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FROM MODERN GREEK CARNIVALS TO THE MASKS OF DIONYSOS AND OTHER DIVINITIES IN ANCIENT GREECE

According to the modern Greeks: “Carnival without masks is like bread without flour”. Masks have traditionally been an important part of the religious festivals in ancient and modern Greece, particularly at the celebrations which are performed in connection with the most important phases during the agricultural year, first and foremost around spring equinox, when the modern carnival season before the Lenten period has replaced the ancient festivals dedicated to Dionysos, who along with Demeter, was the primary deity of the farmer, but people are also masquerading in the beginning of May before the grain harvest, and later before sowing and in mid-winter. One of our ancient sources, Pausanias tells that at the yearly rituals dedicated to Kidarian Demeter, the priest puts on the mask of the goddess, and beats the earth with rods, to wake up the powers of the underworld and make the earth fertile.

The article will compare some significant ancient festivals where masks were important with their modern parallels as celebrated during carnival in Greek Macedonia, where I have conducted fieldwork in several villages. I will also explore the power of the mask in general such as in connection with Medusa and other ancient mythical figures, and discuss the importance of masquerading and animal disguise during rites de passages generally, both in the cycle of nature and the life of humans.

Key words: Modern and ancient Greece, carnivals/religious festivals, masks/
masquerading, agricultural year-phases/rites de passages, mythical figures

Masquerading during carnival (*apokreos*) is a widespread custom, and according to the modern Greeks “Carnival without masks is like bread without flour”. The carnival season lasts three weeks, and is a time of gaiety and merriment before entering the Lenten period, which lasts until Easter. The first week is known as the *Prophōnē* (from *prophōnō*, to address, to announce), because carnival is announced. The second week is the “Meat Week” and the last is the “Cheese Week”, which is an introduction to and preparation for the Lenten fast. Masks have traditionally

been an important part of the religious festivals in ancient and modern Greece, particularly at the celebrations which are performed in connection with the most important phases during the agricultural year, first and foremost around spring equinox, when the modern carnival season before the Lenten period has replaced the ancient festivals dedicated to Dionysos, who along with Demeter, was the primary deity of the farmer, but people are also masquerading in the beginning of May before the grain harvest, and later before sowing and in mid-winter during the twelve-day period from Christmas to Epiphany.¹

Apokreos is not only connected with the relationship between humans and nature.² The actual relationship, however, is both a copy of and a copy for the inter-human relations in Greek conception which operates with a cosmic totality in which the important symbol is the body. Accordingly, we meet the same reconciling element at the social level because carnival also marks the reversal and breakdown of social boundaries.³

The following will compare some significant ancient festivals where masks were important with their modern parallels as celebrated during carnival in Greek Macedonia, where I have conducted fieldwork in several villages in 1992. I will also explore the power of the mask in general such as in connection with Medusa and other ancient mythical figures, and discuss the importance of masquerading

¹ The article is an extended version of a paper presented at the 5th Conference on *The Ritual Year* in Kaunas, July 2009, and I would like to thank the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association (NFFO) for giving me a grant, thus providing me with financial support in connection with my participation at the conference. I would also like to thank Molly Carter for helping to clarify my English. Any remaining errors are of course my own. Since 1983, I have had several periods of fieldwork in the Mediterranean, mainly in Greece where I have also been conducting research on religious festivals since 1990 (cf. Håland 2007), on which the following is mainly based. Here, I also discuss the problems and fruitfulness of working with anthropological comparative approaches (such as using material from Modern Greek civilization as models) to Ancient Society. As an historian, then, comparing modern and ancient Greek sources, trying to shed new light on the latter, the following presentation of carnivals is more interested in comparing the modern carnivals with the ancient Greek, particularly Dionysian rituals, and not necessarily the ancient Roman Saturnalia-festival, since this is a topic which has been discussed by many earlier researchers, mainly from a survivalist perspective (cf. Håland 2007:122-141 for an outline of the relevant historiography, and Håland 2012:216-260, here I also discuss analogies resulting from different processes (for example, influence of folkloristic literature, school books or revitalization of costumes). This also means that I am not necessarily interested in focusing on continuity between modern and ancient material *per se*, although the Mediterranean area generally, and Greece particularly offers a unique opportunity to follow questions of continuity and change over very long spans of time directly and not conjecturally.

² See for example Bakhtin 1968 influenced by Frazer (cf. Håland 2007:139-141, 386-400).

³ Carnival transvestism is a classical example of “rituals of reversals”(cf. Gluckman 1991:109-136; Håland 2007:139-141, 384-401 and Håland 2010). See Håland 2006 for the importance of the human (female) body and the ritual year.

and animal disguise during rites de passages generally, both in the cycle of nature and the life of humans.

Modern Carnivals

Kalgeros in Melikē: The ritual known as *Kalogeros*, i.e. the monk, is celebrated around the spring equinox in the village of Melikē. The protagonist is far away from being or behaving like a monk. He wears a sack and animal hides. Many bells are hung around his waist. They symbolize phalluses. He holds a phallic-shaped rod, his “sceptre”, a piece of wood, with a piece of cloth tied over one end (Fig. 1).⁴



Figure 1. Kalogeros on Cheese Monday, in Melikē (Greek Macedonia), 2 March 1992.
(Author's photograph)

On Cheese Monday, the Kalogeros, followed by other painted characters visit the houses of the village, and are treated with wine, ouzo, and food. The housewife sprinkles the Kalogeros with *polysporia*, a symbolic mixing of grains, through a sieve. As a counter gift, he swings with his “sceptre” in order to mix the grains

⁴ See particularly Håland 2007:122-141, for a presentation of modern festivals. See also Håland 2005, particularly for the Kalogeros. When I am analyzing symbols described as phallic, death and/or fertility symbols etc. these interpretations and descriptions are my own, and are further discussed in my publication from 2007. The interpretations are based on comparisons between ancient and modern sources, the latter being fieldwork material, including informants' point of view and my own pictures (cf. e.g. Håland 2005: Fig. 4) as well as secondary literature (e.g. Henderson 1991; Michael-Dede 1991; Papamichael 1975; Psychogiou 2008).

with water and earth, while wishing a lot of rain and a plentiful harvest. The Kalogeros plunges his “sceptre” with the cloth into puddles, soaks it with muddy water, and smears the celebrants with it. The aim of the procession is to assure the rain and a plentiful harvest. When they have made the round of the village, they end up in front of the church, where the entire village is awaiting them. Here, a play, a parody of ploughing and sowing, begins: “May the water-melons grow as big as the Queen’s breasts, may the maize grow as long as the King’s prick” – all the actors in the agricultural play join in the recitation. Simultaneously, they sow “polysporia”. Two men take the place of a pair of oxen, yoked to the plough, and everybody invokes the buried grain so it may come back to life again. The Kalogeros is the rain-maker, who symbolizes the forces of vegetation and the fertility of the earth. Babo also belongs to the ritual. This is a man dressed up as an old woman. Babo holds a cup with “holy water”, i.e. women’s spittle and a sprig of basil in “her” hands and “she” sprinkles the holy content on the male participants. “Her” assistant holds “The Invincible Life’s Powers” in “her” or his hands. This is the male sex organ in the form of a lyre, to be deposited on the earth when it has been “ploughed” and “sown”. The assistant pretends to play, while “she” utters magical fertility formulas. In ancient and popular Greek, Babo or Baubō is a wet-nurse, and symbolizes nourishment.

An important phase in the action is the ritual ploughing, the fertilization of – or the ritual way of making love with – the earth: the young men represent oxen yoked to the plough. Very often as a result of clumsy movement, or because of the evil forces, they stumble and fall into the mud, but Babo plays the “Life-renewing Lyre”, and after some sprinkling with the “holy water”, and some magical formulas uttered by Babo, the “oxen” get up again.

The king of fertility sits on the cart pulled by the young men representing oxen. Other men represent the evil forces (death). They hang on to the back of the cart and hold on, to prevent the king from moving ahead, but they are vanquished. The triumphant king sits enthroned in splendour because the vital forces of vegetation are invoked by Babo and “her” playing on the lyre. The contact of the royal vehicle with the watered earth suggests the coming prosperity of the earth, of the fecund-making rain through the power incarnated in the rain-invoking King.

The ceremony ends as it started: in front of the church, the Kalogeros is fed ritually with their most important articles of food. By giving this to the rainmaker, the villagers give what they wish to receive in abundance the following year. Afterwards, the Kalogeros is carried to the mud. Here, they immerse him three times. This act symbolises the death and resurrection of the Kalogeros, and is the most important and tragic of the play. When he has come back to life, he is washed with water from the village’s water-tank, “so it will rain during the summer”, everybody says.

Formerly Kalogeros wore an animal mask, but today he is painted, the animal mask however, is found in the village of *Flambouro* on *Cheese Sunday*: The masquerades that are called *Kokkeri* (or *Baboutzikarios*, *Bambouyeroi*, *Babuiros*, *Babousiarka*) represent the main features at the carnival season in Flambouro. Accompanied with folk musicians, *Kokkeri* parade through the streets, visit the houses and ring provocative with their huge bells, offer a drink to the onlookers from the bottles they are carrying, while receiving good wishes for the New Year and a bountiful harvest. The goat skins, the animal masks and the headdresses, i.e. phallic symbols, and jokes indicate that the Flambouro-carnival goes back to primitive agricultural rituals and Dionysian cult.

Formerly, people used to lend the bells from their animals during the carnival, and returned them afterwards. Today, people invest in goat skins, since it is important to have the best skins and be the best dancer. Only trained persons manage to carry the heavy phallic-shaped hats, without destroying their backs. Inside, there is a pole about two meters high. Around the right hand they carry a belt, a whip or a rod. *Kokkeri* are always young men and boys wearing these goat skins and large pointed masks decorated with silk headscarves and paper-flowers and big bells hanging around their waists. On *Cheese Sunday*, from early in the morning, they walk around in the village collecting money to the church. The notes are attached to the masks (Fig. 2) and the coins are put in an orange, paralleling the way they attach money to saint's figures in Italy or the newlywed couples at traditional village weddings in Greece. When the musicians, playing a drum and two *zournas*, arrive, *Kokkeri* dance a particular dance while “bowing” and pounding their pointed masks to the ground (Fig. 3). Up to five *Babuiros* dance to the music, in between, they bow their heads, i.e. hats towards the ground, thus the phallus-shaped hats fertilize the earth.



Figure 2. The notes are attached to the masks of the *Kokkeri* in the village of Flambouro (Greek Macedonia), on *Cheese Sunday*, 8 March 1992. (Author's photograph)

The solemn phallic fertility-dance is performed in front of an audience that is as devout as the congregation during the climax of an Orthodox liturgy, also paralleling the aforementioned ceremonial ploughing and sowing in Melikē, where people do not seem to consider the ritual as “obscene” in a negative sense (cf. Michaēl-Dede 1991:30 vs. Chourmouziadēs 1961).⁵ In the afternoon, everyone are at the main square, the children are dressed in carnival costumes, and everybody dance for several hours. Later, they walk in a procession through the village, followed by more dances at the square.



Figure 3. The ceremonial dance during the carnival at Flambouro (Greek Macedonia), on Cheese Sunday, 8 March 1992. (Author’s photograph)

Boules in Naoussa on Meat Sunday: During the carnival season in the modern village of Naoussa young men, called Boules or janissaries, dress up in women- or men’s clothes. When they are ready in their costumes, a procedure following a particular ceremony, Boules and the janissaries say farewell to their families and accompanied by musicians they go in groups down to the main square to dance. According to the inhabitants of Naoussa, the armed rebels took advantage of the carnival during the Turkish occupation, since the masquerading gave them an opportunity to enter the village and visit their families and friends. Hence, they could collect money to the struggle, since then, as now, it was customary to give money to the masqueraders who attached the money to their costumes.

⁵ For further discussion see Håland 2007:132-135, 384-401.

The swords carried by the janissaries are not only symbolizing the fight against the Turks. They are also phallic-shaped symbols, and at the end they are decorated with ribbons, often in the apotropaic “Greek colors”, i.e. white and blue. The masques are very special. The coats of mail consist of coins, crosses, jewelries and other symbols. They often carry a flag in their belts. After taking photos, people often give them money, which the dancers put in their belts. The leading dancer jumps and shakes so the coins ring, thus paralleling the jumping Kalogers and Kokkeri with their phallic bells and other carnivals when people ring bells to wake up the sleeping earth and keep away evil spirits. After some dancing by the masquerading fustanellas at the Boules, a procession starts. One of the “women” carries a lot of flowers in her hair. “She” always walks the middle, surrounded by the janissaries carrying their phallic weapons high in the air, so the fringes with the apotropaic colors are suspended. The two women’s dances differ from the men’s. Following some marching and dancing, the janissaries start a war dance where they cross swords. The action symbolizes fertility. So, in Naoussa “man takes care of the disguised woman”, illustrated by the janissaries holding their weapons high in the air, while watching over the “women”, the “Boules”, always walking in the middle (Fig. 4).



Figure 4. Boules in Naoussa (Greek Macedonia) on Meat Sunday. Men take care of the woman, 1 March 1992. (Author’s photograph)

In the village of Koimēsē people perform a *mock-wedding* on Clean Monday. The wedding represents an ancient tradition and symbolizes fertility. The masqueraders dress up as a nuptial group, including the Bride and Groom, the Old Match-maker,

the Best Man, the Priest, etc. The ceremony starts early in the morning when the participants walk in procession visiting all the houses from which they collect money, i.e. “taxes”. After eating and drinking, and dancing in the main square, everyone walk in procession to fetch the “bride”. Among the participants is a woman carrying the compulsory “pillow”, symbolizing the marriage bed. The “bride” is a man disguised as a woman, wearing the national costume of “her” mother-in-law. Formerly, he wore a mask, but today he wears makeup. The nuptial procession walks from the “bride’s” home, and ends up at the village square, where the parody of a wedding ceremony takes place (Fig. 5). A man dressed as an Orthodox priest officiates. The “midwife”, “police” and “medical doctor” of the village participate as well. Both before and after the wedding ceremony, people dance and several men try to abduct the bride. After the wedding and the parody of its consummation, the subsequent child-birth takes place when the medical doctor and the midwife pull out a doll. This act symbolizes fertility. Afterwards, a procession walks through the streets and people sing and dance. Among several examples of rain magic is the Bear which is an important character in the carnival in Koimēsē. The Bear-leader cuts a few hairs off the Bear’s coat and offers them to the mothers of small children as an amulet. The Bear falls to the ground and sometimes he becomes surly and stubborn and demands gifts before he will get up. The playfulness of the Bear, its pretended tumbles and demands for gifts before it will get up, is a well-known rain-making ritual. A similar mock wedding is performed in several villages and the ritual terminates the carnival season before the Lenten period. The mock wedding symbolizes fertility.



Figure 5. The crowning at the mock-wedding in Koimēsē (Greek Macedonia) on Clean Monday, 9 March 1992. (Author’s photograph)

Carnivals have generally been related to pagan predecessors, particularly the Greek Dionysos-festivals and the Roman Saturnalia-festival and their parallel rituals linked to sexual reversals, fertility and uproar. The Greek carnivals are indeed celebrated in the same geographical area as the most ancient worship of the mask-god, Dionysos, once flourished. In ancient Athens particularly four different festivals were dedicated to the wine god, combining orgiastic religion with song- and dancing contests, theatre performances, wine consuming and ox-offerings. Two of the festivals will be summarized in the following.

Ancient Festivals

The *Anthesteria* festival was dedicated to the new wine. During this three-day long festival the first shoots of blossom were celebrated at the end of February. This festival presents a complex of different elements. Formally, all the rituals were dedicated to the return of Dionysos, officially, by sea to guard the yearly renewal of vegetation (cf. Håland 2007:266-273, 360-366 and Håland 2012).

All the days were associated with the word pot or jar: *Pithoigia* “Jar-opening”, *Choes* “Drinking Cups”, and *Chytroi* “Pots”, named after the necessities for wine drinking and a meal of pottage. On the first day the *Pithoigia*, the wine-jars, were opened. In honour of the gift of Dionysos and of the beginning of the new vintage, the first fruit offering, the first mixed wine and water, was offered to the god. The offerings, together with a sacrificial bull, were taken out and carried to the shrine of Dionysos in the Marshes, *en limnais*. This sanctuary was the most ancient and most holy sanctuary of the god, and was opened only once a year especially for this festival.

Here, fourteen women, called the Venerable Ones, *gerairai*, headed by *basilinna*, the queen and wife of *archon basileus*, the priest of Dionysos, had the leading roles during the nocturnal ritual in which the god came to life, since he was not continually present in the cult statue, but was specially made for the festival, or rather during the festival, through the ritual setting-up of the mask-god. The ritual might also have conjured the god up from the Marsh. The god was generally thought to be incarnated in a bull, thus the procession to the sacrificial ritual might also have ended with the animal skull being raised up in the sanctuary. At ancient vase paintings the eventual former bull skull or animal mask is illustrated or substituted with an anthropomorphic mask: A jug shows the huge mask of the god lying in a winnowing basket (i.e. *liknon*) between two women, one with a wine jug and other with a fruit salver.⁶ When they have finished the decoration,

⁶ See ARV 1249,13 for women preparing Dionysos’ mask in a *liknon* (winnowing fan, i.e. a broad basket, in which the corn was placed after threshing, and then thrown against the wind so as to winnow the grain from the chaff; *liknon* also signifies cradle). Cf. also Burkert 1985:240.

the bearded mask of Dionysos is placed upright (cf. ARV 1151,2) and is venerated by his female worshippers who are drawing wine, drinking and dancing, thus, paralleling the *maenads* seized by Dionysos during the Lenaia and other Dionysian festivals. Through the ritual, the frenzied god, probably impersonated by the robed and masked Dionysos-priest, arrives through the Marshes, the entrance to the underworld, once a year to marry “the queen of Athens”, and the second day was dedicated to a *hieros gamos*, the wedding of the gods, i.e. basilinna and her husband, the Dionysos-priest, playing the role of the wine god. The couple was escorted in a colorful procession through the city. Disguised participants, many of them masked men wearing women’s clothes, walked in the licentious wedding procession similarly to the Koimēsē-carnival, and the union took place in the *Boukoleion*, the ox-herd’s house, in the *Agora* (the market place). They also had a drinking contest, to celebrate the arrival of the god.

These days were also polluted. It was supposed that the spirits of the dead returned to earth when the wine-jars were opened. They came from the temple in the Marshes, and it was opened to facilitate their arrival. Therefore, all the other sanctuaries were closed and people smeared their doorways with pitch and chewed buckthorn to keep away the ghosts. The third day was dedicated to the spirits of the dead. During a ritual which was the concern of the individual householder, the dead were offered a boiled mixture of all kinds of grains along with honey, *panspermia*. The meal was cooked in Chytroi, from which the day took its name. When the day was over, people shouted: “Get out *Keres* (i.e. the spirits), the Anthesteria is over!”

The *City Dionysia* was a solemn elaboration of the old cheerful rural festivals dedicated to Dionysos, the *Country Dionysia* in which the main features were the procession with the phallus and a he-goat, followed by the sacrificial ceremony. In the classical City Dionysia, however, hundreds of bulls had substituted the single goat, people also wore costumes and masks, and several phalli and bottles loaded with wine were also carried in the procession which ended at the Dionysiac Theatre. The boys’ contests, *kōmos* (i.e. revelling procession) and the tragedies were other central features of the festival.

The ceremony was marked by choral singing of *dithyrambs*, religious odes and dancing in honour of Dionysos. The first step in the development of drama by Thespis was that he engaged in dialogue with the chorus and dressed himself up in a mask and robes so that he could impersonate different characters. The tragedies were followed by a comedy or satyr play in which the chorus instead of impersonating men or women appeared dressed as the half-animal creatures who were the mythical companions of Dionysos. The costume of the Satyrs is the flat-nosed mask with animal ears and the animal skin apparel or loin cloth with horse tail and phallus attached. On vase paintings clown-like mummers, connected with some popular dithyrambos, parade a mock nudity with their buttocks padded put

in an exaggerated way, indulging in all kinds of buffoonery. The satyr play was probably the production in fixed form of something which had been an ancient popular masquerade, thus paralleling the modern carnivals.

The Power of the Mask

Masks were not only important in the Dionysian cult, since Pausanias (8.15,1-3) tells about the Arkadian version of the mystery cult, the great rituals dedicated to Kidarian Demeter. At the yearly rituals the priest puts on the mask of the goddess, and beats the earth with rods, to wake up the powers of the underworld and make the earth fertile. Evidences for the wearing of animal masks are the Demetrian priestly groups of bees, *melissai*. In the cult of Demeter, masks are also related to obscene language, *aischrologia* and exposures, *anasyrmene*, particularly in women's festivals.

There might be some connection between texts, mainly from Church Fathers, and votive gifts in the shape of statuettes from the temple of Demeter at Priene, Asia Minor, presenting the "woman's body" as a face which is also a lower belly, or genitals turned into a mask. The face is huge and below the mouth is a representation of a woman's genitals. On the head is a basket of fruit with a bunch of grapes.⁷ The figure may also be carrying a torch or a lyre, other central fertility-symbols. The figures might illustrate the obscene gesture of the mythical Baubō, who by exposing her genitals, emphasized women's sexual and reproductive role and provoked the mourning Demeter's laughter.⁸

Laughter and obscenities are related to grotesque masks. The laughter put the demons off their guard, because the laughable is a part of the shameful and ugly (*aischros*), according to Aristotle (*Poet.* 1449a31ff.). In general, it is the strangeness of amulets that "attracts the glance of the sorcerer" and keeps it from looking onto the victim (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 682a3). Nevertheless, the misshapen, Priapos, with his enormous penis (Diod. 4.6,3 f.), who generally is a defense against the "evil (i.e. envious) eye", becomes ridiculous when he is compared with the solemn representations of the female sex, which provoke terror, and thus becomes a stronger defense against the male enemy. Perhaps this is the reason that grotesque masks generally are related to female divinities and often represented as genitals?⁹

⁷ See Olender 1990:111 for Baubō, i.e. terracotta figurine, found at Priene, Asia Minor. Berlin TC 8614. Antikenmuseum Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preubischer Kulturbesitz, photo: I. Geske.

⁸ Cf. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.16P-18P and *HHD.* 202-205, which along with other sources are discussed in Håland 2007:256-262, 386-401. See also Rowlandson 1998:pl.28.

⁹ Concerning psychoanalytical approaches, these might supplement other approaches when trying to learn more about the ritual year in general and particularly in connection with the theme

We understand why the “Baubō-figures” fixed stare and the absolute frontality of the public face excites the laughter or fear of the viewer in the same way as it is with Medusa. The Gorgon or Medusa mask appears as an apotropaic sign, with round goggling eyes, lolling tongue, and jutting teeth. The relation between grotesque masks and Medusa might be a male representation of man’s own fear. What man fears himself, might also scare off the enemy. Accordingly Medusa’s apotropaic mask was a desired apotropaic symbol, petrifying the invading enemy.¹⁰

Ugly masks are also connected with Artemis, since grotesque masks of old women made of clay were dedicated as votive gifts in her Ortheia sanctuary. Terracotta, pot-shaped masks are also found in Hera sanctuaries at Tiryns and in Southern Italy. The avenging goddesses, Praxidikai (Paus. 9.33,3, cf. 3.22,2), were worshipped in the shape of heads, i.e. pot-masks.

Until recently, the protagonist at the Kalogeros ceremony wore an animal mask on his head. Thus, he belonged to the animals, “the Others”, since he, by wearing the mask, surrendered his own identity. Although the wearing of animal masks have being condemned by the Orthodox Church since the Byzantine period, the animals are still represented both by the bear in Koimēsē and other masks during the carnivals, particularly in combination with phallic symbols, such as sheep bells and tall pointed bonnets made from the hides of various animals such as wolves or foxes and the decoration carried on the hats is generally lent from the churches, such as in Flambouro. There, the name of the masquerades is Turkish and according to the villagers it was taken to keep the evil forces far away. We meet a mixture of several cult layers, and the popular culture exploits the church, but it also employs what is often denoted as the “Oriental” and “Turkish”.

As I said some years ago in Stražnice,¹¹ in ancient Greek culture masking and animal metamorphosis is widespread in connection with passage rites, girls might be bears, deer or cows, boys are bulls, particularly the first are among other things illustrating their “wilderness”. “Hippo”, a “horse” name, is typical for initiatory girls and boys. The little bears, *arktoi*, were tending the shrine of Artemis of Brauron. Other variants are the Dionysian maenads wearing animal skins or Artemis dressed in a deerskin, as illustrated by the maiden who is getting ready for her marriage

for the present publication such as the background to masquerading in connection to transvestism, sexual reversals “animal metamorphosis”/wearing animal skins etc., and why these topics are important in connection with the life cycle passages of humans. The “evil (or envious) eye” is discussed in Håland 2007:77, 386-401.

¹⁰ See ABV 136,49 for Herakles fights Geryon with a Medusa on his shield.

¹¹ “The Ritual Year of Athena: The agricultural cycle of the olive, girls’ passage rites, and official ideology”. Keynote address presented at the Third Conference of the SIEF Working Group on The Ritual Year, *The Ritual Year and History*, Stražnice, Czech Republic, May 2007. An article version of the paper, “The Ritual Year of Athena: The agricultural cycle of the olive, girls’ passage rites, and official ideology”, is published in *The Journal of Religious History* 36/2, 2012:256-284.

in Ephesos, during the festival procession of the fertility- and mother-goddess, Artemis (X. Eph. 1.2,2-9). The deerskin which the maiden's leader wears over her tunic, both impersonates Artemis and illustrates the transitional phase in which she is herself, thus illustrating the nature-culture dichotomy. The undomesticated female nature is often represented by obscenities and fertility, as when a young maiden, often associated with a deer, is violated by a wild wolf, full of potency. The personification of manhood, Herakles, the super-male hero was disguised in animal skins hence he was able to conquer the nature by putting on elements from the wild nature, since the lion's skin was his official garment.

As the modern Kalogeros, Dionysos also had traits from wild nature, he was uncontrollable and renewing, associated with the forests, trees, and fields. Many supposed that Dionysos spent the winter-months somewhere else. His "brotherhood" or retinue of animated dancers, *thiasos* walked or danced in a wild, drunken and licentious procession, and by shameless actions they made comical gestures during the dances which were an important part of the Dionysian *kōmos* that drove through Athens during the rural Dionysian festivals and the Anthesteria. The satyrs, Pan and the nymphs also belonged to the ritual. Dancing "male goats" and female maenads, the obscene satyrs and the young girls carrying baskets generated fertility.

Masks are the most ancient means of surrendering one's own identity and assuming a new extraordinary identity, whose power seizes (possesses) the person carrying the mask. Simultaneously, the masked person obtains a part in the fertility incarnated in the mask, according to the logic of "sympathetic magic". This is illustrated both at the rituals dedicated to Kidarian Demeter and the Dionysian festivals. From a comparison with the modern rituals this might be the reason that obscenities often are performed by masked persons. During the Kalogeros and other carnival ceremonies, we meet unrestrained alcohol consumption, particularly by masked persons singing obscene songs, carrying phallic symbols while walking in processions. During the procession to ancient Eleusis grotesquely masked figures sat at a critical narrow pass near the bridge across the brook known as the Rheitoi and terrorized and insulted the passers-by with mockery and obscene gestures (Ar. *Ran.* 391 f., 416 ff.). The ritual was called *gephyrismos*, signifying "gross abuse" in ancient Greek, and was performed by men. At Dionysian festivals wagons drove through the streets carrying masked figures who shouted abuse at everyone they passed in a proverbially coarse manner.

A reflection of the ritual use of masks might also be found in the ceremonies exclusively celebrated by women when celebrating their goddesses, for example the *pannychis* all-night festival and clay-daubing of marriageable girls at the Artemis shrine at Ledrinoi, on the banks of the Alpheios river (Paus. 6.22,8 f.). The story goes that Artemis and her nymphs had smeared their faces with mud in order to escape the amorous attention of the river god. The use of mud was

important also in Dionysian rites. Rolling in mud and smearing with mud are well-known features of the customs of today and their use in ensuring fertility also belonged to ancient rituals. The life-giving mud helps both people and their animals. Accordingly, the participants at the Kalogeros are soon as daubed as were the ancient participants in the procession celebrating Dionysos in the Marshes during the Anthesteria.

The mask effects a transposition into a new and unknown world, but apart from the petrifying Medusa, this is a world of ridiculousness and obscenity. There are many variants of the procession with giant phalloi, the wearers of these massive membra promoted fertility. It was further indicated by smearing themselves with soot or bran or by wearing masks, and as nowadays, they could simultaneously conceal their bourgeois identity. The soot-smearred phallus-carriers, *phallophoroi*, and those wearing phalluses, *ithyphalloi*, who marched along in the processions, were extremely drunk, thus paralleling the modern Kalogeros procession, where “even the schoolteachers” are smeared with soot and mud.

Masks and phalluses also go together in the satyr’s costumes. Accordingly and ambiguously, according to ancient ideology, if a man surpassed the Apollonian ideology of solemn restraint, he became a satyr with an eternally erect phallus, infertile. Hence, during the rural Dionysia in mid-winter, men celebrated wine and its powers of arousal, telling the story of how surprised they first were to discover that it gave them erections. The thought that they might be permanently locked into that shameful position drove them to kill Ikarios and to assault Dionysos himself. The significance of the phalloi carried in the local processions of the Rural Dionysia, according to the story, is their gratitude for deliverance from a state of permanent satyriasis, and the complete dominance by their own lower members.¹² The complementary qualities of Dionysos are also illustrated by the phallus symbolizing power and fertility.

One may also parallelize the borders between the human and bestial and the excessive sexuality represented by the satyrs, Pan and Priapos, the incarnation of the male member, with the androgynous Hermaphroditos and Baubō of Priene. The latter, or the Baubō of the Church Fathers, is also known from the Demeter-legend, where she performs the obscene gestures, thus making the sad and sorrowful Demeter laugh.¹³ Although all the examples are related to fertility-magic, the sexuality they represent is beyond the accepted limits of everyday social interaction. According to Olender (1990:105 f.) the ancient contribution was to project these images onto the stage of religion and politics. However, the two factors, politics and religion are difficult to separate in ancient society.

¹² Schol. Luc. *DMeretr.* 7.4, see Rabe 1906:279.24–281.3, discussed in Håland 2007:262–266, 427.

¹³ Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.17P–18P.; *HHD.*202–205, cf. also n. 8 supra. Hermaphroditos: Diod. 4.6.

So, the fertility-bestowing phallus of Kalogeros is a modern equivalent to the ancient Dionysian phallus, which is also present in Flambouro during the solemn dance when the earth is fertilized by the tall phallus-shaped hats. The ritual illustrates an example of the sacred marriage, *hieros gamos*, with the earth, which is performed during the ritual dance when carnival-figures lower their phallic head-clothings towards the earth to make it fertile, thus paralleling the act in the satyr play, the *Cyclops* of Euripides (*Cycl.* 168-172) and many instances in the comedies, i.e. the cult hymns in the Dionysian cult.¹⁴ Dionysos the son par excellence, was effeminate in guise and gait. The masked men also assumed women's parts in the classical theatre, i.e. the performance of the cult hymns dedicated to Dionysos. Modern parallels are "the bride" in the carnival in Koimēsē, Babo in Melikē, and the carnival-procession in Naoussa, in which the "girl" always walks in the middle of the procession. During modern carnival and ancient Dionysian rituals people are no longer who they seem to be, thus, men take the role of the fertile woman by trying to appropriate her socially recognized power to reproduce. Yet, in so doing their ultimate inability to reproduce is marked and also the comedy and the buffooning of the transvestite men.

Every single feature in the Kalogeros ceremony recalls Dionysian and Demetrian worship. The ancient called the modern "polysporia"-mixing *panspermia* (all seeds). It was an important part of the offerings at agricultural festivals celebrated after autumn equinox and before spring equinox. The rituals were dedicated to the powerful chthonic fertility gods, the Corn Mother, Demeter and the wine god, Dionysos. Both were celebrated during winter with licentious festivals which were closely associated. The dramatized acts were addressed to the life beneath the earth, and the fertility-making gestures were always parts of the agricultural rituals celebrated during the winter and early spring.

Conclusion

The goal of the masquerades is to drive the evil forces far away from the houses and cultivated areas, and ensure that the sowing will yield an abundant supply of food. Hence, before the most critical periods during the agricultural or ritual year, particularly before sowing and during spring (i.e. during the sprouting of the grains), people disguise to help or assist the nature, so everything turns out right. Therefore, some masks, principally grotesque women's masks and animal masks, belonging to the sphere of nature in general and the chthonic sphere in particular, are especially popular. By using these particular masks in the calendric rites,

¹⁴ Cf. Romaios 1949:94 ff., Megas 1992:221 ff. pl. IG and Eur. *Bacch.* 379, 728, 862 ff., Ar. *Thesm.* 969 ff. for jumping and dancing.

people try to ward off unwanted influence, such as drought, by way of sympathetic magic.

In Greece, face-painting, illustrated by makeup, sooth or mud, might have the same meaning as using masks, and for some Greeks, particularly the most eager Orthodox believers, the wearing of animal masks have been substituted by other masks, since the Orthodox church have been hostile to the animal mask since the beginning of its era, however, they are still in use.

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OD MODERNIH GRČKIH KARNEVALA DO MASKI DIONIZA I DRUGIH BOŽANSTAVA U ANTIČKOJ GRČKOJ

SAŽETAK

Za suvremene Grke: “Karneval bez maski je kao kruh bez brašna”. Maske su tradicionalno bile važan dio religijskih svetkovina u antičkoj i modernoj Grčkoj, osobito onih vezanih uz tijek agrikulturne godine, ponajprije proljetni ekvinocij, dok moderna sezona karnevala prije perioda Korizme nije zamijenila antičke svetkovine posvećene Dionizu, koji je uz Demetru, bio ključno božanstvo poljoprivrednika. Maskiranje se prakticiralo i početkom svibnja, prije žetve te kasnije prije sjetve i sredinom zime. Prema jednom od antičkih izvora, Pauzaniji, svećenik za vrijeme godišnjih rituala posvećenih Demetri stavlja masku božice i udara zemlju štapom kako bi probudio sile podzemlja i zemlju učinio plodnom.

Značajke antičkih i suvremenih svetkovina pod maskama u članku se uspoređuju s naglaskom na dodirnim točkama. Istražuje se snaga maski općenito, kao npr. u vezi s Meduzom i drugim antičkim mitskim likovima te upućuje na važnost maskiranja i životinjskih maski u obredima prijelaza

Ključne riječi: moderna i antička Grčka, karnevali/religijske svetkovine, maske/maskiranje, faze agrikulturnog ciklusa/obredi prijelaza, mitski likovi