenárides* themselves who actually had the least to say and the least criticisms regarding foreigners. One *Anastenárisa* actually explained, “It is sort of an honour that people come all of this way to see the *paniyíri*”. Miháli told me that it was normal for people to want to see the *Anastenária*, “It is not something that you see every day. It is something which people naturally find amazing and their curiosity brings them here”. One *Anastenárisa* explained to me, “It is good that people want to see the Icons. They should be shared with everyone. But many of the people who come here don't even know how important they are. They walk in and out of the *Konáki*, not even knowing the reason why we are here”. Those spectators who come most years have developed friendships with the *Anastenárides*. They always spoke to the *Anastenárides*, were invited to have coffee and always enjoyed telling me about the ritual performance in the other towns and villages. One man who had come from Athens explained to me that “Foreign tourists (*xéni*) come to see the fire. Greeks come to see the Icons and then the fire”. Whether or not this is true, there is no denying the fact that Greek spectators on the whole have a greater understanding of parts of the ritual's sacred significance than most foreigners do. They share similar knowledge with the *Anastenárides*, Orthodox Christianity, and therefore a shared respect and understanding of the Icons and because of this, they may share a similar understanding, interpretation and appreciation of the ritual.

Exchange and Value: the *Anastenária* as a commodity

The public performance of the *Anastenária* is one of a number of attractions advertised to the tourist market. Being part of the package sold to tourists, the ritual is another moneymaker. It indirectly brings income to the wider economy in its role as a tourist attraction and more locally, brings money into Lagadhás through tourists spending on accommodation, food and transport. If the ritual performance is symbolic labour that generates symbolic capital (which may be able to be converted into economic capital), then

perhaps the ritual can be thought of in terms of a commodity⁵⁶. Is it perhaps, an exchange of entertainment as a display of an 'authentic Greek culture', for money? The problem with this argument however, is whether or not culture can be viewed as a commodity, as a type of 'natural resource'? (Greenwood 1989) in the same way that artefacts are sold as 'pieces of culture'. Can one argue that local rituals such as the *Anastenária*, are also a type of 'natural resource' able to be sold for money? There is no doubt that tourists bring money into the country and pay along the way to see the ritual. As tickets are not currently being sold to view the festival, money is not generated in that way, but, rather, through spectators paying for accommodation, food, transport and so forth. They are transferring economic capital for a product and perhaps in this way the ritual can be seen to be commodified explain commodifies Spooner (1986) refers to 'authentic commodification' and 'tourist art', (see also Graburn 1976) in his discussion of the way in which 'cultural displays' are transformed into commodities. Demand for cultural commodities is largely controlled by Governments and tourist agencies who through advertising, 'create' a demand. Demand is then socially regulated (Bourdieu 1984; Appadurai 1986). Putting it another way, in the cultural market, as in other markets, supply and demand are created, as Bourdieu (1993) argues, by the orchestration of the logics of the fields of production and consumption; a need must be created and then the need filled. A well organised, reciprocal relationship between the production and consumption of a good (and therefore supply and demand) is required. Rossi-Landi argues,

A commodity does not go into the market by itself; it needs somebody to sell it; and it is not sold until somebody buys it, that is, accepts it in exchange for money (or for other commodities in the case of barter). A product does not transform itself into a commodity like a caterpillar into a butterfly; it undergoes such a

⁵⁶ I argue in the following Chapter that through being involved in both the performance and the organisation of the ritual, individuals engage in symbolic labour; that is, labour not recognised as such (Bourdieu 1990). During symbolic labour, symbolic capital is generated; i.e. capital not recognised as capital (in the economic sense) which may be converted and utilised in alternative fields. This involves not only the *Anastenárides*, but also the musicians, the local council members and the members of the Folklore Society, the men who film the festivals and so on.

transformation because there are men who put it into significant relations. And when a commodity is used to satisfy a need, this means that its character as a commodity is, so to say, dropped, forgotten (Rossi-Landi 1973:626).

Acknowledging that this demand for displays of 'authentic' culture has been created, then the popularity of festivals such as the *Anastenária* is understandable. If holidays in Greece which include a visit to the islands and a few days in Athens seeing the archaeological sites are not enough any more, or are seen as passé, then one has to question how and why this shift has occurred. The islands are still popular and the archaeological sites full, but a 'rural' picture of Greece, along with intimate cultural displays has become increasingly popular⁵⁷. The question, is why? Greenwood (1989:179) remarks how for the tourist with money, the tourism industry offers the world to them; "All the natural resources, including cultural traditions, have their price, and if you have the money in hand, it is your right to see whatever you wish". He argues,

Thus tourist cultural performances provide an opportunity for a limited self-criticism of middle-class culture, a kind of pseudo-tragedy in which the affluence that makes touring possible is the very cause of the loss of cultural authenticity. At the same time, the ability to command cultural performances shows that one may be able to have it all without renouncing a comfortable middle-class life-style for the other fifty weeks of the year (Greenwood 1989:184).

It has also been acknowledged that cultural displays may have the ability to politicise a particular group or community as the display and recognition of a cultural life may help to reinforce their ethnic identity, often a pre-requisite for gaining political rights⁵⁸. In a

⁵⁷Greenwood (1989:172) refers to the 'local colour' which is part of tourism merchandising. "Worldwide we are seeing the transformation of cultures into 'local culture', making people's cultures extensions of the modern mass media". See also Carpenter (1972, 1973).

⁵⁸ See Clifford (1988) with his work on the Mashpee Trial in North America. He revealed how the proof of cultural continuity and obvious cultural display legitimates the claim to indigenous rights and claims. In this case, to land claims. See also Greenwood (1989). As mentioned earlier, the *Anastenárides* do not benefit in such a direct way but through good relations with local Government, may be economically rewarded and may also be able to 'use' their relations with the local and state Government officials in other contexts which may be to their benefit.

similar way, they may be used to construct or revitalise a national identity by creating a national culture, often characterised by a notion of continuity. In the same way, they can also divide and disunite communities. With respect to the *Anastenárides* in Lagadhás, I would argue against the claim that tourism is directly responsible for the divisions which have occurred in the group. Rather, divisions developed due to personal disagreements and problems. However, tourism and the discourse which accompanies 'cultural tourism', that of 'authenticity' and 'tradition', have become involved in the contestation as disagreements and the continuing comparison between the groups (made by outsiders and the groups themselves) are expressed within the context and realities of a ritual which is a tourist attraction. Importantly, however, it is also a moneymaking enterprise. Tourism filters money down to many levels, nationally and locally, the host country benefits economically. Employment is generated by the demand for tourism agencies, guides and interpreters, and for the increasing need for services such as hotels and restaurants⁵⁹.

Conclusion

The *Anastenária* has been transformed from a small rural religious festival to a major tourist spectacle and with this transformation has developed an entirely new discourse, one which is articulated by the media, folklorists and other academics keen on documenting the ritual. Now drawn as an example of Greek cultural history, the ritual is either criticised or acclaimed for being more 'authentic' or 'too touristy'. How much this transformation is linked, even indirectly, to the focusing gaze of tourism (Volkman 1990) is arguable. Icons are no longer only the sacred representations of the Saints, but are also powerful commodities in their own right, used to symbolise 'authenticity' and to attract the respect of the spectators. Contradictions are made natural; having the larger crowd is important, but

⁵⁹See Pi-Sunyer (1989:188-190) who notes that tourism has come to be the leading Spanish industry, so successful that "it is responsible for two-thirds (twelve thousand million dollars) of the country's positive balance of payments" (*ibid.*:189. Pi-Sunyer references Vidal-Folch 1987:16).

so is having the more 'traditional' performance. In the same way that the fields of restricted production and large-scale production precariously co-exist, so too will the contradictions.

A great deal of the residents of Lagadhás come to the festival after already celebrating in the Church, to pay their respects to the Icons and to watch the *Anastenárides* walk on the coals. Students of anthropology, history, folklore, music, psychology, science and medicine, come to watch and talk with the *Anastenárides*. Television and newspaper reporters are there. Foreign tourists incorporate the festival into their holiday, as they would a corroboree in Australia, or the Carnival in Italy. They come in bus loads, organised by hotels and tour companies, moving from one *Anastenáride* group to another, looking for the one with the largest crowd, for the best display of 'authentic' Greek rural life. They too, engage in the contradiction.

The following Chapter refers to the different forms of capital that the *Anastenárides* become endowed with and compete for. I specifically examine the Icons, which carry symbolic capital, efficacious in particular fields of struggle. I argue that some forms of capital can be used in different fields, converted into alternative forms of capital.

Developing my argument that the ritual performance is symbolic labour, I examine how capital is generated through participation and involvement in the ritual. I continue my discussion of the conversion and generation of capital, arguing that it is within the ritual itself, as symbolic labour, that capital can be both generated and converted.

Appropriating Social Energy: the Generation, Accumulation and Conversion of Capital

Introduction

This Chapter examines the dynamics of the different fields in which the *Anastenárides* are involved and explores the different forms of capital that the *Anastenárides* employ within them. Following on from the discussion in the previous Chapter regarding the commodification of the ritual and the influence of mass tourism, I now look more specifically at the mechanisms employed in social relations, particularly those involving the commodification of the *Anastenária*. In this Chapter, I consider how different forms of capital are generated within and outside of the performance of the *Anastenária* and how they are transferred, converted and manipulated, within different fields. I specifically examine the field of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993) and those active within it, (performers, spectators, local and federal government, academics, tourist agencies and so on). I show that there exists a struggle between, on the one hand, trying to maintain the ritual as a ‘cultural event’, unaffected by tourism and removed from the desire to generate economic capital and, on the other hand, the commodification of the ritual, where the tourist industry and others seeking economic gratification, aim to incorporate the ritual into popular culture.

I continue the discussion by looking closely at the various types of capital used by the *Anastenárides* and others involved in the ritual and at how these types of capital are generated. I examine the conversion of some of these forms of capital, arguing that some can be converted into other types, which can then be used in alternate fields. Looking specifically at the Icons used in the ritual, I argue that the Icons are endowed with various types of capital in different fields and provide those who own Icons and who are associated with them, the possibility of entry to and position within, these different fields.

The Chapter concludes with an examination of the ritual itself as a site where capital is generated and transferred. Presenting the ritual as a form of symbolic labour (Bourdieu 1990), I analyse how through participation in and involvement with the ritual, symbolic capital can be generated. Different fields of struggle cross over into the ritual performance and preparation, as ritual participants become enmeshed in these struggles. Thus, the ritual is also witness to the transference and conversion of particular types of capital.

The Generation of Capital

There are an enormous number of people who have an interest in the performance of the *Anastenária*. These interests however, are varied. There are those whose interests lie, in different degrees, with the preservation and exhibition of 'traditional Greek rituals', while others encourage and enjoy the benefits of the presentation of the ritual as a tourist attraction. These two positions are in opposition. For those whose desire it is to present 'Greek culture', the generation of economic capital is offensive and destructive to maintaining the ritual as 'authentic'. For those who are interested in gaining a wider audience and incorporating the ritual into the tourist industry, however, economic capital is deliberately sought after.

Folklorists, academics of other disciplines and those individuals and institutions interested in the preservation of 'Greek culture' oppose the intervention of tourism in the ritual performance. As I argued in the previous Chapter, the discourses of 'authenticity' and 'tradition' have dominated the articulation of their position. This 'authenticity' and 'tradition' is measured in the degree of change within the ritual, most particularly in the level of tourist interest and the degree of reciprocal provisions for tourists; bus services, seating, advertising and so on. Consequently, the ritual performance in Kelkíni, where the taking of photographs, sideshows and stalls are forbidden, and outside interest is generally discouraged, is considered as the most 'authentic' and 'traditional'. In comparison, the ritual performances in Lagadhás and in Ayía Eléni are criticised for having become too commercial. As noted in the previous Chapter, some of the *Anastenárides* were also engaged in this type of discourse. This double-edged sword, tourism,

was at the centre of much of the discussion over ritual performances. When I arrived in Greece to begin my fieldwork, I was presented with a run down from various individuals, some academics, on which place would be the best for my study. The choice favoured those villages which were more private and which discouraged the interference of outsiders. The more popular performances, such as those in Lagadhás, were often dismissed as ‘commercialised’ and ‘unauthentic’.

As Bourdieu (1993:7) states, the field of cultural production is like the “economic world reversed”: the accumulation of economic capital from the performance of the ritual is seen as negative. Within this field, however, there co-exist two sub-fields with two separate logics; that of large scale production and of restricted production. For those engaged in the preservation of the ritual (restricted production) generating economic profit from the ritual is in opposition to their position. Making money from the ritual denies them the prestige of either performing or being involved in a ‘serious’ ritual. For the tourist agencies, the Government and local business, the generation of economic profit from the performance of the *Anastenária* is more appealing and to some degree, sought after. These two positions lie in opposition to each other, constituting the dynamics of the field of cultural production. As the number of tourists coming to see the ritual has increased, so has the discourse of ‘authenticity’. The ritual performers are becoming increasingly aware of the consequences of tourist interest in their ritual’s reputation. In Lagadhás they have actually made changes to the way in which the ritual is performed. For example, in 1994 and 1995, the firewalking ritual was performed next to the *Konáki* instead of in a public place.

Similarly, as critical comparison between the ritual performances has intensified, with the ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’ of the performances being more fiercely judged, there has been an obvious shift in attitudes towards the selling of tickets and other tourist inspired additions to the ritual. In the year that I arrived in Lagadhás the debate over the style of the performance dominated all discussions. Mikháli, in particular, in a dominant position within the field of cultural production, knew of the consequences of ‘staging’ the ritual performance. Directly

involved in the discourse of 'authenticity', as a folklore expert, he was acutely aware of how the ritual was judged. As detailed in Chapter Six, it had become clear that the reputation of the ritual performance in the town as an authentic ritual as opposed to a tourist spectacle, was largely measured by the addition or absence of 'extras'; seating, lighting, tickets. Whilst not all of the *Anastenárides* were troubled by the inclusion of these 'extras' — some even supported them — it was decided that the ritual would be performed as it 'used to be', without all of the paraphernalia. This decision was made, without strong opposition, by those who wielded the most power in the group who were also the ones well positioned within the field of cultural production and therefore aware of the advantages of a less public performance. For the same reasons, I presume, the *Anastenárides* with whom I was involved declined the Mayor's generous offer in May 1995.

In much the same way, receiving money for performing ritual duties is seen as problematic. At the end of the festivals the musicians were always publicly presented with a small amount of money depending on the total amount of money which had been collected over the course of the ritual¹. On every one of these occasions at which I was present, the musicians always immediately offered a part of what was given to them, back to the *Anastenárides*. One of the musicians explained, "I give most of the money back. I do not come here to get paid, it is not a job". By keeping all of the money offered, or by treating their services as a form of paid employment, the musicians' credibility within the community would be damaged. By gaining economic profit from the ritual performance, the musicians would consequently be sacrificing their position within the cultural field. Both musicians made it clear that they had a great interest in Thracian music and in the cultural aspect of the performance. Their association with and involvement in the ritual improved their position within the field of cultural production and their conscious neglect of economic interest meant that their position was not jeopardised. Importantly, by jeopardising one's position within the field of cultural production by accepting cash payments for your contributions, may also jeopardise one's position in other fields which

¹This money which is collected during the festivals from offerings made to the Icons and from people purchasing candles, is used for expenses of the performance of the ritual, for the maintenance of the *Konáki*, maintenance of the Icons, for food and so on.

are directly associated with economic profit in more indirect ways. For this reason, risking one's position in the field of cultural production may have far more significant ramifications for an individual. This is why the concepts of 'tradition' and 'authenticity' (that of being linked to the past) are seen as more important and more valuable than economic profit in the context of the performance of the *Anastenária*.

The year that I arrived in Lagadhás, there had been a dispute with one musician over issues of money. Apparently he had demanded more payment. As a consequence of this and other disagreements, he no longer played for Tom's group. Although he became involved with the other group in the town, playing at their festivals, his demands became widely known and his credibility as part of the community had been severely damaged. Another musician explained: "He was greedy. Because he is the best lyre player he thought he could ask for more money, but it is not about that here. The festivals are not about money". I had also been told that he used to play for the *Anastenárides* in Ayía Eléni but he separated from them after they turned down his demands for increased power within the group.

Contested Icons: disputed authenticity and the competition for symbolic capital

As explained earlier, about five years ago there was a split in the *Anastenáride* community in Lagadhás. Due to arguments between one of the previous *Pappús'* sons, Thétis, whose house held the *Konáki*, and several other *Anastenárides*, it was suggested that a new *Konáki* be built away from anyone's house. This reduced the authority of Thétis who was being accused of being too bossy and authoritarian. Thétis refused to move but the others did and so a schism was created in the group. Thétis revealed another understanding of the situation:

They split the group to do bad to me, to cause me harm. They wanted me to join one of their groups too, but I refused, so they are getting back at me. We started it here and if they don't want to do it here then I won't do it anywhere else. So that is why there is no other celebration (*paniyíri*) here in Lagadhás, because it's not done here in this *Konáki*, and it's not done properly anywhere else in Lagadhás. It is obvious they will come back here. But first I am going to let them run around and get tired

and get smart (*ná válune mialó*), and then after that they will come back here (23rd August 1994)

Soon after, before the new *Konáki* had been completed, there were disagreements within the community as to who would be the new *Pappús* and over other issues of authority (and some have told me over Greek party politics and money), dividing the group once again, splitting families and friends. Another *Konáki* was set up in one man's house in the town and the new *Konáki* was also completed. Thus, there were now three *Konákia* in Lagadhás. Tom's group who was situated at the new *Konáki* had the support of the Folklore Society and up until May 1995, also the support of the local council.

However, for their own ritual performances, each *Anastenáride* group needed their own Icons. Although it was constantly contested, it was explained that Thétis owned one of the two dancing Icons in the town. Thétis explained that Tom's group did not have any dancing Icons but that it was the other group who owned the remaining dancing Icon. I was told that Ayía Eléni, Kelkíni and Mavroléfki each own one dancing Icon. During communist rule in Bulgaria (where Kostí and Brodívo are now) all Orthodox Icons were confiscated and made the property of the state. After the collapse of communism (1988-1990) a great number of the Icons were made available to interested buyers. Prior to the official schism in the group, some of the *Anastenárides* from Lagadhás went to Bulgaria and purchased several Icons. Tom bought one Icon of Mary holding Jesus as an infant and Mikháli bought three Icons, one of Mary holding Jesus and two of Saints Constantine and Helen. All of these Icons, it is claimed, are extremely old. Exactly how they were purchased, legally or otherwise, was not disclosed despite constant efforts on my behalf to find out. Thétis claimed that they bought the Icons in preparation for breaking away and forming their own group. He also claimed that this was not the right way to run the festivals or the community; "You can't just go and buy Icons and think that they mean something. The Icons of the *Anastenárides* are special". Several of the *Anastenárides*, however, explained that because these Icons were from the fatherland (*patridha*) they could be sure that they were Icons for dancing. Thétis, however, disputed this, explaining that just because an Icon is old or from Kostí, it doesn't mean that it is a dancing Icon; "Everyone owned

Icons of Saints Helen and Constantine in Kostí and of Saint Pantelimon in Brodívo. But they were not all Icons for dancing, not all Icons for the festival for the *Anastenárides*. They are Icons for the house, the dancing Icons were brought here when we came”.

Orthodox Christians believe that one Icon may have more power than another: some are miracle working (*thavmaturghós*) others are not. Similarly, for the *Anastenárides*, some Icons are believed to be ‘dancing’ Icons and others are not. To have a *paniyiri* and walk in the fire and dance in the *Konáki*, the *Anastenárides* believe that one needs the power of ‘dancing’ Icons. Thétis’ accusation that the new Icons purchased by some of the *Anastenárides* are not ‘dancing’ Icons, but are only Icons for the house (*ikónes yia tó spíti*) introduces an interesting situation where the power of the Icons is contested. Owning Icons, whether purchasing or inheriting them, provides the *Anastenárides* with the means to gain power which can be used to achieve independence and/or position. At the same time, however, their Icons have also come to provide a discourse about authenticity which enables some to claim power whilst others are denigrated. This is done by differentiating Icons into those suitable for *Anastenáride* rituals and those for the house. Thétis criticised members of the group with whom I became friends, “they have got some Icons now and so now they do it like a play/drama (*théatro*)”. He concluded, “..Their Icons are not dancing Icons, they are Icons for the house” (23rd of August 1994). Regardless of Thétis’ accusations, however, the *Anastenárides* at the new *Konáki* do dance and do walk on the burning coals without being burned.

Being able to purchase old Icons also introduces the problem of who can afford them and thereby creates a situation where the wealthier *Anastenárides* are able to gain power and seniority through their economic position. Economic capital is transformed into symbolic or cultural capital in the form of prestige and honour. *Anastenárides*, who went to Bulgaria and purchased Icons that are now used by the group during the ritual performances, have been able to generate prestige for themselves in the same way in which *Anastenárides* who had inherited Icons previously did. Whilst the Icons remain important religious symbols for the *Anastenárides*, they are polysemous in that they also symbolise independence, power and

prestige to those who own them and to the community as a whole. At the end of the festival in January 1995, those *Anastenárides* from Thessaloniki were preparing to leave. Mikháli had two of his Icons — wrapped in white sheets to protect them from the rain outside — in his arms as he made his way to the door. Several people went to the Icons as they rested in his arms to kiss them, kissing his hands at the same time. As he was almost at the door, followed by most of the other *Anastenárides*, he stopped and turned to everyone; “Goodnight everyone. It was a good festival we had, and here is to a good festival in May. A good year”. An *Anastenárisa* carried an umbrella for him, sheltering the Icons and himself from the rain. Three quarters of the group followed him outside and saw him into his car and waited until he had driven off. One man turned to me, winked and said with sarcasm, “The King has departed”.

Bourdieu (1984, 1992) argues that a field is structured internally in terms of power relations. The ‘struggle’ for this power creates the dynamics of the field. In this situation then, Icons are resources that are the symbolic carriers of that power. Now that Icons can be obtained through alternative avenues such as by purchasing them and not solely through inheriting them, there is a disruption of the normal social relations within the field. Its boundaries have become extended as the field has widened. I am not suggesting that anyone can buy an Icon, light a fire and thereby perform the *Anastenária*, however. Whilst the field may have widened, there remain certain qualifications and restrictions which still set the boundaries. Tom and Mikháli’s reluctance to divulge the details of the purchase of the Icons in Bulgaria confirms this, as does Mikháli’s and others’ recognition of the importance that the Icons are not only old, but are also from the fatherland. The extension of the boundaries, however, has enabled the establishment of three independent *Anastenáride* groups in Lagadhás, two of which are actively engaged in ritual performance.

The *Anastenáride* Icons, endowed with symbolic capital, empower their owners through prestige and social honour. As carriers of the Divine Grace (*kháris*) and supernatural power (*dhinamis*) of the Saints, they are immediately endowed with prestige that is similarly passed on to their owners. In the same way, the community of *Anastenárides* is endowed with symbolic

capital through their association with the Icons. In the field of cultural production, where the sub-fields of restricted and large scale production opposingly co-exist, the Icons hold a unique position: as Holy Orthodox Icons, they are immediately endowed with symbolic capital. This symbolic capital is constantly legitimated by non-*Anastenáride* Orthodox Christians coming and venerating them, as well as through the Church's opposition to the *Anastenárides*' use of them². At the same time, however, they generate economic capital through the offerings made to them by visitors. Many of them have also been recognised as being highly valuable because of their age; for example, Mikháli's Icons are registered with the Department of Antiquity because of their age and consequent value.

The symbolic capital that the Icons are endowed with is constantly legitimated in all Orthodox religious practice. They are venerated and prayed to, have offerings given to them and requests made to them. Priests are endowed with symbolic capital through their position as mediator between God and humans but they also generate symbolic capital through the duties they perform in their blessed role. In his Priestly duties, as a form of symbolic labour, a Priest generates symbolic capital and legitimates his position within the religious field and the wider field of power. Similarly, an *Anastenáride*, through his or her involvement in the ritual, association with the Icons and performance of other possible duties; (interpreting illness, reading dreams and so on) generates symbolic capital. This capital enables the *Anastenárides* to be positioned within the religious field, in opposition to the Church and the Priests. Legitimated with supreme religious authority, however, the Church remains in the dominant position within the religious field. The Icons play a particularly important part in this oppositional relationship within the religious field. They are the most desired and efficacious forms of capital. The Orthodox Church is aware that the Icons enable the *Anastenárides* to be favourably positioned in their opposition to the Church, hence its long-term preoccupation with the confiscation of the *Anastenáride* Icons. The Church has been relatively unsuccessful in its quest to make the Icons the property of the Church, however, (apart from in Mavroléfki and for

²It must be remembered here that the power of these Icons is contested. Thétis, for example, as I have explained, claimed that the new Icons of the group are not dancing Icons.

shorter periods of time in other places) and, in fact, their attempts have actually further empowered both the Icons and the *Anastenárides*. By focusing on the sacredness of the Icons, the Church legitimates them and thus, enhances their prestige; the symbolic capital of these Holy objects is increased, and thus, those whom the Church intends to disempower, are also legitimated and empowered.

The Three Faces of Capital

Capital can present itself in three main ways: as economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Economic capital can be directly converted into money and can also be institutionalised in the form of property rights. It is the 'root' of all forms of capital but this fact must remain hidden if the other forms of capital are to be efficacious. Social capital can be seen as 'making connections', creating a network of relationships "of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986:248). Social ability is necessary for the accumulation of social capital. Under certain conditions, cultural capital is convertible into economic capital; it can even be institutionalised in such forms as educational qualifications. Cultural capital has at least three forms of manifestation (Bourdieu 1986:243); the embodied state, in the form of "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"; an objectified state, in the form of cultural goods, which are the "trace or realisation of theories or critiques of these theories"; and an institutionalised state, "a form of objectification which must be set apart because it confers entirely original properties of legitimation which it is presumed to guarantee" (*ibid.*).

Cultural capital often appears as symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986), that is, cultural forms or values whose symbolic worth has the potential to operate as a form of capital without appearing to do so. It is in this misrecognition that its efficacy lies. In an objectified state, cultural goods can take the form of material goods, which presupposes economic capital, but they can also be appropriated symbolically, presupposing cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986:247). Cultural capital can only be active and effective, however, if it is appropriated by agents as stakes in the fields of cultural production. It is in this way that the Icons can be understood to function in the field of cultural production.

The Transference of Capital and Conflicting Fields

Different forms of capital may be transferred from one field to another and in this process, converted. For example, the Church and the *Anastenárides* may bring with them into the religious field, capital produced elsewhere; economic capital, intellectual capital and so forth. Similarly, within the cultural field where the stakes are different, different types of capital may be converted to improve their position. Through their involvement in the performance of the ritual, the *Anastenárides* may have their authority as cultural performers acknowledged, thereby endowing them with symbolic capital. This form of capital may be used within the cultural field where they are positioned against academics and others who compete for authority to control the ritual. Thétis, for example, particularly in the past, has been able to enter into the cultural field because of his position as an *Anastenáris* and importantly, as the son of the former leader of the community. In most of the better known Greek texts, on the *Anastenária* in Lagadhás, particularly the work of Mihail-Dede, it is Thétis who is most frequently quoted and referred to. The more often he was involved with academics and journalists, the more prestige he was accorded within the cultural field. He became legitimated to speak about and for the *Anastenáride* community and this endowed him with symbolic capital in the form of prestige, which was efficacious in the field of power³. It also enabled him to assume and legitimate his dominant position within the *Anastenáride* community. Eventually, however, another who held more cultural capital, legitimated by his position as a journalist specialising in folk culture threatened his position. Similarly, the symbolic capital with which the *Anastenárides* are endowed is efficacious in the religious field when they are positioned against the Church and other religious authorities. This capital is granted to them through their association with the Holy Icons and also, perhaps, from their ability to walk on the coals unharmed, or to diagnose illness, where they are legitimated with religious authority.

The symbolic capital with which people are endowed through being involved in the ritual (not only the performers but also others who involve themselves, such as the Mayor), can be used in

³ See Chapter Six for an explanation of the 'field of power'.

what Crain (1992:106) calls other “social contexts”, but which I refer to as fields⁴. Dhimitris, the head of the Thracian Society in Lagadhás, is able to use his cultural and symbolic capital, generated through his involvement in the *Anastenária*, to enter other fields. At the festival for Saint Athanássios in 1994, Dhimitris had been at the *Konáki* for most of the afternoon and early evening. Later in the evening, before the fire walk had begun, Dhimitris left for a short while and returned with the Mayor and three of his colleagues⁵. Almost as soon as the coals had been extinguished, the ‘distinguished guests’ left, escorted by Dhimitris. About an hour or so later as we were ready to serve the meal in the *Konáki*, I overheard Tassía ask Pétros where Dhimitris, Kóstas and Khrístos (the video men), their wives and a couple of other people whom they were expecting were. I soon learned that they had gone back to Dhimitris’ house with the Mayor and his guests, for something to eat and a few drinks. A few of the *Anastenárides* were obviously unimpressed and Pétros joked that they were probably eating better there and were most likely drinking wine instead of mere ouzo. Tom was asked to call Dhimitris to find out whether or not they would be returning to the *Konáki* for the meal so the women could decide whether to serve the food or wait a little longer. When Tom returned from making the call, he seemed a little angry and explained that Dhimitris and the others were held up with the Mayor but would come to the *Konáki* as soon as they could. A discussion ensued regarding whether or not to wait for them, but it was overwhelmingly decided that we would not wait. Some of the *Anastenárides* explained that it was bad luck and rude. One *Anastenáris* said, “I don’t see what the fuss is about. They knew we were going to have the meal. Why should we wait for them? If they come, they come, if they don’t they don’t”. We ate without them. An hour or so later as we were clearing the table, Dhimitris and the others arrived, minus the distinguished guests. Nothing was said, but it was obvious that the *Anastenárides* were not very impressed despite the efforts of Dhimitris who was particularly jovial and complimentary of the festival.

⁴ Importantly, fields are primarily position orientated. That is, they are constituted when objects of interest become issues of contention.

⁵ The guests were greeted by several of the *Anastenárides*, offered coffee and food and introduced to other visitors considered important. As it was the middle of winter, the ritual was being performed inside and, consequently, the *Konáki* was very crowded. The fire had been lit in the fireplace, positioned in the corner of the room, at the end of the right side of the *stasídi*. The area of coals where the *Anastenárides* were going to walk was only about one metre squared and with the *Anastenárides* dancing in front of the fireplace, it was difficult to get a view of the performance. The Mayor and his guests, however, were positioned so that no one, apart from other *Anastenárides*, blocked their view.

Through his association and involvement with the *Anastenária*, Dhimitris has been endowed with cultural capital that he is able to use to improve his position in alternative fields. For example, the symbolic capital that he has generated through his position as Head of the Thracian Folklore Society has enabled him to position himself, or at least improve his position, in the wider field of power. The symbolic capital, with which Dhimitris has been accorded as spokesperson of and as an influence on, the *Anastenárides*, has meant that he has been able to become more closely associated with the Mayor and others who are better positioned in the field of power. The economic capital that he is also endowed with, as a reasonably wealthy businessman, also improves his position in the field of power. Similarly, his improved position in the field of power, as more closely associated with the Mayor, endows him with symbolic capital in the form of prestige. This prestige, this symbolic capital (capital not recognised as such) also has efficacy in the economic field, providing him with an advantage. In much the same way, the symbolic capital that the Mayor is endowed with from the prestige accorded to him due to his political position, enables him to enter the field of cultural production. Once positioned in the field of cultural production, he is then able to compete for cultural capital. The implementation of symbolic capital is not necessarily a conscious act, however, as its efficacy lies in its ability to be unrecognised as capital. Attending the *Anastenária* and supporting the festival, both financially and publicly, in opposition to the Church, grants the Mayor with possible voting support a type of political strategy. Also in support of the interest that the *Anastenária* brings into the town and the area, through tourism, the Mayor is aware that his involvement and support of the ritual performance is beneficial to his reputation and political career.

Increasing the popularity and hence the number of tourists visiting the area provides the possibility for increased Federal Government support which consequently, is beneficial to his career. His recognised interest, support and involvement in cultural events such as the *Anastenária*, endows him with cultural capital which consequently allows him access to the cultural field but which is also efficacious in the wider field of power. As the competition has

increased between the ritual performances in the various towns, the Mayor has attempted of late, to reconcile the divided *Anastenáride* community within Lagadhás. He has also tried to encourage a return to the more public presentation of the ritual. Hence his offer to finance and pay the *Anastenárides* for performing the ritual in the square in 1995. Because of the divisions within the *Anastenáride* community, there has emerged an opportunity for the Mayor to play one group off against the other. Just as he is able to generate symbolic capital from his involvement with the ritual, so too can the *Anastenárides* be accorded prestige by the Mayor's presence at their festivals. Up until May 1995, and since the division in the group, the Mayor had been aligned with Tom's group. With the Folklore Society also supporting this group, his interest was appropriate. He had attended their festivals and in doing so, had accorded the group the prestige of his presence. In 1995, however, after Tom and the others declined his offer to stage the ritual performance in the square, the Mayor immediately approached the other group. Their acceptance witnessed the Mayor necessarily shift his allegiance from Tom's group to the other. This legitimated the other group and accorded them the prestige that the Mayor's support and presence offered. As mentioned earlier, however, the public staging of their ritual meant that they were disadvantaged in another way: in the field of cultural production, where economic profit and popular culture are avoided, the overly public performance of the ritual meant that in comparison, Tom's group was accorded the prestige of having the most traditional festival. Significantly, therefore, some forms of capital are not efficacious in all fields.

For several years Kóstas and Khristos have been video taping the *Anastenária* performances. These videotapes are for the private collection of the *Anastenárides* and their friends and family and are not sold or publicly shown. Neither of these men or their families (or their wives' families) are *Anastenárides* and they are not interested in becoming involved in the ritual in any other capacity. Both of them had explained that they had grown up with the *Anastenária* and always attended the ritual. As friends of the *Anastenárides* and owning a video camera, they had offered to tape the rituals. This meant that they were always at the festivals and attended the trips to Mikháli's family home to collect the Icons before the

festivals⁶. Their involvement with the *Anastenária*, particularly as positioned on the periphery (not actually walking on the fire or dancing with the Icons) was similar to that of a researcher, like myself, or a member of the Folklore Society. It provided them with a close link with several influential people in the town who were involved in an official capacity with the *Anastenária*; the Mayor and other members of the local council and members of the Folklore Society. Thus, through videoing the ritual performances, attending all festivals and being involved with the *Anastenáride* community, Kóstas and Khrístos generated symbolic capital. Through undertaking a form of symbolic labour, (labour not recognised as such) they accumulated symbolic capital. This symbolic capital which they generated not only improved their position within the cultural field, but also granted them access into alternate fields. For example, the prestige accorded to them as a result of being involved with the ritual enabled them to develop relations with other agents, in other fields, such as the Mayor. Their invitation to the dinner which was held at Dhímítris' house that evening after the festival, was a result of the symbolic capital with which they had been endowed by their association with the ritual; it allowed them entry to an alternative field, the wider field of power⁷. Interestingly, the *Anastenárides* themselves were not invited. Even more importantly, Kóstas and Khrístos had chosen to attend the dinner with the Mayor rather than share a meal with the *Anastenárides* and their families, as they normally would have. Clearly, there was an employment of strategies, a conscious manipulation and use of accumulated capital, as Kóstas, Khrístos and their wives made the choice of where to dine that evening. Interestingly, however, after dining with the Mayor, Kóstas, Khrístos and Dhímítris all came to the *Konáki* where they remained until everyone started dispersing. The prestige accorded to them from their association with the Mayor would be useless if their relations with the *Anastenárides* ceased. I stress, however, that I am not denying any personal and genuine interest in the ritual and genuine respect and friendship with the *Anastenárides*. On the contrary, the ritual is able to have both religious and material interest. Due to the religious significance of the ritual and,

⁶ Both Kóstas and Khrístos were always keen to help me and give me information, encouraging me to take a copy of their videotapes before I left.

⁷ I am not suggesting that the implementation of symbolic capital is undertaken consciously. At times, however, conscious, deliberate manipulation of a particular situation does occur.

more importantly, the reverence and respect accorded to the Icons, the ritual is endowed with a great deal of symbolic capital⁸. It is because of this symbolic capital which the ritual therefore contains, that enables it to have the added material significance without sacrificing its religious meaning.

Conflicts in the Fields

Conflicts of interest, however, may arise both on an individual and on a collective level. In the economic field, for example, one's position and strategies may be in opposition to those one has in the religious field. Mikháli as a journalist and Mikháli as an *Anastenáride* finds himself in a conflict of interest, which causes confrontation on one level, but not on another. That is, the symbolic capital with which he is endowed from his position in the field of journalism, the professional field, through being authorised as a great journalist, is efficacious in the cultural field and more importantly, within the field of power. He is accorded a dominant position within the *Anastenáride* community, not only because of the symbolic capital his Icons grant him, but also because of the symbolic capital earned from his professional position and also the prestige he is granted from being a wealthy man. The prestige he is endowed with through his professional career can be transferred into other fields. However, the capital he is endowed with as an *Anastenáris* and his position in the religious field are in conflict with his position and the capital required for entry into the field of journalism, the professional and academic fields. This is because his being an *Anastenáris* in some way negates and is detrimental to his position as an academic and professional journalist. Some of his colleagues and peers view him as unstable and not to be taken seriously due to his involvement in the ritual. At the same time, however, being an *Anastenáris* does provide him with symbolic capital through the acknowledgment of authentic/'insider' knowledge on the subject and experience, which can be converted into cultural capital in the field of journalism where he struggles for a dominant

⁸ See Kapferer (1997:130) in his discussion of the Suniyama exorcism ritual in Sri Lanka, where he also implements Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital as being generated within and by a ritual performance. Unlike myself, however, he does not refer directly to the concept of symbolic labour. Neither does he acknowledge its omission. I suggest that this is because it is not a concept applicable to the Suniyama as exorcists are more than often paid for their services and are, therefore, engaged in paid labour, not symbolic labour.

position. Being an *Anastenáris* gives him recognition as having ‘inside knowledge’ of the ritual and so legitimates him as being an authority to write on such matters. As he remains an *Anastenáris* and an employed journalist, these conflicts must be in some way, successfully negotiated. This may be because each field is defined by its boundaries which separate it from another. However, this does not mean that one field does not have an effect on another. Miháli made it clear that he did not like to be photographed by media reporters and was careful about bringing that ‘part of his life’ into public attention. Accumulation of capital and one’s position in one field therefore, may affect, positively or negatively, one’s position in another field through the conversion or inability to convert a particular type of capital. A particular form of capital does not, however, have a function or even exist, without being located in relation to a field of struggle. Owning old Icons which are believed to contain supernatural power (*dhinamis*) is significant as a form of capital (economic, cultural and, perhaps, symbolic) only within the dynamics of particular fields.

The Performance of the *Anastenária* as Symbolic Labour

As the *Anastenárides* enter into different fields, they utilise various types of suitable capital (*i.e.* economic, symbolic, cultural). In some circumstances they are able to transfer a particular capital into an alternative field or even convert one type of capital into another. That conversion is possible only through the performance of a particular type of labour. What I am interested in is how the ritual itself acts as a site for the generation, transference and conversion of capital. As a number of fields of struggle are active across the life of the ritual, the ritual itself is often the site of power struggles and consequent manipulations of various types of capital. Acknowledging the ritual as a sacred religious celebration, I am also arguing that the ritual performance is a form of symbolic labour (labour which does not appear as such) through which different forms of capital are generated. I am not suggesting that the ritual itself constitutes a field on its own. What I am arguing is that there are various sites of struggle occurring within and during the ritual and the symbolic capital, which is generated by the performers during the ritual, may be able to be used in one or more of these sites. As I stressed earlier, I am not suggesting that the ritual as symbolic labour negates or diffuses the religious

symbolism of the celebration, but argue instead, that it is that very sacredness which enables capital to be generated without realising it as such. The *Anastenárides*, engaged in a celebration of their Saints, are simultaneously performing a form of symbolic labour. Looking at it another way, through the performance of their ritual, the *Anastenárides* are making a type of symbolic investment (Bourdieu 1977) which provides them with a legitimate way to accumulate resources. Through this investment, they are able to make claims on labour and resources that may be eventually used for economic gain.

Through the performance of their rituals the *Anastenárides* are endowed with symbolic capital by the prestige accorded to them from their association with the Saint and the Icons which are believed to carry Holy Grace transmitted from God. Accorded with religious authority in much the same way a Priest is, from their relationship with the Saint and their Icons, and from their ability to walk on burning coals unharmed under the protection of the Saint, the *Anastenárides* re-generate this capital every time they perform a ritual duty. As the ritual carries religious significance to many Orthodox Christians, the *Anastenárides*' prestige is also legitimated each time a non-*Anastenáride* Christian comes to them for help, prays to their Icons or attends their ritual.

The amount of capital earned is dependent on the type and amount of symbolic labour performed and also on the other types of capital which they may bring with them into the religious field. For example, those *Anastenárides* who walk on the fire are able to 'earn' more symbolic capital than others. Those who are older have usually accumulated more symbolic capital because of their experience and understood authority. Similarly, those *Anastenárides* who own Icons or who are direct descendants of *Anastenárides* in Kostí are already endowed with symbolic capital. The interpretation of dreams, diagnosing of illness and so on, would also endow one with greater amounts of capital. Non-*Anastenárides* may generate symbolic capital through involvement in and association with the ritual and the ritual performers. The taping of the videos, assisting with the festival's organisation and chores performed during the festival, are also forms of symbolic labour. Often during the festivals when the *Anastenárides* were

dancing inside the *Konáki*, people (usually women) would stop an *Anastenáride* (usually an *Anastenárisa*) to kiss their hand and the Icon they were holding. Similarly, when the *Pappús* was performing the blessing of the water (*Ayiasmós*) non-*Anastenárides* had the opportunity to be endowed with the blessing of the Saint. They too are performing a form of symbolic labour, whereby their involvement in the ritual accords them a degree of symbolic capital.

The accumulation of a particular type of capital determines the possibility of profit in all fields and sub fields where that particular capital corresponds. An individual's success in particular fields determines their position in the social space. Accumulation of capital can, therefore, also equate to accumulation of power. The positions and capital acquired in the different spaces of competition in which the *Anastenárides* and others are engaged affects their position in the overall social space, in the wider field of power.

Kapferer (1997:130), in his discussion of the Suniyama exorcist rite in Sri Lanka, argues that the rite is "potentially far more than a 'capital' resource". He suggests that the rite is actually able to 'generate', 'multiply' and even 'launder' capital (*ibid.*). Perhaps, as I argue for the *Anastenária*, the Suniyama has the capability of generating symbolic capital because of its focus and relevance to both religious and everyday life. Like the *Anastenária*, it is a symbolic 'resource' which can generate capital. One's involvement in the Suniyama, as in the *Anastenária*, can influence one's involvement (position) in other areas of their social life (other fields). My discussion of the *Anastenária* as a site where capital is able to be converted, also finds company with Kapferer's examination of the Suniyama where he acknowledges the ritual's ability to convert capital; "Furthermore, the dance (and indeed the Suniyama as a whole) is an act of symbolic conversion whereby the wealth expended on the performance is transformed and manifested as the protective and ordering presence of the gods" (Kapferer 1997:130). The concepts of symbolic capital and indeed, symbolic labour, can perhaps be applied to a number of religious rites and rituals.

Conclusion

The performance of the *Anastenária* is first and foremost a religious celebration, a festival for the Christian Orthodox Saints, Constantine and Helen. Whilst elements of the ritual performance, in particular the sacrificing of animals, the dancing with the Icons and most importantly, the walking across burning coals, have been criticised by the Orthodox Church and many Orthodox Christians, as being opposed to Orthodox tradition, the *Anastenária* has religious significance for those who perform it, as well as for many others. The Holy Icons, which are central to their ritual life, hold religious significance to all Orthodox Christians as do the Saints whom they are venerating and the day on which they celebrate.

In the performance of their ritual and its associated duties, however, the *Anastenárides* are also undertaking a form of symbolic labour. In undertaking this symbolic labour they generate symbolic capital. This symbolic capital may be efficacious in the various fields in which they are positioned. It may also be able to be converted into other types of capital, which may be required in particular fields.

With the increase of tourist interest in the ritual and the inclusion of the ritual into the fields of economics and politics, the *Anastenárides* have found themselves positioned in new sites of struggles. Their identity as *Anastenárides* and their involvement in the ritual performance do not exist exclusively from these fields of struggle, but on the contrary, the ritual finds itself amongst and in between them, affecting them and being affected by them. As participants in the ritual and those who become peripherally involved, (therefore both *Anastenárides* and non-*Anastenárides*), are engaged in different fields, the ritual performance itself necessarily also becomes involved in and affected by, the struggles occurring within those fields.

Conclusion

A common question often asked is whether or not the *Anastenária* will continue to be performed ten or twenty years from now. Already it is claimed by some that the ritual is no longer performed in any other context other than as a tourist attraction. Whilst I cannot attempt to forecast whether or not the ritual will continue to be performed in the future, it is fair to say for now, that the ritual continues to be an important religious celebration for many. Whilst there is no denying that the ritual has become a tourist attraction, it is incorrect to assume that this necessarily means that it has ceased to carry significance in other contexts. What I have attempted to examine in this thesis is just how the *Anastenária* has been able to maintain religious significance whilst also becoming involved in other fields of power and interest.

How these apparent contradictions are negotiated reveals a great deal about social practice and how individuals come to negotiate their positions within the social world. My initial interest in the transformation of the ritual and the phenomenon of tourism led me to examine how the *Anastenárides* come to understand themselves and their ritual and how they are able to negotiate the various identities which they produce in different fields. I realised the necessary link I had to make between the production, generation and construction of identities in different social situations and the apparent transformation of the ritual performance.

Hence this thesis examines not only the transformation of the *Anastenária* and its role as a tourist attraction, but also the transformation of the *Anastenáride* communities and the way in which they have come to understand themselves and their ritual in a changing environment. Necessary to this discussion was an exploration of the notion of identity. I have argued that in practice, individuals generate particular identities in particular situations as they are oppositionally positioned against others. These identities are largely determined by a person's

habitus, but are also dependent on the particularities and dynamics of the particular field in which they are engaged. As the ritual has become involved in the tourism industry, the *Anastenárides* have entered into new worlds of action in which they have been required to reflect on and justify their identity as Christians and therefore also as *Anastenárides*. Because of the dynamic nature of social life and because a person's habitus is historically constituted, their identity as an *Anastenáride* has altered as time has passed. The habitus, in relationship with the fields in which the *Anastenárides* are positioned, generates particular behaviour in practice and, therefore, also particular identities.

The first part of this thesis introduced the world of the *Anastenárides* with whom I stayed, positioning them in their geographical, political, economic and social environment. Acknowledging their place in the wider Greek and European frames, I stressed the importance of viewing the ritual and those who perform it as being engaged in the global system; focusing on the ritual only in its rural capacity neglects the wider economic and political forces which have an effect on the ritual performance and the lives of the *Anastenárides*. I introduced my discussion on the construction and negotiation of identity, presenting the dynamic environment in which the *Anastenárides* live. Acknowledging the contested histories of the Balkans and the current debate over Macedonia, I presented the contexts within which the *Anastenárides* negotiate their various identities.

In Chapter Two I examined the doctrine and teachings of the Orthodox Christian Church and discussed the problematic relationship between the Church and the *Anastenáride* community. Crucial to understanding the significance of the ritual is an knowledge of the Orthodox faith as the *Anastenárides* are first and foremost, Orthodox Christians and to them, the ritual is unarguably an Orthodox Christian celebration. This Chapter necessarily introduced some of the fields in which the *Anastenárides* are engaged, examining the Icons as capital which allows individuals access into particular fields. It is in this Chapter that the complex

dynamics of social life become most apparent; all aspects of individual's social life affect and influence other parts.

Chapters Three and Four introduced the ritual performance. Presenting the ritual as it is performed today, I examined those parts of the performance which have attracted the most attention; the firewalk and the behaviour of the *Anastenárides* whilst dancing in the *Konáki*. In order to address these elements of the ritual performance and as an introduction to the discussion on the notion of self, dealt with in more detail in the following Chapters, I examined the notions of trance and possession and the related areas of consciousness and the realisation of self.

The following Chapter moved on from the ideas put forward earlier, presenting a discussion on the concepts of self and identity. The *Anastenárides*, like all individuals produce certain identities during practice, depending on the particularities of their situation and on the dynamic relationship between their habitus and the field in which they are positioned. I presented some of those different identities produced by the *Anastenárides* and also by those others against whom they are positioned. Central to my discussion of the concept of identity is the phenomenological position on self, which deals with the relationship of subjectivity and objectivity, introduced in Chapter Three and the elaboration of these ideas by Pierre Bourdieu. I have tried to demonstrate how through practice, positioned against others, different parts of a person's habitus become significant in direct relation to the dynamic relationship between their habitus and the field in which they are engaged and active within. In this way, identities are generated. To avoid the trappings of 'role theories', I have argued that by examining identities in this way, through the concepts of habitus and field, one can demonstrate how individuals may have a number of different identities which become relevant at particular times, without denying the dynamics of social life: because the habitus changes through time, in practice and because its constitution and development is directly related to the field in which it is

positioned, transformations and multiple identities can be easily explained and understood. The mutually generative relationship between the subjective and the objective is at the heart of this position.

Chapters Six and Seven examined the transformation and commodification of the *Anastenária*. Presenting the ritual in its alternative capacities of tourist event and folkloric subject, I examined how the ritual has many significances apart from religious. A major point of this discussion, however, was to examine how the ritual is able to maintain its religious significance whilst simultaneously being involved in the economic and political fields. Here my presentation of the dynamics of social life was elaborated; depending on the specifics of a situation, on the individuals involved, the purpose and logic of the situation, the resources (capital) required and so forth, the meaning accorded or made relevant to the ritual will vary. This is why the *Anastenária* is able to be both an important tourist attraction, making it an economic resource which necessarily makes it significant in the political field, whilst also maintaining religious significance, validated and highlighted through the oppositional behaviour of the Orthodox Church.

Included in this discussion was a detailed examination of the accumulation, transference and efficacy of different types of capital which grant individuals access into and relative position within a number of fields. Presenting the ritual itself as a site where capital is able to be generated, through symbolic labour, illustrated the ritual as practice. The *Anastenária* is practice and through the practice of the ritual, individuals come to regenerate and reproduce their social world. Because of the dynamics of the social world, however, transformations are possible and so in the performance of the *Anastenária*, like all practice, there lies the power for the making and breaking of social reality.

Ritual as Practice: practicing ritual

My focus in this thesis lies with practice, hence my interest with Bourdieu. Much of the discussion on ritual has centred around belief, but as Kapferer (1997:177) argues, “Although what people believe is certainly crucial, I stress the potencies of the activities or organisations of ritual practice in themselves”. As beliefs are constituted through practice, practice and belief are mutually generative. As I argued in my discussion of self and identity, of consciousness and *being-in-the-world*, individuals are at once constituted by and constitute their social world. This occurs through practice. It is in the practice of the performance of the *Anastenária*, therefore, that lies its potency, its power to regenerate its meaning. Like in the performance of the Suniyama, where Kapferer (1997:177) explains that each ritual performance is seen as unique — “an original repetition” — the power of the *Anastenária* also lies in its ability to repeat the rite, but each time renewed, with a new set of possibilities and each time reconstituting and regenerating its own practice. Perhaps it is by viewing the ritual in this way, that we might understand its continued performance.

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