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A Study Based on the Mystery Cult of Demeter and the Cult of Isis

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At Athens 9.9.1996 Petra Pakkanen

I. Introduction

1. Problems

This study deals with early Hellenistic religion in Greece, especially in Athens. Its focus is the examination of the nature of Hellenistic religion on the basis of two cults, the Great Mysteries of Demeter and the cult of Isis, both of which are claimed to be mystery cults. The Hellenistic era has been seen as a period of change:[1] the city-state (*polis*) as a political and social institution is believed to have died out; old, traditional public cults were challenged by new ones from outside; new governing bodies and new kings, who were both rulers and gods at the same time, appeared. In religious life, new kinds of formulations and institutions emerged causing changes in the position of ordinary people. The religious history and political history do not fit completely into the same periodization, which itself is an interpretative perspective of historical generalization, because 'Hellenistic' as a religious continuity extends beyond political limits. For this reason the

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[1] The Hellenistic age is the historical period between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the rise of the Roman Empire in the first decades of the Christian era. The concept of 'Hellenism' itself is modern. In the history of religions this period often is seen as a kind of 'axial age' (from K. Jasper's term *Achsenzeit* postulated in 1949 in *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, cf. Eisenstadt 1982, 294) which involves the emergence of individuality, human awareness and the religious formulations of salvation and liberation. See Eisenstadt 1982, 296–298; Hicks 1989, 29.

term 'Graeco-Roman religion' in research literature often seems to be an expansion of the term 'Hellenistic religion'.[2]

After the introductory sections of this study, Chapter Three describes two cults, the Eleusinian Great Mysteries of Demeter and the cult of Isis, as studied from the primary sources. In the fourth chapter, the 'mystery' character of the two cults is studied, and in the fifth, the concepts characterizing Hellenistic religion will be interpreted and re-evaluated on the grounds of the previous chapters. These have been selected from the vast literature concerning Hellenistic religion which usually identifies four concepts considered to cover the nature of the religion of this particular era: 1) syncretism, 2) the monotheistic trend, 3) individualism, and 4) cosmopolitanism. In the research literature these concepts have become accepted as generalizations characterizing Hellenistic religion, taken *a priori* without reference to their meaning in a given context. My task is to locate them in Hellenistic Athens and try to discover what their contextual content might be. Did the Athenians themselves recognize the existence of such ideas which might correspond to the above mentioned terms? Is there any coherence between them as theoretical concepts as used by scholars and contextual historical life? I will call into question the used assumptions, and suggest some answers as to their meaning as a part of Hellenistic religion as they emerge in the sources. I will explore the relationship between the scholarly use of the terms and the scholars' assumptions in the contextual source material.

The problem of mystery religions is studied because both of the cults studied here are called mystery cults in the research literature. In Athens during the period under examination, however, the two cults differed radically from each other, and, in fact, the Athenian third-century cult of Isis should not be called a mystery cult at all. This observation provides an interesting opportunity for the examination of the concept of the mysteries, and to try to determine an approximate date for the emergence of the mysteries of Isis in Greece by comparing its contents and structures with that of her cult in Rome, where it certainly was a mystery cult.

2. Cults Studied

The material available for this kind of study is vast, on such a scale that it is necessary to choose exemplary cults to illustrate the religious life of the period. Thus, we must be satisfied with studying only selected aspects of the religious life in Athens and looking at the related areas mainly during the third and second centuries BC. The two cults chosen function as representative examples of the nature of religious life: The first is the cult of Demeter, her Eleusinian Great Mysteries, which was long and well-established in Athens before and during the Hellenistic era. Traits of Classical religion are to be seen in this cult, but also changes and new 'Hellenistic' elements. The second one is the cult of a newcomer, Isis, who was worshipped by a particular religious association at Athens and Delos and who came first to Delos and then to Piraeus as a foreign goddess. Religious associations were a typical phenomenon of Hellenistic times, especially in the third century BC.

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[2] Martin 1983, 132–133; also Gelzer 1993, 130–131.

Examining the association in which Isis was worshipped provides a view of the religious life of the associations as a whole as well.

The following reasons for the choice of these two cults are asserted: The traditional religious practices of the city-state were kept alive in early Hellenistic Athens without any dramatic break in tradition – the gods of the Greek *pantheon* had their own festivals, some of which were regarded as more important than others, especially to Athens as a city, and thus maintained a remarkable continuity from Classical to Hellenistic times.[3] Demeter warranted more festivals than any other deity honoured in the Athenian city-festivals. Her Great Mysteries was the most important festival of the Athenian year besides the *Panathenaia* and City *Dionysia*, and took nine days in the month of *Boedromion* (from the 15th to the 23rd), and thus represents the typical cults of the *polis* well[4]. In addition, it was a mystery cult with individualistic and cosmopolitan elements, the themes of interest to this study. The cult of Isis tends to cover another aspect of the religious life of early Hellenistic Athens; namely, that of the new cults of the foreign gods worshipped in the religious associations. My choice of this cult as an example was determined by its popularity, Isis having been claimed as the most popular deity among the foreign gods in Athens during the three pre-Christian centuries.[5] The organization of the cult was similar to that of the other religious associations, thus representing this new phenomenon of religious life very well; some inscriptions concerning the cult are well-preserved and reveal much of the typical administrative functions of the religious associations in general. In the research literature the cult of Isis is usually called a mystery cult. In the source material, however, it appears as an established mystery cult only from the end of the first century AD onwards. Thus, the study of the cult of Isis brings interesting new information on the theme and concept of the mystery cults of the Hellenistic era from a point of view other than that which can be acquired from the material on the cult of Demeter alone. By choosing these two cults as examples, it is possible to study how the old and the new ways in religious life came together, and how they lived side-by-side in times of change.

3. Geographical Confines

The inherent interest of Athens depends on its special position in the history of the early Hellenistic period, and on the importance that this particular city still had as a contributor to religious, philosophical and social ideas. Despite Macedonian rule, Athens seems to have been able to continue its 'prolonged life of the polis',[6] and, thus, it had a special position among the Greek cities; the Macedonian rulers after Alexander the Great

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3 See Chapter III.2.A, pp. 29–34.

4 The Mysteries of Eleusis were held for some two thousand years with their heyday falling in the Classical and Hellenistic eras. They have been claimed to be the greatest of all ancient Greek religious festivals. See Mylonas 1961, 285; Keller 1988, 29–30. Cicero stated in the 1st cent. BC in Leg. 2.14.36 that "Athens has given nothing to the world more excellent or divine than the Eleusinian Mysteries" (translation C.W. Keys, The Loeb Classical Library 1988); see p. 115, n. 191.

5 See pp. 54–55 (Chapter III.3.C).

6 See e.g. Ferguson 1911, 3–5.

had other primary interests and let Athens lead its own life.[7] In this study Piraeus is treated as a part of and the harbour for Athens.

Delos is another main area considered, because it was a very important commercial centre and a cult-place for the Athenians as well as for Greeks generally. After the Peloponnesian War, Athenian control of Delos was reinforced by the formation of Athens' maritime confederacy in 378/7 BC when the administration of the Delian temples was reorganized under Athenian officials. For a century and a half after 314 BC Delos enjoyed the usual institutions of a city-state, and during the early third century Delos enjoyed a kind of neutrality as a trade centre of the Aegean. It was during that time that the population of foreigners grew up. The island became closely connected with Athens again when it was granted to her as a free port by the Romans. This was done in recognition of Athens' support for the Romans in their war against the Macedonian Perseus in 167/6 BC. Being under the supervision of Athens, the administration of Delos was organized according to the models of Athens herself, and lasted till 88 BC.[8] Thus the evidence from Delos is very comparable to that of Athens.

In addition to Athens and Delos relevant material from other regions has been collected for this study; comparable examples, the hymns and aretalogies of Isis from Cyme, Maronea, Andros, Ios, Thessalonica and Madinat Maadi (Narmouthis) among other material, are taken into closer consideration in order to make the study more relevant. In the fourth chapter, the Mysteries of Isis in Rome during the second century AD are looked at more closely in order to compare the mysteries of the Romans with the cult of the same goddess at Athens in the third and the second centuries BC.

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[7] The period of Demetrius of Phalerum (317–307 BC) meant controlled autonomy for Athens, and the period of Demetrius Poliorcetes (293–289 BC) began with the restoration of democracy. Democracy was abandoned quite soon, and restored again in 287 BC after a period of oligarchy. After the Chremonidean war (267–262 BC) the period of economic decline in Athens began under the rule of Antigonus Gonatas ruling from Pella (245–239 BC); his rule probably influenced distant Athens only marginally. Demetrius II ruled in 239–229 BC and like his predecessor he had problems with the Northern borders, and thus Athens was not his main interest. The city declared its independence in 228 BC. Antigonus Doson re-conquered southern Greece in 227 BC, but Athens was able to remain as a city outside the areas conquered by him. Its relative independence lasted till the end of the 3rd century BC. C. Habicht 1992 (1994), 68–87 points out that the Athenians and the Ptolemies of Egypt had continuous good relations during the 3th and 2nd centuries BC. Athenians showed favour to the Romans who were the enemies of the Macedonians at the beginning of the 2nd cent. BC. See e.g. Ferguson 1911, 12–26, 69, 95; Holleaux 1930 (1989), 219–225; Rostovtseff 1941 (1972), 215–128; Will 1979, 84–100, 214–230, 338–340, 343–348; *idem* 1981 (1984), 30–32, 42–43, 117; Walbank 1981 (1984), 236–8, 240, 255–6, 446–7, 453, 466–468.

[8] See e.g. Ferguson 1911, 314–315; Roussel 1916b, 1–7, 30–32, 97–99; Rostovtseff 1941 (1972), 230–232; Préaux 1958, 176–180.

4. Sources and an Evaluation of Sources

A. Inscriptions

Inscriptions form the basic material for this study. There are relatively many inscriptions extant for the two cults examined; in general, they constitute our main source of information about the Hellenistic world. In the case of Isis, the material from Delos is combined with that of Athens, because from Athens herself the amount of Isis- and Sarapis-inscriptions from the period is not covering enough. The Athenian inscriptions used are published in the *Inscriptiones Graecae* (mostly IG II/III^2). They deal with the official cult of Demeter, and the religious associations devoted to Isis and other deities in Athens and Pireus. In the case of Demeter, for example, F. Sokolowski's *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (1962 and 1969) and I. de Prott's & L. Ziehen's *Leges Graecorum sacrae* (1869 and 1906) have been used among others in order to supplement the materials of IG. Inscriptions from Delos have been published in IG XI 1–4 and in ID (*Inscriptions de Délos*); and those of the Egyptian cults on the island are published and studied by, for example, P. Roussel in *Les cultes Égyptiens à Délos du III^e au I^{er} siècle av. J-C.* (1916a) and by M.-F. Bazlez in *Recherches sur les conditions de pénétration et diffusion des religions orientales à Délos II–I^{er} siècles avant notre ère* (1977). The inscriptions dealing with the cult of Isis have been collected by L. Vidman in 1969 into the publication *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapicae* (SIRIS).[9] Dittenberger's *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (SIG), *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG) and B.D. Meritt's & J.S. Traill's *The Athenian Agora Inscriptions* (1974) have been used as well for both cults and for other themes of this study.

It is the task of source criticism to pay attention to the religious, historical and social relevance of the material used in a study so that the interpretations being made on this basis are sufficiently valid; thus arises the question of the reliability of the material. Notwithstanding that M.N. Tod has stated that inscriptions hardly need any source criticism because of their objectivity and freedom from bias,[10] there is a need for source criticism of inscriptions. They are frequently mutilated, their occurrence is not stable throughout historical times and places, and they have already undergone interpretation in the editing process.[11]

Where inscriptions are concerned the questions of the so-called 'external source criticism' are casually quite easily solved: When was the text written? By whom was it made? To whom was it addressed? Is the text authentic? Inscriptions are often dated according to the *archonts*; the name of the one who paid for the inscription is often mentioned, their intention being to offer public information about official or private

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[9] In this corpus there are 35 Isis and Sarapis inscriptions from Athens: nos. 1–5 belong to the period between 333/2 BC and 116/5–95/4 BC, nos. 6–12 to the 1st cent. BC, nos. 13–16, 18 and 33a to the 1st cent. AD, nos. 19–20 to the 1st or 2nd cent. AD, nos. 17, 21–25 to the 2nd cent. AD, nos. 26–28 to the 2nd or 3rd cent. AD, nos. 29–30 and 33b to the 3rd cent. AD, nos. 31–32 to the period between ca. 150–350 AD, no. 33 is of uncertain date.

[10] Positivisticly M.N. Tod 1932, 32 states: "Rarely – I would say never – are we in our study of them confronted with problems of *Quellenforschung*."

[11] For the Hellenistic period especially, see e.g. Walbank 1981 (1984), 10–11.

matters. Dating is easy in some cases, but the problem of dating 'undated' inscriptions is more difficult because it was normal to copy inscriptions and the same conventionally accepted formulas were repeated over long periods of time. In addition, the questions of textual criticism have to be weighed. This means that the epigraphist must question the integrity and genuineness of the text, the principles by which lacunae should be filled by the editor, how the editor should use his knowledge of the formulas used and of the language in general, his knowledge of the historical events of the period, and be aware of subjective selectivity. A good epigraphist knows 'the code', the repeated textual and linguistic formulas which were used in this genre. This is why I, a non-epigraphist, have not gone deeper into these critical questions in this study. I have relied on the editor's knowledge and used the published inscriptions as the source of information as such and tried to use the inscriptions that have been confidently dated according to information given in the text itself. I have given the datings in the footnotes as far as possible.

The value of inscriptions as primary source material on public matters, such as official religion of the city-states, can also be justified on the grounds of their character: at the public places of the city-states the majority of them were intended to give information to all those who lived in the cities. This information was usually about official announcements, rules concerning, for example, religious officials, performances of sacrifices or rites and festivals, lists of members of the accepted associations, votive offerings, etc. Dedications to certain gods are important because they reveal the manners of approaching the gods: what kind of epithets were used, how the gods were invoked. In Hellenistic times the number of inscriptions used as a public medium became more general; most relevant information was inscribed on marble. One more reason for the value of inscriptions is that there is no great lapse of time between the events and the recording of the facts. M.N. Tod was even ready to claim that, "inscriptions give us not traditions but fact."[12] The problem is much more complicated with the text written by historians, because their personal affections play an important role. The historical background and motives for the information on deeds and actions stated in inscriptions is what a scholar must be ready to explicate. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that a separate inscription always deals with an isolated part of history, and, as such, it has few connections with the wider spheres of life. A historian may easily emphasize this isolation if he or she fails to take into account other contextual facts which can not be read from the inscription itself. That is why these 'black spots' must be supplemented by other source materials. In this study that material is to be found in ancient literature.

B. Ancient Literature of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods

This group of materials is used in conjunction with the inscriptions in the study. The lapse of time is wider, because ancient writers often used to refer to the (distant) past, sometimes to the mythological one, especially when they wrote about religion. The geographer Pausanias (*floruit* ca. AD 150) is a good example of this. It would have been

[12] Tod 1932, 32.

optimal if most of the authors used had lived at the time under consideration. Unfortunately, only a few of the historians or mythographers whose writings are preserved or handed down to our day lived in Athens in the third and second centuries BC.[13] Thus it has been necessary to study the text of earlier or later authors, mostly those from Roman times. In these cases, it must be remembered that the historical context and writing situation differed from that of the Hellenistic period; most often the frame of reference was determined by Roman policy (for example, Pausanias has been accused of being favourable towards the Romans[14]). There must be some kind of 'filter', therefore, a consciousness of this fact, in using the texts of these writers as primary material.

The writers referred to represent different fields: historians, philosophers, geographers etc. In the following I list the most important ones:

B.1. Texts from the Classical Period

Many texts were written in Classical Athens by philosophers, playwrights, orators and historians giving useful references to religious cults. The philosophers Plato (427–347 BC)[15] and Aristotle (384–322 BC)[16] refer to religion on many occasions, but use the code of philosophy and thus they usually approach religion in an allegorical sense. The playwrights Euripides (ca. 480–406 BC)[17] and Aristophanes (ca. 446–385 BC)[18] wrote plays set in Athens which, among other things, described religious practices, and especially those of Aristophanes mocked religious practices and beliefs in an ironical tone. The orators Isocrates (436–338 BC) and Demosthenes (384–322 BC) referred to religion on many occasions in their speeches giving the democratic Athenian point of view, thus defending traditional Athenian religion.[19]

B.2. Texts from the Hellenistic Period

Athenaion politeia, a text ascribed to Aristotle contains many significant descriptions of religious life, among other things, and was probably written in Hellenistic Athens. Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus (372–287 BC), wrote a description of a superstitious man

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[13] We only have very few extant fragments of the historians for the two centuries following 323 BC, even though the names of 46 historians writing during this period are mentioned in other sources; see e.g. Walbank 1981 (1984), 1.

[14] Frazer 1898, xlix.

[15] His *Apologia* (for the concept of religion), *Epinomis* (for the star cult), *Leges*, *Meno*, *Phaedrus*, *Respublica* and *Theaetetus* are used in this study.

[16] His *Ethica Nicomachea* and *De Virtutibus et Vitiis* are used in connection with the religious associations.

[17] The cult of Demeter and her Mysteries are an important frame of reference for his *Bacchae* and *Heraclidae*.

[18] His *Ranae*, *Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Lysistrata* contain many references to the religious cults of Classical Athens; the frame in the *Thesmophoriazusae* is the women's cult of Demeter in Athens.

[19] Isocrates' *Panegyricus*, Demosthenes' *De Corona*, *Olynthiacus* III and *Contra Boeotum* I are the speeches used in this study.

in his *Characteres* (chapter 16). Menander (342–291 BC), the best-known representative of the new comedy, wrote his plays in Hellenistic Athens.[20] These plays, which are preserved mainly as fragments, describe probable (or fictitious) situations in every-day life and thus contain valuable material from the point of view of religion as well. Menander was an aristocrat and an intellectual who particularly stressed his stance as an artist.

In Athens there was a tradition of writing histories of the city during the century between 370–270 BC. These writers are known as the Atthidographers, and they were interested in the legendary origins of religious institutions. Unfortunately, their writings have vanished expect for quotations and paraphrases[21] of which the fragments of Philochorus (the first half of the third century BC) are used in this study. Fragments of Heraclides Criticus, his description of Athens in the early Hellenistic times, and of Istros are also cited in this study.

B.3. Texts from the Roman Period

The geographer Strabo lived in ca. 63 BC–19 AD and his texts contain several references to religion. Plutarch (ca. 50–120 AD) offers valuable material as a philosopher, biographer and a member of the priesthood of the Delphian oracle institution. He was a native of Chaeronea in Boeotia which is close to Athens. For this study the most important text by Plutarch is in *Moralia* V (351c–438e) *De Iside et Osiride*.[22] Plutarch also wrote about the lives of important men in *Vitae Parallelae* which are useful for this study. I have also used the remarkable works of Pausanias, the writer or geographer who might equally well be called a mythographer, because his writings are based on the mythical history of the Greeks. He offers a geography of Greece in his *Periegesis* (Description of Greece) containing ten books, the first one of which describes Attica and begins with Pireus and Athens. Pausanias lived in the second half of the second century AD and was a native of Lydia.[23] His main interest lies in the sanctuaries, statues, tombs and the legends connected therewith. In connection with the Mysteries of Isis, the most used ancient text is that of Apuleius of Madauros[24] from the second century AD, part of his *Metamorpho-*

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20 From the works of Menander only one complete and nine partial plays have survived to the present. It is most likely that some later fragments have been incorrectly ascribed to him.

21 The fragments of the Atthidographers have been arranged by F. Jacoby 1950 (FGrHist); and commented on by him in Supplement 1954, *A Commentary on the Ancient Historians of Athens*, Nos. 323a–334.

22 R. Merkelbach 1995, 242–243; 253–265 regards Plutarch's text as a philosophical, especially Platonistic interpretation of the Egyptian cults. A good commentary on the text is J.G. Griffiths' (1970) *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride*.

23 Pausanias mentions the Emperor whom he knows as 'the first Antonine' (Marcus Aurelius) and his war against the Germans and Sauromatae AD 166–176, but he does not mention the death of 'the second Antonine', Emperor Lucius Verus, which took place in 180 BC; see Jones (1918) 1978, ix–x (editor's introduction to Pausanias' books I and II).

24 Apuleius was born in AD 123 in the African city of Madauros. He was a wealthy traveller who spent a long period in Athens studying philosophy. *Metamorphoses* is at least in part an autobiographical story which describes the religious cults of the Roman Empire during his lifetime.

ses, Book XI, which is sometimes called 'The Isis Book',[25] because it describes how a man called Lucius finds Isis as his highest *salvatrix*, she frees him from a spell which had caused him to become an ass, and he tells the inner secrets of her mystery cult in Rome. This offers good comparative material on the Mysteries of Isis in pre-Christian Athens and in Rome during the first Christian centuries. The text is completely free of an apologetic Christian frame of reference. The latest texts of the Roman era are those by Athenaeus and Diogenes Laertius; the first one wrote the so called *Deipnosophistae* in the late second and early third centuries AD, and the second one the famous *De clarorum philosophorum vitis* which contains biographies of ten philosophers and some references to the religious life of the time. It was probably written in the second half of the third century AD.

B.4. Texts of the Christian Fathers

It was forbidden to talk about the most sacred events which took place during the final stage of the initiation rites of the Mysteries of Demeter. This secrecy was surprisingly well kept, so that information about the contents of this rite was not revealed in the texts of the ancient writers. On the other hand, the Christian Fathers who were not bound to keep the secret because of their different frame of reference were quite eager to relate these 'horrible pagan practices' with the intention of stressing their own 'truth' as being more pure and noble. Such texts are polemic, the style indebted to rhetorical tradition, and thus they must be viewed as unobjective from the point of view of the history of religions. This is why source criticism has to be kept in mind, especially the question of the author's intention in writing the text. There is also the problem of whether some of the Fathers, especially Clemens of Alexandria, referred to the Mysteries held at Eleusis of Attica or to those of Alexandrian Eleusis. In Alexandria there was a suburb called Eleusis, and it is suspected that there was a mystery cult there as well.[26] The most important Fathers who wrote against the mysteries in their texts are the following: Clemens of Alexandria's[27]

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[25] The book has been a popular topic of research. A good commentary is offered by J.G. Griffiths (1975), *Apuleius of Madauros: The Isis Book (Metamorphoses Book XI)* in EPRO 39.

[26] M.P. Nilsson 1950, 89–90 gives adequate evidence for the existence of the cult; G.E. Mylonas 1961, 300–301 and K. Clinton 1974, 8 support his view. M.P. Nilsson 1957, 66 states, however, that the Eleusinian Mysteries were not transferred to Alexandria, but that the cult of Demeter in this city was influenced by them. N. Hopkinson 1984, 32–38 states that the name (of the Alexandrian Eleusis) hardly have been adopted without the institution which made it famous, but evidence, literal or archaeological, for the Mysteries at the Alexandrian Eleusis is negative. He reasons his view by noting that no mention is made of the Mysteries at the Alexandrian Eleusis by either Strabo or by Clemens of Alexandria who discusses the Eleusinian Mysteries at length in *Stromateis* (5.70). P.M. Fraser 1972, 200–201 supports the negative view of the existence of the Mysteries there; he states that the Alexandrian suburb Eleusis on the east of the city was named after Eleusis in Attica, and there were held yearly festivals with competitions, but no Mysteries were included to these *panegyreis;* see also H.I. Bell 1952 (1975), 18 who doubts the existence of the Mysteries at the Alexandrian Eleusis as well, and Merkelbach 1995, 161.

[27] Clemens was born around 150 probably in Athens to a non-Christian family. He was active in Alexandria as the founder of the so-called 'Alexandrian School'.

Protrepticus, book II and *Stromateis* (which describes the Greek mysteries), Tertullian's[28] apologetic writings, Hippolytus'[29] *Refutatio omnium Haeresium* (refutes the Mysteries of Demeter and Isis among others), Arnobius of Sicca's[30] *Adversus Nationes*, and Eusebius'[31] *Praeparatio Evangelica*[32]. All of them intended to refute the Greek 'pagan' mysteries in their texts. In this study, Clemens of Alexandria's writings are used because they deal with the mysteries most extensively.

C. Previous Research

The research literature which deals with Hellenistic religion is vast, even though the definition of the problems and themes studied in them differ from that of this study; the scope of questioning is different. An often used monograph dealing with Hellenistic Athens is W.S. Ferguson's *Hellenistic Athens* published in 1911, quite an aged study from today's point of view. That Hellenistic Athens has surprisingly been ignored by the researchers of antiquity may be due to its special character in the Hellenistic world and the lack of sources. C. Habicht's study *Athen in hellenistischer Zeit. Beiträge zu Politik, Gesellschaft und Kultur* (1994) is the latest complete book on this theme, but none of its articles concentrate on religion.

Religious life has been mapped by a group of remarkable works including the second part of M.P. Nilsson's trilogy, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion. Die hellenistische und römische Zeit* (1950). It is a classic and useful handbook with complete references. Of the extensive older studies L. Deubner's *Attische Feste* (1932) should be mentioned. A.-J. Festugière has written a lot about Hellenistic spirituality, his *La vie spirituelle en Grèce à l'époque hellénistique ou les besoins de l'esprit dans un monde raffiné* (1977), for example, offering a good introduction. The same may be said of E.R. Dodds' renowned *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951). J.P. Vernant's *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (1965, English translation 1990) belongs to the modern studies and has many fresh ideas.

On the cult of Demeter, G.E. Mylonas' *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (1961) has been of much use. K. Clinton's *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (1974) is a valuable study for the Eleusinian cult. Mysteries in general, including those of Demeter have been studied by R. Reitzenstein in *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (1910) and later on by W. Burkert in, for example, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987).

Some remarkable Isis-research has been carried out recently. It has been promoted by the series, published in Leiden under the leadership of M.J. Vermaseren, called *Études*

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[28] Tertullian lived around 160–225, a native of Carthago, and was one of the most important of the early Church Fathers.

[29] Hippolytus lived in 170–236 and acted as presbyter in Rome.

[30] Arnobius was a teacher of rhetoric from Numidian Sicca. He converted to Christianity around 295 and wrote apology texts at the beginning of the 4th century.

[31] Eusebius from Caesarea wrote in the beginning of the 4th century.

[32] In this text there is a passage 3.12.4 in which the Father cites Porphyry and which describes the Eleusinian Mysteries, but it is believed that this is a reference to the Mysteries of Alexandrian Eleusis, the cult following the model of the Attican equivalent: τὰ δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων πάλιν τοιαῦτά φησιν ἔχειν σύμβολα; see also Clinton 1974, 9 and p. 9, n. 26 above.

préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain (EPRO) which contains, for example, a useful four-fold bibliography (EPRO 46) *Inventaire bibliographique des Isiaca. Répertoire analytique des travaux relatifs à la diffusion des cultes isiaques 1940–1969* (1972–1991) collected by J. Leclant and G. Clerc. F. Dunand's *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée vol.* II*: Le culte d'Isis en Grèce* (1973) in EPRO 26 has been remarkably useful for the present study. A useful corpus is EPRO 130, F. Mora's *Corpus prosopographicum religionis Isiacae* I–II (1990). J. Bergman's *Ich bin Isis* (1968) deserves mention here as well. On the cults of Delos, P. Roussel's study *Les cultes égyptiens à Délos du III^e^ au I^er^ siècle av. J-C* (1916) and M.-F. Baslez' more recently (1977) *Recherches sur les conditions de pénétration et diffusion des religions orientales à Délos II–I^er^ siècles avant notre ère* are important.

Since P. Foucart's *Des associations religieuses chez les grecs. Thiases, éranes, orgéons* (1873) there have appeared very rare monographs which describe religious associations. These are F. Poland's study *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (1909) which deals with all the Greek associations, and the religious ones form only a part of the work; and M. San Nicolò's *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer* (1915, revised edition in 1972) which deals mainly with the Egyptian and Roman associations from the juridical point of view, but has some valuable references also to the Greek associations. Many articles dealing with religious associations among other things have been written, for example S. Dow's *The Egyptian Cults in Athens* in Harvard Theological Review 30 (1937), 183–232 and T. Brady's *The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks (330–30 BC)* published in 1935.

II. Methodology

1. Methodological Approach to the History of Religions

A. Methodological Point of View and Method

The study of the history of religions involves some methodological problems. A historian of religions has to combine the methods of the neighbouring sciences, such as history and its various branches, philology and sociology, in a way that will produce the best possible result in each instance. What makes a study one which belongs to the science of religions is the discipline's methodological point of view. This means that one starts by presupposing and relying on the specific religious dimension of human existence around which the many different forms of religion variously develop and express themselves. Thus religions, including those of historical times, are to be understood as expressions of human religious behaviour. In this way it is possible to penetrate into the meaning of religious phenomena and to understand foreign religions as well.[1] Classical phenomenology of religion systematically studied the forms of religion as a branch of research which classifies and systematically investigates differing manifestations in religious life (even) on a global scale; it is the knowledge of the different ways in which religion

[1] Cf. Reynolds & Ludwig 1980, 12.

appears when studied from comparative morphological-typological points of view.[2] It seeked to give universal perspectives on the forms and structures of religion as well as on the elements of religion.[3] It was strongly pointed out that the phenomenology of religion was to be systematic, not a historical study of religions.[4] From the time of G. van der Leeuw's (1890–1959) contribution,[5] the first occurrence of the hermeneutically orientated phenomenological school in the Netherlands, however, hermeneutically orientated philosophical aspects began to complete this type of comparative religion. Stress was laid on the real essence (*das Wesen*) of the phenomenon. This presupposed an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon,[6] even though van der Leeuw identified the meaning of the phenomenon with the description of the phenomenon.[7] Understanding the meanings of religion has been one of the tasks of hermeneutic phenomenology of religion which systematizes religious phenomena and looks for the intention and meaning of them.[8] In my opinion, phenomenology of this type, which is orientated towards the understanding of meanings and the history of religions, should be combined, so that the empirical starting point of historical study may be enlarged to encompass the purposes of phenomenology which regard the value of the examination as a source for religio-historical understanding.[9] This would also mean that the borders between the history of religions, the phenomenology of religion, the sociology of religion and the philosophy of religion would lose at least some of their importance.[10] The phenomenology of religion is an auxiliary discipline to the history of religions, because the soundly executed phenomenology of religion always relates to history,[11] and history includes sociological as well as

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2 Hultkrantz 1970, 74–75; Gilhus 1984, 26; Pentikäinen 1986, 19–21. E.g. M. Eliade is a well-known representative of this; see e.g. his *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1963). U. Bianchi 1994, 120 states "...method is also characterized by a comparison, not between isolated and bare elements found in different cultures, but between distinct cultural complexes and cultural processes."

3 E.g. C.J. Bleeker, 1954, 147 stated that the phenomenology of religion "intends to be an investigation into the structure and the significance of facts drawn from the vast field of the history of religions and arranged in systematic order."

4 This was postulated already by C. de la Saussaye in 1887 (*Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*). See Pettazzoni 1954, 217; Hultkrantz 1970, 69; Sharpe 1975 (1986), 222–224; Gilhus 1984, 26.

5 G. van der Leeuw's main work on the methodology on the science of religions is *Phänomenologie der Religion* (1933).

6 G. van der Leeuw has been criticized because in his method the religious phenomena are taken out of context and there is no distinction between the phenomena and the categories of classification which are used to organize them. Gilhus 1984, 30.

7 Gilhus 1984, 34.

8 A representative of this is J. Waardenburg from the University of Lausanne; see e.g. his *Religionen und Religion* (1986). See also Pettazzoni 1954, 216–217 and *idem* 1959, 66 and Hultkranz 1970, 79–80.

9 In the '30s, J. Wach strongly defended the aim of the history of religions as being to understand them and to portray them in separation from the philosophy of religion. Wach 1930 (1988), 19–25, 81–82. I cannot agree, however, with all J. Wach's ideas; for example, with the demand that the historian of religion should never base his research on material drawn from only a single area of religious life or that the history of religions must be strictly separated from the philosophy of religion. *Ibid.*, 20, 82–95; see also Bleeker 1954, 148 and Pettazzoni 1954, 218.

10 On the tradition to divide the scope of research of the science of religion into separate domains, see Pentikäinen 1986, 16–25.

11 Bleeker 1954, 150; James 1954, 96; Eliade 1961, 7; Hultkrantz 1970, 76–77; Gilhus, 1984, 38. According to M. Eliade there remains a tension between those who try to understand the essence and the structures of religion and those whose only concern is the history of religious phenomena.

philosophical observances.[12] Discovery of context is the first step of the procedure. This implies an evaluation of the documentary material, and a study of its setting with respect to the contemporary life of the time. All expressions of religious experience are embodied and imbedded in a historical context, and thus they become historical documents comparable to all other cultural data, such as artistic creations, social and economic phenomena, and texts.[13] One task of the historian is to represent events and processes of the past.[14] The context provides meaningful data for such an understanding. Having knowledge of the historical situation of religious behaviour at the first level of the research process makes it possible later, in a concluding section, to abstract the structure of this behaviour, so that it can be analogically located in a multitude of situations where the meanings are structurally coherent.[15] This involves making an effort to find a universal human category in terms of which the people's religious activity can be understood. Distinct systems, which here are the religions of antiquity, have a cognitive value: they increase our knowledge both of empirical facts and of the structure and pattern of human reality.[16] This study takes into account, on the one hand, what people in a certain historical situation said about and regarded as religion, and, on the other hand, viewpoints which stand outside, representing the point of view of the researcher.[17] Thus, this approach might bind these views together, so that the first is a starting point (description of the cults) and the second represents the researcher's interpretations (the results of the study). In other words, a contextualized historical study is to be enlarged into a phenomenological one. It is possible to elaborate a structure for the system of religion which prevails independently of historical facts and does not presuppose them.[18] Parallels and analogies justify this view. Every allegation which is made concerning religion springs from noticing analogous beings comparative in nature, because identification in itself presupposes a comparison even with other religions and other elements of religion.[19] Thus, this method purports to explain some universal structures and elements in a specific religion (Hellenistic religion in Athens) which is studied contextually in a temporally and locally defined context. This pursuit is ultimately hermeneutic in aiming to understand the religious behaviour of the ancients by offering some interpretations of their religion.

According to him this is due to the different philosophical temperament of the phenomenologists and the historians of religion.

12 Rudolph 1979, 103.

13 Eliade 1959 (1974), 89; Wach 1930 (1988), 96.

14 Ricoeur 1955, 41.

15 Eliade 1959 (1974), 93, 99.

16 Chappell 1985, 388–390.

17 In cultural studies the method which asks for the meanings and evaluations of studied people themselves tries to discover and describe the pattern of that particular culture in reference to the way in which the various elements of the culture are related to each other. It attempts to describe the pattern of a culture in reference to the culture's own classifications. To strive for generalized classifications is the intention in the 'external' method in which a researcher or analyst stands outside a culture to see its separate events as compared to those in other cultures. See Pelto & Pelto 1970 (1978), 54–60.

18 Bleeker 1972, 44–45; Rudolph 1979, 104–105; Waardenburg 1986, 129.

19 Hultkrantz 1970, 84.

B. Religion as a System

In the introductory essay to the second edition of F. Cumont's book *The Oriental Religion in Roman Paganism* (1956), G. Showerman viewed Hellenistic religion as "the apparently chaotic condition of paganism when viewed as a system".[20] Despite the often noticed confusing character of the religious life of Hellenistic times, religion must be regarded as a system which has functionally adapted to the surrounding culture. The abstract level of a system of religion is general and intercultural, by which I mean the rules by which mythology and the cultic-ritual complex around it, and social as well as cultural institutions of religion, relate to each other and how they function as a whole. This is the phenomenological interest, and its aim is to consider the 1) meanings of the religious phenomenon studied (what was the meaning people of old themselves gave to religion?), 2) the structure of religion in its historical situation, and 3) the dynamics of religion, i.e. the processes of religious change.[21] First of all this involves a choice of those themes and phenomena which are regarded as relevant for historical understanding. Examining structures and dynamics of the religions studied involves an effort to construct causalities.[22]

C. The Concept of Religion

The concept of religion is crucial in this procedure. Defining it is both a prerequisite of a religious-historical study and, at the same time, the result of the whole study, because one of the most important purposes of this type of research is to construct a coherent and meaningful definition or description of a specific historical religion.[23] As J. Smith put it, religion is created for the scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization.[24] The process of defining religion may be seen as a continuous interrogation rather than a definitive answer provided in advance of the empirical investigation that it initiates. Definition which is understood as a text (in the wide sense of the word, for example, 'ritual as a text') leads, of course, to other texts where other aspects of religion in addition to those indicated by the initiating definition are encountered. On these grounds, W.R. Comstock states that an open definition of religion is a point of departure, not a conclusion.[25] It must be noted that it is not possible to describe religion

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[20] Showerman 1956, vii.

[21] Cf. Bleeker 1954, 149 and *idem* 1972, 44. He uses terms like *essence* of religion and *logos* of religion.

[22] Ricoeur 1955, 28–29, 43, 295.

[23] Bianchi 1972, 20; *idem* 1975, 1–3; *idem* 1987, 401. U. Bianchi has stressed the necessity of defining the concept of religion. The concluding chapter of his book *The History of Religions* (1975) is the same as his article *The Definition of Religion. On Methodology of Historical-Comparative Research.* Bianchi, U. & Bleeker, C.J. & Bausani, A. (eds.): *Problems and Methods of the History of Religions* (1972). See also Wach 1930 (1988), 95: "Concrete religions cannot be deduced from the idea of religion."; and Smart 1979, 28: "It is perhaps not commonly enough realised that important issues can hang on definitions."

[24] Smith 1982, xi.

[25] Comstock 1984, 510.

universally; it can only be derived from the context of which it is a part[26] and to give definitions suitable to the particular case. Description is rarely absolute, that which tends to bind a separate phenomenon comparatively to a larger or universal whole or explain it in relation to it. The ambition of description is more modest.[27] But from a description it is possible in a phenomenological sense to be directed beyond towards interpretation, because interpretation proceeds from explanation, and explanation is not contrary to interpretation and understanding.[28] This means that the definition striven for is 'nominal' (in opposition to 'real'), so that it specifies how the term 'religion' is used, but does not pursue to designate the generally prevalent essence of religion which would be regarded as real and categorial.[29] In general there should be no *a priori* definition of religion, therefore, the only way to begin is with a slight ambiguity: the common **religiosity** of mankind. Religiosity is a human being's self-regulating response to the pressures generated by particular situations within his social, historical, political and economic conditions. Religiosity must be supposed in the science of religion to be a *sine qua non*, and as such it is not easily reducible. It is the human being within a context which is interesting for a scientist of religions: *homo religiosus* is the basis, not his **religion**, which is actually unnecessary. Religion is not a category of human behaviour, but religiosity is a category for the existence of a human being, because it manifests itself in one form or another – at a practical or philosophical level – in many situations which have special importance or deal with existential or ultimate questions. Religious behaviour is one way to express, interpret and outline existence in the world.[30] I would call this starting point the one which begins with the 'relative *a priori*',[31] i.e. with religiosity, but not with the *a priori* definition of religion. It is worth noticing that the religious expressions of a religious man of historical times are nevertheless social in nature, because religion is strongly tied to the facts which relate to cultural, historical, political, economic, ecological and social situation. The religious manifestations preserved to our day tell us about socio-culturally determined religion rather than abstract religiosity. This is a reason why religion of the past should be studied contextually.[32]

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[26] Comstock 1984, 503–504, 507; Hicks 1989, 5.

[27] Holm 1991, 205–206.

[28] Cf. Ricoeur 1955, 26.

[29] Comstock 1984, 502–503.

[30] Cf. Wach 1930 (1988), 93, 107; *idem* 1951, 32 and *idem* 1958, 32. P. Ricoeur relies similarly on basic humanity in all history: "ce que l'histoire veut expliquer et comprendre en dernier ressort, ce sont les *hommes*. Le passé dont nous sommes éloignés, c'est le passé humain". He underlines in the hermeneutical sense the sympathy which constructs the bridge towards understanding humans of the past. Ricoeur 1955, 31–32; 298. See also Ries 1986, 331–333.

[31] The term is used by Wach 1930 (1988), 106, but with a different meaning.

[32] F. Dunand points out strongly that religion is always social in nature, and to try to find the essence of religion in *homme religieux* is ambiguous and dangerous. For him the interest of the science of religion is a group of humans, not an abstraction like a religious man, and as such religion is to be reduced to contextual facts; see Dunand 1976b, 483–486. Thus Dunand is in opposition to the view represented by M. Eliade (see e.g. Eliade 1961, 1–9).

D. Religion as a 'Family-resembling Concept'

Analogy is a very important tool for approaching religions in a scientific sense, because we must find analogical elements in religions in order to handle them as religious phenomena. The religiosity found in different religions is considered an analogy which enables us to regard them within the same sphere.[33] These analogies are like L. Wittgenstein's 'family resemblances', the same elements found in different entities. The members of the family are separate, but share common elements which bind them to the same family. But they have no common essence: some religions are theistic, some atheistic, some have personal gods, some spiritual principles, some rely on linear concept of time, some cyclic, and so on. But just as family-resembling religions are similar in important respects to the others of the family, they are not similar in all respects to any, or in any respect to all. There is a network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing. There is no characteristic that every member of the family of religions must have.[34] These kinds of familial entities must be separated from strictly definable 'universals'. In a historical study it is important to identify analogical elements in the different modes of thinking, because that alone enables understanding, understanding also of those things that seem to be otherwise.[35] The diverse phenomena of the world's religions are bound together by all sorts of metonymic connections which, while not yielding a common essence, do establish both continuities and disjunctions, similarities and differences.[36] Religiosity is always present where something is seen as having deep importance for those to whom it counts as 'ultimate concern', to quote P. Tillich's concept.[37] This religiosity understood as a quality of importance forms a basis for family resemblances in all the different religions.[38]

In addition to analogies there are contrasts that form our way of grasping the ideas and modes of thinking. Religious or sacred things and the non-religious or profane are in contrast to each other, and people construct the sphere of the sacred by excluding profane things and phenomena from that sphere. Every set of ideas or religious system can be apprehended through contrast with other systems. It should be remembered here that these kinds of binary distinctions are an analytic procedure used to grasp the ideas of a religious system, and their usefulness does not guarantee that existence is similarly ordered.[39] The whole mode of thinking of a human being is based on the existence of analogies and

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[33] Cf. L.H. Martin 1983, 131 who opens his article on Hellenistic syncretism as a system by citing M. Foucault: "It was resemblance that organized the play of symbols ... resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture." (Foucault 1971 (1973), 17.)

[34] Wittgenstein has an example of the games as a family with family-resemblances. He postulated also his famous example of the ropes which deserves reference here as well: There are separate and different hemp strands which are 'individuals', all of them have hemp as a common element which makes them ropes, even though one strand does not go through all the way in any of the ropes. Wittgenstein 1963, 66. With references to the Wittgensteinian principle see also McDermott 1970, 390–395; Bianchi 1972, 25 and *idem* 1994, 119–120; Smart 1979, 26–28; Comstock 1984, 512; Hicks 1989, 3–5.

[35] Cf. Ricoeur 1955, 30.

[36] Comstock 1984, 512–513.

[37] Tillich 1957, 1–4.

[38] Cf. Hicks 1989, 4.

[39] Douglas 1970, 161; Dumond 1986, 5.

contrasts, because it is this that enables category and definition-making. What we regard as religiosity may exhibit a great variety in different cultures and at different times; we should accept this variation without prejudice. Religion in society and as a part of human life is not an autonomous phenomenon. This means that new and possibly very different forms of human religiosity should be included in the definition of religion; the definition must be flexible and creative. This is also true of questions about distant times. The gap between times past and present, and differing elements in their religious life, make a dialogue possible. Even contrast can be complementary in the long run, because the pursuit of the method is understanding phenomena, and it proceeds by means of oscillation between the themes regarded as similar in different religions; i.e., those which may be called religious, and particular religious systems, i.e., specific religions of the past or present.[40]

In a hermeneutic sense, we may call this procedure dialectic. The concept of a particular religion is sharpened in the course of the process, because there is an ongoing dialogue between the particularities of the religious life in question and universal themes. Secondly, the matter of the subject, the religion studied, and the whole method of research function reciprocally in the sense that the method progressively shapes and assesses its evidence, while these objects in turn refine the method.[41] Methodologically no material should be regarded entirely through concepts and ready definitions, but there should be a readiness to see new aspects of the definitions through the material.

2. Discussion of Terminology

We cannot help the fact that we perceive religious behaviour through the lens of a particular religious culture, usually the one in which we have been brought up. It is a distinctive set of concepts, myths, institutional systems and so on, expressed through its own particular terminology and vocabulary which is a complete system of concepts.[42] It is possible to speak of the history of mentality of each historical epoch. In studying terminology and the contents of the terms used in historical times, it may be possible to scrutinize the specific mentality of the period. The only possible way to scrutinize the meaning of the concepts of historical religion – which is the interest of this study – is to start from our concepts and then to follow the changes and differences that can be perceived between the modern concepts and their closest ancient equivalents. For example, the Greeks did not have any single word denoting 'religion'.[43] The most extensive

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[40] Cf. Bianchi 1972, 25; Reynolds & Ludwig 1980, 14–15.

[41] Cf. Reynold & Ludwig 1980, 14–15 and Bianchi 1994, 119–121. This sort of hermeneutical approach is opposed to strict positivism which starts from documentation of the materials with the methodological tools defined beforehand; cf. Ricoeur 1955, 27.

[42] Hicks 1989, 8–9.

[43] E.g. according to M. Dubuisson 1985, 82–85, cf. C. Koch 1941, RE, 20.1, cols. 1230–1232, Latin *pietas*, which could be regarded as equivalent of *religio*, corresponds Greek εὐσέβεια. Basing his argument on the text of Polybe, M. Dubuisson accounts that in Polybe δεισιδαιμονία corresponds εὐσέβεια and that Polybe mixes up, not in a pejorative way, δεισιδαιμονία and religious sense of a thing rather than forms an opposition between them, as is usually attested. The negation of εὐσέβεια, ἀσέβεια, is studied in Chapter V.4.B.

word denoting 'sacred' in the Greek language is *hieros* (ἱερός) expressing mainly sacred which actualizes in activities, in cultic life. 'Ανίερος and ἀνόσιος (negative of ὅσιος, holy) could be counted as its opposite side like, for example, βέβηλος (to be trodden or to human 'profane' use). Religious observances, offerings or, more commonly, rites, are called τὰ ἱερά or τὰ θεῖα[44]. The essential nature, meaning and significance of the specific terms which are important and widely used in the history of religions have to be investigated on the grounds of empirical research. These terms should be interpreted according to and related to the life from which they are derived. As terms they also form a basis for terminological use in the scientific sense, and the difference between these two aspects, their original use and scientific terminological use is explained. "No present is entirely new":[45] deeper understanding of terminology involves examination of its roots and interpretation of the terms so that they are understood across temporal distance. Only in this way can their double meaning – that of the past and that of the present – be scrutinized. One of the most important aims of historical study is to re-compose and construct phenomena of the past retrospectively.[46] Here, for example, the contents of the word 'mysteries' involves changes over time. My task is to follow the chronology that led this particular term to mean different things in the course of time.

3. Method for Studying Religious and Social Change

When studying religious change which is closely related to social life, we are able to examine in the main material which relates to the institutional aspects of the religion of the Hellenistic times. Cultural and social change can only be understood in connection with the tension inherent in the symbolic and ideological premises of the civilizations studied.[47] Most beliefs and values connected with them can be analysed as part of a society rather than as a separate cultural sphere. Even moral perceptions and general rules of decision-making incorporated into this change are bound to prevail on the social level.[48] Thus new institutions, religious associations, can yield such insights.

In society human beings belong to different groups that leave historical records of themselves or secondary references to them. Groups create their own value systems, and people may adhere to these or refuse to do so. These values are legitimized by a group which functions as an upper structure. This makes it possible for the members of groups to internalize a group identity and thus co-operate with other parts (including other groups) of society. From this it follows that in the long run groups create values which are possible to identify in the remains of history, historical literature, artistic creations and so on, because every individual is bound to group values whether by acceptance or rejection of them. A group sharpens its own identity and thus 'creates' itself in a society by forming a contrast to the other groups. Such positions of contrast are very important, since they

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[44] The last one e.g. by Pausanias, see pp. 28 and 100.
[45] Wach 1930 (1988), 104.
[46] Ricoeur 1955, 26.
[47] Eisenstadt 1982, 305.
[48] Douglas 1982, 7.

form a basis for evaluating values and identities. A human being easily defines himself through polarities: "I or we are what those others are not, and vice versa". That is to say that value definitions grow from negations. This process is two-dimensional, and it is in a situation of active change, therefore, that the contrast is not only clearest, but also most creative, with new groups and group identities being born.

M. Douglas, who studied change in moral and value judgements, proposed a methodological model for this in her 'grid/group analysis'. She said that "positions... (for example those of belonging to a group) are liable to be stable types, steadily recruiting members to their way of life which is at the same time inevitably a way of thought".[49] It is interesting to note that a group develops a communication code which it uses as a means of maintaining a prevailing inner social structure. It is a system of both communication and control.[50] For an individual moving from one group to another means not only changes in the social structure, but also in that individual's life, because it presupposes choice. One is born into some groups, primary groups which are – for example, tribe, family, gender[51] – without having to make any choices and even without a possibility for such a choice. In the case of Hellenistic Athens there were many groups and this made it possible for an individual to consciously choose a group and integrate him/herself into its code. It is for the above reasons that the questions concerning group identity are important when studying change in Athens (and Delos) of the third and the second century BC. Change in the history of religions goes hand-in-hand with continuity.[52] Religion and religious cults which included both change and conservative continuity had a remarkable role in this. The formalizing process of the new cults and their means of becoming officially accepted by the surrounding society are indicators of change in Athens.

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[49] *Ibid.*, 1–8.
[50] *Eadem* 1970, 55.
[51] This comes close to what M. Douglas called a grid. See *eadem* 1970, 57 and 1982, 16–17.
[52] Ferré 1972, 89.

III. The Cults of Demeter and Isis in Early Hellenistic Athens – Changes in Religion

1. General Overview of the Religious Situation in Athens During Early Hellenistic Period: Typology of Religious Cults

As stated above, in the Athens of the early Hellenistic period there was a great variety of religious cults, both the cults of the city-state and the cults of religious associations. Some of the latter were those of foreign gods brought into Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries BC.[1] Foreign deities had been worshipped at first in private religious associations which thus became incorporated in the official repertoire of the city's religious life. In the course of time, mainly during the late third and second centuries BC, most of these cults became officially accepted. In the following, the cult of Isis serves as an example of a cult which was originally a private religious association and went through the process of gaining the status of a public and official religious cult. The field of religious cults was in any case widened, and the opportunities for the individual Athenian, metic or non-citizen, slave or barbarian, to choose a context for his religious activity were greater than before. It is for this reason that I first describe the field of religious variations in Athens and then study in detail the two case-cults.

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[1] See p. 49, esp. n. 154.

A. Festivals of the City-state

In connection with the official festivals of the *polis*, it should be remembered that they were days set aside by the Athenian state for the worship of deities. There were no purely secular festivals, but all holidays were holy days, because they were dedicated to a certain god or goddess. Thus, there was no rigid definition of what was really religious and what was not, because all official festive events were also secular in one way or another.[2] It is for this reason that the official cults did not die out, but were celebrated regardless of political changes. The practice of inscribing official documents on marble continued, and the documents concerning state religion are among the most important of these sources.[3] Inscriptions concerning state festivals are plentiful throughout the Macedonian (early Hellenistic) and Roman periods. Regulations, statements and honorary accounts in connection with the state festivals are dealt with in the Agora inscriptions, the official accounts, belonging to the period after Alexander the Great till the time of Hadrian. Most of the festivals also appear in early Hellenistic inscriptions.[4] In these inscriptions the conventional formulas are the same as those in the Classical period.

It is also noteworthy that many of the names of the Attic months were derived from a cult title of Apollo, and in each of such months there was a festival in his honour, like in *Hekatombaion* the *Hekatombaia*, in *Metageitnion* the *Metageitnia*, in *Boedromion* the *Boedromia*, in *Pyanepsion* the *Pyanepsia*, in *Thargelion* the *Thargelia*. The names of the other months were derived from the following festivals: in *Poseideon* the seventh day was that of Apollo and the eighth of *Poseidea*, the festival of Poseidon; in *Gamelia* the festival of *Gamelion* was held probably with suitable dates for marriages (in memory of the *hieros gamos* of Zeus and Hera) and *Lenaia* for Dionysus[5]; in *Anthesterion* the *Anthesteria* for Dionysus; in *Elaphebolion* the *Elaphebolia* for Artemis; in *Munychion* the seventh day was that of Apollo again and *Munychia* was the festival for Artemis; in *Skiraphorion* the *Skira* for Demeter.[6]

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2 Parke 1977, 13.

3 See e.g. an important Athenian inscription IG II/III² 1496 listing the sums of money set aside for the festivals celebrated by the city-state between 334/3–332/1 BC: The Great Mysteries (ll. 11, 39–40), *Lenaia* (ll. 10, 41, 81), *Asclepieia* (ll. 15, 45, 69, 85), City-*Dionysia* (ll. 17, 47, 86) *Olympieia* (ll. 19, 50), *Bendideia* (ll. 22, 54), *Diisoteria* for Zeus Soter (ll. 25–26, 55), *Synoikia* for Eirene (ll. 39, 63), the festival for Ammon (l. 39), *Gamelia* (ll. 39, 52–53), *Panathenaia* (ll. 35–38, 65), *Eleusinia* (ll. 66, 74) and the festival for Athena (Athena Demokratias) (ll. 67, 75).

4 These inscriptions have been collected and published by Meritt & Traill 1974. The festivals occurring in these inscriptions of the early Hellenistic period are: *Chalkeia*, no. 78, (= IG II/III² 674), l.16 (Athena); *Stenia*, no. 78, l. 7 (Demeter and Kore); *Chronia*, no. 81 (= SEG XXI 372), l. 6 (Kronos); *Panathenaia*, no. 81, l. 7. Many gods of the *polis* in honour of whom the deeds were done are mentioned in the inscriptions; e.g. Zeus, no. 81 (l. 6); Apollo Prostaterios, no. 89; Artemis Boulaia, no. 89, Demeter and Kore, no. 78.

5 Dionysus was among the gods who were most celebrated in Athens. His festival in the month *Gamelion* is mentioned e.g. in Prott & Ziehen 1896, no. 1 (ll. 16–17), and *Lenaia* in IG II/III² 1496 (ll. 10, 41, 81) from the years 334/3 BC (l. 10), 333/2 BC (l. 41) and 331/0 BC (l. 81); Aristotle, Ath.pol. 57.1 mentions *Lenaia* of Dionysus, its *pompe* and musical contests; see also Heraclitus, frg. 15 stating that the rave festival *Lenaia* is celebrated for Hades and Dionysus.

6 *Hecatombaia*, a festival of Apollo had ceased to be of importance in Attica before Classical times (Parke 1977, 29); *Boedromia* is referred to by Demosthenes, Ol. 3.31; *Pyanepsia* (for Apollo) was most probably linked together with *Proerosia* and the other Eleusinian festivals dedicated to Demeter,

The most important and thus the most enduring festivals of the city-state in Athens were the Great Mysteries of Demeter, *Panathenaia* and City *Dionysia*,[7] because they played a remarkable role in maintaining the position of Athens as a noble city and attracted people to Athens for the celebrations which lasted many days. There were also other traditional festivals mentioned by the authors who wrote in the Hellenistic period. The Atthidographer Philochorus, writing in the first half of the third century BC, describes the festivals and religious practices of the Athenians, mentioning also *Haloa*, *Chytrai*, *Genesia*, the latter being the state festival in honour of ancestors.[8] Sometimes there were reforms in the official cults, for example, in Hellenistic times new observances were incorporated into the city-festival *Olympieia* dedicated to Zeus Soter and Heracles; namely, popular cavalry exercises.[9]

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see IG II/III^2 1363 (beginning of the 3rd cent. BC); *Anthesteria* is mentioned by Philochorus. frg. 84; *Elaphebolia* had in earlier days declined in importance as a festival and was dominated instead by the City *Dionysia* (Parke 1977, 125); *Munychia* was not a festival of great importance, at least by Hellenistic times (Plutarch refers to its origin in Thes. 18.2); *Thargelia*, Apollo's sacred day, is mentioned by Philochorus frg. 88b and Plutarch, Mor. 7.717d; the *Skira* dedicated to Athena is mentioned by Philochorus, frg. 14. See also the regulations concerning the cult of Apollo Erithaseos in IG II/III^2 1362 (end of the 4th cent. BC).

7 The continuity of *Panathenaia* is seen in the early Hellenistic inscriptions concerning the organizations of the festival, e.g. IG II/III^2 334 (335/4–330/29 BC); IG II/III^2 657 (287/6 BC) concerning the *Great Panathenaia* of the year 302/1 BC l. 16–20); it is mentioned in the inscriptions of Roman times (AD 117–138) with the other Panhellenic festivals which included exercises (*Panathenaia*, Olympia, Isthmia, Delphi): IG II/III^2 3163 and 3169/70 (a list of the festivals in the year AD 248); 3165 honours a winner at the Nemean games and at the *Eleusinia* in the 2nd cent. AD; see also IG II/III^2 3198 (AD 262/3). The last-mentioned tells how the Athenian statesman P. Herennius Dexippus made an appearance in a *pompe* at the Acropolis and made a dedication to the goddess. This may have been done merely to maintain the ritual. Philochorus in the 3rd cent. BC describes the practices of *Panathenaia* and its spectacular *pompe* in frgs. 8–9 and 102. In the time of Pausanias this festival was regularly celebrated: see e.g. Pausanias, 1.24.1 who mentions that he saw the ship which was used in the procession of *Panathenaia*; see also *idem* 1.29.1. Dionysiac Panhellenic festivals were an occasion for the drama contests, important from the 6th cent. and throughout the Classical and Hellenistic times. Performing plays was, however, only one part of a festival which included various other activities connected closely with the cult of Dionysus Eleuthereus, like the re-enactment of the original advent of Dionysus from Eleutherae, the *pompe* leading up to the sacrifices in the sacred precinct of Dionysus and the *komos*; see e.g. Philochorus' account on the festival, its popular and lively character in the 3rd cent. BC in his frg. 171; IG II/III^2 1235 (275/4 BC) connects the benefactor of the Dionysiac drama contests and that of the Great Mysteries (ll. 17–19); see also Pausanias, 1.21.1–2; Pickard-Cambridge 1968^2 (1953), 58–61 and the interesting article written by J. Aronen 1992, especially 23–24. About the Great Mysteries see Chapter III.2., pp. 29–47.

8 Philochorus, frgs. 83–84 (*Haloa*); 168–169 (*Chytrai* and *Genesia*). About the last-mentioned he questions whether it was celebrated as a public or as a private cult.

9 Parke 1977, 144. The cavalry exercises are described by Xenophon, Re.eq. 3.1–12; see also Plutarch's account of this festival and its cavalry exercises in Phoc. 37.1 and IG II/III^2 1291 (middle of the 3rd cent. BC).

B. Official Cults of Deities

Throughout the period under examination, numerous deities of the Greeks were worshipped also outside the official *polis*-festivals and had their cults and temples in Athens. An interesting Athenian inscription IG II/III^2 1367 from a date as late as the end of the first century BC, lists nine Attic months (*Hecatombaion, Thargelion* and *Skirophorion* excluded) mentioning the (private) offerings made to the gods during these months: in *Metageitnion* special kinds of baked cakes[10] had to be offered to a god, whose name is, unfortunately, not preserved; in *Boedromion* cocks and grains of wheat to Nephthys and Osiris, piglets and drink offerings consisting not of wine but honey and milk to Demeter and Kore,[11] gathering of the vintage to Dionysus and other gods; in *Pyanepsion* cake offerings to Apollo and Artemis; in *Maimakterion* big cakes and offerings containing fruits, but not wine to Zeus (especially to that of the farmers); in *Poseideon* cakes to Poseidon associated with the ground (earth) and with the gods of the Winds; in *Gamelion* the statues of Dionysus[12] were decorated with ivy; in *Anthesterion* libations had to be made; in *Elaphebolion* sacrificial cakes to Kronos, and finally in *Munychion* hens together with cakes were offered to Heracles.

In Hellenistic Athens the heroes and gods of Greek mythology were also worshipped.[13] Philochorus mentions religious practices dedicated to the gods Apollo, Artemis, Dionysus, Athena Skira, Poseidon, Hermes and Theseus.[14] In this period, personified abstractions and astrological deities became popular. In the epigraphical material, however, they do not appear with any frequency until the Roman Imperial times, and, thus, it is obvious that these cults, though known before, were more favoured after the early Hellenistic period.[15] In the same way celestial objects were personified and worshipped, but this probably started before the personification of abstractions. Philochorus remarks that the Athenians

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[10] These sweet cakes were twelve in number and placed in a certain circle-shaped order (πόπανον χοινικιαῖον ὀρθόνφαλον καὶ καθήμενον δωδεκόμφαλον); this is mentioned in connection with the *Metageitnion* (ll. 2–3), the *Pyanepsion* (ll. 9–11), the *Poseideon* (ll. 16 and 19–20), the *Elaphebolion* (ll. 23–24) and the *Munychion* (ll. 28–29).

[11] This is interesting, because the cock was an animal offered to Demeter during the Great Mysteries, and now the Mysteries of the Egyptian gods represented here by Nephthys and Osiris seem to have become identified with the Mysteries of Demeter held in the *Boedromion*. According to the myth of Demeter (Hymn Hom. Dem. 200), for memory of her fasting, it was prohibited to drink wine during the initiation days of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

[12] Prott & Ziehen 1896, p. 11 (in the commentary of the inscription): Dionysus is here interpreted to refer to the statues of the god.

[13] E.g. IG II/III^2 4986 (3rd or 2nd cent. BC), an inscription connected to the cult of Heracles.

[14] According to Philochorus, *Neomenia* was the day dedicated to Apollo frg. 88b; he mentions practices in memory of Artemis, and talks about the offerings (ἀμφιφῶν cakes) given to the goddess in her sanctuary, frg. 86b; he mentions the offerings of wine to Dionysus and the drinking habits of the Athenians, frgs. 5a–b mentioning that Dionysus got very drunk, but Apollo stayed peaceful and modest, frg. 172; according to him the Athenians worshipped Athena Skira, fgr. 14; he mentions the temple of Poseidon (of the soldiers), frg. 26 and Theseus, the *Theseion* which had the right of *asylia*, frg. 177, and Hermes receiving offerings from new *archonts*, frg. 40.

[15] See e.g. the 4th cent. BC inscriptions concerning the cult of the Moirai, IG II/III^2 4971 and of Mnemosyne, IG II/III^2 4962. The emergence of actual cults of personified abstractions is often seen as a Hellenistic phenomenon. There are exceptions, however, like the cults of Nemesis and Themis at Rhamnous about which see p. 101–102, n. 113.

dedicate their religiosity to Mnemosyne (Mother of the Moirai), Muses, the Sun, Aurora (the goddess of the morning sun), Helios (the Sun God), the Moon, nymphs, and Aphrodite Ourania.[16] All the Olympians had their sacred precincts, temples and statues which are described in detail by Pausanias later in the second century AD. Pausanias describes the Athenian sanctuaries, their cult images and myths; for example, Nike (Victory)[17], Eirene (Peace)[18], Moirai (Fates)[19], Hebe (Youth)[20], Hygieia (Health)[21], and Peitho (Persuasion)[22] are mentioned by him and in the sources of the Imperial period. Pausanias' account concerning the Athenian Agora (1.17.1.) is revealing:

> In the Athenian Agora among the objects not generally known is an altar to Mercy (*Eleos*), of all divinities the most useful in the lives of mortals and the vicissitudes of fortune, but honoured by the Athenians alone among the Greeks: And they are conspicuous not only for their humanity but also for their devotion to religion. They have an altar to Shamefastness (*Aidos*), one to Rumour (*Feme*) and one to Effort (*Horme*)[23].

C. Private Religious Cults

The religious associations were as manifold as the official cults of the *polis*. Religious associations, *thiasoi, eranoi* and *orgeones* were dedicated to particular gods who were worshipped according to the rules of the association. Trade guilds and other associations were also dedicated to deities,[24] but it is obvious that the intention of a man joining this kind of an association was not primarily religious. From the period between the last decades of the fourth century and the end of the third BC there are approximately 100 inscriptions concerning the associations, a great number of which are religious.

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16 Philochorus, frg. 12. See also IG II/III^2 3165 (3rd cent. AD); 5000 and 5093 which mention a priestess of Helios.

17 IG II/III^2 3593 (Imperial period) contains mention of the priest and priestess of Nike; Pausanias, 1.22.4 and 1.24.7 (Athenian temple at the Acropolis); 1.1.3 (Piraean temple of Athena and Zeus where the statue of Zeus holds the one of Nike).

18 IG II/III^2 4786 (Imperial period); Pausanias, 1.8.2 (the statue of Eirene).

19 IG II/III^2 5137; 11674; 13148; 11552 and IG III 1344 (late Imperial period); Pausanias describes the temple of the Seasons (Horai) and Moirai in 1.40.4.

20 IG II/III^2 5150 and 5154 (Imperial period) mention the priests of Hebe; Pausanias describes the altar of Hebe in 1.14.3.

21 Pausanias, 1.23.4.

22 *Ibid.*, 1.22.3.

23 Translation by W.H.S. Jones, The Loeb Classical Library 1918 (1978). In connection with Athens Pausanias does not mention, however, one of the most well-known personified abstractions, Nemesis, whose cult is known, for example, through IG II/III2 4747 (Imperial period) and whose cult at Rhamnous Pausanias describes in 1.33.2–8.

24 Dionysiac artists, for example, were dedicated to Dionysus; IG II/III^2 1325 (begins with the words ἱερὰ Διονύσου. ὀργεῶνες. Ἀγαθεῖ Τύχει); 1326; IG II/III^2 1331; 1332 and 1338 are dedications of the 'artists of scene' from the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st cent. BC (according to the latter they participated in the *Eleusinia* in Eleusis by giving libations and offerings in honour of Demeter and Kore); IG II/III^2 1341 (1st cent. BC) is a decree of the association (*synodos*) of the artists mentioning Apollo and Musai.

Inscriptions show that in Athens from the end of the fourth till the beginning of the second century BC there were associations of the foreign gods Bendis[25], The Mother of the Gods[26], Ammon[27], Sabazius[28], Adonis[29], Sarapis and Isis[30], Aphrodite Syria[31], Zeus of Labraundos[32] and Aphrodite Ourania[33].

The number of associations seems to be most frequent in the third century BC, and during this period associations for the gods of the Greek *pantheon* with special aspects, like Apollo Parnessios[34], Zeus Soter (Saviour) and Heracles[35], Artemis[36], Asclepius and Hygieia[37] were also established.

It is not possible to offer a complete typology of the religious cults and festivals which were available in Hellenistic Athens, even though it is evident that the variety and possibility of choice was great: the religious field was, indeed, colourful. It is not surprising that Pausanias (1.24.3) says of his time that, "the Athenians are far more devoted to religion (ἐς τὰ θεῖα) than any other men". In the New Testament a similar view of the religious life of the Athenians is found in the Acts of the Apostles (Acta Apost. 17:17–18) which tells how Saint Paul sees everywhere in Athens veneration of idols and (... θεωροῦντος κατείδωλον οὖσαν τὴν πόλιν), he discusses with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers and himself becomes accused of being a propagandist for foreign deities (ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι).[38] The Apostle begins his speech on the *Areiopagus* to the Athenians saying (Acta Apost. 17:22):

> "Men of Athens! I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious" (κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ).[39]

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25 IG II/III² 1255; 1256; 1317; 1324.
26 IG II/III² 1257; 1314–1316; 1327–1329.
27 IG II/III² 1282.
28 IG II/III² 1335.
29 IG II/III² 1261.
30 IG II/III² 1292. See pp. 49ff.
31 IG II/III² 1337, l. 6.
32 IG II/III² 1271.
33 IG II/III² 337.
34 IG II/III² 1258, l. 24–25 (324/3 BC), an inscription honouring a certain Polyxenus Diodorus with a golden crown for righteousness (δίκαιός ἐστιν, l. 19), and placing a statue of him in the *hieron* of Apollo Parnessios.
35 IG II/III² 1291 (middle of the 3rd cent. BC), a honorary inscription of an *eranos*. It refers to the law of the *eraniastai* (ll. 5–6) according to which the association honours for *philotimia* its *tamias*, *grammateus* (ll. 12–16), *epimeletai* and *hieropoioi* (ll. 21–22) in the name of their gods Zeus Soter and Heracles.
36 IG II/III² 1298 (232/1 BC), a *thiasos* or an *eranos* honouring eight of its members for goodness and piety (καλός and εὐσέβεια, ll. 9–10) and placing the honorary *stele* in the sanctuary of their goddess Artemis.
37 IG II/III² 1293 (middle of the 3rd cent. BC), an inscription of the *koinon* of the *Asclepiastai* honouring Ἀλκιβιάδης Ἡρακλείτου Θορίκιος for benevolence and piety (*philotimia* and *eusebeia*, ll. 14–15) and placing an honorary *stele* in the *hieron* of Asclepius and Hygieia.
38 Acta Apost. 17: 16 and 18.
39 Also Acta Apost. 17:23: "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions (σεβάσματα), I found an altar with this inscription: 'To an unknown god'."

The two popular Athenian cults studied in more detail below are intended to illustrate the characteristic polarity of Athenian religious life – the official religion of the *polis* and the private religiosity of the associations – so that the nature of the religious heterogeneity of the period would become covered.

2. Cult of Demeter: Eleusinian Great Mysteries

A. Continuity

When discussing the cult of Demeter, we should bear in mind that in Hellenistic Athens her cult was still a cult of the city-state and showed remarkable continuity. Some of the reasons for this were: Changes in political structure affected public and long-lived religious cults very slowly, because these cults had a significance also outside the political sphere. They offered a means of maintaining and expressing Athenian identity, something which was important for people living in the fourth and the third century BC Athens. The means was in the form of public spectacles, especially processions, included in these cults. Festivals had an inner symbolic meaning for the continuity of Athenian religion, and they expressed the importance of the old Greek traditions. Their location in Athens was important for the inhabitants of the city, because the cults increased the respect in which the city was held and at the same time made Athens known to Greeks in the larger Hellenic world. Athens was able to tell the story of its glory to the rest of the Greek world under the cover of religion, which functioned as a commonly shared factor. It focused people's attention on the old traditions and on the special identity of the Greeks as *Hellenes*.[40] In Classical times, the elements of particularism (the term understood in its political sense[41]), had been central to the question of Athenian identity. Identity had been

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[40] Identity is always constructed by contrasting the things which are seen to form 'us' against those which are excluded. These things outside 'our own' sharpen the contrast and form the boundaries which may be called the national *ethnos*. The world outside is seen as culturally different, usually inferior to one's own (ethnocentrism). Isocrates pointed out in *Panegyricus* (written ca. 380 BC) that "we [Athenians] alone of all the *Hellenes* have the right to call our city at once nurse and fatherland and mother" (25), that "Athens has become a teacher of other cities, and has made the name of Greek no longer a mark of race (*genos*), but an intellect, so that it is those who share our upspringing rather than our common nature who are called *Hellenes*."(30) He continued by telling the story of Demeter: "that which was the first necessity of man's nature was provided by our city ... when Demeter came to our land ..." (28) (translation G. Norlin, The Loeb Classical Library 1928 (1966)). In his description of the funerary speech of Pericles Thucydides already took the same tone in 2.41.1–2: "In a word, then, I say that our city as a whole is the school of Hellas (ξυνελών τε λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι) ... For Athens alone among her contemporaries, when put to the test, is superior ..." (translation C.F. Smith, The Loeb Classical Library 1919 (1991)). Thus the Athenian identity here is constructed on the grounds of particularism, which stresses intellectualism and mythical religious traditions of the city itself. About the strong feeling of superiority in the Greek identity see e.g. Giovannini 1993, 265–267.

[41] The term's political meaning comes close to what could be called 'separatism' which includes a will to stress one's own particular identity separated from that of the others. The term has also a theological meaning when it denotes nations which want to regard their own god as the one and only god suitable to that very nation; an example could be Judaism.

anchored in the *polis* which was seen as very special and glorious. Religion in Classical times was a mark of this particularist identity and functioned as a symbol for Athens. The city-state's festivals were not primarily gatherings of individuals, but festivals of the Greek *poleis* which represented themselves during the festivities. They gave the rulers and civil servants an opportunity to make a public appearance. In these ways the Great Mysteries of Demeter fulfilled its role as a cult of the city-state in the Classical period, and it had a clear Panhellenic character, which, in fact, stressed the Athenian element and the importance of this particular city in the cult. In Hellenistic times it was still a very popular annual celebration open to every one with "clean hands and intelligible speech"[42]. This reveals that also in the Hellenistic era there was the need to express the importance of Athens for the sake of the continuity of the well-established and famous cult among the entire Greek world. In general the Panhellenic festivals expressed the homogeneity of the Greeks contrasted to the *barbaroi*.[43] In this sense, the particularistic element and the importance of Athens as a part of whole Greece was clearly involved in the cult of Demeter of Hellenistic times as well. It was one way for the Athenians to maintain their special position as inhabitants of a noble city.

The role of Athens, especially its absorption into the local Eleusinian cult, has been a subject of discussion.[44] Certain political factors should be pointed out here, because they also played a remarkable role in the cult in Hellenistic times. It is most probable that the cult was originally a local Eleusinian one with, it has been argued, distant roots in the Mycenean world. We should be cautious in this matter, because there is no reason to search for the original form of the Eleusinian cult outside its proper location of Eleusis.[45] At Eleusis it was first a local cult with agricultural and fertility aspects, and it was mainly in the hands of a noble *genos*, the *Eumolpidai*,[46] at least from the end of the seventh

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[42] Intelligible speech refers to the Greeks excluding *barbaroi* (who were not humans in the full sense, because their language was not – as they thought – developed to the level of the Greeks themselves) and clean hands referred to the moral qualities of potential initiants; murder made one's hands dirty, and the soul should be conscious of no evil as well as the heart being pure and holy. This statement is not preserved for us in a complete form, but it is referred to by e.g. Aristophanes, Ran. 354–356; Isocrates, Paneg. 157; Suetonius, Ner. 34; note also Herodotus' statement 8.65.4: "Whoever of the Athenians and the other Greeks wishes, might become initiated."

[43] For the concept of *barbaros* see, e.g. Lévy 1984, 6–17. He shows that the concept has a double-meaning: firstly an objective and descriptive one which denotes non-Greeks, and secondly a pejorative one which underlines cruel, despotic and non-cultivated habits of the non-Greeks. Thus the Greeks knew *barbaroi* as non-Greeks and *barparophonoi* as those who did not speak Greek.

[44] See Walton 1952, 105–114; Feaver 1957, 125–134; Mylonas 1961, 7–8; Richardson 1974, 6–10, 21–23; Boardman 1975, 3–6; Jameson 1976, 441–446; Gaegan 1979, 108–111; Parker 1991, 1–17; Clinton 1993, 110–112 and *idem* 1994, 161–162, 169–170.

[45] See e.g. Nilsson 1932, 161, 165 and *idem* 1950, 445; Mylonas 1961, 29–33; 49–54; Le Corsu 1977, 73; Dietrich 1986, 43, 45, 50–51, 59. This is mainly the view of M.P. Nilsson: "Eleusis is a Mycenian site" (1932, 161). It should be noted, however, that physical survivals (architectural remains, votives and so on) do not entail the same cult having endured, because the cultic-ritual complex is always a socio-political phenomenon as well.

[46] Pausanias has an interesting genealogical note on the *Eumolpidai* in 1.38.3. He mentions that the Eleusinians fought with the Athenians, and thus it followed that the Eleusinians were to have independent control of the Mysteries, but in all other things were to be subject to the Athenians. The minister of the two goddesses was Eumolpus. W.S. Ferguson 1910, 278–9 suggested that the *Eumolpidai* had originally been a guild (*thiasos*). But it must be remembered that only later, by the beginning of the 4th cent., *phratriai* were subdivided into units called *thiasoi*, and they have to be

century to the fifth BC.[47] Between the seventh and the fourth centuries BC the Mysteries of Eleusis were taken over by Athens and many of the rituals, those preparatory to the initiations, were transferred from Eleusis to Athens and made subject to Athenian control, even though the important role of the *Eumolpidai* was kept alive in the name of continuity.[48] The Athenian decree regulating the Mysteries, IG I^3 6, was done before 460 BC.[49] The Mysteries were made open to all and the importance Athens in politics was attested, which can also be seen in this inscription. The Homeric Hymn to Demeter had been composed probably between 660–650 BC as an aetiology for the rites performed at Eleusis.[50] It was necessary to establish a professional group of Athenian officials, the priestly *genos* of the *Kerykes* on the side of the Eleusinian *Eumolpidai* so that the cult became bound to Athens. The *Kerykes* were second in dignity to those of the *Eumolpidai*.[51] They are not mentioned in the Homeric Hymn, and thus their established role shows the Athenian policy of incorporating the Mysteries into her state-religion. Nevertheless, one of the early Roman inscriptions[52] states that the privilege of performing initiation was the knowledge coming out of the priesthood that had been in the family of *Kerykes* for so many generations. These two priesthoods in any case held something of a

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distinguished from the private religious associations of the same name. See Flower 1985, 232–235. Thus I assume that the *Eumolpidai* of the 6th cent. BC was rather a genealogically-organised familial organisation, not a *thiasos*.

47 Walton 1952, 106; Feaver 1957, 126; Richardson 1974, 20–21; Boardman 1975, 3; Parker 1991, 6; Clinton 1993, 110–112 and *idem* 1994, 161–162.

48 See IG II/III^2 1231 (end of the 4th cent. BC) expressing the important role of the *Eumolpidai* in distributing their portion in the organization of the Great and Lesser Mysteries (ll. 10–11) and honouring their *genos*; IG II/III^2 1235 (274/3 BC) honouring the *Eumolpidai* and *Kerykes* together (*hierophantes* is mentioned in ll. 2 and 13) and giving honour to certain *hierophantes* Chaeretius; IG II/III^2 1230 (4th cent. BC) is a decree in honour of the *Kerykes* connected to the Mystery festivals; II/III^2 204 (352/1 BC), ll. 13–17; IG II/III^2 1236 (middle of the 2nd cent. BC) concern the duties of the two *gene*. See also Feaver 1957, 127; Mylonas 1961, 229–232; Clinton 1994, 161–163, 168–170.

49 = SEG X 6 = SEG XVII 2 = IG I Suppl., no. 1 = Prott & Ziehen 1906, no. 5 = Sokolowski 1969, no. 6 = Clinton 1974, pp. 10–13. Despite the vagueness of the inscription it clearly states that the festival was open to all people from all the Greek cities. F.R. Walton 1952, 112 dates it to the Cimonean reconstruction and reorganization process. N.J. Richardson 1974, 9–10 states that the Athenian interest in the cult seems to make ca. 550 BC a probable date *ante quem*; see also IG I^3 78 (ca. 422 BC). K. Clinton, 1993, 110–112 and 1994, 162 dates the beginning of the Athenian control in Eleusis to a very early date, conceivably to as early as the 7th cent. BC. Clinton holds the view that by the end of Solon's regime the state was actively interested in the cult and therefore formed the political union. According to him Athens began to promote the Mysteries among other Greek cities at least as early as the first part of the 6th century; this culminated in the 4th century BC and continued throughout the Hellenistic period, pp. 1994, 161–163, 168–170.

50 The aetiological function of the hymn is clear with its local Eleusinian colour. It mentions the *Eumolpidai* and the main outlines of the festival and some of the rites. See Walton 1952, 109; Jameson 1976, 444–445; Parker 1991, 6–8. K. Clinton 1994, 164 regards the hymn as a kind of hybrid story the ending of which (giving of the gift of the Mysteries by Demeter) serves to recommend the Mysteries to a broader Hellenic audience.

51 The main priests, the *hierophantes*, were *Eumolpidai*, while the *Kerykes* acted as *dadouchoi*, torch-bearers, and *hierokerykes*, the heralds of the sacred. Aristotle, Ath.pol. 57.1.

52 Clinton 1974, 50–52. Clinton presents an edition of the inscription and dates it to the year 20/19 BC; see ll.8 ff. It was first published by I. Threpsiades in *Eleusiniaka* 1 (1932): 223–236. The sacred officials in question are *dadouchoi*. They seem to have been selected from the members of the *Kerykes*, but not by lot; see Clinton 1974, 33.

secular administrative position,[53] because their role was so closely related to the political relations between these two states. But the roles of the two *gene* were maintained throughout the third century BC.[54] The appeal and growing popularity of the Mysteries during the second half of the fourth century evidently encouraged Athens to tighten the association of the *polis* with the Mysteries.[55] The *Eleusinion*, the special sanctuary of Demeter in which sacred objects were kept during the first four days of the celebration of the Mysteries, was also built in Athens.[56] The *Eleusinion* had much more to do with the administrative purposes of Athens than with the rites themselves.[57] It demonstrates the remarkable political acumen with which religion was used as an instrument for expressing Athenian strength. Thus Isocrates in 380 BC stressed Athenian hegemony over 'others', coloured by his dream of Panhellenism, and made a reference to the Eleusinian cult (Paneg. 28–29):

> "Our city was not only so beloved of the gods but also so devoted to mankind that, having been endowed with these great blessings, she did not begrudge them to the rest of the world, but shared with all men what she had received. The mystic rite we continue even now, each year." [58]

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53 Feaver 1957, 127.

54 See p. 31, n. 48.

55 Clinton 1994, 169.

56 It was built on the north-west slopes of the Acropolis before the time of Solon. Andocides, Myst. 111 referring to Solon's law (κατὰ τὸν Σόλωνος νόμον) states that the Athenian council had to meet in the *Eleusinion* after the celebration of the Great Mysteries for the sake of a report concerning the festival. See also IG I^3 78 (ca. 422 BC). Pausanias mentions the *Eleusinion* briefly in 1.14.3. See Mylonas 1961, 63; 246–248.

57 The arrival of the goddess Demeter was announced to the priestess of Athena at the beginning of the Mysteries as a kind of symbol of the connections, including ritualistic ones, between Athens and Eleusis. See inscription IG II/III^2 1078 (220 BC) which describes among other things how the *epheboi* must form into a line to escort the *hiera* from Eleusis to the city *Eleusinion* on the 14th of *Boedromion* (ll. 16–17). The continuity of the *Eleusinion*'s role as an important administrative building is seen from the inscriptions of the Macedonian and Roman eras published by B.D. Meritt & J.S. Traill 1974, e.g. nos. 60; 71 (Macedonian period); 189 (=SEG XIX 93); 194; 216; 226; 227 (Roman period); see also discussion based on a similar sort of administrative inscription published and discussed by D.J. Gaegan 1979, 93–115. It is dated to the second part of the 2nd cent. AD (after 161/2) giving the list of the names of over 700 Athenians grouped by tribes. D. J. Gaegan supposes it to be a catalogue of the members of the *genos* of the *Kerykes*, naming the *archon* of the city (ll. 1–2), officials of the *genos* (treasurer or the priest, ll. 8,10), and its *archon* (ll. 2–3).

58 Translation by G. Norlin, The Loeb Classical Library (1928) 1966.

In Classical and Hellenistic times the cult of the Eleusinian Mysteries grew rapidly in importance under the Athenian state.[59] Athens and Eleusis were bound together and this union was legalised by religion.[60]

In Roman times the festival was still famous; note that even Emperors were interested in the Mysteries and some of them underwent initiation at Eleusis.[61] Pausanias, also, noted (Paus. 5.10.1) that,

> "Many are the sights to be seen in Greece, and many are the wonders to be heard, but on nothing do the gods bestow more care than on the Eleusinian rites and the Olympic games."[62]

An interesting note which demonstrates the continuity of the Demetrian Mysteries far from Eleusis itself during the Roman period is the papyrus text POxy XXXVI 2782 from Roman Egypt, dated to AD 161–169.[63] It is a brief, formal letter from a *hierophantes* of the Demetrian Mysteries to a priestess of the goddess in the small village of Sinkepha telling her to proceed to the temple of Demeter to perform there the usual sacrifices. The letter represents the survival of the cult of Demeter also in a small village in Upper Egypt, in the second century AD, still preserving much of its old Greek character and continuity. This was because of the rather conservative attitude among certain Greek communities,

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59 G.E. Mylonas 1961, e.g. pp. 130–132 explains the building activity of the 4th cent. BC in Eleusis from the existing remains and the inscriptions indicating that the south court of the *Telesterion* was enlarged, a new peribolos wall was built, and the so-called Philonian stoa, one of the period's greatest architectural constructions, was placed in front of the Periclean *Telesterion* slightly after 360 BC, finally finished at the time of Demetrius of Phalerum (317–307 BC). See also Guarducci 1969, 243–244; Clinton 1994, 163–164.

60 The Homeric hymn also includes the openness of the festival to a wider public than to the Eleusinians only: Hymn Hom. Dem. 480. See inscriptions IG I^3 6 (before 460 BC), esp. ll. 36–39; IG II/III^2 1078 (220 BC), esp. ll. 13–16 which concerns the rites in *Boedromion* and organizing the *epheboi* into order for the *pompe*. In the beginning Athens and all its allies had to offer the first fruits of the harvest, the *aparche*, to Eleusis. *Aparche* was administered by the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchoi:* IG I Suppl. 225k (422/419 BC). This custom was at first a local one, but at the date of the proclamation of inscription IG I^3 6 it was already Panhellenic in character, urging upon all other Greek cities; see also Clinton 1994, 162–163. IG I^3 78 (ca. 422 BC) is very important, because it also gives the measures of *aparche* from outside of Attica. Note as well inscriptions IG II/III^2 140 (353/2 BC) in which the connection between Athens and Eleusis and the rules for paying *aparche* are explained, and SEG XVI 50 (middle of the 4th cent. BC, l. 12).

61 Suetonius mentions that Augustus was initiated in 21 BC (Aug. 93.1). The same author says that when Nero was in Greece in AD 34 he dared not become initiated, because impious and wicked persons were warned by the herald against approaching the rites (*idem*, Ner. 34.4). Hadrian was initiated twice, Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius both once. Commodus is also mentioned as having been initiated; see Willoughby 1929, 40. See inscriptions in Ἐφημέρις Ἀρχαιολογική III, no. 26 (ll. 13–14), p. 149; and IG II/III^2 3658 (AD 192/3) concerning the initiation of M. Aurelius and Commodus. See Beaujeu 1955, 165–168, 306 and 338 f.; Koester 1982, 178.

62 Translation W.H.S. Jones & H.A. Ormerod, The Loeb Classical Library 1926.

63 R.K. Raslan 1988, 211 gives also the text and translation; he dates it to the year AD 111, but a more correct date (according to the commentary of the edition) is between the years AD 161–169, because on the verso of the letter there is a document that quotes some official correspondence of the year AD 153/4, though, hardly helping to date the letter very precisely, but the Emperors referred to may be Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (AD 161–169) or possibly Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (AD 176–180).

for whom the original Eleusinian cult of Attica functioned as a respected model of cultic behaviour.[64]

We may also question why the Eleusinian Mysteries had such a remarkably wide and long lasting appeal to people, without any break in the tradition. This concerns the individual and emotional importance of the ritual. This aspect should be borne in mind, as well as the political one which brought the Mysteries into the official cults of the city. This festival was important because it touched the individual as a mystery-cult. The significance of the mysteries to the individual is discussed more closely in Chapter IV. It is worth mentioning here only that one of the remarkable aspects of the Mysteries to the individual was obviously its purpose in creating the feeling of something 'other', different from the happenings of every-day life. It was a kind of blessed status for those who had seen the Mysteries and who could share in the secret.[65] All the other great celebrations created an opportunity to escape temporarily from daily life, its duties and troubles, but the Mysteries offered somewhat more. This may be interpreted as purifying, getting temporarily free from anxieties by solving questions concerning life and death and their paradox. It is hard to say whether individual distinction prevailed over group identity, because the central part of the Mysteries, the shared secrecy, was also socially determined. The individualistic appeal, however, was one of the most important factors that made the Mysteries so long-lived in antiquity and guaranteed its continuity.

B. Participants in the Cult

As the proclamation at the opening of the Great Mysteries states, the cult of Demeter was open to all who had "clean hands and intelligible speech". All cities were invited to take part in this festival of Athens.[66] Women were not excluded,[67] nor were slaves who were capable of contributing economically to the cost of the rites.[68] This practice was the

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64 Raslan 1988, 211–213.

65 See Hymn Hom. Dem. 480–482, also Euripides, Bacc. 73f. and Sophocles, frg. 719.

66 See e.g. IG I^3 6 (before the year 460 BC); SEG XVI 50 (end of the 4th cent. BC); IG II/III^2 1235 (274/3 BC), ll. 5–9 from Eleusis; IG II/III^2 1078 (220 BC), ll. 14–16 from Eleusis.

67 See e.g. Koester 1982, 177. There are, even though, only rare literal mentions of the women who took part in the rites; for example, the famous courtesan Phryne is mentioned by Athenaeus, 13.590e–f as having gone to take a bath naked in the river *Cephissus*, in front of the eyes of all participating in the procession from Athens to Eleusis. K. Clinton 1993, 110–120, especially pp. 119–120 sees the Mysteries as a transformation and enlargement of the much older *Thesmophoria* and similar cults open only to women. According to him in the Mysteries the cult was no longer limited to women, but became increasingly more accessible to all adult Greeks.

68 The presence of slaves is discussed in connection with inscription IG I^3 6 (before the year 460 BC): the suggested reading for ll. B 10–11 in IG I Suppl. 1 (commentary) is δούλοι]σιν τῶ[ν Ἀθη]ν[α]ίων), but it is very hazardous to read mutilated letters like this. The same inscription states on ll. B 5–12 and 37–40 that there was a truce (σπονδή) during the Mysteries for *mystai*, for those who took part in the *epopteia* and for ἀκόλουθοι. *Akolouthoi* has been interpreted to mean the slaves (Bömer 1990, 112). Even so there is no mention of excluding slaves from the festival. Another two inscriptions are from the year 329/328 BC: IG II/III^2 1672 (l. 207) and 1673 (l. 24) use the terms μύησις τῶν δημοσίων referring to the initiation of the slaves working as builders in the sanctuary stating that five slaves who had been working there have been initiated into the Mysteries (1673, l. 24). F. Bömer 1990, 112 states that the presence of the slaves in Eleusis is evident, but on a relatively minor scale.

same during the Hellenistic period. From this we learn that the cult was an expedient for expressing the position of Athens, and during period of political and economical difficulties it might have been one way to symbolically show to the outer world that Athens had not lost its power. Thus the public aspect of this religious celebration was important for the city, because it gave an opportunity for the organization of a spectacle, a procession that made the position and power of Athens visible and concrete. The procession was the most important one given by the city-state, because it bound the relation of Athens and Eleusis together at a practical level and gave an opportunity for Athenian power to make a public appearance before all the Greeks. There is epigraphical evidence concerning the ordering of the procession, forming its participants into a line.[69] It is quite evident that the role of the *epheboi* held a remarkable significance; the *epheboi* were those who represented the cities which took part in the festival, and thus their presence had symbolic meaning. Their appearance is most emphasized in the regulations for forming the *pompe*. One inscription from the middle of the fourth century BC (SEG XVII 21)[70] relates how a so-called sacred peace was proclaimed for the period of the Great Mysteries in Athens and states that the initiants had to be ready to accept the regulations of the city. It was necessary for one to prove to the magistrate, who acted for the benefit of the Athenian state, that one had brought a contribution to the sacrifices. It was one way for Athens to make them submit to her, and acknowledge her power. The city itself even had the power of proclaiming an internal peace which demonstrates the remarkable political influence of the festival. No doubt Athens was well aware of this.

C. Administration of the Cult

The chief magistrates of Athens held in their hands the management of the order of the celebration in Eleusis: not its religious content, but the administration connected with Athens. Thus the Archon Basileus was a general supervisor of the Mysteries and the Athenian *epimeletai* acting as superintendents, elected by the *boule*, were responsible for seeing that everything in the celebrations went according to the rules.[71] It should be remembered that the cult of Demetrian Great Mysteries was at first a cult administrated tribally: priestly offices were in the hands of the tribes.[72] It is possible that in the course of time the democratic system of appointing officials had spread to secular Athenian

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[69] See e.g. SEG XVI 50 (middle of the 4th cent. BC); SEG XVII 21 from the same period; IG II/III² 1078 (220 BC); Sokolowski 1962, no. 15 (1st cent. BC); about the duties of the *epheboi* in the rites see also IG II/III² 1006; 1008; 1011 and 1028–1030 between the years 123/2 and 94/3 BC.

[70] Compare SEG XVI 50; ll. 5–7 (middle of the 4th cent. BC) dealing with the same theme as well.

[71] There was a bureau which was responsible for the Mysteries: the *basileus* was first in rank with four *epimeletai* (overseers) two of which were elected by the people, one from the *Eumolpidai* and one from the *Kerykes*. See Aristotle, Ath.pol. 57.1–2, and e.g. Sokolowski 1962, no. 15, l. 19 and Mylonas 1961, 229.

[72] See Aristotle, Ath.pol. 21.6 referring to the constitutional reforms of Cleisthenes Aristotle states: "He left the clans (γένη) and the phratries (φρατρίαι) and the priesthoods (ἱερεωσύναι) belonging to each δῆμος to remain in the ancestral manner".

institutions and had taken a place in the sacred institutions, too. The tribal priesthoods in which the appointment was genealogically determined faded and in the fourth century BC became 'democratized': the eligibility of all citizens and appointment by lot were now also the practice in some of the priesthoods.[73] The cult of Demeter had tended to become a public cult in this sense also. Be that as it may, the roles of the *Eumolpidai* and *Kerykes* had a remarkable significance in the cult of Demeter in Hellenistic times. The appointments to the priestly offices were still controlled by the two tribes.

The sacred officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries differed from other Athenian religious functionaires in that their offices were based on *genos* and were usually for life.[74] The *hierophantes* (ἱεροφάντης), the High priest of the cult of Demeter at Eleusis, was appointed from the *Eumolpidai*. He enjoyed considerable prestige, being the most prestigious of all the Athenian priests, at least in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods.[75] Their duties were mainly financial and administrative, such as receiving income for the sanctuary, but they also had religious functions, such as directing the procession,[76] showing the *hiera* and revealing spoken secrets (λεγόμενα) to the initiates in the *Telesterion*, proclaiming the truce and sending messengers (*spondophoroi*) to invite all the Greeks to participate in the celebration.[77] The *hierophantes*' remarkable power in Athens, also, was made concrete by reserving them three places in the middle of the first row at the theatre of Dionysus (*proedria*), next to the priest of Dionysus Eleuthereus, by giving them regular possibilities to dine at the city-state's expense at the *Prytaneion* (*sitesis*) among the most important men of Athens.[78] In his *corpus* concerning the sacred officials of the Eleusinian cult, K. Clinton has listed epigraphical mentions of the *hierophantes*, the first being from the beginning of the fifth century BC and the last from ca. AD 355–392. Eight of them belong to the era between the beginning of the fifth and the fourth centuries

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[73] Feaver 1957, 136, 139, suggests that these democratic practices developed first of all in the priesthoods. K. Clinton 1974, 53 suggests that by the end of the 3rd cent. BC the lot was no longer the principle applied in the selection of the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos*.

[74] To judge from the epigraphical evidence the explicit hieronymy of the offices was quite a late phenomenon. It applied to five priests as strict official observance: *hierophantes* (from the 3rd or the 4th quarter of the 2nd cent. BC onwards), *dadouchos* (from the beginning of the 1st cent. AD), *hierokeryx* (from ca. AD 119/120–166), altar priest ἱερεὺς ἐπὶ βωμῷ (from the 1st cent. BC) and *pyrphoros* (from the end of the 1st cent. AD); the priestesses (*hierophantides*) were sacred offices after the end of the 1st cent. AD. Clinton 1974, 11, 44; see also Foucart 1914, 224–225; Mylonas 1961, 299–233; Clinton 1974, 114.

[75] The *hierophantes*' high status is indicated e.g. in Plutarch's description of Alcibiades who was accused of corrupting the Mysteries: among other insults against the Mysteries he was accused of calling himself the High Priest (ἱεροφάντης). Plutarch, Alcib. 22.3.

[76] IG II/III^2 1078 (220 BC) regulates how the *pompe* was to be formed by the *hierophantes*. See Clinton 1974, 42.

[77] Plutarch, Alcib. 22.3 relates that the *hierophantes* reveals the secrets to the initiates. Hesychius, Lex., the word *hierophantes* (col.757 in Schmidt's edition 1867) defines him as a priest who shows the *hiera* at the Mysteries. *Hierophantes*' voice was praised in the inscription of the year AD 170: IG II/III^2 3811 (ll.6–7).

[78] Stengel 1913, 1582–1583.

BC, six to the third and the second centuries BC[79] and seventeen to the Roman era, between the period from 86/5 BC till the end of the fourth century AD. There were also two sacred officials called *hierophantides* (ἱεροφάντιδες) who also played an important part in the cult. They were chosen from the *Eumolpidai*. M.P. Nilsson suggests that this office was a later invention which began in Hellenistic times.[80] The first reference to them is from around the middle of the third century BC[81] and the first epigraphical one belongs to the beginning of the last pre-Christian century.[82] In K. Clinton's corpus there are eleven *hierophantides*, all of the period between 86 BC and the beginning of the third century AD.[83]

Then *Dadouchos* (δᾳδοῦχος) was drawn by lot for life from the *Kerykes*. He was next in importance to the *hierophantes* and thus in second place in the procession.[84] As can be ascertained from his title he provided light in the mystery rites. Like *hierophantes* he also had the right of *sitesis*. Thirty-one *dadouchoi* are mentioned in the inscriptions from the beginning of the fifth century BC to ca. AD 372 (the last mention in the corpus), eight belonging to the third and the second centuries BC.[85]

The priestess of Demeter and Kore (ἱέρεια Δήμητρος καὶ Κόρης) played an important role in the *telete*; she carried also the *hiera* at the head of the *mystai* in the procession.[86] Thus she was mostly a sacred official of the sanctuary and much respected as well.[87] In K. Clinton's corpus there are 18 references concerning the priestess, three

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79 IG II/III² 1235 and 3512 (= Clinton 1974, nos. I 10–15, pp. 23–29); IG II/III² 2944 (= Clinton 1974, no. I 10, p. 23 honours an unnamed *hierophantes* in ll. 19–24; SEG XIX 124 (= Clinton 1974, no. I 11) (152/1 BC); *hierophantai* mentioned in the inscription are: Ἀριστοκλῆς Περιθοίδης, l. 5 (see also IG II/III² 2332, ll. 49–52, year 183/2 BC) who was elected *hierophantes* in 183/2 BC (see Habicht 1991 (1994), 207–208); his brother Ἀμυνόμαχος Εὐκλέους Ἀλαιεύς (ll. 4–5; see also IG II/III² 2332, l. 52); Εὐκλῆς Ἀριστοκλέους Περιθοίδης was the son of Aristokles and *hierophantes* as well (see also IG II/III² 1934, ll. 1,6, end of the 4th cent. BC). IG II/III² 2452 (125/4 BC ff.) lists important persons among whom appear *hierophantai* Θεόφημος Κυδαθηναιεύς (l. 48); Εὔστροφος Πειραιεύς (l. 53); Μενεκλείδης Κυδαθηναιεύς (l. 59).

80 Nilsson 1950, 349.

81 Ister, frg. 29 and Jacoby 1954, FGrHist III, Commentary, p. 664, frg. 29 (fragments of the Atthidographer Ister Callimacheus) explaining that the *hierophantes*, the *hierophantis*, the *dadouchos* and the other priests (*hieroi*) of Demeter and Kore of Eleusis received honorary crowns in 250 BC; Clinton 1974, 86.

82 IG II/III² 3514 (= Clinton 1974, no. VI 6), 86 BC. This is a dedication made by Ἀμφία Φιλάδου who acted as a *hierophantis*.

83 The last known *hierophantis*, IG II/III² 3764 (= Clinton 1974, no. VI 11), ca. AD 217/18, ll. 1–4 is mentioned as having been one who revealed the *teletai* of the goddesses. IG II/III² 3632 (= Clinton 1974, no. VI 10) of ca. AD 176, ll. 17–20 explains how a *hierophantis* Εἰσιδότης Εἰσαίου crowned the emperor M. Aurelius and his successor Commodus.

84 Clinton 1974, 68.

85 In the inscription IG II/III² 2332 edited and explained by Clinton 1974, 50–52 and 53–58 there are eight *dadouchoi* of the 3rd and 2nd centuries (ll. 40–53). Their life spans can be ascertained by the genealogy explained in the stemma of daduchic families by Clinton 1974, 58.

86 This is to be read in IG I³ 953, ll. 1–2 (= Clinton 1974, no. III 1) (ca. 455 BC): Ἀρρήτο τελετῆς πρόπολος σῆς πότνια Δηοῖ καὶ, θυγατρὸς προθύρο κόσμον ἄγαλμα. IG I³ 79, ll. 9–11 (422/421 BC) mentions the priestess carrying the *hiera* at the head of the *mystai* in the procession of the Mysteries.

87 Clinton 1974, 76.

belonging to the fifth century BC,[88] one to the fourth,[89] three to the second,[90] and eleven to the period between the first century BC and the end of the second century AD.

Hierokeryx (ἱεροκῆρυξ) was included in the list of the sacred officials of the *genos* of the *Kerykes*,[91] thus, appearing as a priest selected for life.[92] His function in the cult was that of the herald accompanying the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos*. K. Clinton suggests that his duty was to call for silence during the rites.[93] All but one of the accounts which mention him[94] belong to the Roman period.[95]

Hieropoioi (ἱεροποιοί) were important Athenian sacred officials who oversaw, at Eleusis also, that everything in the rites was organized according to the regulations; in Athens herself among other things they organized the *pompe* of the *Panathenaia*. In Athens there were ten *hieropoioi*, one from each tribe, appointed for a one-year term.[96] But at Eleusis they also dealt with many different administrative tasks connected to the cult. Thus their presence at Eleusis kept up the Athenian control as well. The Eleusinian *hieropoioi* formed a collegio called ἐπιστάται (overseers). They took care of the offerings, were responsible for receiving money given to the sanctuary (ταμίαι τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων), and they were also guardians of the *temenos* (ναοφύλακες).[97]

The two *tamiai* of the two goddesses (ταμίαι τοῖν θεοῖν) and *the grammateus* (γραμματεύς) were also, besides the *hierophantes* and *hieropoioi*, responsible for handling the income and expenditure of the Eleusinian sanctuary.[98]

In the Eleusinian cult a child called παῖς ἀφ ἑστίας (hearth-initiand) was usually the offspring of an Athenian noble *genos* and probably his/her role was to symbolize Athens

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88 Clinton 1974, 69 (no. III 1) = IG I^3 953 (ca. 455 BC); IG I^3 79 (422/421 BC) and Plutarch, Alcib. 22.4 mentioning the priestess Θεανὼ Μένωνος Ἀγραυλῆθεν who lived in the 5th cent. BC (in connection with the description of Alcibiades' accusation for disgracing the Eleusinian Mysteries); the priestess appears also in SEG X 348 (=Clinton 1974, no. III 2).

89 Clinton 1974, no. III 3, p. 70.

90 Clinton 1974, 70–72 (nos. III 4–6) = IG II/III^2 3468 (a statue base); IG II/III^2 4690 (ll. 9–10); IG II/III^2 3220 and 3495.

91 Clinton 1974, 50–52, 81.

92 Clinton 1974, 81.

93 *Ibid.*

94 Clinton 1974, no. IV 1, p. 77 (403 BC); his name was *Cleocritus* and he is mentioned as having been in office in 403 BC according to Xenophon, Hell. 2.4.20.

95 Clinton 1974, 77–81, nos. IV 2–11 (no. 3 = IG II/III^2 1072, ll. 4–6; no. 4 = IG II/III^2 2342, l. 8; no. 5 = IG II/III^2 1773–1776; no. 6 = IG II/III^2 1782; 1788; 1798; no. 7 = IG II/III^2 1789; 1790; no. 8 = IG II/III^2 1077, l. 42; no. 9 = IG II/III^2 4075; 4083; no. 10 = IG II/III^2 2241; 3707; no. 11 = IG II/III^2 3814).

96 Aristotle, Ath.pol. 30.3.10. See Habicht 1982 (1994), 171–184 who publishes the list of the Athenian *hieropoioi* for the *Athenaia* which took place between the years 154/3 and 150 BC.

97 IG I^3 78 (especially ll. 9–10; 17–18) and IG I Suppl. 225k mention ἱεροποιοί Ἐλευσῖνι Ἐλευσινόθεν / ἱεροποιοί Ἐλευσινόθεν Ἐλευσῖνάδε. The first mentioned regulates the tasks of them and the sums that the *hieropoios* of the cult *Eleusinia* (ll. 20), were to receive. IG I^3 32 (ca. 450/449 BC) is the first decree of *epistatai* regulating their duties and stating that these *hieropoioi* (*epistatai*) have to be chosen for their office in Athens by the *boule* (ll. 5–8). See also Oehler 1913, 1583–1588; Guarducci 1969, 240–241; Habicht 1982 (1994), 174.

98 See a long inscription IG II/III^2 1672 concerning the income and expenditure of the Eleusinian sanctuary in the year 329/8 BC; in this inscription the *tamiai* functioned as responsible officials; see also p. 40, n. 107; also Guarducci 1969, 240–241.

and her connections to the cult, as the personification and representative of the hope and fortune of the city for the following year.[99]

In the Eleusinian Mysteries minor sacred officials called *exegetes* (ἐξηγητής, advisor), *phaidyntes* (φαιδυντής, cleaner), *panages* (παναγής, healer), *iacchagogos* (ἰακχαγωγός, one who holds the statue of Iacchus in the procession), *hiereus Triptolemou* (ἱερεὺς Τριπτολέμου), *hiereus Plutonos* (ἱερεὺς Πλούτωνος), *pyrphoros* (πυρφόρος, carrier of fire), *hymnagogoi* (ὑμναγωγός, hymnleader) and *bousyges* (βουσύγης, one who offers oxen) are known.[100]

D. Financing the cult

Regulations concerning the economy of the Eleusinian Great Mysteries are few during the period under study. We know, however, that there were different ways of financing the cult apart from offerings, votives, fines and individual economic contributions which all supported the economy of the sanctuary.[101] The priesthoods, alongside other officials, had an important role in handling the finances of the cult. The *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos* were usually responsible for collecting the money which supported the

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[99] Foucart 1914, 277–281; Deubner 1932, 74. This view is supported by K. Clinton 1974, 99–100. He thinks that the word 'hearth' could well have been the main 'hearth' of the city, the one located in the *Prytaneion* from were the *pompe* started. See inscriptions about them from the 1st cent. BC in Ἐφημερὶς Ἀρχαιολογική 1885, nos. 24 and 25, p. 145–6. There are a great number of dedications of the Hellenistic and Roman periods erected in honour of these children, including many by the *areiopagos*, *boule* and *demos*: see IG II/III² 3475–3478; 3480 (middle of the 2nd cent. BC); 3491; 3492; 3499 (middle of the 1st cent. BC); 3517–3519 /end of the 1st cent. BC; see also K. Clinton 1974, 100–113 (nos. X 1–56) listing 56 epigraphical mentions of hearth-initiands: 30 girls, 22 boys and 4 of unknown gender. Ten of them belong to the 2nd and the 1st centuries BC and the rest to the 1st and the 2nd centuries AD. Their parents, when known, are always of distinguished noble or priestly families.

[100] See Clinton 1974, 95–99. Most of these officials appear in the inscriptions belonging to the Roman period, but *phaidyntes* is mentioned already around 470–460 BC in IG I³ 6, col. C, l. 49 as the official among those who organised the order of the *pompe* in front of the *Eleusinion* of Athens, and he is mentioned also in SEG XXI 3, l. 3 (ca. 510/480 BC). In IG II/III² 1078, ll. 16–22 (220 BC) he appears as the one who orders the *epheboi* for the procession to Eleusis and back on the fourteenth of the *Boedromion* and proclaims the sacrifices of Athena κατὰ τὰ πάτρια. *Exegetes* appears in IG II/III² 1672 (329/8 BC). In this inscription from Eleusis, the most important officials seem to be ταμίαι τοῖν θεοῖν. Concerning the Eleusinian officials see e.g. IG II/III² 1092 = SEG XII 95 which IG dates to *post* AD 131 and SEG to around AD 165; in ll. 45–55 it list the Eleusinian officials mentioning ἱεροφάντης (ll. 27,38), two ἱεροφάντιδες (l. 54), δᾳδοῦχος (ll. 27,46), ἀρχιερεύς (l. 47), three ἐξηγηταί (ll. 48,49), ἱεροκῆρυξ (l. 50), ἱερεὺς ἐπὶ βωμῷ (l. 51) παῖδες ἀφ' ἑστίας (l. 47), φαιδυντής (l. 48), ἱέρεια Δήμητρος καὶ Κόρης (l. 53), ἰακχαγωγός (l. 50), βουζύγης (l. 51), πυρφόρος (l. 52), παναγής (l. 53), ἱερεὺς θεοῦ καὶ θεᾶς (l. 54) and ἱερεὺς Τριπτολέμου (l. 55); ἱέρεια of Athena (l. 52), ἱερεύς of Zeus (l. 49) and ἱέρεια of the *Moirai* (l. 46) are listed among the Eleusinian priestly officials as well.

[101] Compare Debord 1982, 192, 198. His study deals with the social and economic aspects of religious life in Graeco-Roman Anatolia, and his results are not directly applicable to the Athenian material; he writes: "Pour l'Asie Mineure, à quelque très rares expressions près, nous ne possédons pas l'équivalent de la comptabilité des sanctuaires égyptiens, d'Athènes et d'Attique, de Délos ou de Delphes, cependant les documents sont relativement abondants et précis et la difficulté provient plutôt de leur extrême dispersion et de leur appartenance à des sanctuaires de nature fort différente" (p. 183).

Eleusinian cult.[102] The Athenian inscription IG I^3 6, face C from the Classical period (ca. 460 BC)[103] records the sums required by the Eleusinian officials from each initiate as payment for performing the initiation and the rites, and for supporting the Eleusinian cult. These officials were representatives of the *Eumolpidai* and the *Kerykes*, *hieropoioi*, the priestess of Demeter and Kore, altar priest, *phaidyntes* and *panages*.[104] In Eleusis, at the end of the second century AD, the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos* were still the officials who took forward the money dedicated to the goddesses.[105] In the Eleusinian Great Mysteries, the *hierophantes*' and *dadouchos*' tasks were quite similar to those of the *hieropoioi* of the other Athenian cults.[106] Concerning financial matters, we meet also an official *tamias* in Eleusis; *tamias* of the gods (ταμίας τοῖν Θεοῖν) appears in IG II/III^2 1672, an inscription from Eleusis of the year 329/8 BC which is a long list of the wages (*misthoi*) paid to the functionaries and workers of the sanctuary and lists the sanctuary's material costs.[107] *Tamiai* were the ones responsible for receiving and distributing money.[108] The inscription mentions also a *thesauros* in which oxen for the sacrifices are to be left[109] and in which any extra pieces of tiles and wooden materials for constructing

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[102] See e.g. SEG XVII, 21 (middle of the 4th cent. BC) in which the *hierophantes* is said to be responsible for collecting the money dedicated to the goddesses (ll. 7, 14–15) and IG II/III^2 1092 (ca. AD 165) which still states that all the money (*denaria*, l. 40) dedicated to the gods (the Eleusinian ones, l. 30) is to be given to the guardianship of the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos* in charge (ll. 27–30; 38–42).

[103] The inscription states that a fee of one half-obol was paid each day (καθ' ἡμέραν, Prott & Ziehen's and Clinton's reconstruction of the word) (ll. 3–4) to all of the major officials who were listed in the text (*hierophantes* and the *dadouchos* are missing because the section most probably dealing with them is badly damaged).

[104] One obol to the *hieropoios* (l. 37), one to the priestess of Demeter (l. 45), a half-obol to the altar priestess (ἱέρεια ἐπὶ βωμῷ) (l. 47), *phaidyntes* (l. 47), *panages* (l. 48) and a half-obol to an official whose title is missing (l. 48). This charge was to be imposed on the *gene* of the *Kerykes* and of the *Eumolpidai*.

[105] IG II/III^2 1092, ll. 24–30.

[106] About the Eleusinian *hieropoioi*, see p. 38.

[107] These costs are manifold concerning mainly the building activities in the sanctuary: IG II/III^2 1092 (329/8 BC) lists wages paid, for example, to the architect (l. 11), stonecutters (l. 17–18), workmen carrying out wood-working for the gates, doors, roofs and other buildings at the *temenos* (ll. 24–25, 27, 42, 66, 165–166, 179), brick-makers (l. 22, 59), workmen who take their meals at home (l. 46), workmen doing stone-works (ll. 97–98), ferrymen (ll. 126, 158–159), cleaners (ll. 128, 232); costs of the materials and goods needed in the sacrifices are listed as well, for example, chalk (ll. 12–13), wood (ll. 128–129, 147), stucco (l. 108), ceramics (l. 13).

[108] The inscription begins with the words λόγος ἐπιστατῶν Ἐλευσινόθεν καὶ ταμιῶν τοῖν Θεοῖν. *Tamiai* are mentioned throughout the long inscription.

[109] IG II/III^2 1672, ll. 160–161. IG II/III^2 1356 (beginning of the 4th cent. BC) lists measures of meat (ll. 17, 21), wheat (ll. 17,21), firewood (l. 18), parts of the bodies of sacrificial animals (l. 19) which have to be left to the *trapeza* (ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν τράπεζαν, l. 18), to the priests of Demeter and Kore for performing sacrifices (l. 16).

roofs and windows in the sanctuary are to be set down.[110] The *thesauros* functioned as a kind of store for incomes – materials and money – that were disposed in the sanctuary.

Direct evidence of the initiation fee, a sum paid for performing the initiation and the rites is scarce in Eleusis[111], but from the epigraphical sources we know that it was demanded from initiates, at least in the Mysteries of Dionysus in Miletos, and in Erythrae for the Mysteries of the Corybantes.[112] A contribution was similarly expected when consulting the healer gods or for the advice given by the oracles.[113] Thus it could be suggested that at Eleusis, also, the initiates and those who took part in the festival were expected to contribute to the costs which the rites demanded, at least in the form of personal offerings. Offerings were, nevertheless, one of the most important ways in which the sanctuary collected income.

The most ancient form of offerings to the gods, in addition to the sacrifices, were the so-called *aparchai*,[114] the offerings of the first fruits of the harvest at Eleusis.

> "... Most of the Hellenic cities, in memory of our ancient services, send us each year the first-fruits of the harvest (*aparchai*) ... and the words spoken long ago confirm the practice of to-day, while present events are in accordance with the statements which have come down from the men of old." (Isocrates, Paneg. 31–32, in 380 BC)[115]

Aparche was demanded from the cities and administrative units, such as important *phylai*, to pay the costs of the cult. It was proclaimed by the *hierophantes* and the *dadouchos* as a formal invitation, "to all the Hellenes to offer *aparchai* for the Mysteries according to custom and the oracle at Delphi".[116] *Aparchai* were parts set aside for the

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[110] IG II/III² 1672, ll. 202, 209. On Delos there was found a decorated *thesauros* of the same type, a collecting box for the offerings in *Sarapieion* A from the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd cent. BC, dedicated by Ctesias Apollodoros from Tenos to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis (l. 1–2), see IG XI 4 1247 (inscription) and the photo and inscription in Roussel 1916a, no. 6 (photo p. 89).

[111] See the inscription IG I³ 6 (ca. 460 BC): according to it initiants had to pay money to the Eleusinian officials (see p. 40, n. 104) at the Lesser Mysteries and at the Great Mysteries, but this practice of paying initiation fees were, of course, not necessarily the same during Hellenistic times. H.W. Parke 1977, 61 regards the initiation fee as a self-evident fact and states that "the cost of initiation was quite high". He reasons his argument by referring to the inscription mentioned in this note and to the IG II/III² 1672 (329/8 BC) about which see p. 44.

[112] Sokolowski 1955, no. 23 (Erythrae, end of the 4th cent. BC), ll. 12–16 gives the sum which have to be brought for the sacred *teleumenoi* of the Corybantes (see also Nilsson 1950, 95); Sokolowski 1955, no. 48 (also Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1932, p. 372, no. 2), ll. 12–15 (Miletos, 276/275 BC) in which it is stated that women give to the priest of Dionysus money ἐν τοῖς ὀργίοις πᾶσιν (l. 15) and which continues by specifying that to the priestess are given the goods for the sacrificial feast (σπλάγχνα), like kidneys, a leg, tongue and leg-bones of a sacrificial animals (ll. 16–17); see Debord 1982, 195.

[113] Debord 1982, 195.

[114] Guarducci 1969, 239–240; Debord 1982, 194.

[115] Translation by G. Norlin, The Loeb Classical Library 1928 (1966). Notice here that the cult is used as a means of stressing the glory of Athens by referring to old traditions and using the code of rhetorics.

[116] Isocrates, Paneg. 157; Suetonius, Nero 34; IG I³ 6 (ca. 460 BC); IG I³ 78, ll. 24–26; 34–35 (ca. 422 BC); IG II/III² 140 (353/2 BC) deals with the *aparche* in connection with the *Eleusinia* of the goddess Demeter. It states the amount of 8 000 drachmas to be paid to the *tamias* of the *demos*. See Nilsson 1950, 471–474; Clinton 1974, 15.

goddesses and as such they are known also by the name *apometra*. Inscriptions from around the year 422 BC[117] and 422–419 BC[118] deal with this matter and reveal that the quantity of *aparchai* were quite remarkable, for instance, in Hellenistic times it was even necessary to build new store-houses for the grain.[119] As an example, in 422 BC the καρπός given by the cities and delivered to the *hieropoioi* was to be called to account as thousand drachmas.[120] This practice of paying *aparchai*, or more generally *apometra* is found in Classical,[121] Hellenistic[122] and Roman[123] inscriptions. These sums were to go "to the gods" and towards the expenses that the rites demanded.

In addition to the above-described official practices to finance the Mysteries private financing was an important way for the Eleusinian sanctuary to obtain income. An inscription set up on the Acropolis of Athens, and in the court of the sanctuary at Eleusis between 216–201 BC,[124] clarifies how individual supporters of the Mysteries of Eleusis were honoured by the Council of the city, because they

> "had offered all the offerings which are appropriately to be made during the year ... and had further provided at their own cost (παρεσκεύασαν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων) the conveyance for the use

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[117] IG I³ 78.

[118] IG I Suppl. 225k.

[119] The construction of the Philonian stoa created a pressing need for storage space, and it is assumed that the long building along the peribolos wall in the south court of the sanctuary was built during the end of the 4th cent. and in the beginning of the 3rd BC to provide for that need. Mylonas 1961, 150.

[120] IG I³ 78, ll. 19–20: according to this regulation from Eleusis, 100 *medimnoi* were required as the *aparche* (l. 3). *Medimnos* was an Attic measure especially of dry food stuffs, like corn; e.g. in IG II/III² 1672 (329/8 BC) the price of one *medimnos* is determined separately in ll. 14.

[121] Concerning the Eleusinian cult see IG I³ 62, l. 16 (428/7 BC); IG I³ 259 is a list of the measures of the *aparche* from the Greek cities from the year 454/3 BC, see col. A (l. 1) and col. B (l. 5); IG II/III² 140 (353/2 BC) is a regulation concerning the *aparchai* for the Eleusinian gods (*aparche* of the fruits of the gods for Zeus, Demeter, Kore and Triptolemos, ll. 12–13, 20–22) given by the *demos* of the Athenians and the *Eumolpidai* (ll. 17–19).

[122] Early Hellenistic inscriptions IG II/III² 140 (353/2 BC) from Eleusis is a regulation giving the rules for Athens to pay *aparche* for the Eleusinian festivals; 1672 (329/8 BC) from Eleusis mentions *aparche* (in the inscription as ἐπαρχὴ) for Demeter, Kore and Pluton (l. 182) and states in ll. 262–264 that the *aparche* is asked from each *phyle* for the celebration of the *Eleusinia* in Eleusis; IG II/III² 1363 (ca. 330/270 BC) concerns the Eleusinian festivals *Eleusinia*, *Proerosia* and *Thesmophoria*, and states that the *apometra* for the *Thesmophoria* of Demeter and Kore are to be given to the priestesses (col. B ll. 20–22) and explains that the *apometra* had to be paid as well in connection with the Eleusinian celebration of Demeter called *Proerosia* in the month of *Pyanepsion* (l. 6). In the inscriptions of the Hellenistic period the *aparchai* were dedicated by the religious associations as well, like IG II/III² 2939 and 4339 (4th cent. BC) which state that the Athenian *Dionysiastae* dedicate *aparchai* to Athena. *Apometra* in the Mysteries went often to the priestess of Demeter (and Kore) and was a remarkable sum; see Clinton 1974, 70.

[123] IG II/III² 1035 (10/9–3/2 BC) is a decree on the restoration of Attic sanctuaries (e.g. of Athena Polias at Acropolis, ll. 15–17, 46, Zeus Soter and Athena Soteira in Piraeus, ll. 17–18, the old *Bouleuterion* and the temple of Tyche in Athens, ll. 42–43, the Panathenaic stadion, ll. 50–51); in ll. 21–22 the inscription mentions the temple of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis and specifies the goddesses as the ones to whom the *aparche* is levied (αὐτῆι ἀργυρολογοῦσα ἀπαρχήν); in IG II/III² 2957 (time of Hadrian) the *aparchai* are stated to have been dedicated to Demeter.

[124] Edited and translated also by Grant 1953, 15–16 (Grant's translation cited). The location of the inscription both in Athens and in Eleusis is stated in ll. 54–55.

of the sanctuaries, and had voluntarily turned over to the Council the amount set aside for their use as the expense of the conveyances ... and beyond all this had delivered the accounts to the office of the treasury and the *Metroion*, and had rendered their account before the court, in accordance with the laws, and out of their own funds had provided for everything else connected with the sacrifice in order to show themselves agreeably disposed toward the Council and the People, thus setting an example for those who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the public welfare and showing that they can count upon the proper measure of gratitude ..." (IG II/III^2 847, lines 16–33).

These supporters of the Mysteries are praised as *philotimoi* in the inscription (lines 32, 34). This shows that private financing was a practice which in part covered the cost of this kind of public cult in early Hellenistic Athens. In lines 46–49 the same inscription cited states: εὐσεβείας ἕνεκεν τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ φιλοτιμίας τῆς εἰς τὴν βουλὴν καὶ τὸν δῆμον. The decrees in IG II/III^2 1299 from the year 236/235 BC honour a certain Aristophanes for *philotimia* and *euergesia* (lines 18–19, 27, 56), for numerous and great services (line 52) that he made to Demeter and Kore and to the other gods of the *polis* (lines 9–11, 23) by crowning him with a golden crown (στεφανῶσαι αὐτὸν χρυσῶι στεφάνωι) and placing a copper picture of him in the court-yard of the Eleusinian sanctuary (lines 27–28, 75–76). The decree is given in the name of the law (κατὰ τὸν νόμον) by the *demos* of the Athenians together with the *demos* of the Eleusinians (lines 9–11, 76). Honouring the supporters of the religious festivals for *eusebeia*, giving them honorary crowns (στεφανόω) in the name of the city-*boule* and inscribing their names on *stelai* was a common practice in the cult of Demeter; it continued similarly in Hellenistic times.[125] Thus this kind of private sacrifice became a part of the broader *philotimia*, i.e., ostentatious expenditure for the public good provided by the wealthy in anticipation of public recognition and gratitude which was typical of the socio-political behaviour of much of the Athenian upper class in the fourth and third centuries BC.[126]

Regarding the payments made by those initiated, Athenaeus sarcastically explains that the term τελετή derives from the verb τελέω which signifies 'pay'.[127] An inscription

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[125] See IG II/III^2 1231 (end of the 4th cent. BC) which honour a certain Tlepolemos for *eusebeia* and *philotimia* (ll. 8–11 and 16–18); IG II/III^2 1235 (275/4 BC) similarly honour the *hierophantes* of the Mysteries because of *eunoia* by crowning him and repeating the above described honorary formulas; see especially ll. 15–16 and 21–24; IG II/III^2 674 (according to IG 277/6 BC and according to Meritt & Trail 1974 (no. 78) 273/2 BC) honour *philotimoi* of the cult of *Chalkeia*, of the "other national gods" (Θεοὶ πάτριοι), of *Stenia* of Demeter and Kore; SEG XXI 464 (140/139 BC) use the same formulas concerning *philotimia*, *stephanein*-practice and other (financial) matters (ll. 19–23) in connection with the official cults of Artemis Boulaia, "and the other national gods", *Stenia* of Demeter and Kore and Apollo Patroos; IG II/III^2 1338 (86 BC) honour *epimeletes* Philomonis for *eusebeia* in supporting the sacrifices of the Mysteries of Demeter and Kore in Eleusis (ll. 4, 14–16) alongside with other festivals, like the dramatic, musical and athletic contests of Dionysus (ll. 4–5). Inscriptions of this sort, excavated from the Athenian Agora and its administrative buildings, are frequent: in Meritt & Traill's collection (1974) from the Macedonian period (the inscriptions are from the 3rd cent. BC) 27 of 95 inscriptions use the same formulas in honouring the *philotimoi*, usually (in 14 cases) clearly in connection with the official religion.

[126] Rosivach 1994, 10.

[127] Athenaeus, 2.40d–e. The author adds: "... and those who spend much are called '*polyteleis*', those who spend little '*euteleis*' ", but it is noteworthy that the text which follows has nothing to do with religious practices. Athenaeus' etymologies are often sarcastic which may well be the case here. The sense of

from the beginning of the first century BC[128] says that it was legal to make an initiant pay an amount of a hundred drachmas if he committed any offence in the course of the procession (lines 27–34).[129] The sum may still have been considerable if we recall that in the Classical times time the salary of a workman for one day's labour on the Parthenon had been approximately one drachma,[130] and that in the end of the fourth century the Council oversaw a pension of two obols per day for those who owned less than 300 drachmas (=three minas) or were so maimed in their bodies that they could not work.[131] Furthermore, the account from Eleusis for the year 329/8 BC tells that the day-wage for young workmen who dined at home was one drachma three obols and for workmen who worked with tiles two drachmas three obols.[132] Fines also belonged to the finances of the cult, and as such their existence reveals that there were financial regulations for the initiants, even if the direct evidence for an initiation fee is not extant from Eleusis of Hellenistic period.[133]

Thus the Eleusinian Great Mysteries were financed in the first place publicly (the *aparchai*), and in the second place privately by individual contributions for the support of the rites, and by offerings made in the sanctuary during the rites. The first-mentioned was made legitimate for other Greek cities "in memory of our ancient services"[134], and the second practice probably developed due to pragmatic reasons; the number of the initiates was remarkable.

E. Official Expression in the Cult

The Mysteries of Demeter offered an arena for the rulers and civil servants to make a public appearance, because it was an official cult of the city-state, and, at the same time,

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duty and payment in the word *telos* and *telete* is present at any rate in Aeschylus' Pers. 203–4, where a man tells of himself having been ready to make an oblation of a sacrificial cake unto those divinities that avert evil, those to whom these rites are due (ἀποτρόποισι δαίμοσιν θέλουσα θῦσαι πέλανον ὧν τέλη τάδε).

128 Sokolowski, Suppl. 1962, no. 15. The inscription is first published by H.J. Oliver in Hesperia 10 (1941): 65–72, no. 31.

129 An offender had to be reported to the *archon basileus* and to the *epimeletes*. Whether this practice was followed is doubtful, of course.

130 One drachma as a day-wage of workmen is an accepted 'standard' day-wage paid in late 5th and 4th-century Athens (see e.g. Feaver 1957, 131; Coulton 1977, 123), but it changed from time to time and depended on price variations. But the changes in prices were not extremely great, for example A. Burford (1972, 138) states refering to IG II/III^2 1672 that a day-wage in Eleusis in 329/8 BC was probably the same as a hundred years earlier; for the examination of the matter see Burford 1972, 137–143.

131 Aristotle, Ath.pol. 49,4.

132 IG II/III^2 1672, ll. 46; 184–186. According to the temple accounts from Delos in the 3rd century the wages for those who made laurel and myrtle garlands (*stephanomata*) for the festival *Apollonia* vary from 3 to 4 drachmas which most probably equal two days' work; see Bruneau 1970, 119 (inscriptions nos. 316, ll. 67, 73; 338; 354, l. 57); see also Linders 1988, 267.

133 Cf. Debord 1982, 194.

134 IG I^3 78, ll. 24–26; 34–35 (ca. 422 BC); Isocrates, Paneg. 31. See also Athenaeus, 6.234 who states that it was Pericles who first obliged the people of Athens, and of the states of the Athenian Confederation, to offer the first fruits to Eleusinian divinities.

widely known everywhere in Greece. In the *pompe*, which was the most spectacular part of the Mysteries, the participants were lined up in due order: *iacchagogos*, the priest of Iacchus[135] with the statue of Iacchus, was at the head of the procession; the priests and the priestesses of Demeter followed next bearing the *hiera* in the *kistai*.[136] Then came the officials of the State of whom the archonts of Athens and those of other cities and foreign official representatives (*theoroi*) occupied the most important positions. After these followed all the others: initiants with their *mystagogoi*, men, women, children and possibly pack animals.[137]

In Hellenistic times the cult of Demeter was an important forum in which the Macedonian rulers could show themselves. Thus they also accepted the official cult of the city without any wish to disturb its ritualistic habit. Athens maintained her independence and importance in the eyes of these rulers at least as far as its traditional religion was concerned. A good example of this is an event which took place during the Great Mysteries of the year 290 BC[138] mentioned by Athenaeus quoting Duris of Samos (ca. 340–260 BC) around the year 200 AD. Athenaeus' intention evidently was to underline the blasphemy and the flattery of the Athenians involved in this event: he calls the Athenians "flatterers of flatterers" (6.253b); in any case, it was his custom to relate curious and ignoble happenings. Demetrius Poliorcetes had been initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries in 302 BC.[139] This might have been a mark of honour by the Athenians to Demetrius. In 290 BC Demetrius came to Athens during the celebration in *Boedromion*. The Athenians are reported to have sung the following hymn to him:

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[135] The role of Iacchus is widely discussed, see e.g. Mylonas 1961, 238; 308–309. In the beginning he might have been a personification of the *Iacche* cry which was repeated in the procession. Later he became more and more a parallel to Dionysus, probably even equated with him, because the role of Dionysus in the Eleusinian Mysteries became more important in Hellenistic times. Iacchus being at the head of the procession might have been a symbol of the important connections between Athens and Eleusis. Pausanias, 1.2.4 describes the statue of Iacchus holding a torch as having been made by Praxiteles. According to Pausanias it was placed at the temple of Demeter near the building for the preparations of the processions.

[136] Κίστη is mentioned e.g. in the Messenian inscription IG V1 1390, l. 30 (1st cent. AD): κίστας ἐχούσας ἱερὰ μυστικά. On Delos appears a cultic functionaire called κιστηφόρος in connection with the cults of Apollo, Aphrodite, Hermes: one tetradrachma was paid to *kistephoroi* according to the inscriptions ID 1430, l. A II 13; 1439, l. A 14; 1441, l. A 45; 1443, l. B 148; 1450, l. A 37 (all inscriptions from the latter part of the 2nd cent. BC). In the Oxyrhynchus papyri *kiste* clearly has its proper meaning as a 'box' or 'basket' for everyday use, see e.g. POxy I 116, l. 18; VIII 1153, l. 3; X 1269, l. 36; XII 1584, l. 13.

[137] Plutarch, Them. 15.1 refers to a great multitude of people taking part in the procession. For the general appearance of the *pompe* see iconographical expressions, such as the so-called votive statue of Nunnius Nigrinus, a relief in which men, women and children are shown with the *bacchoi* in their hands marching in parallel rows. See photo in Deubner 1932, pl. 6., no. 1. See inscription in Sokolowski 1962, no. 15. In general see Deubner *ibid.*, 7377; Mylonas 1961, 253–255; Parke 1977, 65–67.

[138] See dating: Ferguson 1911, 143–144; Nilsson 1950, 142–143; Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 182.

[139] Plutarch, Demetr. 26.1–2; Diodorus Siculus, 20.110.1. The latter records that the dates of the celebration were changed in that particular year because of the demands by Demetrius himself. See also Ferguson 1911, 122.

Now the greatest and dearest of the gods have come to
the city
For hither the propitious hour (*kairos*) has brought both
Demeter and Demetrius.

She (Demeter) will be celebrating the Mysteries of the Daughter,
but, he (Demetrius) as it is worthy of the god, has come
gladly, fair and smiling.
How reverend he seems! All his friends are gathered around him.

He himself in the very midst.
His friends are like stars,
and he is like the sun,
O, offspring of the mightiest of gods, Poseidon,
and of Aphrodite, hail!

There are no other gods, or they are far away,
or have no ears,
or they pay not the slightest heed to us.
But you are here and thee we see face to face;
not carved in wood or stone, but verily and in truth!

And so we pray to thee.
First bring us peace, thou dearest (of the gods)
because thou art Lord (*kyrios*, i.e. it is within thy power),
that dread the Sphinx which crunches down not only Thebes
but all of Hellas!

The Aetolian who sits upon his cliff,
in the manner that sat even the Sphinx of old
snatching us up, carrying all our men as a prey;
and against it I have no force to fight,
for it is the Aetolian way to rape their neighbours' things,

and now more distant things.
Thus, best for youself were if you punished him on your own!
but if not, then find some Oedipus,
who would dash this monster down the cliff
or turn him into stone. (Ath., 6.253.c–f)[140]

[140] The hymn is handed down by Duris of Samos, History 22 (in FGrHist. IIa, no. 13, pp. 141–142) Athenaeus quoting him in 6.253 c–f. See commentary in Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 182–186. See also Walbank 1981 (1984), 90; translation by L.B. Gulick, The Loeb Classical Library 1929 (1961).

This hymn speaks of the relationship between the old traditional cults of the *polis* and the Hellenistic ruler-cult, which were quite easily combined. This reveals the pragmatic attitude of the Athenians as well as that of the Macedonian rulers towards religion.[141] Athenians were capable of accepting a ruler's godship as symbolic recognition. For the ruler it functioned as a means of obtaining constitutional affirmation of his authority. It was difficult to justify it by any legal agreement or treaty.[142] The Mysteries of Demeter presented a perfect context for this; a formal cult which was flexible in amalgamating new ideas into its framework, because it had earlier reflected political ideas and now gave them renewed significance.

3. Cult of Isis

The cult of Isis was different from that of Demeter in Athens in Hellenistic times, because the goddess was a newcomer and she was worshipped in religious associations. This was a new phenomenon present in religious life from the third century onwards. Athenaeus combined *thiasoi* and *eranoi* indicating that *thiasos* and *eranos* are meals provided together and *thiasotai* and *eranistai* are those who gather together for a meal at a banquet.[143] It should be noted that *thiasoi* were religious brotherhoods dedicated to certain gods and that religious activities, like sacrifices, were central to them, at least nominally; *thiasos* bore in its name the role of the gods, thus being a religious *koinon*. *Eranos* was merely an association with many economic and more 'profane' functions, although they had at least a nominal religious character.[144] During the Macedonian period the number of cult associations increased considerably. For example, there are more than seventy inscriptions concerning *thiasoi* and *eranoi* in IG II/III^2 from the second half of the

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[141] There was a special way of thinking about the relationship between powerful men and gods in Greek religion, which was the basis for the heroisation of old times and the ruler cult in Hellenistic times. See Chap. V.2.A, pp. 102–104.

[142] See Ferguson 1928, 15–16 and 21.

[143] Athenaeus, 8.362e. Chantraîne, Dict. ét. and Frisk, GeW., s.v. θίασος explains that a *thiasos* is a religious brotherhood, first especially of Dionysus; its derivative is the verb *thiaseuein*, to become a member of a *thiasos* and to celebrate rites. *Eranos* signifies a meal to which each participant brings his share and a religious association; its derivative is the verb *eranizo*, to bring contribution and to be without debts; Chantraîne, Dict. ét. and Frisk, GeW, s.v. ἔρανος. About the term ὀργεῶνες see p. 52, n. 169.

[144] *Eranos* was also a loan raised by contributions for the benefit of an individual, or for a meal to which each contributed his share. Poland 1909, 31 states that an *eranos* was undoubtedly the most recent type of the religious associations. There is no progression from 'religious' *eranoi* to more secular ones, because they could be both religious and secular in character from the beginning of their history (from the latter half of the 4th cent. BC onwards). The *eranos*-inscription IG II/III^2 1265 (300 BC) tells that the association was religious in character since its sacred official *hieropoios* Agathon was crowned for *eusebeia* and *eunoia* and the association honoured its *tamias* Niconis. On the other hand, the *technitai* of Dionysus, for example, were closer to the trade guild already at the beginning of their history; see IG II/III^2 1325 and 1326 (78/7 and 176/5 BC) even though they used the conventional formulas in honouring their benefactors. There were still 'religious' *eranoi* in Athens at the end of the 2nd cent. AD which can be seen in IG II/III^2 1369 (date not very certain), a law of a certain *eranos* (νόμος ἐρανιστῶν). It had *archieranistes* as a leading priestly official, *grammateus*, *tamiai* (more than one) and *syndikoi* (ll. 35–36) and the practice of crowning its economic supporters (ll. 39–40).

fourth century to the end of the second century BC. In the first century BC, the number of the inscriptions concerning *synodoi*, *koinoi* and 'profane' trade guilds increase and those of religious associations (*thiasoi*) falls. The end of the third century BC and the beginning of the second was an economically and culturally active period in Athens, thus, cultural interest combined with this period of wealth probably promoted the appearance of the associations in greater number.[145] The grouping of religious associations into *orgeones*, *thiasoi* and *eranoi* is due in the most part to P. Foucart's study *Des associations religieuses chez les grecs. Thiases, éranes, orgéons* from the year 1873 and since then it has been a mechanical division. But this is a one-sided practice because these groups and more profane associations are not clearly separable but, in fact, overlap each other.[146] We find associations described as κοινοὶ τῶν θιασωτῶν[147] and κοινοὶ τῶν ἐρανιστῶν [148]. While an association of *orgeones* was more bound to local and genealogical factors, a *thiasos* was more open and functioned on a larger scale.[149] F. Poland suggests that many *thiasoi* of the older type (i.e. from the end of the fourth to the end of the third century BC) originated inside a *phratria*, being merely local cult associations which kept up the rituals of a *phratria*.[150] Later *thiasoi* were clearly religious but no longer bound to a *phratria*.[151] Associations, guilds, 'clubs', brotherly societies, were an important social phenomenon of the time: people found new contexts for themselves and ways to construct their individual group-identity free from existing supra-individual social distinctions which had earlier been given to everyone along with a name and the social status of one's *oikos*, *phratria* or gender. If we used M. Douglas' terminology, there was an opportunity to free oneself from one's grid identity, because people could now integrate themselves into a social group which defined them in a new way and according to their own choices. It elevated a man out of a given social framework to a new sphere where he could have social relations with his fellow citizens.[152] In religious associations the commonly-shared cult formed a basis which bound these individuals together grouping them outside the family, tribal, and civic organisations. On associations, Aristotle states:

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[145] Rostovtseff 1941 (1972), 627. He states that many of the associations may have been fairly prosperous.

[146] Poland 1909, 5, 12, 28–29.

[147] II/III³ 1261 (ll. 8,14,17,20and 38) two inscriptions from the years 302/1 and 301/0 BC; IG II/III² 1263 (l. 23–24); and IG II/III² 1273 (ll. 20–21) from Piraeus between the years 302/1–296/5 BC; IG II/III² 1298 (l. 5); IG II/III² 1323 (ll. 13–14) from Athens of the years 232/1 BC and 213 BC; IG II/III² 2347 (ll. 5–6); IG II/III² 1317 (l. 5) from Salamis of the ca. 350 BC and the 3rd cent.; and IG II/III² 1318 (ll. 9–10), place unknown, the 3rd cent. BC. Almost all of these inscriptions honour the benefactors of the association. See also Poland 1909, 19–21, 28–29. From Delos see IG XI4 1228 and 1229 of the κοινοὶ τῶν θιασιτῶν from the 2nd cent. BC.

[148] IG II/III² 2354 (Athens (?), l. 1, end of the 3rd cent. BC); IG II/III² 1291 (ll. 15–16,20,27) (Athens, middle of the 3rd cent. AD). These are list of the dedicators in honour of the deities. See also Poland 1909, 20–21, 28–29.

[149] Poland 1909, 16.

[150] *Ibid.*, 19.

[151] *Ibid.*, 20, 26.

[152] M. Douglas has analysed the reasons for the formation of social identity in terms of the dichotomy between so-called group and grid identities, the former of which defines identity as a choice of interpersonal contacts and the latter as a behavioral option within personal interactions. See Douglas 1982, 16–17 and Chapter II.3.

"... some associations appear to have been formed for the sake of pleasure, for example, religious *eranoi* and *thiasoi* which are unions for sacrifice and social intercourse (θυσίαι καὶ συνουσίαι)" (EN 8.9.5.).

Individuals who banded together under a certain rubric or institution tended to coerce one another to develop the full implications of their shared experience which in this case was a common cult. People could contribute their interest, time and part of their private property to the common cause, which thus was given under the auspice of religion. To some extent this was the opposite of state religion; but it also complemented it.[153] If we regard private religious associations as a new phenomenon in religious life, we should never forget that in Hellenistic Athens the old and the new lived side by side.

A. Arrival of the Goddess Isis

During the fifth and the fourth centuries seven foreign cults established themselves in Athens, three of which were officially accepted.[154] The gods of these associations were worshipped in *thiasoi*. These *thiasoi* first came to Piraeus, the gods being brought mainly by foreigners. Isis had arrived in Piraeus before 333/2 BC. This is referred to in the inscription IG II/III^2 337 from this year permitting the merchants of Cition to build a temple to Aphrodite.[155] It refers, as a kind of a justification, to Isis and the Egyptians, "who had earlier been given permission to build a *hieron* for their goddess Isis" in Piraeus (lines 42–45). Thus Isis had first been worshipped in a private *thiasos* of Piraeus[156] without having the official permission which was required from a private religious

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[153] It should be remembered that official religions and private religions had also previously existed side by side. The membership of the cults of the phratries was determined by genealogy. But the *thiasoi* of the phratries have to be distinguished from the private religious associations which did not demand blood-relationship.

[154] The cults were those of Ammon, the Mother of the Gods, Bendis, Adonis, Sabazios, Isodaites and Kotys. The three first mentioned had become official by the end of 5th cent. BC. As examples see inscriptions and mentions of the ancient authors about Ammon: IG II/III^2 1282, l. 7 (262/1 BC); about Mother of Gods: IG II/III^2 1257; 1314–1316; 1327–1329 (years 213/2, 211/10 BC, end of the 3rd cent. and the first part of the 2nd cent. BC); about Bendis: Plato, Resp. 1.1; IG II/III^2 1361 (Piraeus, 4th cent. BC); of the *orgeones* of Bendis e.g.: IG II/III^2 1255 (337/6 BC) (Bendis was introduced to Athens in the second part of the 5th cent. BC); about Adonis: Demosthenes, De Cor. 259–260; IG II/III^2 1261 (Piraeus, 302/301 BC); Aristophanes, Lys. 386–390; about Sabazios: IG II/III^2 1335 (102/1 BC); Theophrastus, Char. 16; about Kotys (the goddess did not enter Athens but stayed in Piraeus): Strabo, 10.3.16 (refers to Aeschylus). For Isodaites see Simms 1985, 190–200. In Piraeus there was also a religious *thiasos* of Zeus Labrandos: IG II/III^2 1271 (298/7 BC).

[155] = SIRIS 1. R.R. = Sokolowski 1969, no. 34; R.R. Simms 1985, 205 thinks that this Aphrodite was Aphrodite Ourania, a Cypriot goddess. Thus he connects her to the Salamian goddess who was worshipped in Athens from the end of the 4th cent. BC without official status in the city. The inscription does not in any case specify who this Aphrodite of the merchants of Cition was.

[156] It is possible that the cult of Isis had existed in Piraeus quite a long time before as a private cult; why not, therefore, as the cult of a phratry? Evidence for this is vague but it is interesting that in an excavation in 1959 in Piraeus there turned up a statue of Isis or her priestess dressed in *peplos* with the knot of Isis, dated to the 3rd or 2nd cent. BC (Paraskevaitis 1961, 133), but very hellenized in form with no Egyptian features. This suggests that the cult must have been amalgamated already into the Greek tradition and the goddess herself was hellenized as well. See Paraskevaitis 1961, 133–134.

association when it wanted to build a temple for its god. Isis was brought by foreigners and she was at first their goddess.[157] But in the course of time Isis became very popular, much more popular than the politic-religious cult of Sarapis ever was in Greece.[158] She was worshipped in the *thiasos* of the *Sarapiastai* in Athens, where the cult of the goddess was established in the first part of the third century.[159] It seems to have gained an official status by the end of the century. An inscription from *paulo post* 200 BC (IG II/III^2 4692)[160] shows that the cult of Isis, incorporated into the Sarapis cult,[161] had received official status at Athens by 200 BC and, in all probability, popularity as well. Priestly offices were held and organized according to the *demos* of an annual holder of the post. Most of the other cultic officials were annually chosen by vote, such as the *zakoros*[162] who was a guardian of the temple.

It is interesting to explore the reasons for the popularity of this cult and its official acceptance. It may have depended in part on the political situation as well as on changes in the forms of the religious life of Athens. Obviously, Athenian citizens did not have a craving to worship the goddess Isis, but behaved in a politically and economically sound

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[157] Brady 1935, 19–20; Fraser 1960, 23; Merkelbach 1995, 121–122. Compare this with the situation of the arrival of Isis at Delos. She was the first Egyptian goddess to come to an island, probably between the end of the 4th cent. BC and the beginning of the 3rd (the first epigraphical evidence is a dedication IG XI4 1306 from *Sarapieion* C which Roussell 1916a (p. 106) dates to the very beginning of the 3rd cent. BC). Around the same time the arrival of Sarapis is related in a legendary form in an inscription from *Sarapieion* A IG XI4 1299. The text is studied profoundly by H. Engelmann in 1975, who calls it "the Delian aretalogy of Sarapis" (title of the book). See also Bruneau 1970, 461 Dunand 1973, 87 and Merkelbach 1995, 217. This is the so-called 'Chronicle' stating clearly that the goddess was brought by an Egyptian priest of Sarapis, Apollonius, straight from Egypt to the island and gives the genealogy of the first priests. Thus, the Egyptian priestly origin of Egyptian gods was stressed in Delos. P.M. Fraser 1960, 23 suggests that before the establishment of the official cult of Sarapis described in the 'Chronicle', Sarapis had had a private cult in Delos as well, and dates its introduction between 300–260 BC; see also V. Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 102, 110–111 who underlines that the cult came to Delos as a result of private initiative (of Apollonius). F. Dunand 1983, 78–79 holds the view that 'the Isis-propaganda', active missionary work for her, should not be excluded from the spread of the cult of Isis, and that the 'Chronicle' well represents this. In any case, Sarapis followed Isis to Delos as well (see Roussell 1916a, 245; Bruneau 1970, 461; Dunand 1973, 87). A separate *Isieion* was built in *Sarapieion* C, which was the main meeting-place for the *thiasotai* of the Egyptian gods at the beginning of 2nd cent. BC. The sanctuary was given official status by the Athenians about 190–180 BC. See IG XI3 442 (179 BC). In Delos there was also *Sarapieion* B, a small sanctuary of the Egyptian gods functioning as a meeting place of certain associations in the same manner as *Sarapieion* C.

[158] See e.g. Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 109; Samuel 1983, 82; F. Solmsen 1979 states in p. 22: "Sarapis soon realized that for his career's sake he had much to pay as keeping as close as possible to Isis."

[159] The first inscription concerning the *thiasos* of Sarapis belongs to the year 215/14 BC and is most likely from Athens: IG II/III^2 1292; see Dow 1937, 227–228 and Nilsson 1950, 120. But it is worth remembering that in 291 BC Menander had already mentioned Sarapis as σεμνὸς θεός: POxy XV 1803, 9–10 (Pack^2, no. 2162) = Koerte & Thierfelder 1959 (vol. III), frg. 139, 60. The cult had penetrated into Attica earlier, probably at the end of the 4th cent. BC. See Fraser 1960, 23; Sokolowski 1969, 94 and Vidman 1970, 48.

[160] S. Dow 1937, 198 gives the inscription dating it between the years 210 and 170 BC. The inscription mentions the name of an *hiereus*, the priest with the first sigma of his demotic and a *zakoros* with ethnic. This indicates that a certain order in the cult was already well defined.

[161] Σαράπιδι, Ἴσιδι, Ἀνούβιδι εὐχήν is the common formula used in the Egyptian cults, as in this case. See also and Dow 1937, 231; Vidman 1970, 48; Dunand 1973, 6–8.

[162] About *zakoros*, see pp. 55–56 n. 191 and p. 60 n. 216.

way by accepting the new cult.[163] The political situation will be discussed more closely later, but it is necessary to mention here that the situation in Athens required an openness in public affairs which concerned foreign religions. Foreigners had to have an opportunity to keep up their own traditions, and religious cults played an important role in this.[164] There was no need for them to take part in a common city cult which could have strengthened their commonly-shared identity in Athens. On the other hand, Athens apparently wanted to keep all the foreign cults under her control and did so by closing them within her boundaries and accepting their arrival on such a large scale. Thus she kept the new cults under her dominion. Isis' arrival at Athens seems to have been during a period of tolerance in the city. In the eyes of travellers and especially those tradesmen to whom Athens wished to show herself as a commercial centre of the Mediterranean this may have appeared as conspicuous hospitality. An argument which often occurs in the research literature is that the Egyptian cults spread to Greece because the Ptolemies caused them to do so in order to support their imperialistic propaganda, and these cults would have been a mark of Ptolemaic sovereignty, at least during the third century BC.[165] This opinion, which P.M. Fraser calls 'the imperialistic theory',[166] seems untenable because the Egyptian deities in Greece were worshipped in the private religious associations in the beginning and only later became public. If the Ptolemies had introduced the cults of the Egyptian deities intentionally, as a part of their propaganda, this would rather have resulted in a public and official, not a private cult.[167] It is more probable that the cult was first spread by individual mercenaries, travellers and emigrants who had acquired a

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[163] Cf. Simms 1985, 205.

[164] In religion the status of metics and foreigners was essentially different. Foreigners were not allowed to participate in the city cults, or even to turn to the gods of the city by giving official votives or by offering prayers. The city did not protect them. But metics had the right to take part in the festivals of the city-cults, but they were prevented from becoming officials of these cults. See Clerk 1893 (1969), 140.

[165] See e.g. Lafaye 1884, 24–28; Wilcken 1927, 643; Brady 1935, 7, 17–18; Nilsson 1950, 118, 149; Koester 1982, 187; Samuel 1983, 76, 83–85. According to Brady 1935, 7 and 17–18 Sarapis is sometimes seen as having been used as a symbol by of the Ptolemies for their imperialistic expansion. For the rejection of this 'imperialistic theory' see the note 167 below. Notice also that Plutarch provides a testimony to the way in which tradition associated the early Ptolemies with Sarapis e.g. in Mor. 5.362a–b by mentioning the Greek parallels of Sarapis and his dominion over all peoples.

[166] Fraser 1960, 21.

[167] Fraser 1960, 20–22, 42. The second part of the P.M. Fraser's article is intended to provide evidence for the untenability of 'the imperialistic theory' by examining the material concerning the spread of these cults from the mainland Greece, the Cyclades, the Aegean area, Macedonia and Asia Minor (pp. 20–49). Rejection of the theory is stated also by Nock 1933, 54–55; Castiglione 1978a, 189; Préaux 1978 (1987), 650; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 104; Walters 1982 (1988), 99 as well as already by S. Dow 1937, 18–27 who nevertheless in the other section of his study (pp. 21–22) seems to support it. A.E. Samuel 1983 for his part first accepts 'the imperialistic theory' (pp. 76, 83–85), but in the latter part of his article rejects it: "Surprisingly enough, the introduction of the statue of Sarapis (to Alexandria) and the erection of the temple for it is all that we can find ascribed to Ptolemy (p. 87) ... and it is rightly rejected that the god served as an ideological device to promote Ptolemaic imperialistic goals (p. 89) ... thus the spread of Sarapis worship need not be part of Ptolemaic propaganda (p. 94)." C. Habicht 1992 (1994), 75–76 emphazises the good relations between the Athenians and the Ptolemies stating that the introduction of the cult of Sarapis ca. 200 BC was an indication of continued friendship of the two.

personal interest in the cult and wanted to establish the worship of these deities in their new homelands. The Egyptian gods provided an opportunity to have an individual relationship with the gods, and this made the cults more interesting and, therefore, they spread more easily. Thus they did not need Ptolemaic propaganda to support them.[168] This does not of course exclude the possibility that by accepting the new cult of the Egyptian gods into the public cults of the city the Athenians may have wanted to show their favour of the Ptolemies.

B. The Renewed Public Life of the Polis in the Associations

The *thiasoi* gave the non-citizens a frame of reference in which to keep up and form their group-identity which stemmed from their common local and ethnic origin.[169] In the second part of the third century Athenian citizens were members of the *thiasoi*. Thus the attitude to religious *thiasoi* had changed; they functioned as a *polis* on a smaller scale and thereby were integrated into the structures of the *polis*.[170] This can be seen from the administrative practices of the associations, most clearly in their finances; associations honoured their benefactors, persons who showed grace (χάριτας) as *philotimoi*, and gave them honorary crowns (στεφανόω) inscribing their names on the *stelai* usually mentioning the sum they devoted to the use of an association. Very often officials, most often *epimeletai*, are honoured for their good deeds. In fact, almost all of the inscriptions concerning the associations of the late fourth and third centuries BC are of this type. The terminology in the inscriptions of the associations became conventional repeating the same formulas with slight variations, for example: ... καὶ στεφανῶσαι ἕκαστον αὐτῶν θαλλοῦ στεφάνωι ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ φιλοτιμίας τῆς πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν καὶ εὐσεβείας τῆς πρὸς τὴν Θεόν (IG II/III^2 1277, 19–24)[171] or εὐσεβείας ἕνεκεν τῆς

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[168] Dow 1937, 22; Fraser 1960, 42.

[169] The often occurring *orgeones* differs from *thiasos*, because the *orgeones* was mostly the religious association of citizens (this can be justified from prosopographical evidence, because the names of the officials and the members of the associations are often listed in inscriptions). Religion was central to *orgeones*, because it was born around the cult of the *phratria*, the *orgia* (rites, sacrifices. In the inscriptions the temple (*naos*) or *temenos* are often mentioned. See e.g. IG II/III^2 1252 (end of the 4th cent. BC); IG II/III^2 1253; 1255; 1256 (the *orgeons* of Amynus, Asclepius Dexion and the one devoted to Bendis, middle of the 4th cent. BC); 1314 (*orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods, 213/12 BC); 1334 (Piraeian *orgeones*, end of the 2nd cent. BC). But from the middle of the 3rd cent. BC onwards *thiasotai* could also be Athenian citizens, which shows that attitudes towards religious *thiasoi* had changed; see e.g. the Athenian *thiasoi* IG II/III^2 1277 (278/7 BC); IG II/III^2 1297 (237/6 BC). The members of *eranoi* were both citizens and metics, e.g. IG II/III^2 1335 (year 102/1 BC) which is the list of the names of the honoured officials (*hiereus, tamias, grammateus* and *epimeletes*, all metics) and of the members of Piraean *eranos* of Sabazios including both citizens (35 persons) and foreigners (13 persons), the ethnic of four members is not mentioned.

[170] See e.g. San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 41, 43; Préaux 1978 (1987), 643.

[171] The inscription of an Athenian *thiasos* from the year 278/7 BC: "...and each of them will be crowned by a wreath for the brave deeds and ostentiousness that they have shown to the *koinon* as well as for their piety to the God". Usually these texts end with a formula of the following type, as in e.g. IG II/III^2 1277 (ll. 35–36) and IG II/III^2 1315 (ll. 26–28): ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλει λιθίνηι καὶ ἀναθεῖναι/στῆσαι ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι/πρὸ τοῦ ναοῦ. ("Thus this degree is to be written down onto the stony *stele* which is to be placed/erected to the sanctuary/in front of the temple.") About

εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ φιλοτιμίας τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θιασώτας (IG II/III² 1282, 15–16)[172] or ἐπαινέσαι Δημήτριον Σωσάνδρου Ὀλύνθιον ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἧς ἔχων διατελεῖ πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θιασωτῶν καὶ στεφανῶσαι αὐτὸν ἀναθήματι ἀπὸ: Γ:δραχμῶν (IG II/III² 1263, 20–25)[173]. The words used in enumerating the person's good deeds, in addition to the sums paid, are usually *arete* (goodness), *euergesia* (good-doing, good deed), *eusebeia* (piety), *eunoia* (kindness), *dikaiosyne* (righteousness), and because they are honoured χάριτας ἀξίας ἀποδίδονται / ἀπολήψονται / κομιοῦνται (to give / get thanks or gratitude).[174] This followed upon the practices of the *polis*. Organisation of the association included an assembly parallel to the city-*boule* which took care of the decision-making and formulating of the regulations. In cult associations this assembly is called the ἀγορὰ κυρία,[175] and occurs frequently in the Athenian and Piraean *thiasoi* and *orgeones*.[176] The officials of the cult association, who usually were chosen by lot, were executors of the decisions made by the *agora kyria* which consisted of all the members of the association who had the right to vote.[177] M. San Nicolò regards the *agora kyria* as a part of the phraseology and terminology of the associations. According to him it does not have much practical value, but is quite an empty concept without any juridical meaning in the associations.[178] This is probably true when regarding the associations of the Roman times, but *agora kyria* must have had at least some meaning in the first associations, and only later lost much of its functional role.

One of the basic reasons for the emergence of religious *thiasoi* mainly in the third century BC is the situation in early Hellenistic times; it is probable that on the socio-

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the terminology see also San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 51.

172 The Athenian *thiasos* the name of which is unknown (262/1 BC).

173 The Athenian *thiasos* (300/299 BC).

174 As mentioned above these kinds of statements occur in almost all of the inscriptions of the Athenian and Piraean associations of the period being studied. For good examples see *thiasoi* IG II/III² 1252 (*orgeones* of Asclepius Dexion from the middle of the 4th cent. BC); 1263; 1265; 1277;1282; 1297; 1301; 1315 (*orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods); 1324 (*orgeones* of Bendis), all from the 3rd cent. BC. Notice that almost all of the ca. seventy inscriptions of the associations honour *philotimoi*, e.g.: IG II/III² 1266 (*eranos*, end of the 4th cent.); 1294 (Athenian *orgeones*, middle of the 3rd cent. BC); 1298 (Athenian *thiasos*, 232/1 BC); others are of poor quality or not clearly those of religious associations.

175 See inscriptions from the 3rd cent. BC concerning the cult-association of Bendis in Piraeus IG II/III² 1283 which mentions a report of the *agora kyria* (l. 2) to the Athenian cult-association expressing its wish to co-operate in organizing a common procession. IG II/III² 1361 (latter part of the 4th cent. BC) lists the regulations of the same association concerning the fees that had to be paid by its members before the festival of *Bendideia* (l. 18).

176 See e.g. IG II/III² 1277 (Athenian *thiasos*, 278/7 BC); IG II/III² 1282 (Piraean *thiasos*, 262/1 BC); IG II/III² 1298 (Athenian *thiasos*, 232/1 BC); 1315 (Piraean *orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods, 211/210 BC); 1317 (Piraean *thiasos* of Bendis, end of the 3rd cent. BC); 1323 (Athenian *thiasos*, 200 BC); IG II/III² 1325 and 1326 (Piraean *thiasos* of *Dionysiastae*, 185/4 and 176/5 BC); IG II/III² 1327; 1328; 1329 (Piraean *thiasos* of the Mother of the Gods, 178/7 BC, 183/2 BC, 175/4 BC). The *agora kyria* is still found in associations of the last cent. BC, e.g. IG II/III² 1334 (Piraean *orgeon*, end of the 1st cent. BC); 1355 (102/1 BC, Piraean *eranos*).

177 See Foucart 1873, 15–16 (see also the critic below, p. 54). M. San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 47 refers to the practise of naming the upper officials by vote.

178 San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 99–103.

emotional level the formal cults of the city-state no longer held as much appeal for people as before as there was now more religious choice. Society had become more disintegrated and pluralistic. People were searching for new answers to their social needs, and perhaps also to their psychological ones, in religion. A climate of openness to these new manifestations was also prevalent,[179] and when the religious associations had been absorbed into society, they gained more and more in importance and took on more functions in the life of the city, both economic and political.[180]

It is worthwhile commenting here on the writings of P. Foucart, who in 1873 studied cult associations in his *Des associations religieuses chez les grecs. Thiases, éranes, orgéons.* Following the appearance of this monograph the cult associations have been studied in full only very rarely (F. Poland 1909, *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* and M. San Nicolò 1972 [revised edition by J. Herrmann from the edition of the years 1913–1915], *Ägyptisches Vereinswesen zur Zeit der Ptolemäer und Römer*). Foucart regards *thiasoi* and *eranoi* as immoral associations which were open to all, men as well as women, and what in his opinion is even worst, to foreigners. Thus the associations awoke curiosity and fed the inclination of people desperate to escape into social groups which practised magic, superstitious and orgiastic rites, and noisy music, all of which were in strict contrast to intelligent, pure and "platonically orientated state-cults".[181] Foucart places the religious associations at the opposite and worst end of a polar axis where the cults of the city-state represent all that is good and beautiful. But as has been shown above, there were, in fact, no drastic differences between the participation in these cults – at least when they had became official – and those of the city-state. I am more inclined to think that the cult associations of Athens, likewise, the *thiasos* of Isis among them, reflected the practices of the religious cults of the *polis* on their administrative level. This *thiasos* was an association for the Athenians, also, and being a member in it accorded an individual prestige. The functions and practices of the city-state's organisations lived a new life inside it on a smaller scale.[182] But there was in addition a nominal openness regarding religious matters.

C. Participants in the Cult

As explained above, the cult of Isis had an official public status in Athens by 200 BC.[183] The goddess was worshipped in the *thiasos* of Sarapis, who had been imported into Athens for social and cultural reasons. Isis was much more popular, however, perhaps the

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[179] Religious behaviour was not resignation or isolated devotion to the one and only god; rather, being a member of many religious associations at the same time was permitted.

[180] For more about the meaning of the associations, see Chapters V.3.A and V.4.A.

[181] Foucart 1873, 147–149; 157–169.

[182] See SEG XXII 114 which is the regulation of the cult of Isis given by the *boule* of Athens in the beginning of the 1st cent. BC. See also the next Chapter.

[183] See above, pp. 49–52 and especially notes 155–157.

most popular of the foreign gods in Athens,[184] where the official status of the cult meant that its members and officials were mainly citizens. This is of interest when we consider the situation prevailing at the beginning of the third century: the attitude towards the Ptolemies seems to have been favourable at this time because of the political situation and the economic difficulties. This is one of the reasons why Sarapis, the creature of the Ptolemies, Egyptians and the Greeks,[185] gained such a place of importance in Athens. Isis, being more popular, and probably emotionally more tempting, became the one who was more worshipped, and her cult in Athens appears to have grown in importance continuously till the middle of the first century BC.[186] F. Dunand gives a general picture concerning the acceptance of the cult of Isis from a religious-sociological point of view. She proposes three stages, first of all applicable to the case of Athens: 1) the phase of tolerance (a neutral attitude by the magistrates of the *polis* to the foreign cult of Isis which was maintained by the foreigners), 2) the phase of assimilation and intervention of the *polis* into the cult (metics and citizens became members in the cult) and 3) the official intervention and acceptance of the cult by the *polis* (the organization of the cult as well became determined by the principles of the administration of the *polis)*.[187] In a relatively short time the cult in Athens seems to have become mainly one for the wealthy citizens.[188] According to an inscription from around the year 200 BC (IG II/III^2 4692) the priest of the cult of Sarapis and Isis was also an Athenian citizen.[189] This meant that the citizens could be participants in the cult which no longer was an unofficial cult of non-citizens and foreigners.[190] The *zakoros*, a lower official in charge of taking care of the sanctuary and the statue of the goddess, is often mentioned in the documents. The office of *zakoros* was limited to the cults of a few specific deities, mostly foreign ones.[191] This post was impor-

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[184] Dow 1937, 231–232 (with references to votive offerings and six pieces of coins dedicated to Isis alone); Dunand 1973, 12.

[185] See Chapter V.1.B.3, also p. 51.

[186] Walters 1982 (1988), 100–103. In addition to the evidence of the inscriptions there is the impressive and exceptional portrait of a priest of Isis found in the south-east corner of the Agora (inv. no. S333; for a photograph see the cover of this book). It shows a middle-aged shaved man whose facial features are carved with strong realism. The shaven head is a mark of the priest of Isis, and in this portrait the facial type is surprisingly close to the Egyptian representations. So it is very possible that the statue is of a priest of Isis. It is dated between the second half of the 2nd cent. BC and the forties of the 1st cent. BC. See Harrison 1953, pp. 12–13, no. 3, pl. 3. Another important find supporting the wealth of the Athenian sanctuary of Isis in Roman times is a colossal statue of Isis in dark Eleusinian limestone found on the south slope of the Acropolis and dated to the forties of the 1st cent. AD; see Miliades 1960, 49.

[187] Dunand 1983, 88–90.

[188] Brady 1935, 47–49; Dunand 1973, 16; *idem* 1983, 83–84; Walters 1982 (1988), 98. In the Isiac inscriptions from the period between 333/2 and 144/3 BC in Athens in SIRIS collected by Vidman (1969) the priest/priestess (*hiereus/hiereia*) is mentioned in all but one (no. 1 = IG II/III^2 337) and he (she in no. 2 = IG II/III^2 1292) is always an Athenian citizen (in IG II/III^2 4692 only the first letter of the demotic is preserved).

[189] The inscription reveals the first sigma of the demotic of the *hiereus* Στησικράτης.

[190] Compare Dow 1937, 200.

[191] The title of *zakoros* was also *neokoros*, but in Athens he appears mostly as *zakoros*. *Neokoros* of Sarapis appears as a dedicator in the Athenian inscription SEG XXVI 155 (AD 196/7–205/6); the *neokoros* of Isis is not found in Athens until the 3rd cent. AD; see IG II/III^{2}3681. In other foreign cults *neokoros* was common, and his office is already known from the Classical times e.g. from Delphoi; see Hanell *RE* 1941, 2422–2428. See the inscription SEG XXII 114 (first part of the 1st cent. BC)

tant in the Athenian association despite its low rank among the officials of the cult. E. Walters argues for the upper class status of the cult of Isis: she beses her argumentation on the Attic grave reliefs which represent women in the dress of Isis and which should be identified as those of a prestigious group of participants of this cult: they document continuous participation by a fairly large number of the prosperous class in the cult in Athens from the first century BC to as late as the early fourth century AD.[192] The gradual increase in the number of 'the Isis reliefs' indicates a period of sustained growth in the membership of the cult of Isis to the sixties of the third century AD. Thus in Athens the cult lasted long – till the end of the fourth century AD – and in the course of time participation extended also to the lower classes.[193]

The position of women in the *thiasos* of Isis has been discussed. This religious association seems to have been open to women, however, though in Athens it quite clearly consisted mainly of men.[194] Usually the cult of Isis is thought to have been a cult especially for women (which it obviously was later on in Rome), but in Greece, in Athens and on Delos during Hellenistic times, it had a different character. The *hiereus*, the priest, was a man until the Roman period in Athens.[195] Inscription IG II/III^2 1292 (= SIRIS no. 2), dated by L. Vidman to 215/214 BC, is interesting, because it gives the name of *proeranistria*[196] Nikippe (lines 24–25), a woman who was probably a kind of main priestess, a leader of the temple and cultic services. But her position was nominal; in principle she was the first titular priestly official, but not in practice. As a woman she

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concerning the attribution of *zakoros* who had an important post in the Athenian cult of Isis; see also Pollitt 1965, 128 and below p. 60, (n. 216).

192 Walters 1982 (1988), 94, 98, 102–104. In E.J. Walters' catalogue (p. 208–209) 'the Isis reliefs' date from the last quarter of the 1st cent. to the early 4th cent. AD. The 1st cent. reliefs are 14 in number, the first being the relief in the National Museum of Athens, inv. no. 3036 and the last is the so-called Aegina pediment (Walters' catalogue no. 5). Dunand 1973, 145–148 lists 19 'Isis reliefs', all from the Roman period (the 1st and 2nd centuries AD) and states that in Imperial Athens Isis and her cult is to be seen to have implanted itself into the population (p. 144). Walters' study shows that there was a heightened production of Attic grave reliefs in the Roman period and that 'the Isis reliefs' were among the best and largest of them, produced mainly in the 1st and the 2nd centuries AD; Walters 1982 (1988), 95–96. In the case of grave reliefs it should be remembered, however, that the anti-luxury law of Demetrius of Phalerum from 317–307 BC prohibited impressive and expensive grave reliefs and the lack of them in Athens does not, of course, correlate with the wealth of the Isis' cult in Hellenistic period.

193 Epigraphical evidence from the Athenian cult in L. Vidman's SIRIS lasts till AD 220 including 34 inscriptions, 12 (nos. 1–12) from the Hellenistic period. See also Dunand 1973, 144 and Walters 1982 (1988), 101.

194 See e.g. Dow 1937, 194–195; Poland 1909, 29. That there were women members in the associations is to be seen in the lists of the members: there are female names in many associations e.g. the Athenian *thiasos* IG II/III^2 1277 (237/6 BC) lists 58 members of the *thiasos* (in addition to *archieranistes* and *hiereus*, both males) among whom appear 10 women (ll. 25–34).

195 Vidman 1970, 48–49; see the inscriptions in SIRIS, 1–9 except no. 2. For those of Roman times with priestesses see, nos. 13; 18; 23 and 24 (for their IG-numbers, see thr concordance).

196 The same position is often called *archieranistes* in other cult associations, especially those of Artemis. See IG II/III^2 1297 (l. 10); 1319 (ll. 15–16) (3rd cent. BC), and IG II/III^2 1339 and 1343 (both from the 1st cent. BC). *Archieranistes* is still mentioned in the law of an Athenian *eranos* which probably belongs to the end of the 2nd cent. AD. On Delos this position is normal, but see discussion about its functions in Roussel 1916a, 266. *Archiereus* is met in the Egyptian associations, see San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 67–68.

might have represented the femininity of the goddess Isis. *Hieropoioi* were those males (line 15 on the above-mentioned inscription) who took care of priestly services in practice.[197] On Delos, where the Athenian official influence in the cult of the Egyptian gods is obvious at least in *Sarapieion* C[198], women had a minor role as members, donors of offerings[199] and as officials[200]. In *Sarapieion* A which kept up a more 'original' Egyptian character and cultic practices the *therapeutai* joined together to pay a contribution to the costs of the dedicated monuments and practical needs of the sanctuary. Twenty of them are known by name from an inscription, but only one is a woman.[201] There is an exception from *Sarapieion* B, a small Delian sanctuary of the Egyptian gods which did not have an official character, but functioned as a meeting place and sanctuary for certain associations.[202] All the dedications of this sanctuary are dated before the year 166 BC. Among them there is a dedication of the so-called κοινὸν τῶν δεκατιστῶν (IG XI4 1227). The name is given according to the day of the month, the tenth, when the association had its monthly celebration in honour of the gods Sarapis, Isis and Anubis. The inscription gives the names of sixteen members, nine of whom are men and seven women. Only one bears a patronymic, so that this association was mainly one of non-citizens. Other inscriptions from *Sarapieion* B of a similar type do not name any women, for example, the κοινὸν τῶν ἐνατιστῶν (IG XI4 2228; 2229), whose monthly celebration was held on the ninth day, gives names of the twenty-four members of this *thiasos*, all men, an *archithiasotes* Dionysius among them.[203]

T.A. Brady has studied the prosopography of the Egyptian cults in Greece in his *The Reception of the Egyptian Cults by the Greeks* (1935). According to his statistical analysis there were seven Athenian citizens as officials of the Athenian cult of the *Sarapiastai*, and nine citizen members (among whom the names of two were, though, quite mutilated) mentioned by name in the inscriptions of the cult association in Athens between the years

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[197] Cf. Dow 1937, 194–5.

[198] In *Sarapieion* C on Delos this cult especially was 'Athenian', and its important officials were always Athenians from the upper classes chosen for their posts in Athens. The city of Athens provided the sanctuary on Delos with major dedications as well. In this *Sarapieion* the Egyptian gods were worshipped by religious associations. Thus the cult there was a means of asserting Athenian occupation of the island. See e.g. Roussel 1916a, 235, 255–257; Walters 1982, 100.

[199] See the list of the names of donors of votives and their sexes in Delos' cult of Isis in F. Mora, 1990, 3–134, indices on the donors and their sexes 135–141; 152–151. See also the comments of Roussel 1916a, 269 on the inscription no. 84 (= ID 2120): only one of the 19 who contributed economically to the finances of the cult on Delos was a woman.

[200] The first priest (ἱερεύς) on Delos was never a woman (ἱέρεια). See Dow 1937, 194, 200 (*argumentum ex silentio*).

[201] IG XI4 1299 (the 'Chronicle') mention θέραπες in l. 43; IG XI4 1217 lists the names of the *therapeutai* (20 names), and IG XI4 1290, l. 4 mention *therapeutai* (without specifying their number) as well, both inscriptions from the beginning of the 2nd cent. BC. See also Roussel 1916a, 253. About the *therapeutai* see pp. 118, 120.

[202] Roussel 1916a, 258.

[203] IG XI4 1228, l. 2 and 1229, ll. 14–15. *Archithiasotes* is mentioned on ll. 2–3. The latter one is a dedication of this *thiasos* stating only a name of the *thiasos* without specifying the names of the members. Compare San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 49–50 who describes the practise of organizing the yearly religious celebrations in the associations of the Ptolemaic Egypt.

330–30 BC.[204] In the case of Athens, five of the Athenian *Sarapiastai* belong to the third century BC, suggesting that this time was the high point of the cult in Athens which was in contrast to other places in Greece where Egyptian gods gained popularity mainly between the second century BC and the second century AD. T.A. Brady's analysis is valuable in that it shows the lines on which the cult became accepted in Athens and that the most important period in the history of the association was the third century BC when it met with official acceptance.

D. Administration of the Cult

Administrative structures of religious associations are interesting because by observing them it is possible to follow the change that took place in religious life in the early Hellenistic times. Here we are looking only at the cult of Egyptian gods in Athens, the *thiasos* of *Sarapiastai*. The Ptolemies were known to support the cult of Sarapis generously; Sarapis was regarded as a patron of the Ptolemaic dynasty.[205]

There was no stable hierarchy or any kind of charismatic leadership in the cult of Isis in Athens. The officials were usually chosen annually and the leadership was probably not based on the personal charisma of the leading person. The cult had a priest (see above page 55), and his post was for a year in Hellenistic times, but this was not the case in the Imperial period.[206] His Athenian status is seen in the formula ἱερεὺς Σαράπιδος εἰς ἄστυ in the inscription SEG XXI 584 of 144/3 BC (line 7). A very important official in the association was the *tamias*, the one who took care of the finances, received the dues, paid the expenses for such things as inscribing *stelai*, for sacrifices and the burial of members.[207] The *tamias* is most commonly mentioned in the inscriptions of Athenian cult-associations.[208] The *tamias* was the leading and first-mentioned male official of the cult-association of Isis and his duties were much parallel to the liturgy of the *hieropoioi* of the *polis* cults and like the *epimeletai* of the Eleusinian Mysteries.[209] In the cult associations

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[204] Brady 1935, 49 (summary in form of a table). On Delos there were 109 Athenians, but their names belong to a later period, mainly to the 1st cent. BC.

[205] See p. 51–52, n. 167.

[206] The word ἐνιαυτός in the inscription IG II/III² 1292, l. 10 (215/14 BC) states that the officials had been nominated for one year. See inscriptions concerning the Athenian cult of Sarapis and Isis in Hellenistic times with the names of the annual *hiereus* in SEG XXI 584 (144/3 BC); SEG XXI 796; IG II/III² 4702 (early 1st cent. BC) and SIRIS 5 (116/5 BC). For the Imperial period, see IG II/III² 4732; 3564; 3565, and SEG 22, 167 (the 1st or 2nd cent. AD).

[207] In IG II/III² 1275 (beginning of the 3rd cent. BC) is a law for the *thiasotai* in Piraeus outlining the obligations of the members of the *thiasos* and of their family members in relation to such funerals (ll. 5–6). Important members had to be present at the funerals of the members and of the benefactors of the association. No doubt for an individual the securing of one's funeral was one of the important reasons for the existence of *thiasoi*. For comparison see e.g. the cult-associations of Bendis in Piraeus IG II/III² 1284; of the Mother of the Gods IG II/III² 1327 (middle of the 3rd cent. BC); and Dow 1937, 192.

[208] In the case of Sarapis and Isis of the early Hellenistic times the *hieropoios* is the most commonly mentioned, then the *zakoros* and the *epimeletes*.

[209] M. Hakkarainen states in his unpublished manuscript that the office of *epimeletai* is not known to have existed before the middle of the 4th cent. BC, and that during the 3rd cent. BC the duties of the *Eumolpidai* increased so that they did not only perform sacrifices like before, but were responsible of

the *tamias* usually had a lower position than the *hiereus* (and *arkhieranistes*), but in the case of the *Sarapiastai* this seems not to have been the case: IG II/III^2 1292 mentions him first, giving him special honours that may have been a recompense for the payments made out of his own pocket.[210] The *grammateus*[211] worked as a secretary and never had a very high precedence. It is possible that there was more than just one *grammateus* in a *thiasos*.[212] The *epimeletai* were also annual officials, who performed sacred priestly acts such as caring for the *hieron*, organizing offerings for sacrifices, marshalling a *pompe*, setting up *stelai*, announcing honours, convening the *agora kyria*.[213] Thus *epimeletai* were subordinate, a kind of pragmatically oriented priesthood, the equivalent of whom in the *polis* was an official called the *hieropoioi*.[214] The number of *epimeletai* was not set in the association of the *Sarapiastai* in Athens. In IG II/III^2 1292 (SIRIS 2 from the year 215/14 BC) there is only one of them (line 8), but in SEG XXI 584 (SIRIS 4) from the year 144/3 BC also Delian *epimeletai* are mentioned (line 11). Thus there might have been *epimeletai* from Delos, who served in the Athenian cult of Sarapis and Isis.[215] Of the lower officials in Athens in the cult of the Egyptian gods only the *zakoros*, *kleidoukhos* and *oneirokrites* are mentioned. The first of them is the equivalent of the *neokoros* of other cults, under which name this official is mentioned only twice later (at the end of the second century

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taking care of the finances of the cults as well.

210 Giving honours to officials who contributed to their associations economically was clearly the case also e.g. in IG II/III^2 1271 (Athenian *thiasos* honouring its *epimeletes*); 1323 (*thiasos* honouring its *grammateus*); 1325 (*orgeones* of *Dionysiastae*) and 1327 (Piraean *orgeones* of the Mother of the gods honouring its *tamias*), all the inscriptions from the 3rd cent. BC and the beginning of the 2nd cent. BC.

211 In the cult of the Egyptian gods he is mentioned in IG II/III^2 1292 (215/214 BC) and in SEG XXI 584 (144/143 BC). For comparison about the *tamias* and the *grammateus* in the associations of the Ptolemaic Egypt, see San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 71–75: there the *grammateus* probably had a higher position than in Greece, may be due to traditionally more honoured role of the Egyptian scribe.

212 See IG II/III^2 1278 (ll. 10–11), Athenian *thiasos* (of a god whose name is not mentioned) (277/6 BC) which honours *grammateus* and *grammatophylax*. The latter was probably a lower *grammateus* of the association. See also Dow 1937, 192–193; Dunand 1973, 7.

213 See e.g. the Athenian *thiasoi* IG II/III^2 1259; 1260–62 (the end of 4th cent. BC) honouring *epimeletai* of the associations as *philotimoi*; 1283, (*orgeones*, before the middle of the 3rd cent. BC); 1301 (*orgeones* or *thiasos*, ca. 222/1 BC); 1324 (*orgeones* of Bendis, beginning of the 2nd cent. BC); For an honour to a private person for acting in favour of the association, see e.g. IG II/III^2 1263; 1297 (Athenian *thiasoi*, beginning of the 3rd cent. BC), and Foucart, no. 6 (pp. 193–194).

214 "There are another ten appointed by lot, entitled the annual *hieropoioi*, who perform certain sacrifices and administer all the quadrennial festivals except *Panathenaia*", according to Aristotle, Ath.pol. 54.7 (translation H. Rackman 1935 (1972), the Loeb Classical Library).

215 According to L. Vidman 1969, p. 7, later Delian priests are known in the Athenian cult (IG II/III^2 2336, 102–94 BC). S. Dow 1937, 193 remarks that the number of *epimeletai* was usually three. He refers to the inscriptions IG II/III^2 1261 (Athenian *thiasos* of Aphrodite, 302/1 BC); 1283 (Athenian *orgeones*, before the middle of the 3rd cent. BC); 1301 (Athenian *orgeones* or *thiasos*, ca. 222/1 BC); 1314 (*orgeones* of the Mother of the gods, 213/212 BC) all of which are honorary inscriptions for the officials of these associations, and they mention *epimeletai* in plural without stating the exact number of them.

and in the third century AD) in the cult of the Athenian *Sarapiastai*.[216] We meet the *zakoros* relatively often in the third, second and first century Athenian Isis and Sarapis inscriptions.[217] The *zakoros* took care of the material property of the cult-association and the temple; he/she was a '*templi custos*'. Usually the *zakoros* was a metic.[218] On Delos the post of *zakoros* was on an annual basis until the time of Sulla, but in Athens this was not always the case.[219] The *kleidoukhos* and *oneirokrites* do not appear in Athens until the year 116/5–95/4 BC.[220] The first is the norm on Delos and typical of the cult in Egypt. He was a servant, and P. Roussel thinks he opened and closed the doors of the temple among other tasks.[221] The *oneirokrites* was an interpreter of dreams sent by the goddess. It is quite clear that these two posts were rare in Athens and they were merely characteristics of the cult of the Egyptian gods in *Sarapieion* A of Delos which kept up the Egyptian cultic customs. The Athenian cult (and the Delos cult in *Sarapieion* C) was much more hellenized, and organized along the lines of the city-cults. The cult was protected by the city-*boule*. One characteristic trait of the *thiasos* of Egyptian gods in Athens was the principle of filling the offices on a yearly bases. Thus the priesthood did not specialize in a life-long position which would have demanded special devotion to religion only. Rather it reflected the principles of the religious officials of the city-state and followed the needs of the political situation of Athens.

E. Financing the Cult

The financing of the cult of *Sarapiastai* in Athens is interesting, because it mirrors the general trends of economic and social organisations in early Hellenistic Athens, being managed in the same way as in the other religious associations. S. Dow suggests that in the third century BC religious associations were not wealthy, but became so towards the second century BC.[222] The economic aspect of the cult association was of importance for

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[216] SEG XXVI 155 (AD 196/7–205/6), l.3 concerns the *neokoros* of Sarapis who gave a donation to Sarapis, and IG II/III² 3681 (*neokoros* of Isis from the 3rd cent. AD). On Delos the *neokoros* was very common and his post was not subordinate, but quite honourable, because he was chosen from among the citizens and he assisted the priest. Roussel 1916a, 259.

[217] IG II/III² 4692 (slightly after 200 BC); SIRIS 5 (116/5–95/4 BC); IG II/III² 4702 (beginning of the 1st cent. BC); SEG XXII 114 (first half of the 1st cent. BC) mentions a *zakoros* in l. 7 telling about the nomination of a person to this post in relation to the decisions of the city-*boule*.

[218] IG II/III² 4692, l. 2 indicates the ethnic of the *zakoros* (Herak[l]); IG II/III² 4702; SIRIS 5; SEG XXII 114 (l. 7). On Delos the office was similarly frequently held by the non-Greeks, possibly also by slaves and freedmen. Pollitt 1965, 128.

[219] IG II/III² 4702 (Athens, 1st cent. BC) shows that the period was probably not limited to one year in Athens. S. Dow 1937, 201 thinks that it was "doubtless one year"; J.J. Pollitt 1965, 128 holds the view that the post was filled yearly, because this "might have been intended to prevent collusion between the priest and the *zakoros*"; see also Foucart 1873, 23, who does not limit the period to one year, and compare IG II/III² 1328 (2nd cent. BC), a decree from Piraeus stating in ll. 16–20 that the *zakoros* of the cult of Cybele was appointed yearly.

[220] SIRIS 5.

[221] Roussel 1916a, 268.

[222] This is to be seen in the quality, size and modesty of the inscriptions concerning the cult (e.g. IG II/III² 1292, 215/14 BC). Half a century later their size was larger, letters were more carefully done, script was higher in quality and there were more cult monuments in general. See Dow 1937, 190. Notice the

the association and its relations with the city. M. San Nicolò regards an association as a juridical person (*juristische Person*) which as a unit had rights and duties, and individuals who took part to the rites and sacrifices, for example, shared the common property of the association.[223] We noticed above that the post of *tamias*, an official who dealt with the finances, was important in the association. Associations were self-sufficient, autonomous units, and for example, granting of loans was a common practice in them.[224] Associations had lots of expenses: land for the *hieron* (*temenos*), buildings (including a *naos*), financing the festivals and common meals (*eranoi*), paying for the inscriptions in honour of benefactors, paying the expenses of the funerals of its members and so on. How was all this financed? In general, *thiasoi* were either dependent on a wealthy founder or they were closely attached to an official cult of the city or a private house.[225]

Associations required their officials to contribute to different funds for the support of the cult, its festivals, the sanctuary and cult facilities.[226] Bringing money or sacrificial goods to the rituals of the association was often compensated by the *summa honoraria* in the inscriptions.[227] Membership fees are not mentioned in the inscriptions of the associations,[228] but the associations often used to get annual amounts of money or material goods from their officials as payment for sacrifices or as first offerings (εἰσιτητήρια).[229] The late fourth century BC inscription from Piraeus of the *orgeon* of Bendis (IG II/III^{2}1361)[230] tells us that the association as a whole had to pay for the sacrifices to the goddess: a private person, ἰδιώτης paid a fee of a half-obol in addition to a hide (δέρμα) and

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economic and cultural period of growth at the beginning of the 1st cent. BC; see also p. 55.

223 San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 175–176, 181–186.

224 See Sokolowski 1962, no. 20 (ca. 256/5 BC): a regulation of an *orgeones* the first part of which concerns the lending of money taken care of by the *grammateus*. Compare with IG XI4 1216 from the Delian *Sarapieion* A (middle of the 3th cent. BC): The names of those indebted to an association were listed in inscriptions; compare also San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 161.

225 See Burkert 1987, 34.

226 IG II/III^2 1329 (175/4 BC) is the regulation of the *orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods in Piraeus expressing the gratitude to Chaireas Dionysios Athmoneas (l. 23) for his contribution and deeds for the benefit of the association which make it possible for the members of the association to have equal share of the rites (in *Munychion*) in honour of the goddess (ll. 7–15); IG II/III^2 1325 (185/4 BC), ll. 23–24 honours certain members of the association for spending freely a great number of drachmas to pay the silver and golden decoration of the cult objects (ἀνάθημα) of Dionysus, the god of these *Dionysiastae*; IG II/III^2 1324 (beginning of the 2nd cent. BC), the inscription of the association of Bendis in Piraeus similarly honours its *epimeletes* Stephanos for *philotimia* because he contributed to the costs of the *pompe* in honour of their goddess.

227 See e.g. San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 160–161, 185.

228 A membership fee was known in the phratries, e.g. in IG XII Suppl. 303 from Tenos in the 3rd cent. BC in which a certain *phratria* regulated that the relatives of the members could be introduced freely to the membership, but those who were born out of wedlock and wanted to become members of the *phratria*, should pay 27 drachmas (ll. 4–6).

229 See e.g. in IG II/III^2 1315 (211/210 BC), the decree of the *orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods in Piraeus regulating this yearly practice (εἰς τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν τὸν ἐπὶ Αἴσχρωνος τά τε εἰσιτητήρια τὸν ἔθυσεν καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς θυσίας ἃς καθῆκεν θύειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ, ll. 6–7). IG II/III^2 1325 (185/4 BC), the inscription of the Piraean *thiasos* of the *Dionysiastae* expects its *tamias* to act as a χορηγός , the one who supplies the costs of the association, and thus makes possible the monthly meetings of the association (ll. 25–26).

230 Commented also by Foucart 1873, p. 189.

portions of meat (lines 4–5). This did not apply to regular members (lines 2–3). Usual costs were covered by the sums which the officials contributed themselves (lines 16–17), but before the great festival of *Bendideia* every *orgeon* paid two drachmas (line 18).[231] The sums paid for the festivities varied from one association to another; for example, of the *Iobacchoi* in Athens at the end of the third century BC (Prott & Ziehen 1906, no. 46, lines 34–39) those who were newly accepted to the register of the *Iobacchoi (apographe)* had to make a *sponde*, a drink-offering of wine.[232] The Athenian *eranos* from the year 57/6 BC regulated that the outsiders and visitors (ἀποδημοῦντες), but not the ἐπιδημοῦντες, had to bring to the association an amount of three drachmas for entering into the procession, and if there was a surplus after the festival, it was to be distributed.[233] There are a number of decrees of the associations which state that the association paid a reward of a certain sum to its *philotimoi* for their economic support and *summa honoraria*.[234] The associations were sometimes even able to pay wages (*misthoi*) to the persons who acted for benefit of the association.[235]

It is evident that offerings and sacrifices were an important part of the income of the associations and private support – that of the *philotimoi* together with the offerings and contributions of the members – rose in importance for the economy of the associations. The finances of the associations could amalgamate in the course of time with the public economy of the *polis*. The public administration could also have wanted to take the finances of the particularly wealthy associations under its cloak in order to combine its financial policy more coherently with the finances of the sanctuaries.[236]

Concerning the finances of the Egyptian gods in Athens, it must be noted that private financing appears to have been as important method of obtaining an income for the

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[231] Payment had to be left by the officials who functioned for the association before the *Bendideia* which took place on the 18th of *Thargelion* (ll. 17 ff.) and required money and most of all meat. In order to better guarantee the income it was forbidden to sacrifice παραβώμια (l. 7) i.e. outside the altar and without the assistance of a *hieropoios*. See Sokolowski 1954, 156–157.

[232] In his commentary on the word ἰσηλύσιον (l. 39) and on this practice L. Ziehen 1906, p. 133 refers to Hesychius, s.v. εἰσηλούσιον = τίμημα εἰσόδου.

[233] IG II/III² 1339, ll. 6–13.

[234] IG II/III² 1261 (302/299 BC), the *thiasos* of the Syrian gods in Piraeus pays to the *hieropoios* Stephanus 8 drachmas for *philotimia* and *andragathia* because he had contributed remarkably to the costs of the *pompe* of Adonis (ll. 10,15–19,39–40); IG II/III² 1277 (ca. 278/277 BC), the Athenian *thiasos* honours its *epimeletai* for supporting, organizing and carrying out sacrifices and thus pays them a sum of 65 drachmas and a cup made of silver (εἰς ταῦτα ἐπιδεδώκασιν παρ' ἑαυτῶν Γ Δ Γ δραχμάς, καὶ ποτήριον ἀργυροῦν ποησάμενοι παρ' ἑαυτῶν ἀνέθηκαν τῆι Θεῶι ὁλκὴν Γ Δ Η Ι Ι Ι δραχμάς, ll. 10–14); IG II/III² 1263 (300/299 BC), the regulation of the *thiasos* in Piraeus reminds us that the *thiasotai* should know that *philotimia* is expected from them and that it will be recompensated as soon as possible by silver (money) in the manner of contribution (ll. 29–35) (and in this way the *thiasos* thanks Demetrius for his *philotimia*, ll. 41–42).

[235] This is expressed e.g. in IG II/III² 1263 (300/299 BC), a decree of an Athenian *thiasos*; it states that it is decided to give *misthos*-payments to those who have conducted work for the *thiasos* (ὅσοι τι τῶν κοινῶν διεχείρισαν καὶ νῦν διατελεῖ τὰ συνφέροντα πράττων ... ὑπὲρ τῶν θιασωτῶν καὶ κοινῆι ... καὶ ψηφισαμένων τῶν θιασωτῶν μισθὸν αὐτῶι δίδοσθαι ἐκ τοῦ κοινοῦ, ll. 12–19).

[236] Debord 1982, 206–207, 210. He states that the Romans especially seem to have been willing to impose their rules unto the sacred finances; the opinion is shared by San Nicolò 1915 (1972), 53. In Athens the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods became officially accepted; was it thus incorporated to the public life of the city because of its wealth and popularity?

Athenian *Sarapiastai*. An inscription of this association from the year 215/14 BC (IG II/III^2 1292, lines 20–25) states that those *philotimoi* who had been benefactors of the association were to be crowned for their deeds. The practice was the same on Delos at *Sarapieion* B which was the meeting place and sanctuary of the *thiasotai*.[237] *Philotimia* gave prestige to a private citizen, because he was honoured by an honorary crown and had his name inscribed in marble. All-in-all, there is no doubt that the private financing of the cult-associations, that of Isis among them, was a very important way of supporting all the costs.[238]

A couple of coins belonging to the first century BC bearing the symbol of Isis with the name of a rich magistrate on the reverse have been found in Athens.[239] This magistrate, an important Athenian citizen, was probably involved in the cult-association of Isis, since he wished to display the goddess as his own symbol to the people of Athens. This reveals the importance of the cult and tells us something about its ties with the economic functions of the city.

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[237] Inscriptions IG XI4 1226 (a dedication to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis of a θίασος τῶν Σαραπιαστῶν); 1228 and 1229 (κοινὸν τῶν θιασιτῶν), all from the *Sarapieion* B, the end of the 1st cent. BC honouring *philotimoi* of these associations for goodness and piety.

[238] There are inscriptions which bear only the names of the *philotimoi* of the associations and the honorary formula; see e.g. IG II/III^2 2347 (second half of the 4th cent. BC), a Salamian *thiasos* listing 29 names; IG II/III^2 2354 (3rd cent. BC), an Athenian κοινὸν τῶν ἐρανιστῶν listing 23 names; IG II/III^2 2357 (3rd cent. BC), a catalogue of a *thiasos* or *eranos* in Piraeus listing 37 names of which 21 are women's (there had been more names, but these are unfortunately damaged, like the headline which probably gave the name of an association); IG II/III^2 2358 (ca. 150 BC), an Athenian *eranos* honouring its *archieranistes* and *hiereus* and listing 91 (readable) names of the members, 22 of whom are women; IG II/III^2 2355.

[239] 125/4 and 107/6 BC a magistrate called Demeas chose Isis as his symbol; at first the standing goddess and then just her head. Thompson 1961, 601–603 and 607. See also Ferguson 1911, 287, 303; Dow 1937, 207.

Table 1

In the following table the characteristics of the early Hellenistic cults at Athens described above are presented:

	THE CULT OF DEMETER	THE CULT OF ISIS
GENERAL CHARACTER	Official cult of the city-state – spectacle (official dimension) – mystery cult (individual dimension)	The cult of unofficial *thiasos* 333/2 – ca. 200, official from ca. 200 BC The cult of religious association with non-mystery character
PARTICIPANTS	Open to all the *Hellenes* (women and slaves included)	– first metics and foreigners (unofficial period) – mainly male citizens, but nominally open to women as well
ADMINISTRATION	Public administration ordered similarly with the 'secular' institutions of the *polis* Members of the families of the *Eumolpidai* and *Kerykes* inherit the offices of the high priests City-*boule* as the responsible assembly	Ordered according to the administrative models of the *polis* Elected priestly officials *Agora kyria* as the responsible assembly
FINANCES	Public finances: – *aparche* (the first fruits of the harvest) from the cities Private financing: – *philotimoi* as supporters – contributions of the initiants to the sacrifices	Private financing: – *philotimoi* as supporters – payment by the officials of the association for cult facilities

IV. The Problem of the Mysteries

1. Definition of the Term 'Mysteries'

The mysteries are regarded as an individual type of religion which flourished during the Hellenistic period and proved very popular among people who sought new and more satisfying religious experiences.[1] The spiritualism of the mysteries seems to fit perfectly with the general view of religion in Hellenistic times, even though there were mysteries before this era, such as the Eleusinian cult. The cults of Demeter and Isis are both described as mystery cults. In this chapter this 'mystery character' of them is looked at more closely. The concepts that will be studied in the next chapter, syncretism, individualism, the monotheistic trend and cosmopolitanism, are linked with the problem of the mysteries.

Our knowledge of the mysteries is very uneven in character. Ancient authors talk about them in various contexts, but there is no clear and coherent view of what the concept actually meant in the ancient world. Ancient writers were familiar with the words explaining and illustrating the mysteries, like μυέω, μυστήρια, τελέω, τελετή and ὄργια in various connections, and therefore the use of the term 'mystery religions' as a pervasive and exclusive name for a closed system is inappropriate.[2] The Greek word *mysteria* conforms to a well-established type of word to designate festivals that included initiation ceremonies and a cult in which admission and participation depend upon some

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1 Meyer 1987, 3. A different view is postulated by H. Koester 1982, 202 who claims that mystery religions cannot be distinguished from other religious movements of the time.

2 Burkert 1987, 10.

personal ritual performed by the initiand.[3] It belongs to the same group with the verb μυεῖν, to initiate into the mysteries with the probable suggestion of closing the eyes and lips (of an initiand).[4] The word *mysteria* appears for the first time referring to the mystery cults in Heraclitus ca. 500 BC.[5] Plato used the word metaphorically in the sense of reaching the heart of the matter.[6] *Mysteria* must be distinguished from 'mystic', because it was only through the complicated development of Neo-Platonic and Christian metaphors (Dionysos the Areiopagite played a remarkable role in this) that the word μυστικός acquired the meaning of mysticism.[7] The concept of 'mystery' with its modern connotations should not be tied to the term 'mystery religions', because there is no common theological ground for doing so.[8] Τελεῖν and the words of its family overlap with μυεῖν in designating 'to accomplish', 'to complete', 'to celebrate', 'to perform sacred rites' (τελεῖν ἱερά), 'to initiate' (when used with a personal object and with a god's name in the dative). Τελετή and τελεταί mean religious festival or rites, the celebration of mysteries, τελεστής a priest who performs such rites, and τελεστήριον a place for initiation.[9] Pausanias usually designated the mystery rites by the word τελετή[10]; he only

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3 LSJ, s.v. μυστήριον gives the first meaning of the word as secret rite. According to the etymological dictionaries μύω means 'to close': Frisk, GeW., s.v. μύω → μυστήρια; Chantraîne, Dict. ét., s.v. μύω. *Mysteriasmos* refers to initiation of the mystery cults, especially to those of Demeter and Kore in Eleusis (Burkert 1987, 7–9).

4 The connection of the verb μύω – which actually means 'to close', also 'to fall asleep', referring to the closing of the lips and the eyes – with the religious sense of the word μυστής gave rise to the verb μυέω, 'to initiate into the mysteries' (thence, because of the vow of silence about the secret knowledge gained in the ceremonies); Chantraîne, Dict. ét., s.v. μύω; Frisk, GeW, s.v. μύω; also Meyer 1987, 4.

5 Chantraîne, Dict. ét., s.v. μύω – μυστήριον; Frisk, GeW, s.v. μύω; LSJ, s.v. μύω. The philosopher Heraclitus, frg. 14, ll. 3–4 (in B. Snell's edition 1983, frg. B14 p. 10–11) uses the word *mysteria*, when describing people called νυκτιπόλοι, μάγοι, βάκχοι, ληναί and μύσται as people whom he threatens with the things that come after death and claims that they perform the initiation rites accepted among mankind in an impious manner: τὰ γὰρ νομιζόμενα κατ' ἀνθρώπους μυστήρια ἀνιερωστὶ μυεῦνται. Reference to Heraclitus as the first user of the word is in Herodotus, 2.51 (in connection with the mysteries in Samothrace); this fragment (no.14) is preserved through Clemens of Alexandria, Protr. 22.2.

6 In Men. 76e9 Plato uses the word in its metaphorical sense "to be initiated into the learning of truth or into the mysteries of wisdom", as in Grg. 497c: τὰ μεγάλα μεμύησαι πρὶν τὰ σμικρὰ. In Tht. 156a3 he uses the word in a very general sense denoting 'secret'. This kind of use may have allowed the later interpretation of it as 'mystic'.

7 Bouyer 1981, 45–47. Notice also that the Latin *sacramentum* is equivalent to μυστήριον which is an abstract and general term denoting secret rite and secret in general as well (Lampe, Patr. Gr. Lex., s.v. μυστήριον). The word *mysterion* is frequently used by the Christian writers as a theological concept which denotes divine, secret purpose or activity, Christian faith as a body of revealed truth, mystical truth, hidden meaning and sacrament of baptism, eucharist and other sacraments of the Church; Lampe, Patr. Gr. Dict. s.v. μυστήριον. See also R. Merkelbach 1995, 162 who interprets *mysterion* as an essential part, especially as an opening ceremony, of the rites for the Egyptian gods as well.

8 Cf. Koester 1982, 202.

9 In the sense of a rite the word appears e.g. in Aeschyle, Pers. 204; Plato, Phdr. 253c3.

10 Pausanias 1.2.5 (Eleusis); 1.37.4 (Eleusis); 1.38.3 (Eleusis); 2.12.5 (Corinth); 2.14.1–4 (the mysteries of Demeter in Celeae, near Corinth); 2.36.7 (Lernaean rites of Demeter); 8.15.1–4 (description of the Eleusian rites as a model for the rites in Mantinea); 9.25.7 (rites of Cabiri); 10.31.11 (remark on the

once uses the word μυστήρια.[11] Ὄργια is a general word for 'ritual' and 'sacrifices', but it is used in the context of the secret Mysteries of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis or, more frequently, of the rites of Dionysus.[12]

Clemens of Alexandria, Church Father who wrote in the second and third centuries AD, uses all the above-mentioned words when he speaks about Greek mysteries in his *Protreptikos* (chapter II). The mysteries he mentions are those of Demeter and Kore, Dionysus, Aphrodite, Cybele and Attis, and Corybantes.[13] "Demeter and Kore have come to be a subject of a mystic act (δρᾶμα μυστικόν)" (Protr. 2.12). In his text,[14] in general, mysteries are called τὰ μυστήρια and the word *orgia* usually designates the rites.[15] *Telete/teletai* is very close to *orgia*, for example, τελεταὶ μυστικαί.[16] Sometimes the closest equivalent for it seems to be 'ceremony'.[17]

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greatness of the Eleusinian mysteries). To Pausanias *telete* meant the sacred rites of other cults as well, see e.g. 2.3.4 (τελετὴ Μητρός in Corinth); 2.26.8 (rites for Asclepius in Epidaurus); 2.30.2 (rites for Hecate); 2.38.3 (rites of the Argives for Hera); 4.34.11 (rites for Apollo); 8.23.4 (rites for Artemis); 8.37.2 and 8 (rites for Δέσποινα which in this connection designates Kore alone in Arcadia) ; 10.7.2 (mystery rites of Orfeus); 10.38.7 (rites for Dioscuri in Amphissa); even the ruler cult of the Roman Emperors in Mantinea was called τελετή by Pausanias: 8.9.8. Demeter and Kore are sometimes called θεαὶ μεγάλαι by Pausanias and their rites designated by the word τελετή: 4.33.5; 8.29.1 The author tells about the *telete* of the Great Gods (Θεοὶ Μεγάλοι), which is based on the model of the Eleusinian *telete*, in 4.1.6–9; 4.3.10; 4.26.8 and 8.31.7. It is suggested that by these deities he meant the Cabiri of Samothrace or the Dioscuri, the native deities of Messenia: Frazer 1898 (vol. III), 407–408; the same view is held and the theme studied by B. Müller 1913 in his book Μέγας Θεός. But note that in Pausanias' text the expression *Theoi Megaloi* often seems to be connected with the mystery cults, thus having a specific designation for the gods of the mysteries. In the Messenian inscription SIG II[3] 735 (92 BC) the expression θεοὶ μεγάλοι (ll. 25–26) designates the gods in honour of whom the mystery festival *Carnea* (Κάρνεια) was celebrated. About *orgia*, the word designating mysteries as well in Pausanias' text, see n. 12 below.

11 Pausanias uses the word μυστήρια only once, in describing the Orphic mysteries in 9.30.5. (in 10.7.2. he calls these rites *mystikai teletai*).

12 The word ὄργια is used mostly by the Christian writers for polemic purposes; For pre-Christian ancient writers see e.g. Hymn Hom. Dem. 273, 476; Euripides, Heracl. 613; Aristophanes, Thes. 948; 1151–1152 (rites of Demeter); Herodotus, 5.61.11; Pausanias uses the word 15 times, seven times for the rites of Dionysus (8.6.5, Mantinaea; 8.26.2, Heraea; 8.37.5, Arcadian myth of Zeus and Dionysus; 9.20.4, Tanagra; 10.4.3, about Attic and Delphian women celebrating mysteries of Dionysus; 10.6.4, Delphoi; 10.33.11, Amphicleia), and seven times for the rites of Demeter (2.14.3., Eleusis; 10.28.3., Thasos; 4.1.5–7 (two mentions); 4.2.6.; 4.14.1 and 4.15.7 are references to the Eleusinian rites as a model for the Messenian ones); 9.25.7. (in connection with the mysteries of the Cabiri).

13 Clemens of Alexandria, Protr. 2.13.

14 E.g. *ibid.* 2.11 (general term); 13 (Demeter); 14 (Corybantes); 15 (Dionysus); 16 (Corybantes); 19 (general).

15 *Ibid.*, 2.11 (mystery rites of Dionysus); 13 (general for the mystery celebrations); 16 (rites of the mysteries of Corybantes); 19 (negative: ἀνοργίαστος, a rite without sanctity). Clemens also gives his own etymology for 'orgia': "It seems to me that the term '*orgia*' must be derived from the wrath (*orge*) of Demeter against Zeus." (2.12).

16 *Ibid.*, 2.11. See also 19; in his Lexicon Hesychius (4th cent. AD), defines *orgia* as τὰ ἱερά. οἱ δὲ τὰ μυστήρια, M. Schmidt's edition (1867), col. 1140.7; for the verb ὀργιάζειν Hesychius gives the meaning τελεῖν Διονύσῳ (col. 1140.8) and, interestingly enough, he defines ὀργεῶνες as μύσται, ἱεροφάνται and ἱερεῖς (col. 1140.4).

17 As e.g. in Plutarch's text. See Mor. 5.417b–d.

Ancient authors regarded mysteries as a separate group of religious practices, separate from the cults belonging to the Homeric–Hesiodean pantheon. In a tone of philosophical speculation Plutarch explains, by referring to Plato and Aristotle, that there is a certain kind of philosophy which may be called 'epoptic' (from *epopteia*). It means the primary (πρῶτος), simple (ἁπλόος) and immaterial (ἄυλος) stage in which one may grasp pure truth (καθαρὰ ἀλήθεια) after one has passed beyond conjectural and confused matters. By this principle the whole of philosophy is fulfilled.[18] This approaches what we today would understood to be mysticism, namely special kinds of subjective experiences which strive beyond conceptualisations and reasoning.[19] But Plutarch was a religious expert, and, thus, in the sense of religious duties concerning the mysteries, he explains that, "Regarding the mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια), in which it is possible to gain the clearest reflections and adumbrations of the truth about the demigods (δαιμόνια), let my lips be piously sealed, (as Herodotus says)" (Mor. 5.417b–c). Words attributed to Aristotle tell us that, "At the final stage of the mysteries (τελουμένα) there should be no more learning (μαθεῖν), but experiencing (παθεῖν) and a change in the state of mind (διατεθῆναι)" (frg. 15).[20] The same kind of content is to be seen in the statements of W. Burkert and U. Bianchi, two of the most important scholars who have studied the mystery religions: "Mysteries were initiation rituals of a voluntary, personal and sacred character that aimed at a change of mind through experience of the sacred".[21] Many scholars besides these two have tried to construct a view of the contents of the whole complex of mystery cults.[22] The examples given in this study are mainly from the cults of Demeter and Isis.

2. Aspects of the Mysteries

The Eleusinian cult has been used by scholars as a model by which to define the mysteries of antiquity in general. For example, U. Bianchi gives the following definition:

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18 Plutarch, Mor. 5.382d–e.

19 Pyysiäinen 1993, 25. This could be compared with the so-called pure consciousness event (PCE), the contentless state of consciousness in which there occurs no change, and in which all previous expectations are confounded and transcended. PCE is striven for and experienced in various religious traditions, most clearly in Buddhism. See *ibid.* 46, 99–101.

20 Aristotle, frg. 15 = Synesius, Dion 8.48a. The reference to this is in Plutarch's Mor. 5.382d–e. See also Clemens of Alexandria, Strom. 5.71.1. Notice that Aristotle moves in the sphere of philosophy here in order to make the highest understanding of it analogous to the *epopteia*, the final stage of the mysteries.

21 From Burkert 1987, 11; The same already in Bianchi 1976, 1–8 and 1980, 11. U. Bianchi's 'mystic' (*mistico*) means 'experience of difference' between gods, world and self and it is distinguished from 'mystery' (*misterico*) defined as above and from 'mysteriosophy' (*misteriosofico*) which refers to the speculative constructions of Orphism.

22 E.g. Nilsson 1946 (1984), 173: "Les idées religieuses que l'on attribue aux Mystères, ce que j'ai nommé plus haut une théologie des mystères, peuvent être résumées en ces mots: mort et résurrection, nouvelle naissance et filiation divine, illumination et rédemption, divinisation et immortalité." (Translation M. Ghyca 1984).

"Taking our point of reference we may define this typical phenomenon of Greek spirit as follows: a mythical-ritual complex implying an annual festival not without connection with the theme of seasonal fertility and the welfare of the city, but including very prominently the individual initiation of groups of citizens; and later on of men and women from all over the Greek and Hellenistic-Roman world. This initiation – protected by secrecy – conferred special personal privileges already in their life, but particularly in their afterlife."[23]

The Eleusinian cult is a frame of reference and has an important position in research literature, but there are still some aspects of the mysteries which do not fit the Eleusinian picture all that well. Usually the Oriental element in one form or another, but not *per definitionem*, belongs to the mysteries. This view was founded by R. Reitzenstein in his work of 1910 which examined mysteries as Hellenistic religions; Hellenism for him being "Oriental spirituality in a Hellenized form".[24] The Oriental influence is especially clear in the cases of well-known mysteries such as those of Cybele and Attis, both of whom came from Asia Minor, as well as Dionysus and Mithra. In this respect the Eleusinian mysteries, together with the Orphic ones, were especially Greek in character.[25] The Oriental element in the Eleusinian mysteries was brought by Dionysus.[26] He appears in the Eleusinian iconography in Classical times, but his role increased in importance during the Hellenistic era, when he had additional, separate popular mysteries of his own. It is worth remembering, however, that the important mysteries of the Egyptian gods were not strictly Oriental in origin, if the Orient is understood as being mainly Asia Minor. Thus, it would be preferable to say that the mysteries included foreign elements which were understood in Greece according to local needs and made to fit the cultural context.[27] W. Burkert states that the mysteries seem to reflect the older model of Eleusis or Dionysus, or both.[28] In this way we might say that the mysteries of Hellenistic times, including foreign elements, went through the process of *interpretatio Graeca.*

The myths of the mystery cults were aetiological to the cult practices. Myths made the cults intelligible and brought the mythical and meaningful past in touch with the present situation. Myths tend to give an explanatory content to rites. They give reasons for

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[23] Bianchi 1976, 4; see also Burkert 1978, 2; Koester 1982, 176: "For the development of the Greek and Hellenistic concept of the 'Mysteries' the Demetrian cult in Eleusis was the most significant."

[24] Reitzenstein 1910, 9.

[25] The roots of the Eleusinian cult were located in the Minoan-Mycenaean world. See p. 30 n. 45. But it is not possible to say that the Eleusinian cult was a successor to or survivor of Minoan-Mycenaean tradition, because both cultural areas were independent, having their own characteristics which were connected to local historical and even ecological conditions. Only some indications of continuity may be searched for.

[26] Dionysus appears often among the Eleusian gods in the Eleusinian iconography. See Bianchi 1976, pictures 2, 5 (4th cent. BC), 6 and 7 (4th cent. BC), 8 (3rd cent. BC), 17, 18 (describing Dionysus–Bacchus and Demeter from Roman times). See also Prumm 1967, 154 (L.H. Prumm argues for the very ancient origin of Dionysus' role in the mysteries, because his name has been found in Cretan-Mycenaean linear B tablets.) Note that in the plays of Aristophanes, Dionysus appears in connection with the Eleusinian cult scene as one who encounters the initiants who continue to celebrate the Mysteries by dancing and singing together in the Iacchus procession in the realm of Hades; see Ran. 311–459.

[27] See Nilsson 1846 (1984), 184.

[28] Burkert 1987, 2, who follows the view of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1932, 368–387.

traditionally learned practices. In the mysteries, and especially in the rites experienced personally, mythical and atemporal time was made actual. These experiences widened the temporal horizons of the participants, giving their existence a religious meaning and explanation. Localized aetiological myths are the point at which worship and mythology intersect, and thus the myth reveals something of what local people thought about the deity, ritual or cult.[29] In these myths there is usually a divine couple of dissimilar rank, but linked to each other in some kind of genealogical way. Usually this dualistic dichotomy of the gods is manifested in a relationship between a man and woman (Attis – Cybele), a man and wife (Osiris – Isis) or more rarely, as in Eleusis, as a mother and daughter (Demeter – Kore). In the central position there is a feminine deity who brings life and fertility through the destruction and subsequent rebirth of her counterpart. K. Prumm describes this as "basic vegetation duality."[30] In an agrarian culture this was clearly linked to the cycle of the year, the temporal concept of which was different from the cycles of human life, i.e. the polarity between the fertile period (spring and summer) and the barren one (autumn and winter).

The fertility aspect is one of the unifying principles belonging to all the mysteries.[31] Fertility of the land guaranteed continuity of human kind. In the mythico-ritual complex a possibility of birth (and rebirth in the afterlife) presupposes death as a prerequisite of birth and new life, emphasizing the chthonic aspect of the mystery gods; very clearly so in the case of Demeter.[32] Nevertheless, the Eleusinian cult was never only a 'salvation mystery cult', as, for example, Orphic-type mysteries (as a branch of the Dionysiac ones), Mithraism or even those of Isis in the Roman world. The place of fertility and mythical femininity suggests a sexual aspect which could have been expressed in the forms of ecstatic rituals or phallocentrism in the mysteries, as in the cases of Dionysus and Cybele. On the other hand, this could lead to sexual abstinence, which is the other side of the same coin. The Eleusinian and Egyptian mysteries lacked such a strong emphasis, though sexual symbolism was implicitly involved in these cults as well. But sexuality in the mystery cults, for example sexual union, may rather have been a symbolic expression of the union between man and god.[33] The feminine basis of the myths was not enlarged to the cultic level which would have led to the sexes being separated systematically. The mysteries of Dionysus and Cybele were mainly directed towards women, Mithraism and Orphism towards men, and those of the Eleusinian and Egyptian gods were open to both sexes.

Secrecy is one of the common and very important, probably the most important, characteristics of the mysteries. It had a great deal to do with questions concerning death and after-life, because an individual who became initiated into the mysteries sought emotional or cognitive satisfaction in religious matters dealing with his personal questions regarding life and death. Mysteries could give some personal answers but only in the

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29 Mikalson 1991, 4.

30 Prumm 1967, 155.

31 See e.g. Lavedan 1931, 681; Prumm 1967, 155; Bianchi 1976, 4–5.

32 The Eleusinian cult has been interpreted from the feminist point of view so that its significance is focused on three interrelated dimensions of life, mainly on women's life: 1) fertility and birth (that of earth and human's), 2) sexuality and marriage (mythical allegories and practices), 3) death and rebirth. Keller 1988, 30–31.

33 Nilsson 1946 (1984), 175.

name of secrecy. But what is not clear – because of this well-kept secrecy – is what kinds of solutions were given. Secrecy also had another function; namely, a social coherence which was needed in a situation where people kept strictly to the ancient forms of worship and their meanings were only explained by the myth. The secret formed a gradual psychological framework for social coherence in differing situations. It was supra-individual and kept the appeal of the practices alive.[34] Secrecy was important also for the individual because the rituals offered an area of participation in the religious rites on a very personal level, but they were at the same time socially shared. Thus the secrecy had social, individual, cognitional and emotionally-affective meanings.

3. The Mysteries in Athens During the Early Hellenistic Period and a Comparison to Those of Rome in the Third Century AD

A. Significance of the Mysteries in Athens to the Individual and to the City

A.1. The Eleusinian Cult

It has been shown in Chapter III that the Great Mysteries of Demeter were important for the identity and self-respect of Athens also in Hellenistic times. There were all the elements that are characteristic of a public cult: proclamations, offerings, and processions. In the literature dealing with the mysteries, however, the individualistic element in the cult has been stressed strongly; the cult of Demeter among other mysteries has become a kind of contrast to the formal city-cults, because it is seen to have given to the individual an opportunity to act as a responsible individual. Thus the mysteries have become one of the most important characterizations of the individualism of the time in religious matters. An individual is seen as one who seeks answers to his personal questions, which deal mainly with life and death. The wish to conquer the finality of death and to gain an after-life is in this connection regarded as a new characteristic of individual religion in Hellenistic times. But have not these questions always been central when we speak about religion, because death is the final point that marks certain boundaries in human life? This is why the problem of death has often become sacralised in the world's religions and put into the sphere of 'religion'. In general religion deals with questions of this sort; solutions may be more individually or more socially oriented. Thus for centuries the cult of Demeter also dealt with emotionally individualistic motives of this kind.[35] Yet it cannot be denied that the cult of Eleusis satisfied some sincere and deep human longings that had not been satisfied so explicitly by the other cults of the *polis*. But evidence in this cult of a belief in resurrection symbolism as it is understood in Christianity, is uncompelling. Even though

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[34] Prumm 1967, 156.

[35] As examples see Hymn Hom. Dem., 478–483; Sophocles, frg. 719: "Happy is he who having seen these rites goes below the hollow earth; for he knows the end of life and he knows its god-sent beginning" (translation R. Carden 1974).

there was a clear notion of death and after-life in the Mysteries, the concept of rebirth in a Christian sense was really not explicit.[36]

Individualism in the cult may be understood as obtaining knowledge of a commonly shared secret, and keeping that secret was everyone's personal duty. This created an internal coherence among the initiated individuals, even though they did not form themselves into any kind of religious associations, *thiasoi*. Having gone through the sacred rites one was not obliged to follow a certain kind of life-style or to obey certain rules, not even to return to the sanctuary to worship or give offerings to the goddesses. Thus he experienced the rites individually without any social obligations. There was no socially determined core outside of the *genos* of the *Eumolpidai* and the *Kerykes* around which religious institutions could have arisen to keep up the tradition: officials were in contact with the life cycles of the city-state, and the most important happening of the Eleusinian cult, the Great Mysteries, was organized by both secular institutions and secular personnel of the city-state. Even religious writings were not *hieroi logoi* in the strict sense, because there was no priestly organization to control such *logoi*.[37]

One more matter must be dealt with here, namely the practice of purification in the cult of Demeter, because it largely constituted the Mysteries as a 'mystery religion'. Even the duties of most of the lesser officials of the Eleusinian cult were connected with purifying sacred things, places or persons.[38] In the Greek language the idea of religious purity, implying moral purity as well, is signified by the term *hagnos* (ἁγνός) and when connected with the quality of a deity it is close to or equivalent of *katharsios* (one who purifies being pure him/herself).[39] In Christian symbolism the concept *hagnos* implies also purity manifested in virginity and maternity; but this symbolism is familiar to the Eleusinian Mysteries equally well because the concept of purity can be noticed in the mythology of the Mysteries, in the epithets of the two goddesses[40] and on many occasions

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[36] Burkert 1987, 23–24.

[37] This *logos* could be understood as belonging to the both part of the Mysteries: in them (inside-tradition) and about them (outside-tradition). Myths must be counted in both groups, because they may have been parts of the rituals, for example, recitations, or common traditions about the rituals in legitimating them or giving 'religious' history to the rites (the aetiological function of the myth). *Hieroi logoi* of Isis appear later, during Roman times; see p. 77.

[38] The *phaitryntes/phaidyntes* was the one who cleansed the statues of the gods, the *hydranoi* cleansed the initiants by pouring water over them, and the *neokoros* (who does not appear until the Roman period in the cult of the Egyptian gods) took care of the cleanliness and purity of the sanctuary. In his lexicon Hesychius calls *hydranos* the purifier of the Eleusinian rites (ἁγνιστὴς τῶν Ἐλευσινίων), col. 1486 in Schmidt's edition (1867). See Clinton 1974, 95, 98.

[39] According to A. Motte 1986, 140–141; 144–145; 147–149 *hagnos* says more than *katharos*, p. 147: "*hagnos* associe bien au départ l'idée de pureté à celle de sacré, de santeté. C'est une notion de pureté non pas abstraite, mais vitale ... elle est liée à une appréhension mythopoétique du principle féminin de la vie". *Hagnos* implies the meanings of holy and sacred, while *katharos* has a direct reference to a deity and his/her ability to purify his/her adherents; it also includes cleanliness in a moral sense: "with clean hands" (LSJ, s.v. ἁγνός; καθαρός). The term φαρμακός refers to one sacrificed or executed as an atonement or purification for others (LSJ, s.v. φαρμακός). In the meaning of 'scapegoat' it appears, e.g. in Aristoph., Ran. 733.

[40] Deities qualified by *hagnos* are usually feminine, most usually Demeter and Kore, often Artemis; see Motte 1986, 144–145; 162. In the Homeric hymn to Demeter Demeter occurs as πότνια ἁγνή (203) and Persephone as ἁγνή (337); see also Pausanias 4.33.4: *Hagne* is a title of Kore; and Aristophanes'

in their rites. Even the proclamation of invitation emphasised the purity of the initiands,[41] and the rites of *elasis*,[42] *krokosis*[43] and prohibitions of the *mysteriotides* in general[44] were closely connected with the purpose of purification. *Krokosis* was a social purifactory rite, and the two others more individually oriented. Sea-water was seen as purifying[45] as well as the blood of the piglets which were offered to Demeter.[46] What is important is that in the official religion which did not emphasize the role of an individual as much as did the Mysteries, the quest for purity played only a minor role. Purification rites in the other state-cults could have been included in the preparations, but were never the purpose nor the end for which to strive. In this sense the Mysteries of Demeter transcended the nature of the official cults. The cult's purpose was cleansing defilement, which manifested itself in real material objects such as blood and dirt, so that purification was effected through physical operations involving washing the body, letting the blood of a piglet flow out, and fasting.[47]

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call to join Demeter and Iacchus in dance, Ran. 335: χαρίτων πλεῖστον ἔχουσαν μέρος, ἁγνήν, ὁσίοις ἅμα μύσταισι χορείαν.

41 G.E. Mylonas 1961, 248 suggests that those initiants who were accepted to take part in the Mystery rites probably had the right in Athens, before the rites, to enter into the precinct of the *Eleusinion* where the *hiera* were kept, after washing their hands with lustral water kept in the basin by the door.

42 *Elasis* took place on the 17th of *Boedromion*, the 3rd day of the Mysteries. Then all the *mystai* went to the coast (Piraeus) from Athens to bathe in the sea. On the same occasion each of them offered a piglet to Demeter and carried it back to Athens as a personal offering. See e.g. Polyaenus, Strat. 3.11.2 and IG II/III^2 847 (215/14 BC) which records that the procession of *elasis* was organized by the officials of Athens.

43 This rite took place during the great procession from Athens to Eleusis. The members of the legendary *genos* of the *Krokidai* (Pausanias 1.38.2) tied a yellow ribbon around the right arm and left leg of each initiant. Most probably this was to ward off evil and thus purify the initiant. See discussion of this matter in Deubner 1932, 77; Mylonas 1961, 256; Parke 1977, 66. But after *krokosis* at the bridge which crossed the river Cephisus (Pausanias 1.37.3–4; 1.38.5), a rite which clearly had a wider purificatory meaning took place; namely, the permission for men sitting on the bridge with their heads covered to shout insults at important and well-known citizens participating in the procession; see Athenaeus, 13.590e–f. This act offered a moment of compensation by breaking every-day rules of social and political politeness and presented an opportunity in an exceptional situation and under its 'sacred' veil to say things usually kept silent. This was social purification. See Mylonas 1961, 256; Parke 1977, 66.

44 In the name of purity it was prohibited for an initiate to eat beans, eggs, the meat of a cock, fish or to drink wine following the model of Demeter's fast which was due to her grief (Hymn Hom. Dem., 201). Since "it was not lawful for her [Demeter] to drink red wine, she bade them [king and queen of Eleusis] to mix meal and water with soft mint" (*ibid.* 271).

45 See e.g. Euripides, IT 1993 and Plutarch, Mor. 6.263e: τὸ πῦρ καθαίρει καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἁγνίζει. Plutarch explains furthermore that fire and water are recognized as elements of the first principles, fire masculine and water feminine.

46 The sanctuary was probably cleansed by the blood of the pigs: IG II/III^2 1672 (329/8 BC) from Eleusis is a long inscription listing all the costs of the sanctuary during the year; in ll. 126–128 it states that wages (*misthos*) of ┼┼ (2 drachmas) is paid to the cleaner (whose name is missing), and that two young pigs for cleansing the Eleusinian sanctuary were bought (χοῖροι δύο καθῆραι τὸ ἱερὸν τὸ Ἐλευσῖνι, ll. 126–7).

47 Cf. Vernant 1990, 124, 127.

A.2. Cult of Isis

As in the case of Demeter, it is hard to say whether individual distinction prevailed over the group-identity of the adherents of Isis, because the individualistic appeal lived hand-in-hand with the social functions of the religious associations. Openness was the characterizing aspect of the *thiasos* of Egyptian gods in Athens, and thus there was no shared secrecy in this cult that would have made the association clearly one of the mystery-type. I am inclined to think that *thiasoi* of this time differed noticeably from the mysteries proper precisely because of this lack of secrecy, which would have been socially determined. The same applies to the clubs or trade guilds. Nevertheless, it is true that there were similarities between the mysteries and *thiasoi*: they were intended to provide an individual with a deeper level of religious experience, probably through a more mysterious aura. The analogy lies in individualism, cosmopolitanism and communal life.[48]

As in the case of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the cult of Isis dealt with the questions of death, but it was not a central concern in the *thiasos* of Egyptian gods in Athens; the *thiasos* had far too many social and economic functions. The symbolic experience of death might have been a part of the rituals, but it was not identical with the attainment of immortality: every-day life of a member of a *thiasos* was in this life, and becoming a member did not presuppose any radical abandonments or changes in this life. Being a member of a *thiasos* and contributing economically to its costs guaranteed a funeral and burial place, something which was important to everyone. In this way the existence of may be defined as such only in later times, during the Roman Imperial period.[49]

The official status which the *thiasos* of Isis gained in Athens is an important factor that points out Isis' non-mystery character in early Hellenistic Athens. There is equivalence for this on Delos where a difference between the two *Sarapieia* prevailed. *Sarapieion* A (established in the second part of the third century BC) was the first one, and it maintained its Egyptian character during the Athenian occupation, but *Sarapieion* C (established before the year 215 BC[50]) was in the hands of the Athenian officials and thus its rites were much more 'Greek' in character. It was a representative of Athenian official power on the

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48 F. Poland 1909 (1967), 36 underlines the meaning of the contrasts which the associations offered to people as regards the state cults.

49 See Poland 1909 (1967), 37–38. E.g. τὸ κοινὸν τῶν μυστῶν in the inscription IG IV 659 (Argos, 2nd cent. AD), l. 5. The term *thiasos* is rarely used in the inscriptions concerning the 'mystery associations'. Mystery-associations are found in Smyrna of the period of the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138–161) in the inscriptions Poland 1909, nos. B354a–b: σύνοδος τῶν τῆς Θεοῦ μυστῶν; Poland 1909, no. B353 (ll. 1–3): σύνοδος τῶν μυστῶν τῆς μεγάλης Θεᾶς πρὸ πόλεως θεσμοφόρου Δήμητρος; in Ephesus of the same period there was an association, Poland 1909, no. B326, which stated (ll. 3–5): οἱ πρὸ πόλεως Δημητριασταὶ καὶ Διονύσου μύσται. But during the last centuries BC there were no associations of this kind; their emergence is connected with the process of syncretism; see Chapters IV.4 and V.1.

50 Roussel 1916a, 250–251.

island. *Sarapieion* C was under Athenian official supervision and its religious officials and priests were chosen annually by lot in Athens in the same manner as in the cult association in Athens itself. They were Athenian citizens; and thus in *Sarapieion* C there were no Egyptian religious functionaries, who would have been the connoisseurs of the rites, supporters and teachers of sacred tradition.[51] *Sarapieion* A was different because there the post of the priest was hereditary and based on the Egyptian origin. The first priest of Sarapis was a certain Apollonius, a Greek from Egypt, who brought Sarapis to Delos from Memphis following an order given to him by the god in a dream. The second priest was Demetrius, a Greek from Egypt as well, and the father of the third, also Apollonius, who tells the story of the foundation in an inscription found in *Sarapieion* A.[52] In this sanctuary the practices and the rituals of the cult were much less 'hellenized' than those of *Sarapieion* C: there are stories about miraculous healings,[53] nocturnal visits of the gods,[54] descriptions of water rites[55] which are lacking from *Sarapieion* C. In these Egyptian rites the purifactory functions of the gods are apparent. The theme of purification was not so explicit in the Athenian cult of Isis (nor to the 'Greek' cult of Isis and Sarapis in *Sarapieion* C), because it was an official cult without clear affinities to the mysteries.

B. Comparison: the Mysteries of Isis in Rome in the Third Century AD

The situation was somewhat different later. The cult of Isis developed into a mystery cult, as it may be called, during Roman times. In Rome itself its mystery character was very evident. This is seen most clearly in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius of Madauros written in Rome in the middle of the third century AD. Apuleius' story, fictional in character, but at least to some degree autobiographical, is about a man called Lucius who, bewitched, wanders the Roman world in the form of an ass. He sees many kinds of religious cults, mysteries among them, and finally finds his destiny and salvation (*beneficia et fata*, 275.12–13), the Most High Isis[56], who appears to Lucius in a dream telling him

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[51] Ferguson 1911, 361, 385; Roussel 1916a, 122–127; Dow 1937, 206; Dunand 1973, 103–105. Inscription ID 2610 (= Roussel 1916a, no. 73, pp. 122–125) is a list of the priests of *Sarapieion* C (35 names, *demos*-name included, are preserved, but the beginning of the inscription is damaged). The priests belong to the period between 137–109 BC, but probably the inscription was a complete list of all the priests after the year 166 BC; see also Roussel 1916a, 259.

[52] See p. 50, esp. n. 157.

[53] IG XI4 1299 (the 'Chronicle') which clearly expresses this.

[54] Roussel 1916a, 74–79.

[55] In *Sarapieion* A there was a water crypt with an inflow pipe which was connected to the collection tank situated about 11 meters east of the temple, thus possibly designed to imitate on a small scale the Ptolemaic Nilometers of Egypt and thus maintaining ties with Egypt. In *Sarapieion* B a similar kind of crypt was found, but without any sign of an inflow pipe or drain. But in *Sarapieion* C no such structure has been found within its precinct. See the descriptions of these constructions in Wild, 1981, 34–39. But note that such an interpretation which connects inflow pipes with Egyptian nilometers should not be accepted without doubts. See also Merkelbach 1995, 150–153.

[56] Isis' omnipotence is well expressed in the words said to Lucius by the goddess herself: "I who am the mother of the universe, the mistress of all the elements, the first offspring of time, the highest of deities, the Queen of death, foremost of heavenly beings, the single form that fuses all the gods and

the secret of how to save himself and giving him commands (*imperiis sacris* 270.4–5; 281.4). Lucius becomes initiated (*initiatus* 273.14–15; 279.13) into the Mysteries of Isis, follows the strict rules of the cult and the priesthood (*ministerium* 281.1–2; 283.17),[57] abandons all his property, and even sells his clothes (289.15–19). In the end he is raised to the status of being able to be initiated into the mysteries of Osiris, the supreme father of the gods, the unconquered One (*magnus deus deumque, summus parentis invictus Osiris* 288.7–8) and becoming a member of the priesthood of the god, one of the *pastophori* (288.19).[58]

Here the essential elements important to the mystery-cult are apparent. Mysteries are called by Apuleius *religionis secreta* or *sacra*[59] and the rites of the mysteries are *ritus*[60] or *teletae*[61] This reveals that secrecy was the most important feature of the cult; it largely defined the cult. It was expected that the one who wished to be initiated would follow certain rules of chastity[62] and abstinence[63] (281.7–8; 285.1), follow a certain life style ordered by the god, for example, being obliged to shave his head[64] (291.13–14), to

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goddesses ..." (Apuleius, Met. 269.9–15), translation J.G. Griffiths 1975. Compare this with the aretalogies of Isis which contain exactly the same elements, even the same form of composition; about the aretalogies see p. 79, n. 73.

57 Lucius tells that to serve of the faith was arduous and that, the rules of chastity and abstinence were extremely hard (*sedulo percontaveram difficile religionis obsequium et castimoniorum abstinentiam satis arduam cautoque circumspectu vitam quae multis casibus subiacet, esse muniendam*), Apuleius, Met. 281.7–8.

58 About the *pastophori* see R. Merkelbach 1995, 122–123 who calls them *clerus minor* of the cult of the Egyptian gods in Egypt. He also regards that the *pastophori* had a remarkable role in spreading the cult from Egypt to Greece and Italy. According to Apuleius, Met. 279.15–17 in Rome there were the whole *collegium* of *pastophori* of Isis and Osiris.

59 See e.g. Apuleius, Met. 266.14; 289.9; 290.6; 291.1.

60 *Ibid.*, e.g. 267.15; 269.14.

61 *Ibid.*, e.g. 284.17; 288.3; 288.9; 290.6; 291.1. Once he uses the word *orgia* (289.23), but in the sense of 'nocturnal ecstasy' caused by the supreme god (see translation by J.G. Griffiths 1975, 107).

62 Plutarch, Mor. 5.351f–352a states that the *mystai* abstained from the lust of the flesh (the pleasures of Aphrodite) and curtailed licentiousness (σώφρονι μὲν ἐνδελεχῶς διαίτῃ καὶ βρωμάτων πολλῶν καὶ ἀφροδισίων ἀποχαῖς κολουούσης). Herodotus, 2.64 explains that the Egyptians were the first to make it a religious observance to wash themselves after having had sexual intercourse before entering a temple. According to him the Greeks followed this rule.

63 Apuleius says that he had to abstain from unhallowed and unlawful food so that he might better make the journey to the hidden mysteries of the purest faith (283.11–14) and specifies that during the ten days before initiation it was forbidden to eat animal flesh or drink wine (284.25; 289.20). Plutarch, Mor. 5.251f explains that the initiated followed a strict regimen and abstinence from many kinds of foods, and states (352f) that the priests eschew most legumes, mutton and pork, use no salt (because it increases appetite), nor fish (353c–e) nor onion (353f). For the use of wine he says that the clergy either use wine in great moderation or abstain completely from it periodically. Herodotus, 2.38 tells that for the Egyptian clergy sacred food is cooked, and that fish and beans were considered impure. See also Dunand 1973, 175–176. The Delian inscription from *Sarapieion* C, IG XI4 1300 (middle of the 2nd cent. BC) denies entry into the sanctuary to those who had drunk wine.

64 Herodotus, 2.36 and 37 says that in Egypt priests are shaven; they shave the whole body every other day. Plutarch Mor. 5.352c–e explains that a priest of Isis shaves his head as a sign of mourning (ξυρεῖσθαι τὰς κεφαλὰς διὰ τὸ πένθος). See Malaise 1986, 83 and Merkelbach 1995, 161.

observe a vegetarian diet (289.20–21; 290.26), to wear special linen vestments[65] (273.15), and to live in poverty (289.16–19). He had to devote his entire life to the goddess. Isis says to Lucius (270.20–22):

> "But especially remember and ever hold enshrined deep in your heart that the remaining course of your life, even to the limit of your last breath, is dedicated to me" (270.20–22).[66]

This reveals a completely different attitude in religious matters and to piety than that which prevailed in Athens in the third and the second centuries BC. The sequence to this was that in Rome there was a group of religious specialists who formed a social class of their own, which may be called a priesthood in the more modern sense of the word.[67] This group took care of the sacred writings (*liber de litteris* 279.17; 284.13) as well. These writings were regarded as holy, and were observed by the special authority of religious specialists. The existence of these *hieroi logoi* in the Isiac cult before the Roman era can not be proved.[68] This shows that the tradition was already well-established in Rome at the time of Apuleius.

In the mystery cult of Isis as described by Apuleius purification held an important position and included a rich symbolism. Apuleius had to go through bathing rites escorted by the faithful before becoming initiated, and had to have prayers said on his behalf asking for the forgiveness of the gods, and he had to be cleansed completely by an older priest.[69] Apuleius also describes a certain rite performed in honour of Isis in which the ships dedicated to Isis were purified on the sea-shore with a torch, an egg and sulphur so well

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[65] Linen, especially white linen, was regarded as a pure material, flax being the material which springs from the earth which in turn is immortal; it yields edible seeds and supplies a plain and clean clothing; Plutarch, Mor. 5.352c–d,f; Herodotus, 2.37 underlines purity also in telling about the use of linen garments ("they [the Egyptians] set cleanliness above seemliness"). See Dunand 1973, 102; Griffiths 1975, 526; Baslez 1977, 218–219; Malaise 1986, 85. In Delos there were inscriptions giving regulations concerning the clothes of the priests of the Egyptian gods in *Sarapieion* A: ID 2180 (= Museum of Delos, inv.no A3033 and A3029) from the middle of the 2nd cent. BC. M. Malaise 1986, 86 notices that linen clothes for the priests of Isis are not attested outside Egypt before Roman times when the cult became 'Egyptianized'. See also Dunand 1973, 49.

[66] Translation J.G. Griffiths 1975. See also Apuleius, Met. 277.20–24. It is seen that in this cult of Isis there was a personal *vocatio* causing *dignatio* (honourable position). This kind of *vocatio* is seen also in the Megalopolitan inscription IG V2 472 (2nd or 3rd cent. AD) in which Isis' follower Dionysia is called upon and became her servant (λάτρις, ll. 6 and 8; πρόπολος, l. 9). Dunand 1973, 164–165; Malaise 1981, 484. About the oaths of faithfulness given to the Egyptian gods see Merkelbach 1995, 170–171. The papyri from the first cent. AD Pack^2 2472 (= Totti, no. 8) is this kind of an oath to Sarapis (l. 7) spoken by an initiand (with his *synmystai*, l. 9–10). For the text, translation and the commentary see Cumont 1933, 150–160, see also Nilsson 1950, 695.

[67] Of the devotees Apuleius uses the words *collegium, cultores, sacrorum consilium* (Met. 287.25; 288.11), and the priest are *sacerdotes* (*ibid.*, 279.11; 283.15).

[68] Plutarch, Mor. 5.351f (and 352b) mentions the *hieroi logoi* of the cult of Isis, the writings which Isis compiles, puts together and passes on to the initiates: τὸν ἱερὸν λόγον, ὃν ἡ θεὸς συνάγει καὶ συντίθησι καὶ παραδίδωσι τοῖς τελουμένοις. In the aretalogy of Maronea (see p. 79, n. 73) the writings are referred to in ll. 22–24; see Y. Grandjean's comments on this in 1975, 75–77 and 103–104. See also Malaise 1981, 486.

[69] Apuleius, Met. 284.20–21 (*lavacro traditum, praefatus deum veniam, purissime circumrorans abluit*).

that "it was purity itself" (278.11–17). The intention of becoming initiated included the notion of becoming pure so that a person simultaneously went through a process in which he could be purified from the deeds of his former life: Lucius even tells the whole story of his anxiety to purify himself (*protinus purificandi*) (266.22).

The conception of death and after life was more explicit in the Roman Mysteries of Isis than it had been in Athens before Roman times. Isis says to Lucius that, "I alone have power to prolong your life beyond the span determined by your destiny" (271.5–6), and when Lucius is initiated he remains silent in the name of secrecy, but, nevertheless, reveals how in the ceremony he "approached the boundary of death and treading on Proserpine's threshold, was carried through all the elements, after which returned." (285.11–12). This may be understood as a symbolic statement, too, but as such it suggests that the symbolism of death signifies at the very least a new life which is radically different from the present one; the old life is thrown away and a new one begins in the divine service of the goddess. An initiant becomes *renatus* (278.9 and 283.9), the one whose old life has come to an end and the new one begins on the holy birthday of the initiation (*natalis sacrorum* 286.6–7)[70]. A symbolic experience of this sort is purifying as well. It may be noted here that besides the merely symbolic expressions concerning death we may account, for example, the so called *cista mystica* of the Isiac cult. Apuleius refers to it by the name *vasculum* (274.10–12). The evidence for *cista* comes only from the Roman period.[71] *Cista* is to be regarded as 'mystery' or 'canopic' jar used originally in Egyptian religious tradition in funerary processions and later in the Isiac and Osirian cultic context.[72]

4. Emergence of the Mysteries of Isis in Greece

As we have seen above, during early Hellenistic times there were no mysteries of Isis in Greece in the strict sense of the word. They emerged later, during the Roman times, and were to be found then in mainland Greece as well. It is necessary to ask when the cult of Isis in Greece might be called a mystery cult.

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[70] See Griffiths 1975, 51–55; 258–259 (comments on *renatus*); 317 (on *natalis sacrorum*). See also Malaise 1981, 493; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 112–113.

[71] H. Van Voss 1979, 23–26 presents the archaeological evidence for the *cista* of the Isiac cult (monuments: three-dimensional representations, reliefs on altars and gravestones, reliefs on sarcophagi, frescos and carvings on vases).

[72] Van Voss 1979, 24. See the interpretation of N. Genaille 1983, 300–305, on *cistae*. She shares the opinion of Van Voss 1979, 23–26 thus regarding the *cista* as an emblem of the divinities or of the devotees who wished to identify themselves with the gods. According to her *cistae* were used in the ritual processions. These authors reject the interpretation of R.A. Wild 1981, 54–63 who regarded them as objects containing sacred water which was believed to come from Nile itself. It is noteworthy that the Athenian funerary *stelai* on which these *cistae* are described as an attribute of a devotee of Isis, are also from the Roman epoch: of 22 reliefs illustrating women dressed in the typical 'Isiac' costume and listed by Dunand 1973, 145–148, 15 demonstrate also the *cista*. Dunand's list is based on A. Conze's (1893, 54–59) catalogue, nos. 1954–1972 ("Isisdienerinnen"). Conze's no. 1868 is also clearly a funerary *stele* of the same genre. From Delos there is no evidence of *cistae*.

We may get some light on this question by examining the so-called aretalogies of Isis which were written during the first century BC and the first century AD. There are five epigraphical aretalogies.[73] It might also be appropriate to call them hymns or eulogies. They are to be divided roughly into three sections by their contents: introductory section gives the names of Isis, the second section tells the universal omnipotence of the goddess, and the third deals with her specific deeds, discoveries and miracles.[74] In the aretalogies of Cyme and Thessalonica from the end of the first century AD, Isis says: "I revealed mysteries unto men" (ἐγὼ μυήσεις ἀνθρώποις ἐπέδειξα) (Cyme, line 22; Thessalonica, lines 22–23). It is possible to call the Greek cult of Isis at this time a mystery cult. Parallelization of the Isis' festival with the Mysteries of Demeter is important in the process of the development of these mysteries. The two goddesses had been parallelized and afterwards identified with each other. The syncretizing process on the cultic level followed parallelization so that the form of the mystery cult of Demeter was adapted into the cult of Isis. The development of the mystery festival of Isis in Greece resulted from the old Egyptian cult practices and the Greek practices of the mystery cults,[75] the most important of which was that of Demeter. It is noteworthy that in Hellenistic Egypt the nature of the cult of Isis differed from the Graeco-Roman mysteries of the goddess in the mainland Greece, for example, in Egypt there were sacred rites in which only the higher priests were allowed to participate.[76] An opportunity open for all, men and women equally, was a Greek feature of the mysteries. The Graeco-Roman mysteries of Isis were typically open to both sexes regardless of social rank.[77] This practice was also taken from

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[73] Aretalogy of Maronea (ca. 100 BC), see SEG 26, 821; Grandjean 1975, 122–124 and 1 ff.; Totti 1985, no. 19; Festugière 1949, 209–210; of Andros (late 1st cent. BC), see IG XII Suppl. 739; Totti 1985, no. 2; Peek 1930, 14–20 (text), 25–75 (commentary); of Cyme (1st or 2nd cent. AD), see IG XII Suppl. pp. 98–99; Totti 1985, no. 1; Salač 1927, 379–385; Peek 1930, 120–125 (text); Bergman 1968, 301–303 (Textbeilage); Grant 1950, 131–133; Merkelbach 1995, 115–118; of Thessalonica (1st or 2nd cent. AD), see IG X2 254; Totti 1985, no. 1; of Ios (2nd or 3rd cent. AD), see IG XII5 14 (=IG XII Suppl. p. 98); SIG III^3 1267; Totti 1985, no.1. See also Vanderlip 1972, 84–86; Bianchi 1980, 9–30; Leclant 1986, nos 1692–1709; Henrichs 1984, 154–156; Préaux 1978 (1987), 656–657; Versnel 1990, 41–46 and Merkelbach 1995, 113–114. V.F. Vanderlip (p. 86) gives also the stemma of the aretalogies thus assuming that there has been a common archetype for them all. D. Müller 1961, 7–69 compares and finds relation between them and the so called Isis aretalogy of Memphis (hieroglyphics and translation, p. 89–91) from the Ptolemaic great temple of Sarapis in Memphis; according to him there are many parallels between the Greek hymns to Isis and this text, thus many of the themes in the Greek ones reflect the strong Egyptianism expressed in the Memphis aretalogy; see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 87–88; see also Merkelbach 1995, 73–76. The so called Isidorus hymn to Isis (ca. 96–80 BC) and the invocation to Isis in POxy XI 1380 (= Totti 1985, no. 20, 2nd cent. AD) from Egypt belong to the same genre as the aretalogies, see p. 108–109.

[74] Vanderlip 1972, 89–90.

[75] Bianchi 1980, 18–19.

[76] Dunand 1975, 164; Griffiths 1975, 189; Burkert 1987, 40. Also M. Malaise 1972, 473 notes that in Egypt the tradition of initiation was not known before the Roman Imperial times. Note that in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, Lucius goes abroad after his initiation and acts in his homeland (*patria*) as a constant worshipper (*cultor*) (Apuleius, Met. 287.24–25).

[77] J.G. Griffiths 1975, 190–191 referring to Apuleius' text *viri feminaeque* (Met. 273.15). Even though women were very welcome in the ranks of the initiants, the important priesthoods were occupied by men (Griffiths 1975, 189). Those people who became adherents of the cult of Egyptian gods in the Greek before 30 BC world are listed by T.A. Brady 1935, 47 ff. He classifies them by their social

the model of the Demetrian mysteries. Purification and purificatory rules in the sanctuary were likewise originally an Egyptian practice, but became incorporated in the Greek cult later on.[78]

The terms used in connection with mysteries in Greece that appear in the epigraphical material, especially in the aretalogies of Isis, provide good evidence of the emergence of the Greek mysteries of Isis. The terms *mystes* or *mystis* appear in epigraphical material in connection with the cult of Isis, but not until the second century AD.[79] The word appears in the aretalogy of Andros from the late first century BC (χάραξα φρικαλέον μύσταις ἱερὸν λόγον, "I terrifyingly pronounced the sacred words to the *mystai*", line 12). This supports the view that the mysteries of Isis came into existence in Greece at the end of the last century BC and held an established position by the first century AD. To this date, the first century AD, belongs an Athenian inscription IG II/III^2 1367 which clearly supports this hypothesis. It lists the Attic months and offerings that had to be made to the gods during these months. The *Boedromion* was the month for the Eleusinian Great Mysteries, and in lines 4–8 of the inscription the religious duties for this month are described. On *Boedromion* 13th, cocks and fruits of the cultivated earth, grains of wheat and corn, had to be offered to Nephthys and Osiris together with the drink offerings which contained not wine but milk (σπονδὴ μελίκρατον lines 4–6). The offering of piglets had to be committed to Demeter and Kore (lines 6–7) and the gathering of the vintage to Dionysus (7–9). Cocks and pigs were the sacred animals of Demeter, but now a cock was sacrificed in honour of the Egyptian god Osiris at the time of the Mysteries. In memory of Demeter's mythical fast it was prohibited to drink wine during the initiation period, and similarly this regulation was adopted in the cult practices of Osiris. The mysteries of the Egyptian gods were thus identified with those of the Eleusinian gods, even the sacrificial customs were mixed. Dionysus, who is mentioned in this section, had his popular Mysteries, and thus all the gods having mystery cults were grouped together. It is noticeable that Diodorus Siculus wrote in the second part of the first century BC that the initiation of Osiris is similar to that of Dionysus (1.96.5)[80]. The first two inscriptions to the Egyptian gods from Eleusis use the terms of the Eleusinian cult; they are from the latter part of the first century

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position mentioning soldiers and men of lower official rank, artists, craftsmen, upper classes and lower classes. Evidence of women participants in the cult of the Egyptian gods on Delos from the 3rd cent. BC to the beginning of Christian era is given in a list by M.-F. Baslez 1977, 166. It clearly shows that women were welcome in the cult on Delos as well, but they played, however, minor roles (she lists 6 women adherents one of whom is an Athenian and 12 names of women in company with male/males, none of whom is Athenian).

78 Malaise 1986, 93.

79 According to SIRIS nos. 326 (Prusa, middle of the 2nd cent. AD); 390 (Rome, 1st cent. AD); 758 (Panoias, 3rd cent. AD). The words are used in connection with the Eleusinian cult still in the 2nd and 3rd cent. AD: see IG II/III^2 4213 (*mystis*); 3553 (*mystis, hierophantes*), both inscriptions from Athens, and 3686 (*mystis*) (Eleusis, 2nd cent. AD); no. 3639 (Eleusis, time of P. Herennius Dexippus who *floruit* AD 253–276) mentions (l. 3) *teletai* and a nightly *orgia* of *mystai*.

80 τὴν μὲν γὰρ Ὀσίριδος τελετὴν τῇ Διονύσου τὴν αὐτὴν εἶναι. He continues by explaining what is cited in p. 82. The inscription from Thessalonica IG X2 107 (end of 2nd cent. BC) dedicated to Osiris puts forward the words Ὀσειριδι μύστει (l. 1) of people called Alexander, Demetrius and Dikaia who probably were initiated adherents of the cult of Osiris.

BC. The first one[81] states that the *boule* (line 5) and *demos* (line 6) (of Athens) ἀφ' ἑστίας μυηθεῖσαν (lines 4–5), i.e. honoured the initiated child, the hearth initiand, a name ascribed to a special official in the Eleusinian cult[82]. But the same inscription continues by telling that the *boule* and *demos* κανηφορήσασαν Σαράπιδι (lines 12–14) i.e. honoured a woman *kanephoros* who carried sacred things or basket in the procession for Sarapis. The terminology of the inscription is familiar from the Eleusinian cult: to carry sacred things[83], often by *kanephoroi*, belonged to the Eleusinian procession as well. The other inscription[84] is also from Eleusis and from the same period stating similarly about the hearth initiand (lines 4–6), but in this case the *boule* and *demos* honoured the *kanephoros* of Isis (lines 1–3). Furthermore another Athenian inscription SIRIS, 33a[85] the first part of which (lines 1–21) is dated to the end of the first century BC and the second part (lines 22–29) to the middle of the first century AD enumerates sanctions given in the name of the city-*boule* of Athens (κατὰ αὐτοῦ φάσις πρὸς τὴν βουλὴν καὶ τὸν βασιλέα Ἀθήνησιν, lines 8–9) to persons guilty of acting against the sacred law of the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods Isis and Sarapis (ἔνοχοι ἔστωσαν τῇ ἀσεβήᾳ, line 7). The sacred rules are called *dogma* (lines 15–16). Thus it seems evident that in addition to its established and public character the cult had rules protecting its special cultic purity. Together with this epigraphical evidence, the aretalogy of Maronea[86] from the early first century BC gives a clear *terminus ad quem* for the established existence of the mysteries of the Egyptian gods. It differs from other aretalogies in content, and it is only in this that we may observe the clearly Greek aspects of the mysteries of Isis, because even though Isis appears as Egyptian in her origin and character, she is parallelled with Greek Demeter and

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[81] IG II/III² 3498.

[82] About hearth initiand see pp. 38–39.

[83] Κανηφορέω, 'to carry the sacred basket in procession' occurs similarly in the other cults, see e.g. parallel inscriptions IG II/III² 3220 (1st cent. BC) from Eleusis which states that the *boule* and *demos* honoured the *kanaphoroi* of the cult of the Mother of the gods (ll. 11–12), Asclepius (ll. 6–7) and Aphrodite (ll. 16–17); 3477 (2nd cent. BC) from Athens stating that the *boule* and *demos* honoured the *kanephoroi* of Pythian i.e. Delphian Apollo and those of the procession of the *Panathenaia*; 3489 (after 86 BC) from Athens honours the *kanephoroi* of Dionysus and the Mother of the Gods; 3554 (1st cent. AD) from Athens stating similarly that the *boule* and the *demos* honoured the *arrephoroi* of Athena Polias (ll. 3–4), hearth initiand (ll. 12–13), and the *kanephoroi* of the procession of the *Eleusinia* and *Epidauria* (ll. 21–22).

[84] IG II/III² 3727.

[85] It is found in Pikermi, close to Athens, close to the church of Methamorphosis where L. Vidman suggests there was a sanctuary of the Egyptian gods (1969, 18). J.J. Pollitt first published the inscription in Hesperia 34 (1965): 125–130; it is also to be found in SEG XII 167.

[86] SEG 26, 821. Compare this and its Eleusinian themes with a later hymn to Isis, the Isis-hymn of P. Aelius Mesomedes, text in Merkelbach 1995, 226–227, commentary 227–228. Mesomedes was born in Crete, was literally cultivated and had close connections to the Hadrian's (117–138) court. His four hymns are the hymn to Helios, to Isis, to Physis and to Nemesis. The one to Isis is heavily coloured by the Eleusinian themes: Isis is the one who in spring time brings new production of earth (l. 8, 11), new births (l. 13), who is called upon by Hades to the underworld to celebrate wedding (ll. 9–10), who has got the holy fire of the rites of which none is allowed to speak (πῦρ τέλεον ἄρρητον, l. 14), to whom Triptolemos comes from the city in wagon (ἅστεα διφρήλατα) to dance in the *Anactoron* (ll. 17–19).

her cult seems to be dependent on the cult of Demeter.[87] The aretalogy of Maronea draws a parallel between the cult of Isis and the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter. It ends with a hymn-like section which enthusiastically praises Athens and Eleusis as the origins of Europe (lines 39–40). According to the aretalogy Isis is especially honoured there – in Athens and at Eleusis in the sanctuary which is the origin of this city (lines 35–36). "That is why we desire to go to see Athens in Greece and Eleusis in Athens" (lines 39–40). Isis' position in Eleusis is important, because it is there that she is said to have revealed the fruits of the earth for the first time (line 36). Here the two goddesses are identified totally. The same mythical occurrence justifies the cult and there is no separation between Isis and Demeter.[88] The Demetrian mysteries provided a structural model for the mysteries of Isis. In the same manner Apuleius makes an explicit identification of these goddesses in praising Isis two centuries later: "O Queen of Heaven – whether thou art Ceres, the primal and bountiful mother of the crops, who, glad in the return of the daughter ... showed to men gentler nourishment, after which thou hast now honoured the soil of Eleusis" (Met. 267.4–6).[89] As a mystery cult, the cult of Isis in Greece was creative, and it could assimilate local mystery aspects into the old Egyptian tradition in a creative way. Before this there was a coexistence of the two forms, as on Delos, where the two different types of the cult of Isis existed side by side: an old Egyptian type, one which respected original traditions in *Sarapieion* A and a Greek *thiasos* type in *Sarapieion* C. But the Greek mysteries of Isis were characterized also by cosmopolitanism and syncretism, and these elements accumulated into the monotheistic tendencies of the goddess and were well expressed in the praises given to her. An original Egyptian trait in the cult was the idea that the goddess herself invited an individual, by means of a dream, to become her devoted worshipper or an initiated adherent of her cult, after which he was expected to devote himself entirely to the cult, as, for example, Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.[90] The theme of overcoming death was strengthened in the Graeco-Roman mysteries of Isis. To sum up, it is worth citing the statement made by Diodorus Siculus at the end of the pre-Christian era: "The initiation of Isis is very much like the initiation of Demeter. It is only question of changing the names" (τελετὴν ... τὴν δὲ τῆς Ἴσιδος τῇ τῆς Δήμητρος ὁμοιοτάτην ὑπάρχειν, τῶν ὀνομάτων μόνων ἐνηλλαγμένων) (1.96.5).[91]

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87 Bianchi 1980, 16–19.

88 Grandjean 1975, 103–104; Bianchi 1980, 17; Merkelbach 1995, 63–64. F. Dunand 1984, 88 states: "la transformation de l'image peut signifier que les fideles grecs voient dans cette Isis–Déméter une déesse totalement integrée à leur univers, à leurs catégories mentals"; and Henrichs 1984, 158 concludes: "The Maronean inscription reactivates and elaborates an Eleusinian heritage which characterizes the Greco-Egyptian assimilation of Isis to Demeter."

89 Another parallelization is made by Apuleius when he describes the appearance of Isis saying that the crown of the goddess "was adorned also with outstretched ears of corn" (*etiam cerialibus desuper porrectis ornata*) in Met. 268.13. Ears of corn were originally one of the most characteristic epithets of Demeter, but then occurred in connection with Isis when she became identified with her.

90 Bianchi 1980, 31, 33–35.

91 See also Grandjean 1975, 104; Dunand 1975, 247.

Table 2.

Presented in the following table are the summarizing remarks on the two mystery cults:

	CULT OF DEMETER: CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC	CULT OF ISIS IN EARLY HELLENISTIC ATHENS	CULT OF ISIS IN ROMAN TIMES: ROME AND GREECE
TERMINOLOGY:			
mysteria = initiation festivals	X		X
myein = to initiate into the mysteries	X		X
telein = to celebrate	X	(X)	X
orgia = ritual	X	(X)	X
ASPECTS:			
shared secrecy	X		X
fertility aspect	X		X
purifications	X	(X)	X
foreign element belonging to the mythico-ritual complex	(X) Class. X Hellen.	X	X
myth aetiological to the cult practices	X	X	X
divine couple causing vegetation duality	X	X	X
dimension of death and afterlife	X	(X)	X
life-long devotion to the cult			X
hieroi logoi			X

V. Definitions: Re-evaluation of Concepts

1. Syncretism

A. Theoretical Beginnings

The 'syncretism of antiquity' and specially that which emerged after the conquests of Alexander the Great has been regarded as the classical instance of syncretism in the history of religions. But in literature syncretism is too often used as a term which needs no explanation as to its meaning and contents. "Syncretism is most characteristic of Hellenistic religion";[1] "it defines Hellenistic Religion as a response to the new political internationalism, a response that preserved the richness and particularity of tradition ..."[2] Statements of this sort are found all too easily. H. Ringgren stated that in everyday language the term syncretism is used to denote any mixture of two or more religions, as for instance, in Hellenistic religions, where elements from several religions are merged and influence each other mutually. He continues, correctly, that this definition is too broad to be scientifically useful.[3] Thus, the term does need clarification.

Studying syncretism is studying change, and changes make up a process. Culture as a whole is a syncretistic and continuous process. Culture does not necessarily develop in one

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1 F.C. Grant 1953, xiii (Introduction) in the book the name of which is characteristic: *Hellenistic Religions. The Age of Syncretism.*

2 Martin 1987, 10. See also e.g. Samuel 1983, 75: "So called syncretism of religions has been cited as a major characteristic of Hellenistic culture", and Henrichs 1984, 140.

3 Ringgren 1969, 1.

direction only, going from a lower to higher level, but simply evolves progressively. Syncretism as a theoretical term in literature has had negative connotations. It has been treated as a result of decrease, a deprived stage caused by mixing which has damaged the original wholeness and purity and thus is a negative change, a change which includes corruption and scatters original wholeness into lesser parts. This kind of thinking is based on a need to project the events of the past onto imaginary 'original' constructions, to freeze the process into stable stages. Since the beginning of the history of the science of religions syncretism has had these negative overtones from which it should be released. In great part this was due to the need to defend 'pure, real and authentic' religion (which was, of course, always the defender's own). The term was already being used polemically in the struggles of the theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries.[4] It is possible that they also used it in order to defend the seventeenth century Protestant movement which had attempted to harmonize the diverse sects of Protestantism in the face of Roman Catholism.[5] In this sense it appeared frequently in the science of religion and historical theology in the second half of the nineteenth century. We may mention, for example, H. Usener for whom religious syncretism was not only abandonment of the faith of the fathers, but also a necessary transitional stage in the history of religions, a 'mishmash of religions' (*Religionsmischerei*),[6] a term which has negative overtones in German. J. Réville regarded *syncrétisme* as the central category of his historical study of later Roman religion,[7] but it still implied its theological overtones[8]. In 1903 H. Gunkel articulated a non-theological, historically formulated thesis according to which Christianity, too, was a syncretistic religion.[9]

The term syncretism is a theoretical invention and can be traced as such later, but not in ancient times. The authors of antiquity did not use it, although there are many words used as nouns beginning with συν- and having the root of κεράννυμι.[10] The Greeks had no need to use a term for religious syncretism. The concept of syncretism may be used as a category of historical explanation, as an instrument for understanding. As a theoretical concept and as an abstraction, syncretism is a construction which does not have a correspondence in contextual reality, but provides new categories for handling the religious processes of the past. Its main value may be as a heuristic tool for trying to discover the otherwise hidden antecedents of historical facts and to interpret them.[11] Every interpretation requires typologizing, and typologizing is the first step in interpretation. The problem

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4 Nouailhat 1975, 214.

5 Martin 1983, 135.

6 Usener 1896, 337–340.

7 Réville, J. 1886: La religion à Rome sous les Sévères. Paris.

8 *Idem.* e.g. p. 21. See also Martin 1983, 135.

9 Gunkel 1903, 398–400, 445. See also Martin 1983, 135.

10 See e.g. Segert 1975, 63–66. The term συγκρητισμός first occurs in Plutarch's Mor. 6.490b, but it is etymologically completely different from our 'theoretical syncretism' and he used it in a completely different context which had nothing to do with religion. Its etymology is κρητίζω 'to speak like a Cretan', from which κρητισμός 'the Cretan behaviour'. E.g. des Places 1969, 13; Martin 1983, 136 and Colpe 1987, 218 are totally wrong in linking Plutarch's text to the meanings of syncretism.

11 Colpe 1987, 219.

is whether syncretism is considered to be explaining a stable state, a result of changes, or a process.[12] In the first case syncretism is a category on its own and in the last it is unstable. By taking a chronological frame of reference into account a solution can be found – actually I find it hard to think of syncretism without implications of process. In the following I shall do this by constructing a theoretical syncretistic process by considering historical data that lead to syncretism as a process (syncretism as process) and then construct the result of this process, a kind of 'metasyncretism', which may help in understanding the phenomena in question by providing categories for typologizing (syncretism as a state or category). As is obvious, we should not find ourselves arguing in a circular manner, explaining the phenomenon of syncretism by syncretism.[13] We can escape this danger by concentrating here on the defined situation, i.e. that of Hellenistic Athens and Delos. At the same time, we must remember that this particular syncretism gave new grounds for a continuous syncretistic process, even though here we remain inside the stipulated boundaries. My task is to provide answers to the question of what exactly syncretism in Hellenistic Athens as well as Delos was *per se*, not to go further into the newer syncretisms of later times. Thus I start from the primary material, taking the context into account, and then construct a theoretical picture of syncretism in this case, because no definition of syncretism is possible without the specific context underlying it.[14] Syncretism in this sense is 1) a process in the context which may be theorized into 2) a conceptual category, in order to systematize and thus to understand some important characteristics of the religion of Hellenism. This is an inductive method and the point of departure is the primary material. The next level is the formulated theoretical picture of the syncretism of Hellenistic Athens.

This chronology includes typologizing syncretism.[15] In Greek culture there were first local gods which were strictly bound to the surrounding culture and its conditions. They had their own mythology, which developed slowly and reflected the special needs of the local culture. Thus these gods were functionally rooted in a particular culture. Secondly, when elements of foreign and local cultures come into contact to such an extent that the

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12 C. Colpe 1987, 219–220 and R. Nouailhat 1973, 213–214 discuss this from their own points of view. L.H. Martin 1983, 137–139 proposes that syncretism would be better understood if it was handled as a system and not applied to describe a historical process. He calls this a 'systemic view' of Hellenistic religious syncretism and understands this syncretism as an enduring finite field. Martin bases his opinion on R. Baird's view on religious syncretism; Baird 1971, 151, mainly from the point of view of an anthropologist of religion, argues that "Syncretism is a concept applied to a religion by those who stand outside its circle of faith and hence fail to see or experience its inner unity."

13 Nouailhat 1975, 214.

14 Cf. Colpe 1985, 219. H. Ringgren 1969, 8–12 puts forward two questions for studying syncretism on the basis of the empirical facts of encounter of religions: firstly, the historical aspect which asks what elements derive from the one or the other source and how they have merged with each other, and secondly, what are the conditions for a borrowing to take place.

15 See edited books and articles which are the results of the conferences on the topic of syncretism organized at the end of 1960s and the beginning of '70s: the Conference in Aurle in 1966: *Syncretism.* Hartman, S. (ed.); Symposium in Turku in 1969: *Syncretism.* Hartman, S. (ed.); Colloque de Strasbourg 1971: *Les syncrétismes dans les religions grecque et romaine*; Colloque de Besançon 1973 (published 1975): *Les syncrétismes dans les religions de l'antiquité.* Dunand, F. & Lévêque, P. (eds.).

new religious elements influenced those of the prevailing religion, there occurred a phenomenon that may be called *interpretatio* (*interpretatio Graeca*, *interpretatio Deliaca*, *interpretatio Romana*, for example)[16]; namely, foreign religious elements adjusted to the traditional system and the local system is mirrored by it. In the alien individual element there must be at least some familiar traits which represent that which is known in the local tradition. Thus there must be analogies, for example, between a local god and a foreign one on which basis both of them or one of them is reinterpreted. This stage in the syncretizing process includes parallelization. Parallelization is most usually expressed literally: the names of the gods are put one after another, such as Demeter–Isis, Isis–Aphrodite, Isis–Agathe Tyche, Isis–Mother of the Gods. The third stage in the chronology of syncretism is assimilation or amalgamation. This means symbiosis or synthesis of different religious systems into a new one. The result is a new entity in which the individual traits of the amalgamated elements are difficult to see as separate parts. This designates a self-supporting system that may in turn produce new elements. It is possible to discover syncretized cultic practices, too. This may be regarded as the last and final stage of this chronology of syncretism, because it is also possible to study how this kind of independent religious system functions. If we went further, we would find 'fully developed' new religions, possibly in isolation, and so on. These would not be syncretistic any more, because syncretism always has something to do with change and we are studying the situation of change. An example of a syncretism of this last type is the religion of Sarapis.[17] The cult of this god was consciously produced to be used for political and social goals: for unifying separated and heterogenous peoples together in the name of a common god who incorporated features of the gods well-known to different peoples. Syncretism in this case contains also the very consciousness of amalgamating. This could happen only in an open climate where there already existed separate and diffuse areas of religiousness in contact with each other.[18]

To sum up, the process was this: separate religious systems adapted functionally into the surrounding culture → cultural and religious contacts caused parallelization → assimilation and synthesis of religions caused a new wholeness which was still open to changes → stable syncretistic religion or consciously produced syncretism emerged i.e. a new religion as a complete system was born.

In the following the constellation above is mainly used to study the material of the cults of Demeter and Isis. First it is valuable to look at parallelization and identification more generally and then to look at Demeter and Isis more closely.

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[16] These were long regarded as principal presuppositions, or even as a principal phrase of syncretism itself. Colpe 1978, 224; Martin 1983, 134. R. Merkelbach 1995, 231, 235–238 examines the so called *interpretatio aegyptica* by which he means the tendency to interpret Greek religion and philosophy from the Egyptian point of view and to stress the Egyptian elements of thought; according to him this is especially evident in Diodorus Siculus.

[17] See pp. 92–94. This represents e.g. L.H. Martin's (1983, especially pp. 140–141) 'systemic' syncretism referred to above on p. 87 (n.12). About the syncretism of Sarapis' cult, see pp. 92–94.

[18] Cf. Colpe 1987, 222.

B. The Concept of Syncretism in the Typologies of Encounter of Religion

B.1. Parallelization

We should remember that the sources which tell us about parallelization are mainly literary. The first and most revealing example of this comes from Herodotus. When describing the Egyptian manner of performing rites compared with those of the Greeks, he states that "Isis is called Demeter in the Greek language" (2.59). He also claims that "the Greeks only recently adapted the old Egyptian customs to their own" (2.59; 2.156). Herodotus compares the two goddesses, keeping them as separate individuals. He regarded them as equivalent rather than handling them in a syncretizing manner.[19] Parallelization is thus no invention of the Hellenistic period; it only became more common during that era.[20]

The Athenian material concerning early Hellenistic Isis, namely inscriptions and texts of Athenian authors, is not very large. But Athens was closely linked with Delos from the third to the last century BC. Athenian influence was strong on the island especially during the period of the city's occupation there.[21] The period of Athenian occupation on Delos was the hey-day of religious activities on the island: Athenians were interested in making their devotions there, most of the priests were Athenians, official delegations visited the sanctuaries, and there were active artists on Delos.[22]

There are many Delian inscriptions belonging to the period between the end of the third and the beginning of the first century BC that connect Isis with some other goddess. The inscription given by a certain Andromachus, dedicated to Isis whose epithet is *Soteira*, and who is connected with Astarte and Aphrodite with the epithets εὔπλοια and ἐπήκοος, and to Eros, connected with Harpocrates and Apollo, is very characteristic (ID 2132[23]):

Ἴσιδι Σωτείραι
Ἀστάρτει Ἀφροδίτηι εὐπλοίαι ἐπ[ηκόωι]
καὶ Ἔρωτι Ἁρφοκράτει Ἀπόλλωνι,
Ἀνδρόμαχος Θανομάχου
[ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ] καὶ τέκνων χαριστήριον.

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19 Dunand 1973, 81.

20 Bregman 1982, 59: "Syncretism itself may be defined as the combination and association of divinities, practices and ideas from different religious traditions. It is a common phenomenon in the history of religions."

21 See p. 4. The number of the foreign population (Athenians included) on Delos increased remarkably from the end of the 3rd cent. onwards, when even citizens are met in inscriptions; see IG XI4 1299, l. 81–83 (1st cent. BC); see the diagrams and explanations given by M.-F. Baslez 1977, 143–148, especially p. 150 which shows that the Athenian population formed the first or second biggest group of all the people of Delos; and see Roussel 1916b, 10–13.

22 Roussel 1916a, 226.

23 = SIG II^3 764 = Roussel 1916a, no. 194 = SIRIS CE 194 = Mora 1990 no. 60, date uncertain, probably (according to F. Mora) between 166–140 BC, *Sarapieion* C.

Here Isis *Soteira* appears connected with the deities Astarte and Aphrodite who had similar characteristics with her, Eros is connected with Harpocrates,[24] and in the group Apollo holds a place as an important god for Delos. Some of the inscriptions mention Isis together with her counterpart, some belong to the sanctuary of another goddess but are dedicated to Isis: a dedication to Isis, Mother of Gods, Astarte and Dionysus in *Sarapieion* C,[25] for Artemis, specified with *Hagia*, and Isis in *Sarapieion* C (by an Athenian),[26] for Isis and Nemesis (by the Bithynian king Nicomedes III) in *Sarapieion* C[27] and for Isis–Aphrodite having *Dikaia* as an epithet (by 'Ασκληπιάδης Δικαίου 'Αθηναῖος).[28] Abstractions personified as deities were parallelized with Isis as well. Dedications given to these deities were: Isis–*Dikaiosyne* dedicated by a priest Γάιος Γαίου 'Αχαρνεύς,[29] Isis–*Euphrosyne*–*Dikaiosyne* by the priest 'Αριστέας 'Αριστέου Μαραθωνίου in *Sarapieion* C,[30] Isis–*Euploia* by a certain 'Ισίδωρος 'Ισιδώρου Αθηναῖος in *Sarapieion* C[31].[32] Isis parallelized with *Dikaiosyne* is found in Athens, too, in the inscriptions from the beginning of the first century BC[33] dedicated by an Athenian (the Athenian priests and a non-Athenian *zakoros* are mentioned as well). Plutarch (Mor. 5.352f) says that Isis had been called Justice already in Egypt, but here in Athens *Dikaiosyne* was a personification, a deity, and she was considered on par with Isis.

The Greeks knew Isis–Aphrodite and Isis–Demeter, the two commonest parallelizations of Isis.[34] Aphrodite occurs in connection with Isis in Athens as well,[35] and on Delos she was the closest counterpart of Isis[36] perhaps because of their similarity in femininity and feminine beauty. Yet here the goddesses are not assimilated but kept separated so that their individual traits are still noticeable. On a lantern of the Hellenistic period from Egypt the face of Isis with her typical epithets, the Isiac crown with disc and horns is described. The decoration is surmounted with two ears of corn which is the most typical epithet of

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[24] For the sculptural presentation of Harpocrates–Eros see a statuette from the Roman period in which Harpocrates–Eros is shown with 'Isiac crown', little wings of Eros and cornucopia in his hand. Archaeological Museum of Florence, photo in Merkelbach 1995, Abb. 123, p. 596.

[25] ID 2101 (130/29 BC).

[26] ID 2068 (101/0 BC).

[27] ID 2038 (110/9 BC); see also Dunand 1973, 82.

[28] ID 2158 (94/3 BC) (also ID 2040, the same date, where the Isis' epithet *dikaia* is not so clear). This may be seen as an assimilation, too.

[29] ID 2079 (115/4 BC). *Dikaiosyne* appears as well in ID 2103 (114/3 BC).

[30] ID 2107 (before the year 88 BC).

[31] ID 2153 (104/3 BC).

[32] Dedicators who were not with certainty Athenians honouring the parallelized Isis were: Διονύσιος Δημοκλέους Σιδώνιος dedicating to Isis – Mother of Gods – Astarte in *Sarapieion* C (130/29 BC): ID 2101.

[33] IG II/III^2 4702 a dedication for Isis–*Dikaiosyne*; see Dunand 1973, 11–12, 82.

[34] Isis paralleled with Aphrodite is the most frequent of the artistic representations of syncretized Isis; the next common is Isis–Demeter. See LIMC, s.v. Isis–Aphrodite, nos. 249–259 (pp. 779–781). See also Dunand 1973, 80.

[35] IG II/III^2 4994 (middle of the 1st cent. BC). The names of the gods Hermes, Aphrodite and Pan in connection with Isis are clearly individuals; thus here it is question of parallelization, not assimilation.

[36] See e.g. IG XI4 1305 (beginning of the 2nd cent. BC, *Sarapieion* A) which is a dedication to Aphrodite, but located in the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods and most probably connected with their cult as well.

Demeter.[37] This type of syncretism considers the obvious equivalents of the goddesses side by side.[38] The analogy that bound gods together but kept them as recognizable individuals was always quite abstract. Here beauty, the goddess' fertility-promoting and prosperity-evoking aspects (for which ears of corn and the *cornucopia* function as epithets) were analogies abstract enough to give rise to the same connotations but not to combine the goddesses. On Delos an Athenian Hephaistus, a man called Macedus and his wife, dedicated a votive relief[39] in the first century BC which illustrates parallelizing syncretism. It is a marble relief of Sarapis and Isis symmetrically on both sides of Agathos Daimon, who is in a form of the snake, and Agathe Tyche.[40] Together these four gods form a coherent unit, but each of them is easily recognizable. Isis' counterpart is Tyche and that of Sarapis is Agathos Daimon.[41] The connecting link and analogy between them all is firstly their shared role as guardians, secondly the prosperity and fertility-promoting aspect as well as escatological ones which all of these deities have.[42] The dedicators wished to be protected in general and especially be under the protection of all these separate gods at the same time.

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37 Egyptological Museum of Cairo, inv. no. CG 26939; Dunand 1976a, 71–72, figure in pl. I,1. See also Tran Tam Tinh 1986, 359. A comparable iconographical representation is also a relief from Hellenistic Egypt (Fayum) from the middle of the 1st cent. BC showing Isis with her head-dress (sun-disc surmounted with horns) holding in her right hand the ears of corn and lotus flower. The relief is in the Egyptological Museum of Cairo, inv. no. JE 47108; LIMC, s.v. Isis, no. 174 photo also in Merkelbach 1995, Abb. no. 88, p. 567.

38 F. Dunand 1973, 84–85 would call this "syncrétisme juxtaposition". P. Lévêque 1971, 181–182 used the same term contrasting it to "syncrétisme emprunt" by which he meant that readily syncretistic elements construct a deity, who then moves from one place to another carrying this syncretism with him/her.

39 The relief was found in *Sarapieion* A, dedicated by a common formula to Agathos Daimon and Agathe Tyche. The dedicative inscription belonging to it is IG XI4 1273. In G.I.F. Kater-Sibbes' catalogue of Sarapis-monuments it is no. 356 and the inv. no. A 3195 of The Archaeological Museum of Delos; photograph also in Leclant 1983, 349 (fig. 9).

40 Compare this relief with the Roman one showing crowned Isis with a sceptre, Cerberus on her right side, seated Sarapis with crown in the middle, Harpocrates with *cornucopia*, and Demeter with torch standing on the right (Rome, Mus. Cap. 4371); see LIMC, s.v. Isis–Demeter, no. 262; photo also in Merkelbach 1995, Abb. no. 138. About Agathos Daimon associated with Sarapis and Agathe Tyche associated with Isis, see Pietrzykowski 1978, 959–966; also Vanderlip 1972, 4, 94.

41 Agathos Daimon occur often in form of snake on reliefs and terracotta figurines, and Egyptian Thermuthis (Renenutet), the old maternal goddess of cereal and grain, was sometimes illustrated as snake (cobra) with human head wearing 'Isiac' crown, a sun disc with horns; see LIMC, s.v. Isis–Thermuthis, nos. 332–364. Thus this pair became relatively early (in the middle Hellenistic period) associated with Sarapis and Isis; see e.g. a bronze statuette from the 1st cent. AD (Berlin, Staatl. Mus., Ägyptl. Mus. 20428; LIMC, s.v. Isis, no. 359) in which Isis–Thermuthis and Sarapis–Agathos Daimon are shown in the form of snakes with crowns, partly entangled together, and a small relief (Leiden, Rijksmus. F 1960/9.1.; LIMC, s.v. Isis, no. 354) on the same theme. Pietrzykowski 1978, 962–963; also Vanderlip 1972, 4. On the association of Agathos Daimon and Sarapis in Roman coins, see Bregman 1989, 70–71 and LIMC, s.v. Isis, nos. 330, 337, 344a, 349a.

42 The attributes of Agathos Daimon are often earns of corn and poppyheads, also known to symbolize Demeter's role in promoting fertility. Chthonic deities or the ones with chthonic aspects are often illustrated in the form of a snake and thence their attributes are torches and a caduceus which occur in the iconography of Agathos Daimon, Thermuthis, Sarapis and Isis as well. Pietrzykowski 1978, 963.

Syncretism that parallelizes religious elements presupposes interaction but not necessarily readiness to reform the religious system; old elements are kept alive. Reshaping was not done until the second stage of syncretism, namely with identification and assimilation.[43]

B.2. Identification

I regard identification as the second stage of syncretism, because it usually follows chronologically parallelization, but does not necessarily occur in all cases. Identification means that individual gods merge into each other to such a degree that it is no longer easy to distinguish the previously individual elements of the gods. Their epithets and attributes may still be seen, but even these usually amalgamate into a new unity.[44] One of the best examples of this is the case of Demeter and Isis. On Delos in *Sarapieion* A, a statue of Isis has been found with a crown decorated with two ears of corn.[45] Ears of corn are a symbol of Demeter, a diadem with 'horns' occurs in the iconography of Isis, but in this case they form a new individual symbol for the goddess Demeter–Isis who is a complete whole: ears of corn are now the horns of the crown of Isis, and their symbolism expresses the goddess' fertility aspect and her role as the bearer of harvest. Some of the Athenian tetradrachmas from the end of the first century BC were impressed with Isis' head decorated by Demeter's epithet, ears of corn, as well with the owl of Athena on the reverse.[46] There are similar types of representations of Isis–Aphrodite as well.[47]

B.3. Syncretistic Religion: Case of Sarapis

In the case of Sarapis the syncretizing process went even further. The consciously created god was a new whole, even his name completely amalgamated those of different

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[43] This is also connected with universal and cosmopolitan elements in religion. See Chapter V.4.

[44] Compare V. Tran Tam Tinh 1986, 359 who quotes J. Vandier 1944, 14: "Syncrétisme ... consiste à unir deux divinités ayant chaqune une identité indépendante et à faire de cette dualité un être unique dans laquel se retrouvent les charactères, primitivement indépendants de ses deux éléments formateurs."

[45] Roussel 1916a, statue no. A 3181, p. 275; Baslez 1977, 57. A small statue of a similar sort has been found in Cretan Galene of Hellenistic times. The head-dress of the goddess is composed of a burst of ears of corn, a moon-shaped crescent and astral motifs including 'Isiac cross'. Leclant 1964, 394; Leclant & Clerc 1985, fig. XII.

[46] Thompson 1961, 382 and 606–607 catalogue nos. 1232–1233. Five of these coins of the year 107/6 BC were found. See also Dow 1937, 226–227; Dunand 1673, 12 and p. 63 above. These symbols must have had significance for the Athenians, since an individual magistrate could use them on his own coins.

[47] E.g. a little statuette from Myrina carries epithets of both Isis and Aphrodite which together form a typical iconographical representation of the goddess Isis–Aphrodite. Mollard-Besques 1963, 87; fig. VIII in Leclant & Clerc 1985; photography also in Leclant 1986, 344, fig. 5 (text in p. 344). See p. 90, n. 34.

gods.[48] When attempting to account for Sarapis and his nature, ancient writers tended to assert that he was essentially the same as any other god or gods: He is identified, for example, with Pluto[49], Osiris[50], Apis[51], and Zeus[52], but the most obvious identifications are Asclepius and Zeus[53]. In the first century BC, Diodorus Siculus said that (1.25.2): "Some are of the opinion that Osiris is Sarapis, others that he is Dionysus, or Pluto, or Ammon; some that he is Zeus, many that he is Pan. And some say that Sarapis is the god who is called Pluto among the Greeks". It is clear that Sarapis was connected, iconographically as well as in other ways with Zeus, Asclepius, Pluto, Osiris, Apis and Dionysus, within a hundred years of Alexander the Great's death in 323 BC and that in the following years this syncretistic divinity was extended to include Helios well.[54] Sarapis appears very frequently in the documents of the third century BC. He arrived in Athens at the beginning of the third century BC.[55] The 'creation story' of Sarapis reveals some essential elements of syncretism. Ptolemy I[56], who was visited in a dream by a god who was later identified as Sarapis, invited the Egyptian and Greek specialists to create together a new god, his cult and rituals. Manetho represented the Egyptians as a priest of Sebennytus, Timotheus was a member of the genos of the *Eumolpidai* and belonged to the priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries. It is claimed that these two priests were Ptolemy's religious advisors and it was mostly they who prepared the cult scheme of Sarapis. Bryaxis is said to have cast the physical appearance of Sarapis,[57] and Demetrius of Phalerum wrote hymns in honour of

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[48] The Egyptian god of the underworld, Osiris, and the Apis bull of Memphis are mixed in the name of Sarapis according to U. Wilcken, P.M. Fraser and G. Mussies who explain the etymology of the name Sarapis as an equivalent (but not an exact transliteration) of the Egyptian Wsir–Hp (Osor–Hapis) which is Osiris–Apis. According to D.J. Thompson Apis was at Memphis Osor–Hapi, the deified Apis bull, yet as Sarapis to the immigrants his chthonic aspect was that of Dionysus. G. Mussies 1978, 828–829 argues for the opinion that Sarapis was purely the *Greek* name of Osor–Hapi (Wsir–Hp), and that it was undoubtedly the Greeks who attributed the name to the Egyptian god. This deity was worshipped at the funerary temple of Apis bull at Memphis in which there were the statues of Apis and Sarapis and of the other deities together, but yet separate; the temples and statues were there for both the Greeks and the Egyptians. See Wilcken 1927, 25–27; Fraser 1960, 1; Stambaugh 1972, 5; Mussies 1978, 825; Thompson 1988, 212; also Nilsson 1950, 156; Préaux 1978 (1987), 649–650; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 101; Samuel 1983, 85.

[49] E.g. Plutarch, Mor. 5.361e.

[50] Cf. Clemens of Alexandria, Protr. 4.48.5–6 (refers to Athenodorus of Tarsus, a writer from the 1st cent. BC).

[51] Clemens of Alexandria, Strom. 1.21.106.4–107.1.

[52] Epigraphical document in SEG XV 426 from Thracia, (1st cent. BC). In the inscription Sarapis is identified with Zeus Aithrios (Ζεύς Αἴθριος, l. 3).

[53] Fraser 1960, 3; Merkelbach 1995, 83.

[54] Stambaugh 1972, 6; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 101–102; Merkelbach 1995, 78, 82. POxy XI 1382 (= Pack^2 2480; Totti 1985, no. 13) is a dedicatory inscription to Zeus–Helios–Megalos Sarapis from the 2nd cent. AD.

[55] See Chapter III.3.A (esp. pp. 50–52, n. 159).

[56] See the discussion on whether Ptolemy was the I, II or III in Stambaugh 1972, 6–10 which concludes that: "... if we use the name Sarapis as a touchstone for the introduction, it cannot be later than fairly early in the reign of Ptolemy I ..." (p. 10).

[57] Plutarch, Mor. 5.361f–362a; Tacitus, Hist. 4.83–84. Later Christian writers referred to the occasion, e.g. Clemens of Alexandria, Protr. 4.48.1–6. It has been suggested that the Eleusinian expert Timotheus was invited to Alexandria to advise the Egyptians on how to act correctly in the newly

the god as a response to being miraculously cured of blindness.[58] Thus the very consciousness based on political motives makes Sarapis' creation a representative of a 'fully syncretistic' religion with its own rites and cultic customs. Sarapis was the patron deity of the Ptolemaic dynasty, as well as of Alexandria. The Ptolemies thought of Sarapis as a kind of divine counterpart to their own benevolent rule, as a symbol, an ambassador for this policy, and at the same time as a mediator of their imperialistic expansion.[59] Ptolemaios Soter I wanted even Memphis to become a central city of Sarapis worship already at the end of the fourth century BC.[60] Thus the Greeks who wished to show their favour to the Ptolemies easily accepted Sarapis, whose very essence included their more traditional gods and who now had a complete cultic scheme of his own.

C. Syncretism of Demeter and Isis

Symbols are the instruments by which communication in religious life is made possible and concrete. To *homo symbolicus* (which as a concept includes *homo religiosus*) religious behaviour is symbolic in character. Thus by observing symbols we may study more closely how the syncretizing process was carried out in the case of Demeter and Isis. Attributes and epithets are symbols that characterize the roles, functions and identities of the goddesses.

"La confusion entre Isis et Demeter est totale", says Y. Grandjean in his study concerning Isis of the first centuries BC and AD.[61] As completely identified they are not met until the late first century BC. When Isis came to Athens she was clearly different from Demeter; her roles and sphere of activities were at least to some degree contrary to those of Demeter. The goddesses complemented each other because they had different functions. Demeter was the goddess of the old Greek *pantheon*, and represented the age-old religious traditions. Isis, on the other hand, was a newcomer and in her Greek form was closely connected with the pluralistic culture of Hellenism. In the beginning, when Isis arrived on Greek soil, there was no need for competition between these goddesses, especially when one takes into account the fact that in Greek culture it was possible for a person to belong to many cults and to be an adherent of many deities simultaneously. This way of acting was regarded as good, honourable and prestigious. The assimilation of Demeter and Isis was a necessary solution only in a situation where a competitive position emerged. This first caused the parallelization of the goddesses and finally led to their

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established Demetrian mystery cult of Alexandrian Eleusis. Thus his duty would have been to observe that the rites were celebrated in accordance with those of the Attican Eleusis, the original location of the Mysteries. See Nilsson 1950, 94–95; Mylonas 1961, 203; Clinton 1974, 9; le Corsu 1977, 51; Préaux 1978 (1987), 651. Note, anyhow, that the existence of the mystery rites proper at Alexandrian Eleusis is a doubtful matter; see Bell 1952 (1975), 18; Fraser 1972, 200–201; Hopkinson 1984, 92–98 and p. 9, n. 1.

58 Artemidorus, Onirocr. 2.44.11–18.

59 Brady 1935, 7, 17–18; Stambaugh 1972, 94. See also 51 above and note rejection of the 'imperialistic theory'.

60 Merkelbach 1995, 73–74.

61 Grandjean 1975, 93, also 103.

syncretism also on a cultic level as shown in the previous chapter. Now we shall follow the process of syncretism of the two goddesses.

C.1. Independent and Individual Goddesses

Demeter's Identity:

Demeter was a chthonic[62] goddess of corn and fertility. She awoke the land each spring to produce wheat and fruits so that people might enjoy them. Demeter's connection with death came through the cycle of birth and death; it is only by death that a new birth is possible. She was the Mother and her beauty was worthy of honour. M.P. Nilsson said that the Mother god of the Greeks was not Ge, but Demeter[63]. Demeter's femininity is well-expressed in her epithets, and most of her functions and roles have some connection with it. The goddess Demeter occurs as a fruit- and gift-bearing goddess (ὠρηφόρος ἀγλαόδωρος), who brings fruitful seasons to humans.[64] Thus she is given epithets like fruit-bearing (καρποφόρος) and wheat-bearing (χλοόκαρπος), fruit-giving Mother (μήτηρ καρποδότειρα), rich of ears of corn (πολύσταχυς), nourishing ears of corn (σταχυοτρόφος), nourisher (βωτιάνειρα, πολυτρόφος, κουροτρόφος), the one who brings many *medimnoi*, i.e. Attic corn-measures (πολυμέδιμνος).[65] More generally she is the giver of life and nutrition; she is a fertility-giving Mother.[66] Demeter's fertility aspect is connected with the land and more narrowly with corn and fruit. It is remarkable that Demeter's beauty is so much admired, her hair especially receiving attention; she is fair-haired; her hair is ambrosial and blonde or beautifully crowned;[67] she is said to be fair-garlanded and mostly dark-clad;[68] even her ankles are admired.[69] As an important Olympian goddess Demeter was from the beginning σεμνή, πότνια, ἄνασσα, βασίλισσα, δέσποινα, αἰδοίη and σώτειρα.[70]

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62 *Chthonia* is a frequently-occurring epithet for this. See e.g. IG IV 679, ll. 29, 13 (2nd cent. BC).

63 Nilsson 1950, 461.

64 Hymn Hom. Dem., 492, also 4, 54, 192.

65 See Aristophanes, Ran. 382; Orphic hymn 40. 2,3,5,13,18; 43.9; Theocritus, Id. 10.42; Callimachus, Hymn 6. 2,119,136. In these the epithets πολύσωρος, σταχυοτρόφος, χλοόκαρπος and καρποῖς βρίθουσα also appear.

66 As Mother she appears twice in the Hymn Hom. Dem.: 35. 185 and 360 (dark-clad Mother). In the Orphic hymn she is called βίον ἱμερόεντις (life-loving), κουροτρόφος (nourishing mother of boys) and even ὀλβιοδώτις (giver of happiness and wealth), Orphic hymn, 40. 2,9,13. Artemidorus, Onirocr. 2.39 says that Demeter is called ζείδωρος, βιόδωρος, φερέσβιος (life-giving), because she possessed the knowledge of cultivating the earth.

67 Hymn Hom. Dem. 41, 251, 295, 302, 314, 470.

68 *Ibid.*, 224, 307, 360, 374.

69 *Ibid.*, 453.

70 In Hymn Hom. Dem. Demeter is the σεμνὴ Θεός: 1; πότνια μήτηρ: 39, 122, 185; πότνια: 54, 492; ἄνασσα: 75, 440, 492; αἰδοίη: 343, 374, 486; in the Orphic hymn σεμνή (twice), πολυπότνια and ἄνασσα: 40. 2,13,20; in Aristophanes, Thesm. 286 she appears as δέσποινα; in Ran. 378 as σώτειρα and 382 as καρποφόρος βασίλισσα. Callimachus called her πότνια and ἄνασσα in his hymn 6. 10,49,121. When describing gods σεμνός is usually attested to goddesses, often to Demeter, in Athens it described also Erinyeis (σεμναὶ Θεαί) and Athene, and ὄργια σεμνά when connected with the mystery-rites (Hymn Hom. Dem., 476–478). Of the gods it signifies revered, august, holy

Isis' Identity:

Isis had a far-reaching background in Egyptian mythology before she arrived in Greece, where she became hellenized. When she first came to Greece, Isis reflected her original roles, of which many belonged to areas quite different from those of Demeter. In Egyptian mythology Isis was in the beginning, Oldest of the old, a sun-goddess.[71] Thus she was more excellent than any other god; she was unique, Mistress of the House of Life, Mistress of the world of the gods.[72] Egyptian Isis dealt with the courses of the sun, moon and stars because she was a primeval god who separated heaven from earth. These astral roles remained as Isis' Egyptian characteristics.[73] As a woman Isis was a Mother and sister, wife, smiling and gentle.[74] Motherhood was an important characteristic of Isis from the beginning. She expressed perfect motherhood, because she was at first the female embodiment of the Nile's annual reawakening and also the mother of Horus of whom every Pharaoh was the incarnation. Thus she was in control of all.[75] This is seen in the Book of the Death in which she is described as having her feet on the prow of heaven and with her all-covering arms outstretched.[76] Isis herself was the conqueror of death – which she never suffered – being concerned with resurrection.[77] Family and daily welfare also depended on Isis, because she was the inventor of these, herself the ideal wife of Osiris and the one who invented cultivation, papyrus, linen, beer and bread.[78] These aspects were still prominent in the role of Isis of the Hellenistic era, when she is described as a giver and organizer of civil life (Plutarch, Mor. 5.377a): "... (she was with Osiris) appointed over every allocation of good and whatever there is in nature that is fair and good ... Isis receives and distributes them."[79] Isis played her role in justice and law: she was lawless (ἄτακτος) in the sense of being above human law and also a lawgiver (θεσμοφόρος)[80] and the best of advisors being a very skilful lover of wisdom (σοφή).[81] As such Isis showed people moral values, for example, she suppressed murders; she established the first matrimony; in the social and civil sphere she protected cities and their institutions.[82]

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and of humans worthy of respect, majestic, stately and honourable (LSJ, s.v. σεμνός).

71 Witt 1971, 14; Vanderlip 1972, 93; Merkelbach 1995, 4.

72 Münster 1969, 203–207.

73 Vanderlip 1972, 94.

74 See e.g. Orphic hymn, 42.9.

75 Witt 1971, 15, 17.

76 Bergman 1968, 280; Münster, 1969, 203; Witt 1971, 15.

77 Münster 1969, 71–76.

78 Witt 1971, 16–17; cf. The Pyramid Texts 655a and 474c.

79 Notice also Plutarch, Mor. 5.377a: "And if we revere and honour what is orderly and good and beneficial as the work of Isis ... we shall not be wrong." (translation F.C. Babbitt, The Loeb Classical Library 1936 (1962). In the aretalogy of Thessalonica IG X2 254 (1st or 2nd cent. AD) Isis claims to be one who caused barbarians to be disposed (l. 21).

80 See Bruchman 1893, 161–162; aretalogy of Cyme IG XII Suppl. pp. 98–99 (1st cent. BC), ll. 34–35, 37, 52 and of Thessalonica IG X2 524 (1st or 2nd cent. AD), ll. 16–17: ἐγὼ τὸ δίκαιον ἰσχυρὸν ἐποίησα.

81 See e.g. Plutarch, Mor. 5.351f.

82 Diodorus Siculus, 1.15.1; 19.7. Osiris was also a protector of cities in the text. In the aretalogy of Cyme IG XII Suppl., pp. 98–99 (1st cent. BC) Isis speaks about herself: "I constructed walls of the cities (l. 51), I devised marriage contracts / I brought together man and woman (ll. 17 and 30), I gave and ordained laws for men, which no one is able to change (l. 4), I brought an end to murders (l. 26),

To the Greeks, also, Isis became known as the goddess who could heal from illnesses; thus she was a salvatrix and magician.[83] All in all, Isis who had transcendental aspects became to influence also every-day human life and thus immanent qualities incorporated into her roles and identity. Isis' feminine appearance is usually connected with her garments: Isis is clad in linen (λινόπεπλος and λινόστολος)[84] probably referring to her original role as an Egyptian deity (Αἰγυπτίη).[85] In addition to her vestments she was crowned and shown as holding a lotus flower.[86] The knot in Isis' garment is an epithet and identifier of the goddess at least in sculpture, especially in Graeco-Roman art.[87] In addition to this she, as a hellenized goddess, had in art many attributes of other goddesses, such as the torches and poppy-heads of Demeter, crescent moon of Artemis–Selene, helm of Tyche, but the knot in her dress front is always the safe attribute which identifies Isis.

C.2. Parallelized Goddesses

Parallelization was possible by reason of analogies. People noticed analogous elements in the roles of deities in Hellenistic times. For example, the Eleusinian deities were connected with the Egyptian ones on Delos: the inscription IG XI4 1235 from the end of the third century BC or the beginning of the second is a dedication made by the people of Athymbrianus to Pluton and Kore, Demeter, Hermes and Anubis together (Πλούτωνι καὶ Κόρει, Δήμητρι, Ἑρμεῖ Ἀνοῦβι). Both of the two goddesses, Demeter and Isis, were Mothers, a role which became strongly underlined. In mythical thought being a mother is connected with the fertility of the land[88] and through it with the fertility of the whole of

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and to the eating of men (l. 21)" (translation bases on the one of Grant 1950, 131–133). Similar themes occur in the aretalogy of Thessalonica IG X2 254 (1st or 2nd cent. AD) which concentrates on listing Isis' values in ordering social and civilized life: "I am the constructer of the city of Bubastos (ll. 11–12), I brought together man and woman (l. 17; also 27–28, 30), I brought an end to the eating of men with my brother Osiris (l. 22), I brought into being the right power of gold and silver (ll. 28–29)". According to B. Müller 1961, 87–88 these themes in the hymn reflect Egyptian ideas of Isis, the hymn being connected with the so called Isis-aretalogy of Memphis from the Memphis *Sarapieion* where also Isis was worshipped. According to D.J. Thompson in this *Sarapieion* the native hold was strong. Though it was Sarapis and Isis, not Apis and the Mother-of-Apis who became to be in the centre of worship in the Ptolemaic Memphis, Thompson 1988, 265.

83 See p. 115 especially n. 190.

84 This must be due to the regulations concerning the original Egyptian rites of Isis in which priests had to wear linen vestments. Plutarch gives reasons for this habit in Mor. 5.352c–d. See also his description of Isis' *cultus* at Hermopolis in Mor. 5.53b–f and the Delian inscription (the 'Chronicle') IG XI4 1299 from *Sarapieion* A which describes the Egyptian rites and duties of the priests of Isis, e.g. fume incenses (l. 60), the proclamation of miracles (l. 48) and the interpretation of dreams (l. 51).

85 See Bruchman 1893, 161.

86 Dunand 1973, 12. See p. 91 n. 37.

87 See e.g. E.J. Walters' study on Attic grave reliefs representing women in the dress of Isis, especially her catalogue 1982 (1988), 208–209 and A. Conze's catalogue of Isis-reliefs, 1893, nos. 1954–1972 ("*Isisdienerinnen*") and 1868 in the Attic funerary monuments, where the knot seems to be one of the most important epithets of Isis. See also LIMC, s.v. Isis.

88 It may be thought that in the beginning (in mythical thought) the land itself had been the first and original mother of human kind. This *Terra Mater* was substituted and personified later by fertility

human kind. In Greece, Demeter was always associated with corn, and this connection also played a role in her cult. Euripides wrote that, "divine Demeter – Earth is she, name by which name thou wilt; she upon dry food nurtureth mortal men" (Bacch. 274–277).[89] Plutarch (Mor. 5.377b) notices that people had also associated Isis and Osiris with seasonal changes and with the growth of the crops, with sowing and ploughing.[90] But still he associated Demeter specifically with the earth by saying (Mor. 5.367c): "That which pervades the earth and its products is Demeter and the Daughter".

Similarities of this kind were easily seen even in the parallel elements of the myths of the two goddesses. The myth of Demeter is best known in the Homeric Hymn's version from the ca. 660–650 BC,[91] and that of hellenized Isis from Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* from the first century AD. Plutarch noticed also the parallelism between the mythical elements of the Egyptian and Greek myths.[92] He was a Greek and sympathizer of Isis, but also a member of the priesthood of Delphi. Similar thematic elements in these mythical texts are: both goddesses lose a beloved member of their family, they seek desperately for the lost one all over the world, during their wanderings they meet an earthly queen with whom they become friends and whose child they take care of, making him immortal by fire (Demeter tries to do this, but is prohibited at the last moment by queen Metaneira); both goddesses are given back their beloved one and thus they symbolically achieve victory over death. Death is represented in personified form in the myths (Hades and Seth).[93] It should be noted that this myth of Isis was already hellenized and many typically Greek traits had found their way into this story of the Egyptian gods.[94] But this also represents parallelization by explaining the ease with which Demeter and Isis were considered similar on Greek soil. As explained above (Chapter III), the myth of Demeter was an aetiology for the cult thus explaining it. The aetiological function is seen also in the case of Isis: the hellenized myth explained Isis' roles, her cult and the parallels with the myth of Demeter made her popularity and triumph in Greece understandable. The myth gave content and substance to the rites, and together they formed a whole in which the rite was a frame, and the myth completed it by giving meanings to it. This promoted the syncretism of the two goddesses.

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gods, like Ge in Greece, who was displaced later by Demeter. Cf. Eliade 1963, 245–246.

89 Translation by A.S. Way, The Loeb Classical Library 1912 (1950).

90 Plutarch continues *ibid.* by telling of an offering of the first fruits to Osiris and says: "When they hear all this, people love it and believe it, deriving their conviction from things close at hand and familiar."

91 For more about the hymn, see above, p. 31.

92 Plutarch, Mor. 5.360f. See the commentary on the text in Griffiths 1970, 57–58, 309. R. Merkelbach 1995, 51–52, 252–265 describes in length 'Plutarch's Platonic interpretation' of Greek and Egyptian religion. He means the Plutarch's tendency to describe and interpret Egyptian religion through the platonically orientated point of view, e.g. in *De Iside et Osiride* Plutarch explains that the role of Osiris is equivalent to the principle of good (*ibid.*, 1995, 258–259), Isis–Psyche is the goddess of philosophical exercise (*ibid.*, 259–260) and that Isis is a symbol or equivalent of knowledge (*ibid.*, 261–262).

93 Cf. le Corsu 1977, 63–64; Martin 1987, 84; Merkelbach 1995, 5, 38.

94 Préaux 1978 (1987), 658–659. V. Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 102, 104–105, 115 underlines that outside Egypt Isis became hellenized towards the beginning of the 3rd cent. BC.

C.3. Identified Goddesses

There are some aspects of Demeter and Isis which are so similar that the goddesses could become combined as persons as well. These aspects were noticed and utilized mainly in the second and the first centuries BC. Both deities were emphatically feminine and in the larger sense Mothers (Μήτηρ); they made the cultivation of both the land and civil life possible. There are various features that connect Isis as a founder of culture with the nature of the Greek Demeter.[95] Thus they both civilized humankind.[96] Common epithets which characterize this are mother of ears of corn (σταχυομήτερ) and fruit-bearing (καρποφόρος and καρποτόκος)[97] and θεσμοφόρος[98]. Designated like this Isis is put into the traditional roles of Demeter and becomes the same. The Greeks who identified Isis with Demeter saw in Isis' rites their own Mysteries, and thus the ritualistic similarity has a place of importance in the identification.[99] Being deities with similar functions Demeter and Isis were jointly honoured as powerful and mighty goddesses. Demeter is frequently specified as queen and majesty[100] and Isis was given epithets that referred to her role as an omnipotent god who knew, saw and understood everything: she was all-seeing (πανδερκής); she had many forms (μυριόμορφος) and was many-named (πολυώνυμος).[101] In the first century BC Diodorus Siculus said that (1.24.2): "the same goddess is called by some Isis, by others Demeter". The same thought is found in Clemens of Alexandria (Strom. 1.221.106.3–4): "Isis belongs to the Egyptian gods and is called Demeter by the Greeks."

The oldest of the aretalogies of Isis,[102] (often personal) proclamations in which the goddess explains her majesty and power, belongs to approximately 100 BC. It was found in Maronea,[103] but its importance is that it has been claimed to be the first explicit literal identification of Greek Demeter and Egyptian Isis.[104] I would like to emphasize that in this

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95 des Places 1969, 50; Versnel 1990, 42; Merkelbach 1995, 62.

96 Demeter taught the men of Eleusis the art of agriculture according to her myth and thus elevated humans from the savage way of life to that of civilized humans: Hymn Hom. Dem. 452–458; Callimachus, Hymn 6.18–19. According to the myth Isis taught men all that is good and civilized them; Plutarch, Mor. 5.361d–f (Plutarch's specification e.g. in 5.377a).

97 About Demeter's and Isis' roles see pp. 95–97. Demeter appears in Athens as καρποφόρος and καρποτόκος in IG II/III^2 4587 (middle of the 4th cent. BC), and as καρποφόρος and θεσμοφόρος still in SIG II^3 820 (AD 83/84), ll. 3–5; see Bruchman 1893, 76, 161; Isis as καρπῶν εὑρέτρια occurs e.g. in the Isidorus' hymn to Isis from Madinat Maadi (SEG VIII 548–551) from the 1st cent. BC, l. II,3 (for more detail about the hymn, see below, p. 108–109), and in the aretalogy of Cyme (IG X2 254) she appears as πρώτη καρπὸν ἀνθρώποις εὑροῦσα (l. 1).

98 Pausanias mentions that Demeter Thesmophoros had temples at Alimus, a small Attic town, 1.31.1; in Megara, 1.42.6; in Corinth, 2.32.8; at Leuctra (in Boeotia), 9.6.5; at Drymea (in Phocis), 10.33.12. Isis Thesmophoros occurs e.g. in the aretalogy of Cyme (IG XII Suppl., pp. 98–99), l. 50.

99 Heyob 1975, 11. This is discussed in Chapter IV.4.

100 See p. 95, n. 70.

101 See POxy XV 1803 (= Pack^2 2477), ll. 94,97,101 (πολυώνυμος and πανδερκής), and Isidorus Hymn to Isis SEG VIII 548, l. I,26 (πολυώνυμος), also in Vanderlip 1972, 17–18, 34–35, 49–50. See also Collart 1919, 93–100 and Grant 1953, 128–130.

102 See p. 79 (n. 73).

103 The aretalogy and its commentary are in Grandjean 1975.

104 Versnel 1990, 42.

text the cults of Demeter and Isis are identified as well, since they have both become mystery cults.[105] It is noteworthy that at the level of cultic practices identification did not occur until this time. Only from this time onwards we may talk about the Mysteries of Isis in the full sense. This has been discussed in connection with the problem of the mysteries, but the above-mentioned questions of the greatness and power of the goddesses now lead us to another very important concept that occurs in connection with the nature of Hellenistic religion; namely the monotheistic trend.

2. Monotheistic Trend

Monotheism as a concept is both categorical and abstract. It is an instrument of researchers, and its purpose is to help to classify religious phenomena; the word is not Greek, but invented from the Greek word θεῖον (divine being, deity)[106] with the prefix *mono-* to denote religion which involves belief only in one god. Even though the idea of monotheism had been known to philosophers for a long time before the Hellenistic era. When studying cultic practice we must be cautious in using the term, because it is a strongly interpretative one. The problem is that the concept of monotheism is connected with our Christian-centred point of view, its theocentristic forms and models for explaining the characteristics of religions. Old evolutionary theories about religious development must be assessed on this basis. These theories regarded monotheism as the final and complete form of the developing process of religions. This process was regarded as including stages that involved first, for example, animism and magic, then polytheism, and finally monotheism of which Christianity was ethnocentrically seen as the most ennobled representative.[107] When studying the religions of antiquity it seems more suitable to speak about a 'monotheistic trend' rather than monotheism, because as a term monotheism excludes even the potential existence of other gods: "There is no other god at all except this god". The religions of Greek and Roman antiquity did not do this; they were fundamentally clearly polytheistic. Despite this there were monotheistic tendencies. The Greeks knew only synthesis of all or most of the gods, on the one hand, or philosophical or theological principle on the other.[108] I shall comment on both of these in what follows.

It may well be appropriate to remember the term henotheism in this connection. It means an attitude which includes monotheistic content without involving rejection or

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[105] See Chapter IV.4 on this theme.

[106] LSJ, s.v. θεῖον. Τά θεῖα denotes to the acts or attributes of the gods and in general to the religious observances.

[107] Older evolutionary theories of religion, which viewed the development of natural and social world as a movement from lower to higher forms, from the simple to the complex, were first postulated by E.B. Tylor ('animism') and R.R. Marett ('animatism' or 'dynamism'). In animism the origin of religion is in human belief in surrounding spirits and souls, and in animatism humans tend to spiritualize the surrounding world of objects, which habit is seen as the original religious thinking. About the emergence of these ideas see Sharpe 1975 (1986), 53–58, 65–71 and Bolle 1987, 296–302.

[108] Nilsson 1950, 569.

neglect of other gods. Evidence which reveals this kind of tendency does not always entail monotheistic notions in the strict sense.[109] Thus henotheism may be regarded as a kind of *praeparatio* for monotheism in stressing the exceptional value of a certain god who is believed to be especially benevolent for the nation which believes in him/her. Prior to henotheistic concepts there may have been parallelizing or assimilating syncretism. A chronology may be constructed. In the process there is first syncretism which is followed by henotheism and finally a 'monotheistic trend' occurs.

The idea of monotheism belongs to many spheres: to the area of philosophy as a superior principle[110], to political life as the hierarchical system of monarchy, and to religion as a process of syncretism leading to a monotheistic trend. It should be noted that this chronology is highly theoretical, and the chronological development does not always presuppose all of the stages. Its purpose here is to help in analyzing the central themes of Hellenistic religion, not to provide a universally applicable model for religious development.

All this was focused on the need to outline an ever-increasing and pluralistic gallery of gods, ordering them under one god who was regarded as more powerful than the others, but who could encompass in him/herself traits of the others at the same time. This strong god was not necessarily above good and evil in the universe, but was placed on the highest step of the hierarchy of the gods.

Absolute monotheism brings into mind the concept of transcendence. As a term 'transcendent' is technical.[111] The transcendent indicates the idea of something 'beyond', first of all beyond the sphere of physical things and finite spirits as being prior to essential nature, to exalt above it. The transcendent idea of a god includes the idea that the god is absolute and infinite, wholly impassable and immune to influence of others, while an immanent god would be relative and finite (if we could comprehend such a god). Classical theism denies transcendence.[112] From the beginning of Greek religious thought there had been immanent elements which belonged to the theological structure. There was an idea of a Supreme Being existing behind (or above) the theogony, that had an eye on the gods of the *pantheon* and affected their deeds. Activities of personal gods were subordinate to this power. This was denominated, for example, as Nemesis, who was fairly abstract and only rarely had an actual cult prior late Hellenistic or Roman times,[113] or as Tyche. These

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[109] Versnel 1990, 35. He notes rightly that it also often denotes personal devotion to one god, for example, in the form "there is no other god like this god (for me)".

[110] E.g. Bregman 1982, 58 speaks about 'Greek philosophical monotheism'.

[111] Smart 1979, 29.

[112] In religious thinking transcendence is a value term expressing the unique excellence of god, and immanence, the term important in connection with transcendence, is not obviously a value term because it includes a sense of *ubiquity*, being everywhere and thus merely expresses a unique property. Hartshorne 1987, 16, 18–19.

[113] See e.g. Allègre 1889, 38–39. Pausanias describes the cult places of these deities (personified abstractions), see pp. 27 and 43. Nemesis accompanied with Themis had a cult at Rhamnous already in Classical times. Rhamnous had two temples, the older and smaller of which was built in the 480s BC. There have been found two early 4th century BC thrones, originally placed in the porch, and dedicated to Themis and Nemesis by a priestess as well as the statue of Themis. The larger temple was built 50 years later to Nemesis alone. The cult statue of Nemesis and its base is known only from Pausanias 1.33.3–8 who tells that on the head of the goddess was a crown with deer and small images

deities represented the principle which was above or beyond in the same way as represented by transcendental deities, but they were immanent in belonging to the inner structure of the Greek theological setting of personal and usually anthropomorphic gods. When Isis was equated with these gods, as in the Isidorus' hymn to Isis, she is clearly both immanent and transcendent, a helper on Earth and a divine judge, great Mother and creator-god.[114] When studying Greek religion we are confronted with a search for order and meaning that required even the gods themselves to be subject to a predestined pattern.[115] In the course of time, the transcendent element seems to gain ground at the expense of immanent principles. In Hellenistic times this idea of a Supreme Being was made more explicit and gained more prominence in theological structuring. This may have been the religious response to a situation in which people had to handle the coexistence of many different gods simultaneously and to deal with this plurality. Syncretism belonged implicitly to monotheistic tendencies, because they both tended to create order in religious pluralism. It should be remembered that the idea of monotheism does not necessarily imply turning away from polytheism, since monotheistic ideas may belong to a polytheistic system as such.[116] Greek religion was to a certain extent a mixture of pantheism (the idea of the Supreme Being) and polysymbolism which means that none of the divine symbols excluded the divinity of the others. This was expressed vaguely among the people and more precisely among the philosophers.[117]

A. Ruler Gods

The problem when studying a monotheistic tendency in the religion of the Hellenistic period is methodological: is it possible to handle religious thought and transcendental theories in the same way as the religious activities of every day life, i.e. will primary material be revealing enough about abstract modes of thought? We are attempting here to interpret the 'monotheistic trend' on the basis of the primary evidence, and trying to find

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of Nike, in her hand libation bowl and an apple branch. Based on Pausanias' description A.N. Dinsmoor 1972, 15 states that the cult statue was not particularly attended to the character of the goddess but was instead the colossal image of a beautiful woman. In any case the inscriptions on the thrones show that at Rhamnous there was a cult of these goddesses in Classical times. H.J. Rose 1949, 601 argues that Nemesis may have appeared to have been there originally a deity of the type of Artemis who deals or distributes νέμει, appropriate gifts to her worshippers, and was afterwards made abstract. See Dinsmoor 1972, 14–15, 22–24; Eliot 1976, 753.

[114] Cf. Vanderlip 1972, 4.

[115] Humphrey 1978, 210. He refers to the suggestion made first by J.P. Vernant that it is important to make a distinction between transcendent power and transcendent order. In Greek thought the latter is predominant and means that it is not possible to find a contraposition of religion and the state. Humphrey 1978, 110–111.

[116] Bianchi 1975, 95.

[117] Festugière 1954, 255. The reason for this may be that the idea of transcendence is rather a sophisticated concept belonging mostly to the structuring of the philosophers and theologians. Smart 1979, 29. See also Bregman 1982, 59: "The universalist elements in Hellenistic religions reached their logical culmination when a transformed paganism systematically subordinated all the gods to a supreme transcendent One".

an answer to the question of what monotheistic tendency might really mean in a particular situation. There were some modes of civil orientation in social life which were determined by the movements towards new forms of religious thought, especially monotheistic thinking, so that the level of social structure comes into the picture, lessening the contradiction between the evidence and abstract constructions about the modes of thought. Transcendental visions in civilization can be recognized at least to some degree in the emerging institutions in which there appeared the concept of the accountability of the rulers and of the community to a higher authority such as a divine force, for example in the case of the ruler-gods.[118] The cult of deified rulers was an important phenomenon in the religious and political life of the Hellenistic period. I will not treat this at length here, but it is necessary to take into account some notions connected with the 'monotheistic trend' and immanence of divine power in the persons of human rulers. Alexander the Great was the first deified ruler in the Hellenistic world[119] and his successors wanted to follow his model, like the Macedonian king Antigonus and his son Demetrius Poliorcetes who were welcomed in Athens as *Soteres*, *Euergetai* and even as *Theoi*.[120] The problem of the ruler-cult is whether it was motivated for administrative purposes in order to create, and present to the people, a powerful ruler whose role and deeds were justified by reasons taken from the divine sphere, and who could become venerated as a god belonging similarly to all people and all nations in the Hellenistic world at large, or was ruler-cult the spontaneous worship of men who were believed to be gods.[121] From Alexander the Great onwards the first alternative seems reasonable; for example, in these cults the foremost object of worship was never a person or personality of a certain ruler, but an abstract characteristic of a benevolent ruler in general, like *arete, dikaiosyne, philanthropia* or *sophia*.[122] Rulers wanted to strengthen their divine role by presenting themselves as identified with powerful gods known to the people and taking the epithets of these gods to characterize the ruler himself: Alexander the Great was known, for example, as Zeus and Heracles,[123] and Demetrius Poliorcetes was presented in Athens as Zeus.[124]It is

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[118] Eisenstadt 1982, 303.

[119] See e.g. Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 148, 318; Habicht 1970, 225; Samuel 1983, 99: "The dynastic cult itself was a Greek institution, and it was completely separate from the traditional Egyptian worship of Pharaoh."

[120] Antigonus and Demetrius are both claimed to have had the cult of *Soteres* in Athens after the year 307 BC. Plutarch, Demetr. 10.3–4; see also *ibid.* 12.2–4; Diodorus Siculus, 20.46.23 and 20.93.6. Both authors speak of the golden statues of Antigonus and Demetrius, and the cult of the Saviour gods in honour of these Macedonian kings. The cult of Demetrius is known from the years 307, 304/3, 294 and 291/290 BC. This might have been said in the means of propaganda in order to defend the status of these rulers after their death. Habicht 1970, 44–45, 51, 166–167; see also Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 173–176.

[121] See e.g. Habicht 1970, 223–225, 229, 232.

[122] *Ibid.*, 222–223.

[123] Plutarch, Mor. 4.2.338f says that Alexander was presented as Zeus; he was connected also with Heracles, the beloved hero of the legend and with whom he tended to identify himself and in the deeds of which people could see parallels with Alexander; see Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 148–151, 156–160, 162–166.

[124] Plutarch, Mor. 4.2.338a; Clemens of Alexandria, Protr. 4.48; the latter adds that in Athens there was a temple of Demetrius designated as 'Descending' (Καταιβάτης, a way down) while his altars were

evident that immanent divine power was incorporated in the person of a ruler, and this made him seem more potent when handling worldly matters. Divine justification from above, from the world of non-humans strengthened the authority of a ruler, because as a god he was exalted above the possibilities of ordinary people. For the Greeks (and Macedonians) the deified ruler was the one who had merited divine honours through his accomplishments, for example, victories. F.W. Walbank states that the ruler god in Greek fashion was *identified* with specific Greek gods while in Egypt, where different tradition prevailed regarding ruler gods; he was an incarnation of Horus, because he *was* Pharaoh.[125] Godliness implies always the conception of power, often sovereignty as well. A ruler-god offered a worldly representative of these, of *philanthropia* and wisdom. His main role was probably to present himself as a benefactor to those he ruled. Thus in ruler-gods the transcendence of the gods above was made immanent in the world of humans. It is necessary, however, to deal next with the philosophical thought of Hellenistic Athens concerning abstract orientations and social structure.

B. Monotheistic Trend among Intellectuals

The role of intellectuals[126] in contemporary thought is crucial. The importance of their role is often connected with a time of change as well. To S. Eisenstadt 'axial age' means a period which has to do with the emergence, crystallization and institutionalization of basic tension between the divinely justified and the mundane orders in society. During these periods the intellectual elite tends to become aware of the necessity to actively construct the world according to some visions with transcendental elements, i.e. so that it rests on something which gets justification from above the ordinary, every-day life and its institutions. These visions in turn ultimately become institutionalized.[127] Intellectuals always have a two-fold role in society, because they have to distance themselves from what they analyze or criticize in order to be able to do so effectively, but at the same time they have to share the conditions analyzed, seeing it from inside in order to know what they are criticizing. Thus the philosophers of Hellenistic times also[128] always had to

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everywhere. The word *kataibates* was used as a title for Zeus (see e.g. the Athenian inscriptions IG II/III^2 4964 from 400–350 BC: Διὸς Καταιβάτο. ἄβατον ἱερόν. and IG II/III^2 4998 from the 1st cent. AD: Διὸς Καταιβάτου) and it was probably used by the Athenians to flatter Demetrius as well; Clemens may have been willing to tell about this flattery in order to represent 'pagan' beliefs in negative light; about Demetrius entitled as Zeus, see also Bruchman 1893, 129.

125 Walbank 1993, 122.

126 By intellectuals I mean those people in a society to whom the role of an analyst and observer, and participation in political matters as well, is defined by the value of intelligence, i.e. comprehension as both a means and an end. Cf. Humphrey 1978, 212.

127 Eisenstadt 1982, 294, 298–299.

128 Of course the philosophers of the Classical times wrote texts which say a lot about this problem as well (see e.g. Korhonen, unpublished manuscript). Plato is surely the best example in his writings about the *Demiurgos* whom he identified with the Good and the Beautiful. The *Demiurgos* was a kind of personification of this highest idea of the Good or the Beautiful. The *to theion* of Plato is a divine force (idea), but as yet not highly personalized. Our ideas of personality are not equivalent to those of the ancients, and our idea of monotheism usually includes personal concepts of gods. See des Places

re-think their role in the city. The cynical and sceptical attitudes or self-control and superiority widened the distance between the intellectuals and every-day political activities in Hellenistic times.[129] This separation obviously favoured the emergence of transcendental theories[130] and a critique of religion by the philosophers.[131] It is noticeable that the civilized public in particular had an important role in the change of religious attitudes, because through them new ideas slowly percolated through to a wider public.[132]

Athens was occupied by the Macedonians, and a Macedonian garrison installed itself in the city after the Lamian war in 322 BC. Cassandrus instituted an oligarchy in the city in 317 BC and granted a controlling position to Demetrius of Phalerum. This ruler wrote about Tyche (*Peri Tyches*) in the same year[133] and he placed Tyche above all humans and gods. He clearly regarded Tyche as a goddess who had qualities which placed her above theogony and which thus made her omnipotent. Later this was cited by Juvenal in his revealing verse on the same subject (Sat. 10.365–366; 14.315–316): *Nullum numen habes si sit prudentia, nos te, nos facimus Fortuna, deam caeloque locamus.*[134] The new governmental system reflected itself in the religious system, autocratic aspects becoming explicit in the nature of the Greek gods of Hellenistic times. M.P. Nilsson even stated that Tyche was the last stage in the secularization of religion in matters concerning human

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1969, 324–325.

[129] E.g. the Cynics proclaimed that they were rootless and outsiders in the *polis*. Their aims were extreme self-sufficiency, attack against conventions and freeing oneself from the prevailing norms. Korhonen, unpublished manuscript.

[130] Notice that C.S. Humphrey locates this to Classical times: "Study of the social position of the Greek intellectuals from Homer to Aristotle ... has suggested to me that there were factors both in the social structure of the Greek cities between the eighth and fourth centuries BC and in the conditions of communication experienced by Greek intellectuals that favoured the development of transcendental theories." Humphrey 1978, 212.

[131] See e.g. the Athenian Theophrastus (372/369–288/285 BC), Char. 16, a famous characterization of a superstitious man, and Euhemerus' theory on the upsurge of religions in his *Hiera Anagraphe*, Jacoby (FGrHist I), 63 (handed down in Diodorus Siculus' collection of fragments 6.1–10, cited also by Eusebius). Theophrastus expressed his ironical and scornful attitude towards religion, and Euhemerus expressed his rationalizing attitude in explaining that gods had originally been nothing but human kings who later became divinized. Theophrastus was a leader of the Peripatetic school after Aristotle and Euhemerus stayed for long periods in Athens in the service of Cassandrus between 311–298 BC. A.J. Festugière 1972, 123 claims with exaggeration (and without stating reasons) that "Évhémère a été l'un des plus lus au IIIe et IIe siècles"; see also Henrichs 1984, 140–145: "Euhemerus' theory ... enjoyed such a wide circulation". A. Henrichs 1984, 140–145, 151 argues for the origin and base of Euhemerus' thinking in Prodicus, an Athenian sophist and Socrates' contemporary. Actually Euhemerus' theory, later known as 'Euhemerism', had more success in Latin after the publication of the *Euhemerus* by Ennius; see Brink & Rose 1949 (1950), 344 and Nilsson 1946 (1984), 86–92.

[132] Festugière 1972, 40; Humphrey 1978, 203–204, Eisenstadt 1982, 289–299. This is mainly in connection with philosophical thinking. The religious devotion and the piety of lay people was not abstract in the same sense.

[133] Demetrius of Phalerum, frg. 39 (FGrHist IIb, pp. 969–970); also in Polybius, 24.21.3–7.

[134] See commentary on this in Ferguson 1911, 87–99 and Murray 1925, 165–166. Compare this with the omnipotence attributed to Isis in Apuleius' statement about her in Met. 269.14–15: "(*Isis*)... *cuius numen unicum multiformi speciae, ritu vario, nomine multiiugo totus veneratur orbis.*" See commentary in Griffiths 1975, 142–143.

destiny and the world[135]. This also had a vice versa effect, as seen in the case of Demetrius of Phalerum. And it is worth remembering that Demetrius of Phalerum was involved in the history of Sarapis by writing hymns to the new and mighty god who reflected omnipotent qualities and taking personally part to the 'creating' of Sarapis in Egypt.[136] Men who held ruling positions had an interest in maintaining and strengthening the social order and thus sought to integrate transcendent omnipotence into the prevailing system in order to legitimate their own power. The hierarchy of the gods organized below the Supreme Being or the principal god was reflected in the political hierarchy of the state. But intellectuals who criticized the system and used expressions reaching beyond the sphere of humans by constructing, for example, a theoretical cosmology, sought authority outside the institutionalized offices and structures of their society. This implies a transfer of authority and a challenge to it, perhaps even an expression of dissatisfaction with it.[137] This took the form of a critique of religion.

C. Monotheistic Trend among More Concrete Religious Thought

Syncretism in the types and stages described above came first. The names of the gods were put one after another, and only later did the deities become identified. Abstract similarities, such as goodness and ruling power of a god, were incorporated into all of the gods. This included a 'monotheistic trend', but not monotheism proper. Here, too, the Delian material concerning Egyptian cults is revealing. The forms of invocation that people used to call the gods to whom they gave dedications are telling. In most of the Delian documents the gods are mentioned in the plural and called upon as a group of divinities.[138] Convention required no separate mention of these gods; inscriptions were dedicated to the gods generally (Θεοὶ), this being the conventional topos at the opening of inscriptions on religious and related matters.[139] Most of the inscriptions of the religious associations were dedicated to gods. Grouping the gods together and not particularizing them had connotations also for the mystery cults, because this habit occurs frequently in connection with them; the devotees did not have to particularize the god honoured; for example Demeter and Kore were often named together in a dual form as τὼ θεώ in

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[135] Nilsson 1946 (1984), 101.

[136] About the 'preparation' of Sarapis see pp. 93–94.

[137] Cf. Humphrey 1987, 211 and 236–237.

[138] Baslez 1977, 124–128.

[139] In IG I^3 (the volume of Attic inscriptions containing the oldest ones) the first inscriptions in Athens with the opening dedication to *theoi* are IG I^3 34 (448/7 BC); 292 (434/3 BC); 130 (432/1 BC); 296 (430/29 BC); 82 (421/0 BC); 285 (421/0 BC). They deal with administrative matters of Athens, like collecting taxes (no. 34), naming the *hellenotamiai* (no. 285), organizing the administration of the city's cult for Athena Polias (nos. 292, 296) and Hephaistus (no. 82) and regulating the Athenian offerings for Delphian Apollo (no. 130). The oldest (333/2 BC) inscription IG II/III^2 337 referring to the Egyptian gods in Athens opens with the invocation Θεοί as well. According to A.G. Woodhead 1959 (1981), 39 the opening formula Θεοί occurs frequently in the decrees and, as it seems, rather cryptically indicates that, before matter under discussion was considered and decided, the proper religious exercises had been performed or invocations made.

connection with the Eleusinian cult.[140] But a group of gods, such as the Egyptian ones, called upon as Θεοί receiving a specifying and abstract common epithet which underlines their shared power and might, shows perhaps a slight monotheistical trend. These groups could be named first as gods dwelling together or gods grouped together (θεοὶ σύνναοι, θεοὶ σύνναοι καὶ σύμβωμοι)[141]. Then come invocations giving the gods epithets grouping them together without specifying their names, such as Great Gods (θεοί μεγάλοι).[142] Sarapis and Isis named as θεοὶ μέγιστοι, the greatest gods are also found.[143]

As a curiosity, it is interesting to look at later Hellenistic Isis outside of Athens in order to observe the development. This is best done by examining aretalogies of Isis which were written during the first century BC and the first AD. They have been considered as cultic texts, largely Greek in conception with Egyptian references, and they express actual beliefs of ordinary worshippers of Isis.[144] For the form of the aretalogies it is essential that they are proclamations in which the goddess proclaims her power, *dynamis*. The Cyme aretalogy ends with the formula expressing Isis' omnipotence over other gods: "What pleases me, that shall came to an end. With me everything is reasonable" (lines 46–47). Final sentences make this more explicit: "I overcome faith. Faith harkens to me" (lines 55–56). The frequent epithets with the prefix *pan-*, like παντοκράτωρ, πανδερκέτης, πανμήτηρ, παντρόφος, πάντων βασιλεία underline the sentiment that she was seen as a powerful and mighty god in the hymns and aretalogies of this period. The same is true of the prefix *poly-*, such as πολυπότνια, πολυμόρφος, πολυώνυμος.[145] The same occurs in the Orphic hymns to Demeter which were written over a long period of time between the fifth and the third centuries BC. In them Demeter is likewise πανμήτειρα, πολυώνυμος, παντοδότειρα, πολύτεκνος, πολυπότνια and πολυάνθεμος.[146] In addition to the hymns and aretalogies there are a number of Greek inscriptions denoting

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[140] Nilsson, 1950, 463; e.g. IG I^3 78, l. 13, 38–39, 50 (ca. 422 BC); IG II/III^2 4588 (middle of the 3rd cent.); Aristophanes, Lys. 112; see des Places 1969, 50–51.

[141] Delian inscriptions from the pre-Athenian era (before the year 167/6 BC) IG XI4 1223 (θεοὶ σύνναοι καὶ σύμβωμοι); 1227; 1239; 1251; 1257; 1270; 2131. All these group together Sarapis, Isis and Anubis as θεοί σύνναοι, also mentioning them separately. From the Athenian era ID 2119 (Apollo together with the Egyptian triad) and ID 2146 (the triad and Harpocrates as θεοὶ σύνναοι καὶ σύμβωμοι). See also Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 106.

[142] ID 2180 and 2181 (middle of the 2nd cent. BC); IG IV 854 (Methana, 162–146 BC); and SIRIS 41 (Argos, end of the 2nd cent. BC, of Sarapis and Isis), see Roussel 1916a, pp. 94–95; The Delian dedication ID 2105 (probably 98/97 BC). In these inscriptions θεοὶ μεγάλοι designates the Egyptian divinities. Note also the thesis that *theoi megaloi* designates mostly the Cabiri and Dioscuri, studied by B. Müller (1913), who states: "Θεοὶ μεγάλοι ... *in insulis Samothracea, Imbro, Paro suam vim atque naturam Cabiros semper servavisse puto, sed aliis locis, utrum Cabiri an Dioscuri intellegundi sint, paucis absolvi nequit*" (p. 289). B. Müller lists also the other Greek gods called θεοὶ μεγάλοι.

[143] Of Sarapis and Isis as θεοὶ μέγιστοι: IG XII3 247, ll. 5–7 from the island of Anaphe, close to Delos, the 1st cent. BC; see also Baslez 1977, 63, 124–125.

[144] Henrichs 1984, 154–155.

[145] Keysner 1932, 45–46. He gives a complete list of the Greek hymns in which these epithets occur. Epithets mentioned here are to be found in the hymns to Demeter or Egyptian gods, most of which are mentioned in the notes to this study as well.

[146] Orphic hymn, 40. 1,3,16,17.

the might of Isis in her epithets μεγάλη,[147] μεγίστη,[148] παντοκράτωρ,[149] σεμνή,[150] πλουτοδότειρα,[151] εὔπλοια[152] and even μήτηρ μεγάλη ἡ πάντων κρατοῦσα (the great mother having dominion over all)[153]. In the second century BC Isis was already the goddess whose important function was to save people; she was Σώτειρα even to the degree of becoming the means of salvation.[154] In this role she was raised above other gods as the one who could rule the others. Omnipotence gives a god supremacy over life and death also, and Isis was the ruler over death *par excellence*. This and the monotheistic trend is to be seen in the Isidorus'[155] Hymn to Isis, which is dated to the first decade of the first century BC, being the earliest of some dozen Greek hymns to Isis[156] and belonging to the same genre as the aretalogies. It was found (*in situ*) at the south gate of a large Graeco-Egyptian temple in Madinat Maadi (Narmouthis in Fayum) in Egypt:[157]

I, lines 14–24:
"All mortals who live on the boundless Earth,
Thracians, Greeks, and Barbarians
Express Your fair Name, a Name greatly honoured among all,
Each speaks in his own language, in his own land.
The Syrians call You sovereign Astarte, Artemis, Nanaia,
The people of Lycia call You sovereign Leto, the Lady,
The Thracians also name You as Mother of the Gods,
And the Greeks Hera of the Great Throne, or Aphrodite,
Or Hestia the goodly, Rheia or Demeter.

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147 IG IV 854, ll. 4–5 (162–146 BC, Methana, the only Ptolemaic base on the Greek mainland which had a harbour); SIRIS 41 (Argos, end of the 2nd cent. or beginning of the 1st BC).

148 See above, n. 142.

149 IG V2 472, l. 6 (2nd cent. AD, Megalopolis).

150 *Ibid.*, l. 1.

151 IG IV 244 (Cret.I), l. 1 (163 BC, Crete).

152 ID 2153 (Delos, *Sarapieion* A, 107/6 BC); ID 2132 (inscription cited above, p. 89).

153 IG XI4 1234, ll. 3–4 (*Sarapieion* C, middle of the 2nd cent. BC); see also POxy XI 1380 (Pack^2 2477; Totti 1985, no. 20), l. 20.

154 Versnel 1990, 45; see also Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 107 and Merkelbach 1995, 66–67. See inscriptions naming Isis as *Soteira*: SIRIS 179 (Rhodos or Kos, 1st cent. BC); SIRIS 247 (Kos, 3rd or 2nd cent. BC), and the Delian ones: IG XI4 1253 and 1254 (end of the 2nd cent. BC); ID 2132 and ID 2119 which is an (ex-voto) dedication from *Sarapieion C* to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis (*theoi synnaoi*) in a great danger craving for salvation from these gods. It is worth noting here that the names *Soteira* and *Soter* were largely a matter of royal policy and as such were connected to the ruler gods as well.

155 Isidorus was a priest who might have been brought to be a member of the Egyptian priesthood during the reign of Soter II who was interested in temple building and restoration. According to V.F. Vanderlip Isidorus was also a supporter of Soter II, and thus his hymn is a political as well as a religious statement of royalty. Vanderlip 1972, 14–15.

156 A more precise date (*terminus post quem*) 96 BC is proposed by Vogliano 1938, 274–276. See Bernand 1969, 631–632 with references. From the external and internal dating evidence V.F. Vanderlip 1972, 10–16 gives as *terminus post quem* the year 96 BC and as *terminus ante quem* absolutely latest the year 80 BC. This inscription is published in SEG VIII 548–551. Translation given above is based on Vanderlip's translation in 1972, 18–51; the text, French translation and commentaries are also in Bernand 1969, 636–638; see also Dunand 1984, 79.

157 About the archaeological context see Vanderlip 1972, 9–12.

But the Egyptians call You 'Thiouis' because (they know) that You alone,
You among all the other goddesses people are calling for."

I, lines 26–34:
"Deathless Saviour, many-named, mightiest Isis,
Saving from war, cities and all their citizens;
Men, their wives, possessions, and children.
As many as are bound fast in prison, in the power of death,
As many as are in pain through long, anguished, sleepless nights,
All who are wanderers in a foreign land,
And as many as sail on the great sea in winter

When men may be destroyed and their ships wrecked and sunk
All are saved if they pray that You be present to help."

II, lines 1–4:
"Hail, Agathe Tyche, greatly renowned Isis, mightiest
Hermouthis, in you every city rejoices;
O Discoverer of Life and Cereal food wherein all
mortals delight because of your blessing."

The text indicates how the monotheistic tendency is bound to syncretism, which first parallelizes and then identifies gods of different areas and of similar roles.[158] The intention was evidently to reduce the chaotically multiform world of the gods into order by finding the most suitable god to rule the others, one whose roles were sufficiently manifold to identify and later subordinate those of the others to her/him. This idea may also be interpreted from the point of view of change by looking at the concepts of power and potentiality of the gods of Classical times and of Hellenistic times, which were manifest in their *dynamis* and *energeia*. In Classical times, this power previously manifested itself in the gods, in the form of their persons, but in the Hellenistic period the gods themselves became merely manifestations of power.

3. Individualism

Individualism is deeply-rooted in our conception of man in today's world. It is also seen as the cardinal value of modern societies.[159] Modern individualistic ideology is

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[158] Compare this Isidorus-Hymn with POxy XI 1380 (Pack^2 2477; Totti 1985, no. 20, early 2nd cent. AD) first published by B.P. Grenfell & A.S. Hunt 1915 : "I invoke thee, who at Aphroditopolis art called fleet-commanding, many-shaped Aphrodite, ... at Pephremis Isis, ruler, Hestia, Lady of every country, ... at Delphoi best, fairest ... at Sidon Astarte ..." Almost everywhere Isis receives epithets like most great, almighty, ruler, many-shaped, many-named, all-seeing, one. This invocation is given and commented on by P. Collart 1919, 93–100. See the list of the Isis' epithets with expressions of omnipotency in POxy XI 1380 compiled by M. Malaise 1986, 31. See also Merkelbach 1995, 94–98.

[159] F. Dumont 1986, 16, who criticizes a 'Durkheimian view' of individualism which regards it quite clearly as a value.

defined sociologically in relation to global values.[160] As L. Dumont states, we are not dealing with one isolated feature, but with a configuration of features.[161] The emergence of individualism in the history of ideas has been discussed quite a lot, and is variously placed in Hellenistic times, in our Judaeo-Christian background; sometimes the origin of the concept 'individual' is connected with Classical Athens where men lived seeing themselves as individuals in their consistent discourses, or with Renaissance, or with the rise of the bourgeoisie[162].

Menander, a representative of new comedy, living in Athens at the end of the fourth century, wrote at the end of his play *Epitrepontes* (1085–1090): "The world contains about a thousand towns each one with thirty thousand residents. Can every single man of them be damned or guarded by the gods? Absurd – you'd make their lives a drudgery."[163] Could this suggest one manifestation of individualism that has been claimed to have arisen in Hellenistic times? If we were to apply our understanding of today's life and to regard the mood of this sentence as analogous to it, then perhaps so, but it might equally well have been a comic irony or scepticism by a playwright to wake up his audience, even though it has been common practice to speak of the Hellenistic period as an age of "the discovery of the individual" (S.C. Humphrey),[164] and to quote Menander. Third century Athens has been said to have gone through the second great crisis of Greek religion. (The first was caused by the activities of the Sophists in the fifth century.) It has been claimed that these crises produced Hellenistic religion largely as a result of the conflict between official civil religion and individual religion.[165] "L'élément principal consiste en la prédominance, de plus en plus assurée, de la religion individuelle" (A.-J. Festugière).[166] "It is doubtful whether it is legitimate to speak of the emergence of the individual before the development in the late fourth century of the conception of society as a set of ego-centred networks" (S.C. Humphrey).[167] Statements like this suggest that individualism has become a generalisation of Hellenistic religion. Still it is worth remembering that the gods of inner devotion were never objects of public worship in Greece; intellectual concepts of divinity,

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[160] This includes, for example, a nation being a set of people who think of themselves as individuals. We often tend to think that real existence is granted only to individuals and not to relations nor to elements nor to sets of elements. Dumont 1986, 10–11, calls this modern nominalism.

[161] Dumont 1986, 9.

[162] Dumont 1986, 24. He holds the view that something of modern individualism is present with the first Christians, but it is not, however, individualism exactly as we know it. J. Hicks 1989, 29–31 sees the emergence of individualism connected with personal openness in the matters of the divine sphere, which he calls transcendence, as the most important feature of the so-called 'axial period'.

[163] This was an answer given by Onesimos to a question by an old man, Smikrines: "Do you think the gods have time to dole out every day to every man his share of good and evil?" (translation F.G. Allison, The Loeb Classical Library 1921 (1951)).

[164] S.C. Humphrey 1978, 219, whose article deals with the role of intellectuals in Greek society. He criticizes Menander's statement by saying: "It might be more revealing to speak of the poet's discovery of the city and of her type."

[165] Nilsson 1940, 20–21; Dodds 1951, 242; Festugière 1972, 117; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 105, 117; Simon 1983, 105.

[166] Festugière 1972, 121; F. Dunand 1983, 98, too, states: "La religion personalisée, individualisée, tend de plus en plus à constituer un refuge dans l'imaginaire, dans la mesure surtout où le monde où l'on vit offre peu de satisfaction"; see also Préaux 1978 (1987), 640–641.

[167] Humphrey 1978, 204.

as well as those of the lay public in the sense of personal devotion, had always been personal in character.[168] Nymphs lived in every cave and fountain, Pan could be approached by devotion everywhere in the countryside, there were sacred stones and trees, houses had little shrines and enclosures, ancestors were worshipped in households. These kinds of religious practices were not the highest, but the most personal and probably the most persistent forms of the Hellenistic religion of unlettered peasants. This type of worship outlived the great gods and public religion as well as formal changes in religion.[169] Thus it seems to me a little exaggerated to regard individualism as a completely new characteristic of Greek religion. Yet it is true that there were changes in political and social life, and those were reflected in religious life and vice versa.

Many reasons for this are given. The official state religion had become less important as a giver of meanings and answers to people's religious needs even though its practices continued to be performed.[170] New institutions in religious life, such as the religious associations, fulfilled this function. In Athens the population had become more heterogeneous, the city still being one of the centres of Mediterranean trade and traffic. Borders were expanded, foreign religions came to Athenian soil, and travelling was widespread. Diffusion of foreign cults, especially those of Oriental and Egyptian origin and their identification with Greek ones, had an important role in the process of 'awakening an individual'.[171] There were continuous wars and political instability. The results of all this for the religious life is expressed in the research literature as following, for example: "Hellenistic existence had been propelled into an individualism without instruction, an aimlessness motivated by a profound sense of alienation"; in short, into "a crisis of freedom" (L.H. Martin).[172] There seems to prevail a tendency to regard Hellenistic 'alienation' and 'aimlessness' as an analogy with our own times when people tend to find answers to their existential problems in new religions.

Philosophical activity, the sustained exercise of rational inquiry, fostered individualism by stressing the capacities of a particular person who practices this individual thinking and which may take precedence, at least implicitly, over everything else. The Cynics especially expressed attitudes that favoured individualistic independence. The Cynic Teles wrote in the middle of the third century (De Ex. 64–65):

> "Whether you manage to do well among the masses of people (οἱ πολλοί) or the private person (εἷς), whether you serve in public or work at home, whether you are in a foreign land or remain in your own land, it is equally possible with the same good planning to gain advantage from the political office and from one's private life."[173]

In this connection L. Dumont's distinction between an inworldly individual and an outworldly individual is relevant. The 'inwordly individual' implies a man who lives in a

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[168] Festugière 1954, 5.

[169] Nilsson 1940, 18–21; Préaux 1978 (1987), 642–643.

[170] See e.g. Nilsson 1950, 20–21; Dodds 1951, 242; Festugière 1972, 36; Bregman 1982, 58; Simon 1983, 105.

[171] Baslez 1977, 310 calls this "l'avènement de l'individu".

[172] Martin 1987, 24. See also Dodds 1951, 242–244.

[173] Translation from Betz & O'Neil 1977 (24 H). Teles was a native of Megara.

society and is defined by its presuppositions; he is social in fact. The latter is one who has left the society proper; he is independent and autonomous, as, for example, an Indian renunciant. Outworldly individualism encompasses recognition of and obedience to the powers of this world. In a way these represent two concentric circles, the larger one representing individualism in relation to god and the smaller one standing for acceptance of worldly necessities, duties and thus is accommodating to a society.[174] Individualism in antiquity may be interpreted as having been of the inworldly sort: Plato and Aristotle regarded self-sufficiency as an attribute of the *polis*, and analogically it becomes an attribute of the individual. The Stoics and the Epicureans had already turned towards the individual in their ethical principles by stressing the social spheres of pious life less than had been done by Plato and Aristotle. Stoicism was cosmopolitan in stating that an individual can be ethically good everywhere, and Epicureanism sought to reason the nature of a good individual in terms of his personal happiness.[175] On the contrary, the first Christians were merely representatives of outworldly individualism in rejecting the surrounding society.[176] Thus, it seems that the Hellenistic times offered changes in the contents and nature of individualism, so that Christianity, growing in the milieu of Hellenism, would not have been able to succeed in the long run without a new type of individualism. This was mainly imbedded also in the religious thinking and in the religious life of the common people.

We must look at individualism in religious life more closely and try to rid ourselves of the over-generalisations which are to a large extent based on the parallelism seen between Hellenistic times and our own. The reason for this may be our own emotional goallessness and anxiety in today's world, which produces a feeling of sympathy for the people of Hellenistic age.

A. Individualism as the Possibility of Choice

There were several possible social frames of reference for an individual in early Hellenistic times. The meaning of citizenship changed. The concept and context of interaction as a basic unit of social structure was undergoing a transformation; namely, the Classical kinship groupings *phyle*, *phratria*, *demos* (the official subdivisions of the state), *genos* (the aristocratic colonial clan) and *oikos* (the household) were no longer the only reference groups for an individual.[177] These had had their own rules, structure and patterns of behaviour, because there was in each a central cluster of coherent structural principles defined and upheld by law, or strong religious or moral beliefs. A common cult functioned as a shared symbolic structure which defined group identity and formulated it to conform

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[174] Dumont 1986, 27–31; 280–281.

[175] Nilsson 1946 (1984), 102–103; Korhonen, unpublished manuscript.

[176] Cf. Dunand 1986, 27, 32.

[177] Membership of the tribe and phratry was always a prerequisite for citizenship and thus only through that could a person be a political person. *Genos* organization was predominantly confined to the nobility. The criteria for its membership were strictly defined, and when they possessed rights to hereditary religious offices, as they did in Athens, the definition of membership also depended on descent. See e.g. Humphrey 1978, 194–197.

to the outside world. Religious associations were open to all in the context of new social interaction which could offer a new kind of group identity, and *oikoi* maintained or even strengthened its value structure. The relation between religious groups and the *oikos* deserves mention, because the role of *oikos* as an arbiter of values seems to have been important even in Hellenistic times.[178] But it seems likely that the changes occurred less in the structure of *oikos* and its relations to a wider kin group, and more in the changing significance of the household itself as a formulator of social roles.[179]

It has often been said that the importance of individual religiosity increased at the expense of public religion in Hellenistic times.[180] There arose the opportunity to choose one's own religion; namely, the religious associations, in which a man could become a member by performing the required duties, opened the possibility of choice outside the boundaries of citizenship or kinship. A man could experience his individuality by uniting himself with others who had chosen similarly. This is sociologically determined individualism which Dumont calls inworldly individualism. Religious associations preserved their social character to quite a considerable degree. All this may have increased the motivation and intensity of the religious activities at the beginning of the Hellenistic era, when the cult associations generally increased in number in Athens. This produced the misleading but still prevalent illusion that people suddenly became much more 'religious' than they had been before.[181] Only the contexts of religious activities and practices received new forms, and the intentions of religious life acquired new contents by being bound into social structures in a different way than before.

At the beginning the religious associations were religious in character, like the *orgeones*, and the individual's interest in membership was centred around cultic and burial practices. Thus in the first associations the religious interest prevailed as it had had a role in religious institutions based on kinship, like *phratriai*. But in the course of time, from the beginning of the third century onwards, *thiasoi* and *eranoi* of foreign gods had many activities in social life in addition to their primarily religious functions. They were more developed in this sense than *orgeones* and *thiasoi* inside the *phratriai*; sometimes they tended to underline the ethnic roots of the adherents by forming 'national religious clubs' whose members were compatriots in a foreign land united primarily by worship of their national divinities. At the beginning of the second century BC, the resources of the associations grew, organizations developed, and the social as well as the economic basis

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[178] E. Salmenkivi has studied the meaning and role of the *oikos* in the comedies of Menander and draws an important picture of the Athenian *oikos* as a social and political unit in which even emotional relations played an important role. Salmenkivi, unpublished manuscript. I am thankful to E. Salmenkivi for many fruitful discussions.

[179] Humphrey 1978, 200–201.

[180] See e.g. Festugière 1972, 36; Avi-Yonah 1978, 32; Hicks 1989, 30.

[181] Often this new kind of 'religiosity' is seen as a hopeless sense of dependence on some irrational ruling power, and thus people turned to Tyche, practised magic and astral cults. E.R. Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951) is a good example; Dodds' chapter dealing with the Hellenistic times characteristically speaks about "turning back to the irrational" and about "the intellectual period slowly vanished away", pp. 244–255. See also Grant 1953, xxii. Contrary to this M.P. Nilsson 1946 (1984), 106 already stated that the level of religious piety had never been so low as at the beginning of the Hellenistic times.

increasingly displaced some spheres of the religious ones. Characteristic of this stage are the societies of *eranistai* and *koinoi*. They still bore the names of the gods in their titles and performed some cultic acts. Could religion legitimate the social and economic functions of *eranoi* and other *koinoi* by naming an association after a god? Finally the clubs called *synodoi* were secular.[182] Thus we see that by choosing to become a member of a religious association an individual could find a new sphere of social life, too. His religion was not strictly individualistic, because it continued to be bound to group-institutions. The reason for its more individualistic character than the one of religion of the city-state was the opportunity and freedom of an individual person to choose outside the predetermined kinship and ethnic restrictions. This might be called 'personal religion',[183] as distinct from 'official religion', depending on private decision and preference. In this sense there is a remarkable similarity between the associations and the function of the mysteries of Hellenistic times. W. Burkert distinguishes three major organizational forms of ancient mysteries, and as the last one he lists the association of worshippers in a form of a club, *thiasos*. In *thiasoi* the individuals remained independent, especially on the economic level and were still integrated into the structures of the *polis* and *oikos*, but they chose to contribute their time and part of their private property to the common cult which was of personal interest to them.[184]

B. Individualism as a Personal Faith

Conscious choice of this kind might also be, on the side of the social aspects and reasons, regarded as a personal religious trust, *pistis*, which is an essential element of religious individualism. The substantive σέβας[185] means honour, respect, reverential awe (in front of divine majesty) which prevents someone from doing something disgraceful, and generally worship, honour and reverence, while the verb σέβομαι (σεβάζομαι) in Greek language meant at first to be reverenced and respect. Εὐσεβέω is to live or behave reverently, piously, and εὐσεβής designates a quality of one who is thus disposed, that is to say a person respecting a deity. Εὐσέβεια as a way of behaviour is connected to the feeling, σέβας, which means firstly reverence towards gods or parents, filial respect, or more generally piety.[186] Thus *pistis* meant for an individual trust in persons, institutions, but also in gods. Later, in Christian times, this concept became to denote more clearly only religious experiences or feelings towards a deity and an act of faith. But already in Hellenistic times a new kind of a view of the goal of religious practices emerged; for example, soteriologically orientated goals of salvation as a final stage.[187] Seeking liberation from daily troubles, among which, for example, a serious illness may be one of the

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[182] Tod 1932, 74–75; see p. 47.

[183] The term was first postulated by A.-J. Festugière in 1954. W Burkert 1987, 12 observes that this has often prompted scholars to look for a deeper, 'truly religious', spiritual dimension in religion. He comments that "they cannot be said to be totally mistaken."

[184] Burkert 1987, 31–32.

[185] *Sebas* could also be an object of reverential awe; LSJ, s.v. σέβας.

[186] LSJ, s.v. εὐσέβεια; See also Motte 1986, 156–157 and 159–160.

[187] Hicks 1989, 32–33 points out this soteriological aspect strongly.

most important, introduces a modest kind of soteriological desire. People needed to submit their worries to the gods whom they trusted thus expressing personal *pistis*.[188] This concept, as denoting trust in a deity, is frequently attested in connection with Isis,[189] and more precisely when personal healing and salvation was needed. Isis was a healer and salvatrix,[190] as was Demeter[191]. Thus giving votive offerings, i.e. the practice of making vows, as a form of religion which is personal and individual in character, is an important indicator when studying individualism in religion. The practice of making vows is closely connected with sacrifice and prayer: a vow may be regarded as a personal sacrifice to a

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[188] In this connection the term ἱκετεία (= ἱκεσία), supplication (to the gods) is worth noticing. An ἱκέτης is a person who approaches (a deity) as a suppliant, mostly in prayers. F.T. van Straten suggests that this phenomenon, already known in the Homeric texts, was reserved for prayers and addressed to deities that were close to the common people and could be trusted to hear their invocations as helpers where aid was needed. In Isidorus' hymn to Isis (SEG VIII 548–551) the writer states how he supplicates himself to Hermouthis: Σῶν δώρων κάμοὶ μεταδός 'Ερμοῦθι ἄνασσα, σῶι ἱκέτηι (II. ll. 29–30). Van Straten 1974, 183–184; Motte 1986, 125.

[189] See Malaise 1980, 95, 100–109; Dunand 1975, 161–163; Grandjean 1975, 105. POxy XI 1380 (Pack^2 2477; Totti 1985, no. 20), l. 152: (ὁρῶσι σὲ κατὰ τὸ πιστὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι, thou art seen by those who invoke thee faithfully). In Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* this is a clearly expressed, see 275.12–13.

[190] Isis was called *iatreia* on Delos, see inscriptions ID 2116; 2117 (slightly after166 BC, dedication by a man and a woman, and in the last one by the same woman); 2120 (129/8 BC) and *Hygieia* in 2060 (112/1 BC, dedication to Isis *Hygieia* by a *zakoros*). In POxy XI 1380 (Pack^{2}2477; Totti 1985, no. 20), l. 76 she is called σώζουσα, protector. A demotic hymn (reverse of the Papyrus Heidelberg 736), a kind of prayer to Isis from the 2nd cent. BC repeats seven times the sentence "Come to me Isis, to protect me" (from Spiegelberg's German translation) and calls upon benevolent and powerful Isis; see Spiegelberg 1917, 33–34 and Malaise 1980, 100; see also Leclant 1986, 348, Le Corsu 1977, 52–53 and Merkelbach 1995, 173–174. In Athens she was connected, along with Sarapis, to Asclepius; votives are given to her in the Asclepieion of Athens; see e.g. Dunand 1973, 63, 170. Talking about gods living in the underworld or being in contact with it – Sarapis, Isis, Anubis and Harpocrates – Artemidorus, Onirocr. 2.39.8–15 (2nd cent. AD) states that these gods have always been regarded as salvators (σωτῆρες) to those who are in extreme trouble, danger or in a painful situation, and they protect those in these situations. Diodorus Siculus, 1.25.2 explains: "For Isis the Egyptians say that she was the discoverer of many health-giving drugs and was greatly versed in the science of healing (ἰατρικὴ ἐπιστήμη); consequently, now that she has attained immortality, she finds her greatest delight in the healing of mankind." (Translation C.H. Oldfather, The Loeb Classical Library 1933 (1946)). Diogenes Laertius, Dem. Phal. 5.76 refers also to the healing qualities of the Egyptian gods.

[191] Giving people salvation which has power over life and death was a very important aspect of Demeter as the giver of life, Hymn Hom. Dem., 480–483: ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων ὃς δ' ἀτελὴς ἱερῶν, ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίων αἶσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι. (Blessed of the earth-bound man is he who has seen these things, but he who dies without fulfilling the holy things, and he who is without a share of them, has no claim ever on such blessings, even when departed down to the gloomy darkness. Translation N.J. Richardson 1974.) Cicero also speaks about salvation in connection of the Eleusinian Mysteries in Leg. 2.14.36: *Nam mihi cum multa eximia divinaque videntur Athenae tuae perisse atque in vitam hominum attulisse, tum nihil melius illis mysteriis, quibus ex agresti immanique vita exculti ad humanitatem et mitigati sumus, initiaque ut appellantur, ita re vera principia vitae cognovimus; neque solum cum laetitia vivendi rationem accepimus, sed etiam cum spe meliore morendi.* Artemidorus, Onirocr. 2.39.25–30, describes the qualities of Demeter and Kore: τοὺς νοσοῦντας ἀνιστᾶσι καρπῶν γάρ εἰσιν ἀνθρώποις χρησίμων αἴτιαι (Demeter and Kore ... relief from illnesses and put a sick back to an healthy state, because these goddesses gave humans useful fruits).

god and/or a prayer dedicated to him. We see that votive offerings, just like sacrifices, were often presented to redeem a vow previously made in a prayer.[192] A votive could serve as thanksgiving (for curing an illness, for example), a memento, a request for taking care or curing and so on. It is in large measure a down-to-earth form of worship within the ancient religions and represents a humble aspect of them. For W. Burkert it formed the background for the practice of the mysteries.[193] The main point is that salvation, even though not in the Christian sense, was understood to be addressed to the individual person. The quantity of votives must have been vast in the temples, especially in those of the healer-gods, such as Asclepius, Hygieia, Artemis (Brauronia), Apollo and in Hellenistic-Roman times Sarapis who had at that time risen to the status of a healer-god equal to Asclepius.[194] Gods who in the Hellenistic period gained the status of 'healer gods' were usually of Egyptian, Oriental or Carthaginian origin; and Asclepius had this role among the Greek gods. The healing capacity of Isis and Sarapis were part of the identity of these gods.[195] For example, Pausanias mentions in his description of Corinth, that in the temple of Asclepius at Titane the images of the gods (Asclepius and Hygieia) could hardly be seen because they were so surrounded with gifts given as votives.[196]

Situations which concerned the ultimate questions, and were of deep importance to humans, could be treated as those which have a 'religious' character.[197] In paying attention to individual religiosity, religious expressions in the case of serious illness may well be handled on such occasions as ultimate questions. Need teaches people to pray or induces them to give votive offerings personally to those gods who are of importance to them. When a man is ill he acquires a special awareness of mortality, which is why those gods whose roles touched upon the questions of life and death attracted a lot of votives of this sort. The sick sought cures foremost in the sanctuaries of Asclepius and of the gods venerated there, for example, in Epidaurus, the central cult place of Asclepius' cult.[198] The votives given to the gods are often models of the parts of the human body which had been

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[192] See Plato, Leg. 909e–910a–d; Theophrastus, Peri Euseb., frg. 12 (H. Pötscher 1964, about sacrifices); Juvenal, Sat. 12.28: *antiquitus enim solebant qui naufragio liberati essent pro voto pingere tabellas et in templo Isidis ponere*. See also van Straten 1981, 67–71.

[193] Burkert 1987, 12–16.

[194] Van Straten 1981, 98; see also Préaux 1978 (1987), 652.

[195] Vanderlip 1972, 92; Préaux 1978 (1987), 652; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 108, 111. E.g. in the aretalogy of Maronea (SEG XXVI 821) the healing capacity of Isis is referred to (ll. 6–11): "You came when I invoked you for my health" (English translation in Grandjean 1975, 25); see also Forsén, unpublished manuscript. B. Forsén kindly let me read the manuscript of his forthcoming dissertation on anatomic votives which will finally satisfy the need for a study on this important topic, and for which I am very grateful.

[196] Pausanias 2.11.6. See the same theme also in Diodorus Siculus, 5.63. In the *Asclepieion* of Rhodes in the 3rd cent. BC was an inscription, SEG XVI 456 (especially ll. 5–9), giving rules concerning votives: "No one is permitted to request that an image be raised or some other votive offering set up in the lower part of the sanctuary ... or in any other spot where votive offerings prevent people walking past." (translation in van Straten 1981, 78); the text states that ex-votos have to be placed in a certain corner of the sanctuary (ll. 12–13) and that if someone behaves against these rules he will be expelled and his ex-votos will be transported (ll. 18–22).

[197] See Chapter II.1.

[198] F.T. van Straten 1981, 98 states that Epidaurus has its richest collection of votives from the 4th cent. BC.

cured and which were presented in gratitude to the deity, or as a prayer for a cure of this particular organ. It should be noted that votives of this sort have long been regarded in archaeological excavations as finds of minor importance and despite their number are not usually listed or studied properly. In Athens anatomical votives dedicated to gods are found from the fourth century BC onwards. The datable fourth and third century BC votives come from the *Asclepieion*[199], the sanctuary of Amynus[200], the sanctuary of Heros Iatros[201] and from the sanctuary of Artemis Kalliste.[202] Those dedicated to Aphrodite are often female organs, such as vulvas or breasts.[203] From Delos we have a list of anatomical votives dedicated to the Egyptian gods which mention 3 human faces, 20 eyes, 3 ears, 1 male genital, 2 wombs and 1 arm.[204] There are a number of votive dedications of human ears to Isis.[205] The problem is whether their function was to commemorate the listening character of the goddess or to function as votives representing gratitude or prayer.[206] One of these anatomical votives in the form of a human ear is a relief from the second century BC Delos[207] depicting two bronze ears dedicated to the goddess Isis with an inscription stating: "Diogenes, son of Diogenes from Antioch to Isis the listening one as a vow". The

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[199] IG II/III² 4372 = van Straten 1981, no. 1.4 = Forsén 1995, no. 1.1.: eyes and a part of a nose to Asclepius; IG II/III² 4407 = van Straten 1981, no. 1.8 = Forsén 1995, no. 1.5: female breast to Asclepius; IG II/III² 4429 = van Straten 1981, no. 1.22 = Forsén 1995, no. 1.47. B. Forsén 1995 lists 49 anatomical votive offerings from the Athenian *Asclepieion* of which the above mentioned are datable to the 4th cent. BC.

[200] IG II/III² 4422 = van Straten 1981, no. 2.3 = Forsén 1995, no. 2.2.: female breast dedicated to Asclepius (4th cent. BC); IG II/III² 4435 = van Straten 1981, no. 2.4 = Forsén 1995, no. 2.4.: female leg (4th or 3rd cent. BC).

[201] Van Straten 1981, no. 3.1 = Forsén 1995, no. 3.1.: eye(s) to Heros Iatros (3rd or 2nd cent. BC)

[202] IG II/III² 4667 = van Straten 1981, no. 5.1 = Forsén 1995, no. 5.1: female breasts to Artemis Kalliste (3rd cent. BC).

[203] For example F.T. van Straten 1981 lists 8 ex-votos (nos. 11.1–11.8) and B. Forsén 1995 lists 9 ex-votos (nos. 11.1–11.9: no. 11.1 = IG II/III² 4576, no. 11.2 = 4575, no. 11.4 = 4635) from the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Daphni depicting female vulvae; four of which are dated to the 4th cent. BC, others are of uncertain date. Van Straten also lists one ex voto depicting a female vulva, two male genitals, one female breasts from the sanctuary of Eros and Aphrodite on the north slope of Acropolis in Athens (nos. 4.2–4.5). According to Forsén 1995, no. 1.6 van Straten's no. 4.5 (=IG II/III² 4729 from the 1st cent. AD), the ex-voto depicting female breasts does, however, probably originate from the *Asklepieion* on the south slope of the Acropolis.

[204] Bruneau 1970, 463–464; van Straten 1981, 128, no. 25; Forsén, unpublished manuscript.

[205] SIRIS 28 (Athens); ID 2173 (Delos) dedication to Isis *epekoos*; SEG XVI 732 (Lydia); Thessalonican inscriptions: IG X2 98 (Ἴσιδι ἐπήκοος); 59 and 100 (Ἴσιδι ἀκοήν); 101 (Ἴσιδι ἐπήκοος); 119 (to Isis). B. Forsén, unpublished manuscript states that of these anatomical offerings the ears and eyes obviously were to symbolize the (all-)seeing and listening character of the Egyptian gods; see also Bruneau 1970, 283–284.

[206] B. Forsén suggests that votives of human ears with the epithet ἐπήκοος dedicated to the Egyptian and Oriental gods function as symbols for the listening role of the deity, while ears dedicated to Asclepius usually function as thanksgiving or prayer votives to the healer god; Forsén, unpublished manuscript; see also M.F. Baslez 1977, 294–295 who regards the votive of ears given to Isis in order to command the god's attention to hear the prayers.

[207] ID 2173 (the 1st cent. BC); Museum of Delos, inv. no. A 1858; van Straten 1981, 83, fig. 11.

ears of the goddess emphasize here that she is listening to the prayers.[208] Thus Isis was clearly the goddess to whom prayers (εὐχαί) were addressed.[209] A very telling marble plaque comes from Eleusis (van Straten 1981, no. 13), the only anatomical votive found on this site, which is decorated in relief and painting and is from the fourth century BC. Eyes and a nose are described on it, and underneath there is an inscription Δήμητρι Εὐκράτης. This may have been in order to commemorate Eucrates' attainment of the final grade of initiation, *epopteia*, which indicates primarily a visual experience.[210] The personal and individual experience of initiation, which required healthy eyes, justified giving a votive offering to the goddess as a mark of gratitude.

In Hellenistic Athens, Demeter could heal men on either side of the boundary of life and death; and Isis had ruling power over human life in this (social and personal) cosmos as the protector who could affect even Fate.[211] This was one important factor in the process of the goddesses becoming identified with each other. They both had power (*dynamis*) in being Demeter/Isis βασίλισσα, ἄνασσα, δέσποινα or σώτειρα in front of whom humans could express their personal faith (*pistis*). Individual element in religion and a person's self-identity inherent in it is concerned with the way in which a person assigns himself in relation to the gods he worships.[212] Those people were servants (θεραπευτής) or slaves of the goddesses (δοῦλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ).[213] A submissive, individual, attitude towards a deity who is approached as an omnipotent one becomes linked with the monotheistic trend dealt with in the chapter above. This power-concept was disseminated through the cultic reality of Greek religiosity in the Hellenistic-Roman periods.[214] Gods even became manifestations of power. The worshippers often presented their gods as powerful absolute rulers who gave explicit commands (ἐπιταγή, πρόσταγμα, for example).[215] In the aretalogies of Isis the *dynamis* of the goddess is expressed in honouring her *arete*, 'miraculous power' which is a post-Classical way of glorifying the divine

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[208] Isis' epithet ἐπήκοος emphazise this role; see inscriptions presenting Isis in this role: SIRIS 47 (Peloponnesus, 3rd cent. BC); 88, l.1 (Euboea, Roman era); ID 2149 (Ἴσιδι χρηστῆι ἐπηκόωι, Delos, *Sarapieion* C, 122/1 BC); ID 2130 (dedicatory inscription for Sarapis, Isis and Anubis as *theoi epekooi*, Delos 166–140 BC); ID 2116 and 2117 are dedicated to θεοὶ ἐπηκόοι in *Sarapieion* A by a man and a woman (2116) and by a woman alone (2117); the last mentioned specifies Isis also as ἰατρεία (l. 7), both from slightly after 166 BC.

[209] Malaise 1980, 83–116 shows this in his article concerning personal piety, especially prayers, in the cult of Isis. In the hymns to Isis the practice of praying is met frequently; see e.g. Isidorus' hymn to Isis SEG VIII 548–551, ll. I, 35–36; II, 34–35 and III, 34 expressing the words of dedicating the prayer to Isis.

[210] Van Straten 1981, 120–121.

[211] See the aretalogy of Cyme IG XII Suppl. pp. 98–99, ll. 55–56 and Apuleius, Met.11.15.20: *"absolutus Isidis magnae providentia gaudens Lucius de sua Fortuna triumphat"*. See Burkert 1987, 27.

[212] Van Straten 1993, 248.

[213] See Pleket 1981, 152–153.

[214] Pleket 1981, 172.

[215] Van Straten 1993, 259; van Straten deals primarily with the inscriptions connected with votive reliefs. The term ἐπιταγή is often used of oracles and more generally of divine commands and force; πρόσταγμα denotes generally ordinance and command, see LSJ, s.v. ἐπιταγή and πρόσταγμα.

omnipotence in general.[216] An alteration in society's organizations and social conditions (the rise of autocrats and a more heterogeneous population) is reflected in an autocratic image of the god coupled with submissive behaviour towards the deity.[217] This submission could be expressed by an individual by kneeling before the god from whom he expected help. Even in his *Deisidaimonia* Theophrastus describes his caricature, the superstitious man in third century Athens, as the one who (Char.16.5) "when passes one of the smooth stones set up at crossroads he anoints it with oil from his flask, and will not go his ways till he have knelt down and worshipped it".[218] Kneeling down (προσκύνησις[219]) has been a constant feature over the centuries, but most of the evidence comes from the fourth century BC to the second AD. Both the Eleusinian gods and the Egyptian gods were knelt before.[220] Often a deity to whom a person expressed this kind of supplication had at least some healing powers. Strikingly often the kneeling worshippers in the reliefs seem to be female.[221] For example, three reliefs from the Athenian Agora (fourth century BC) show us human figures kneeling in front of Demeter and Kore accompanied by Iacchus and Plutos.[222]

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[216] Nock 1925, 85–86, 94; Grandjean 1975, 6–7 (see note 21); Préaux 1978 (1987), 655, 658 Pleket 1981, 157. Nock thinks that the concept of divine power itself was more important than divine personalities. On *arete* as a post-Classical phenomenon see van Straten 1974, 16 (see notes 226–228).

[217] Pleket 1981, 154–155.

[218] Translation by R.G. Bury, the Loeb Classical Library 1961; see also Plato, Leg. 10.887e where he describes the habit of kneeling down before the gods as an expression of supplication.

[219] In wider sense than προσκύνησις (adoration) προσκύνημα means an act of worship. The first may refer to adoration and obeisance without kneeling down as well; in the Greek Lexicon of Roman and Byzantine Periods, E.A. Sophocles gives to προσκύνημα and προσκύνησις the meanings 'to bow' and 'a pilgrimage to a holy place'; see also Lampe Patr. Gr. Lex., s.v. προσκύνημα and προσκύνησις. Thus there were differences in the content of the word at least between ancient and Christian times. See Geraci 1971, 14–17.

[220] In connection with the Egyptian gods προσκύνημα appears most often in the case of Sarapis. Of the evidence containing 67 mentions of *proskynema* and listed by G. Geraci 1971, 57 belong to Sarapis, 10 to Sarapis and σύνναοι θεοί and only one to Isis alone, p. 183, Geraci 1971, 173–183 and list 203–205; see also SIRIS 364 from the Roman period: Ἴχνος ἔχων, πόδ' ἀν' ἴχνος ἔχων, ἀνέθηκα Σεράπει and Malaise 1980, 99. Van Straten 1974, 159–189 (sections 6 and 7 in his article list the Athenian sculpture concerning the Eleusinian deities); *idem.* 1981, 83 and *idem.* 1993, 252–253. He has collected sculptural evidence from the 4th cent. BC; Pleket 1981, 156–157.

[221] In F.T. van Straten's corpus (1974) there are only two exceptions, the kneeling male figures, nos. 12 and 13; see pp. 175–176. There must have been a discrepancy between the religious observances of men and women which is expressed, for example, in the contents of the comedies of Aristophanes and in Plato, Leg. 10. 909e–910a: "all women, especially the sick, and those in danger or in trouble, and also those who have on the contrary become across the luck, tend to sacrifice to gods, daemons and brother gods everything that happens to be at hand, to promise offerings and the construction of a sanctuary." (translation P. Shorey, The Loeb Classical Library 1935 (1963)). See also Nilsson 1950, 783.

[222] Van Straten 1974, 166–167, figs. 14 and 15 = Athens Agora Museum S 1646, S 1251 and Athens Acropolis Museum 2661. As a comparison it is worth noticing sculptural evidence of the practice of kneeling in three reliefs from Piraeus which show human figures standing or kneeling in front of the representations of the god Zeus Meilichius (two in a theomorphic form and one in a form of a huge snake, thus associated with *Agathos Daimon*) to whom a prayer was directed. Humans have their right hands raised in supplication. Van Straten 1974, 164, 180 and *idem* 1981, 82, 83, figs. 8, 9, 10 =

In the material collected by P. Roussel and M. Baslez from Delos in connection with the Egyptian gods of Hellenistic times we meet the terms θεραπευτής (one who serves the gods) and λάτρις (actually a one who works for a wage = δοῦλος ἐπὶ μισθῷ) characterizing the devotees.[223] According to H.W. Pleket the term *therapeutes* becomes a structural one in Hellenistic times to denote an attitude of subservience in the cults of Sarapis, Isis, the Syrian goddesses and the Mother of the Gods.[224] The individual's role as *latris* or *therapeutes* of the god connotates complete devotion to the deity. It seems to me that the religiosity of this type was a phenomenon of later times, springing up during the Roman period and was typical of Christian piety.[225] In Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (Met. 277.21–278.2), the suggestion addressed to Lucius requires:

> *Quo tamen tutior sis atque munitior, da nomen sanctae huic militia, cuius non olim sacramento etiam rogabaris, teque iam nunc obsequio religionis nostrae dedica et ministerii iugum subi voluntarium. nam cum coeperis deae servire, tunc magis senties fructum tuae libertatis.*
> "Enroll your name into this holy military service whose solemn oath you were asked to take not long ago, and vow yourself from this moment to the ministry of our religion. Accept of your own free will the yoke of service. For when you have begun to serve the goddess, then you will better realize the result of your freedom."[226]

The requirement of a life-long devotion to the cults of Demeter and Isis is not met in Athens in the third and second centuries BC. It arose in the cult of Isis together with the development of its proper 'mystery nature' and belongs to the Roman era.[227] In the Mysteries of Demeter it was sufficient to devote oneself to the goddess only during the

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Athens, National Museum nos. 1431, 1408. The text in the first mentioned (Ἀριστάρχη Διὶ Μειλιχίωι) has also been edited in IG II/III^2 4618.

223 Baslez 1977, 304–305, 192–197 (on humility in personal devotion on Delos) with material references in the notes. In *Sarapieion* A the IG XI4 1299 the "Chronicle" uses the word θέραπες (favouring gods) in l. 43; IG XI4 1215 from *Sarapieion* C (end of the 3rd cent. BC) is a dedication to Sarapis and Isis in the name of king and queen (Ὑπὲρ βασιλέως καὶ βασιλίσσης) and Demetrius (ll. 1–3) by *therapeutai* (l. 4). The first alpha and nu of the king's name is preserved; on this ground P. Roussel suggests that this king was Antigonus Gonatas (died 240/239 BC). IG XI4 1216–1222 are inscriptions of the religious association the members of which called themselves οἱ θεραπεύοντες ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι τούτωι (end of the 3rd or beginning of the 2nd cent. BC); IG XI4 1226 is an inscription of the κοινὸν τῶν θεραπευτῶν (*Sarapieion* A, 196 BC); IG XI4 1290 and ID 2077–2080 are inscriptions of the θεραπευταί (*Sarapieion* A, end of the 3rd or the beginning of 2nd cent. BC, 2080 from 105/4 BC). These Delian associations used the term *therapeutai* in their name as the equivalent of the devotees. For λάτρις as meaning 'servant of god' (Isis), see IG V2 472 (l. 3) (2nd or 3rd cent. BC).

224 Pleket 1981, 160. He thinks that the Nymphs and Asclepius were venerated by practices of this kind of personal religiosity in pre-Hellenistic times, and personal religiosity of this sort rose to a higher stage in the Hellenistic era under Oriental influence.

225 Cf. e.g. Nock 1925, 96. Concerning the Egyptian gods see e.g. Roman inscriptions SIRIS 375 (Regio VI, 3rd cent.) which is dedicated by *hierodulos* (ἱερόδουλος) T. Abidius Trophimianus to Sarapis and Zeus Helios: πάσης ἱεροδουλίας εὐξάμενος ἀνέθηκα (ll. 3–4), and SIRIS 556 (Ostia, 222–226) which is dedicated by four men to Zeus Helios, Sarapis and *synnaoi theoi* at the port: ἱεροδουλείᾳ ἀνέθηκεν ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ (ll. 22–23).

226 Translation by J.G. Griffiths (1975).

227 See Chapter IV.4.

rituals; there was not even a need to return to the sanctuary. But if an individual was in personal need of healing and salvation, he expressed feelings which revealed his personal religion. This is seen in the inscription from the island of Amorgos the dating of which is uncertain; suggestions range from the second century BC to the second AD.[228] The text tells how its dedicator wishes Demeter to punish a certain Epaphroditus who caused him misery. He uses words which are revealing: "Mistress (κυρία) Demeter, queen (βασίλισσα), I, your suppliant, your slave (δοῦλός σου) fall down before you (προσπίπτω) ... Demeter, I ... seek refuge in you, to participate in your mercy ... mistress Demeter, I beg you, hear me."[229]

4. Cosmopolitanism

As a concept cosmopolitanism is linked to the three other concepts studied above. Syncretism favoured and was a prerequisite of the monotheistic trend which was favourable to individual religion because it included the idea of a higher power before whom an individual could express his personal faith. Cosmopolitanism was a phenomenon implicit in all of these.

Cosmopolitanism was a prerequisite for this sort of thinking. There was a movement towards the internationalization of values and conceptualization of structures larger than the *polis* that continued from the fourth century into Hellenistic times.[230] Late fourth and early third century Athens prospered culturally and economically especially during the reign of Demetrius of Phalerum. The next flourishing period was not until the middle of the first century BC.[231] This caused an increase in migration, travelling, mixed marriages and economic, intellectual and religious relations between Athens and the other parts of Greece. Another reason for the population transfer was that it was the means by which the Hellenistic rulers maintained control and internal security over the conquered areas, and this may well be called colonization. Alexander himself had established colonies as part of his program mainly to the Eastern reaches of his empire. His successors the Ptolemies as well as Seleucids followed this policy of founding settlements, using soldiers to populate the colonies and recruiting mercenaries to them.[232]

In Hellenistic times Athens had famous philosophical schools which attracted intellectuals from abroad to move into the city. On the other hand, Athenian intellectuals searched for new opportunities; for example, Alexandria was popular among them.[233] As a city Athens was relatively independent and could attract foreigners. This increased the status and prestige of the city. On the other hand, there was a pronounced nationalism in Athens

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[228] The text is given in Bömer 1990, 207; Zingerle 1926: 67–72. M. Gronewald and D. Hagedorn 1981, 290–291 mention the text as a parallel to the oracular text from the Ptolemaic age.

[229] See comments of Pleket 1981, 189–191.

[230] Humphrey 1978, 238.

[231] Ferguson 1910, 3–4; Rostovtseff 1941 (1972), 626–632; Day 1942, 3. See e.g. the late 4th cent. traveller's description of Athens which belongs to the writings of Heracleides Criticus, written between 275–200 BC (Pfister 1951, 45).

[232] See, e.g. Cohen 1983, 69, 74.

[233] Nilsson 1946 (1984), 109; Parsons 1993, 159.

in the middle of the fourth century (Isocrates).[234] The 'cosmopolitan attitude' of the intellectuals especially considered the surrounding world as a borderless universe which was principally the same everywhere; this is expressed, for example, by the Cynic philosopher Teles who wrote in the middle of the third century BC (De ex. 81–85):

> "Having considered that my homeland is insufficient for me, I move to another place and live abroad, and as far as I can. And just if changing from one ship to another I can have the same navigation, so I may pass from a city to another and be similarly happy."[235]

Migration was not due to an improvement in the status of foreigners, even though, the distinction between citizens and metics prevailed, but the opportunities available to them were more numerous from the late fourth century onwards.[236] In the third century admission to citizenship both to individuals and to whole communities, increased.[237] This might have been done as a diplomatic act; after all the Athenians wanted to show favour in front of their foreign protectors and thus gain a more powerful army as an awareness of the political situation and an opportunity to defend her interests against adversaries.[238] Royal visits to the city, especially during great festivals such as *Panathenaia* or the Great Mysteries, should not be forgotten. Movement within the military service became more common during the Hellenistic era,[239] though it had not been uncommon in Classical times. Guilds travelled as well, for example Dionysiac artists passed from one city to another spreading Athenian ideas and promoting uniformity of culture.[240] All in all, Athens and the other important cities of the third and second centuries BC, Delos included,[241] were centres of immigration, and demographic movements were a common phenomenon of the time. This trait of cosmopolitanism promoted fusion of peoples and cultures and favoured the amalgamation of religions.

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[234] Baslez 1984, 213–216.

[235] Teles, De Ex. 81–85 (25H in the edition of Betz & O'Neil 1977, whose translation is cited). The same kind of attitude is expressed by Meleager in the epigram Anth. Gr. 417.5–6: "I am a Syrian, so what. The whole world is my fatherland", translation H. Beckby 1957).

[236] See e.g. Baslez 1984, 210.

[237] See, e.g. Giovannini 1993, 277–278 and Hakkarainen, unpublished manuscript (about the formulas in the inscriptions granting to foreigners the Athenian citizenship in the 4th and 3rd centuries).

[238] Bazles 1984, 227–228.

[239] *Eadem*, 235–236: "L'essaimage massif des soldats est relativement une nouveauté"; Festugière 1972, 125.

[240] Baslez 1984, 236; Ferguson 1911, 296.

[241] Delos has been handled as an example *par excellence* of the melting-pots of foreigners and foreign religious ideas. One example is the attitude towards the Egyptian gods and the increased number of the temples of the gods of foreign origin on the island especially in the 2nd cent. BC. Delos' role as a centre of the Aegean trade (wheat, slaves, oriental products) and as a colony of Athens which wanted to support and strengthen those foreign contacts useful to economic and military support favoured this cosmopolitan development. See Préaux 1958, 176–184.

A. Cosmopolitanism as openness

As with the concepts studied above, also cosmopolitanism among them is an often used concept when rough lines have been drawn to describe changes in religious attitudes. A.-J. Festugière used it to distinguish three chronological periods of Greek religious thought: the period of general, shared public religion → the period of religious crises → the period of absolute universal religion which included the possibility to devote oneself totally to a religion. According to him the last period belongs mainly to the Hellenistic era and includes a religion which turns towards cosmic universals. According to Festugière's view this kind of cosmic religion was much more all-embracing than earlier religions and included a strong element of escapism. People now sought a final release from an eternity of death, and found this, for example, in the mystery religions.[242] This kind of periodizing is a typical view of religious change, and describes well how the Hellenistic period has been treated in the history of religions. Notions on fatalism, determinism and religious despair shadowed by a fear of release into a limitless cosmos usually characterize this view.[243] It should be remembered, however, that there were some means by which the new ideas were handled, and the new structures developed around renewed religious life as well as around social and political life. It is better, therefore, to regard cosmopolitanism and universalism in Athens rather as an open attitude towards new forms of religious life. This openness affected social institutions, and thus it was quite a general phenomenon in urban life. Openness was expressed in the readiness to accept new cults, the new kind of religiosity which incorporated these cults into social and political contexts so that they were handled as part of the whole culture. "The association is the most efficient melting pot of the Hellenistic city, because the most outstanding feature of the different groups known is mixing (*le mélange*) ... First of all the mixing of citizens and foreigners really characterises the Hellenistic association", states M.-F. Baslez[244]. In his analysis of 'axial age', S. Eisenstadt underlines the society's dynamics during these periods. According to him, different social groups constituted a basic component of these civilizations, generating their specific dynamics. One of the characteristics of this was the social interaction giving rise to new modes of institutional creativity. Its influence was two-fold: firstly towards growing symbolic articulation and ideologization of the meaning of social activities and collectivities; and secondly towards the growing diversification of the ranges of social activities and frameworks.[245] An important factor was the possibility of making a free choice concerning one's religious reference group. Religious life gave a good ground for expressing national coherence in both concrete and symbolic ways. It may be said that at the end of the third century and during the second, the religious associations

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[242] Festugière 1954, 98–99, 119. M.P. Nilsson 1946 (1984), 99 points out two crises in Greek religion: 1) disintegration of ancient piety at the beginning of the Athenian democracy and 2) the crisis that followed physical and mental enlargement of the world after the conquests of Alexander the Great.

[243] See e.g. Cumont 1912, 160; Tran Tam Tinh 1982, 105, 116–117; Henrichs 1984, 139; Nilsson 1946 (1984), 111–112.

[244] Baslez 1984, 335. See e.g. IG II/III^2 1335 (end of the 3rd cent.) which is the list of the Athenian *thiasos* of the god Sabazius listing 35 citizen-members and 13 foreigners (probably mostly soldiers from Syria and Macedonia) and 4 whose ethnic is not mentioned.

[245] Eisenstadt 1982, 307.

had a social appeal. In Athens it was still necessary for a new association to obtain a permit from the city-*boule* to build a sanctuary.[246] This is also seen in the first inscription concerning the Egyptian cults in Athens (IG II/III^2 337[247]) in 333/2 BC, when the merchants of Cition received permission from the *boule* to build a sanctuary for their goddess Aphrodite "in the same manner as the Egyptians built a sanctuary for Isis" (καθάπερ καὶ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τὸ τῆς Ἴσιδος ἱερὸν ἵδρονται, ll. 42–45). But it is evident that it was easy to acquire permission; the number of religious associations increased remarkably, especially during the third and the second centuries BC. Economic relations and broadened foreign policy made it necessary for the city to show a loyalty to those foreign religions which had initially been convined to foreigners. The emergence of the religious associations was a concrete consequence of the cosmopolitanism in Athens at this period.

It has been speculated very abstractly that this also opened the individual's mental cosmos to such an extent that he could for the first time see universal perspectives around him, and act according to general universal laws that prevailed everywhere. Astral religions and mysticism have been treated as expressions of this kind of thinking.[248] Philochorus (frg. 12[249]) mentions that in Athens in the third century BC people regarded the morning sun, the sun and the moon as sacred. A.D. Nock even postulated three reasons which may have been behind the acceptance of the new religious cults, and which were at the same time consequences of this phenomenon: 1) new ways of outlining the universe, especially turning towards astrology, 2) interest in immortality, and 3) a habit of relying on supernatural solutions to religious questions.[250] Applied to the situation of early Hellenistic Athens, this sounds a generalization. I would prefer to think that people were willing to solve their religious questions by becoming involved in the activities of the religious cult in which they were interested, and that turning towards cosmic universals was rather turning towards socially orientated religious activity. The primary material, the popularity of religious associations, supports this view. It must be remembered that in Hellenistic Athens the activities of the philosophical schools offered an opportunity for practising cosmic speculations outside the proper religious (cultic) life.[251] How much philosophy was religion is another question which will not be touched upon here.

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[246] This refers to a law then recently promulgated by Lycurgus (390–325 BC) mentioned in the inscription IG II/III^2 337, ll. 30–31 (333/2 BC).

[247] See also Foucart 1873, 83, 129–131; Ferguson 1911, 88; Simms 1985, 197 and above p. 49.

[248] See e.g. Cumont 1912 (especially Chapter V: *Astral Mysticism – Ethics and Cult*, pp. 138–166); Nilsson 1946 (1984), 128–134 and Préaux 1978 (1987), 658.

[249] FGrHist IIIb, p. 101.

[250] Nock 1933, 99–105. See the parallel construction of Avi-Yonah 1978, 37–38.

[251] A.-J. Festugière 1972, 34–37 says that it was in fact Plato who was the one who actually started religious thought being orientated towards the cosmic god, something which was so common in Hellenistic times. It should be remembered, though, that philosophical abstraction, like Plato's god, even though described by the forms of myth, is to be kept separated from actual religious life, like cults for the astral personifications, stars, sun, etc. Philosophy was not every man's every-day life.

B. Openness versus *asebeia* legislation

When regarding cosmopolitanism as openness in early Hellenistic Athens, one should bear in mind that a tension between old conservative attitudes and the new ones still prevailed. It was a time of the old encountering the new. A.E. Samuel underlines the conservative element of Hellenistic thought, perhaps a bit too straightforwardly, in the following way: "In religion as in everything else Greek conservatism asserted itself. Although surrounded by new ideas and different concepts of deity, cult and religion, the Greeks managed to insulate themselves from novelty, for the most part."[252] The focus of the older conservatism was the still extant *asebeia* legislation. It is most probable that there had been *asebeia* legislation in Athens in the latter part of the fifth century BC,[253] and it had not been explicitly abrogated. *Asebeia* legislation was a sanctioned Athenian law against foreign gods which were offences against the religion of the city-state. Aristotle (Virt et vit. 7.1–4) defined *asebeia* as "error (malpractice) concerning the gods and *daimones*, or dead people and the parents and the fatherland." (ἀσέβεια μὲν ἡ περὶ θεοὺς πλημμέλεια καὶ περὶ δαίμονας, ἢ περὶ τοὺς κατοιχομένους καὶ περὶ γονεῖς καὶ πατρίδα.)[254] Hyperides (389–332 BC), an orator who shared the political views of his contemporary Lycurgus, takes the same line, saying (Eux. 6) that *asebeia* is "impiety against sacred institutions" (περὶ τὰ ἱερά). Plato had postulated in his tenth book of *Leges* three kinds of impiousness concerning non-belief in the gods of the *polis*: 1) not to believe in the existence of the gods, 2) to believe that the gods do exist, but that they have no regard for men, and, finally, 3) to believe that the gods are easy to win over when bribed with offerings and prayers. According to him, all these were illegal and required official punishment imposed by law. An Athenian statesman and warm supporter of democratic ideals Andocides was accused of impiety in 415 BC on having taken part in two acts of sacrilege, the mutilation of the *hermae* and parody of the Eleusinian Mysteries together with Alcibiades; he expressed a disrespectful attitude towards the vow of secrecy. In 399 BC the accusation of impiety took place another time, now on two counts, the more serious being that he had taken part in the Mysteries when he was legally disqualified from doing so. The accused had to defend himself in front of the city-council. His defence is known as the speech *On the Mysteries* in which he says, for example (De myst. 10): "Concerning the Mysteries, I would show you (the Athenians) that I have not conducted impiety, neither have denounced, nor confessed" (περὶ τῶν μυστηρίων ὡς οὔτ' ἐμοὶ ἠσέβηται οὐδὲν οὔτε μεμήνυται οὔθ' ὡμολόγηται).

On the ground of Plato's texts, the law against impiety should include the prohibition of building private sanctuaries in private houses as well.[255] Plato seems to identify a person who could be accused of *asebeia* and a person who could be called *atheos*; namely, the

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[252] Samuel 1983, 101.

[253] Versnel 1990, 128; Derenne 1930, 185–190.

[254] Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of offence (ἀδικίαι) of which *asebeia* is the first. Cf. the concept with Latin *impietas* (the opposite of *pietas*).

[255] Plato, Leg. 10.885a–c; 907d–909d. In 907d (and 909d) the Athenian orders: "All the impious to quit their ways of life for those of piety (προαγορεύων ἐξίστασθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἀσεβέσι τρόπων τῶν αὐτῶν εἰς τοὺς εὐσεβεῖς). For those who disobey let us prescribe the law concerning impiety (*asebeia*)." (Translation P. Shorey, The Loeb Classical Library 1935 (1968)).

one who does not believe in the gods, an impious person.[256] For Plato there seems to be only one correct way of believing, namely to believe in the existence of the gods. His intention was to reason for the existence of the gods and for the superior nature of the soul, because in the gods there is a trace of the Beauty; even though it is doubtful whether Plato himself was so dogmatic in theological matters.[257] Socrates was accused of corrupting youth and not acknowledging the gods recognized by the *polis*, but different, new *daimonia*.[258] The concept *nomizein theous* (νομίζειν θεούς) has been taken to explain the Greek attitude towards religion as practical and act-oriented: Greek religion was centred mainly on honouring the gods by worshipping them according to the cultic tradition, taking part in the rituals and thus observing the gods by practical deeds. Plato considered it unwise to think that one is wise and that the other is not (Ap. 29a). Actually this kind of thinking was for him equivalent to thinking that one is divine. Such unwise manner of thought de facto is 'not acknowledging the existence of the gods'.[259] According to this view Socrates refused to do what was expected of him. But as E. Derenne and M.L. Morgan convincingly showed, Socrates refused to believe in the existence of gods in the way that was traditionally held by the *polis*.[260] Plato wanted to argue for belief which was not reducible to deeds or to a set of moral values of right, and just in distinction to traditional, honour and prestige orientated values. The same tendency characterizes in a more general manner the new way the people of Hellenistic times interpreted the contents of νομίζειν θεούς. New gods, Plato's *daimonia*, meant that things could become deified as gods, and new deities who had been denied before could now be believed in, in the same way as the traditional gods of the *polis*.[261] Thus the belief, not the deeds, held the place of foremost importance for Plato. For him these objects of belief were mainly celestial objects and foreign deities.[262]

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[256] See Leg. 10.887a.5; 889e.3; 900b.4; 907b.2; d.1,7; e.5; 908a.7; 909c.5; 910d.3; 890a.5 and compare Leg.12.966e.5 and 967a.3 in which the *atheos* is the one who refuses to acknowledge the gods and the divine nature of the stars; see also Ap. 26c: ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐ δύναμαι μαθεῖν, πότερον λέγεις διδάσκειν με νομίζειν εἶναί τινας θεούς, καὶ αὐτὸς ἄρα νομίζω εἶναι θεούς, καὶ οὐκ εἰμὶ τὸ παράπαν ἄθεος οὐδὲ ταύτῃ ἀδικῶ, ("I am unable to understand whether you say that I teach that there are some gods, and myself then believe that there are some gods, and I am not altogether godless and wrongdoer in that way". Translation W.R.M. Lamb, The Loeb Classical Library 1914).

[257] Thesleff 1986, 404 in the commentaries of *Leges*; Price 1989, 84–85.

[258] Plato, Ap. 26c, 27c, 35d; see also 21e–22a in which Socrates states that it is really the God who is wise and "that is why I still go about even now on behalf of the gods searching and inquiring among both citizens and strangers, should I think someone of them is wise" (translation W.R.M. Lamb, The Loeb Classical Library 1914). M.L. Morgan's 1990, 8–10 contention is that Plato viewed as his goal immortal tranquillity and his method of obtaining this was the 'philosophical' version of extatic initiation rites of the foreign cults. See also Diogenes Laertius, Vit. 2.40 and Xenophon, Mem. 1.1.1.

[259] Cf. Morgan 1990, 10–11.

[260] Derenne 1930, 117–123. See also Versnel 1990, 124–125; Nilsson 1946 (1984), 97; Morgan 1990 10–21.

[261] There is a discrepancy between this view and the dogmas in the *Leges* (Book 10). The attitude postulated in *Apologia* seems more convincing and a more Platonic view of the matter.

[262] Compare Versnel 1990, 126. It is argued that Plato was one of the introducers of cosmic gods and astral deities to Athens on the official level, too. This is seen also in Leg. 10.886a and 899b and 12.966e–967a4. See Festugière 1972, 67–69. *Epinomis*, the text ascribed to the philosopher and probably written by his pupil Philippos (Thesleff 1990, 329–330, in the commentary; text pp. 7–29),

In a similar way, there were also changes in the contents and interpretations of the term *asebeia* in early Hellenistic times. At that time *asebeia* legislation was primarily the law concerned with the introduction of foreign gods and their cults into Athens. IG II/III^2 337 tells us that permission for building the *hieron* of Isis had been given regardless of the *asebeia* legislation. A little earlier the famous courtesan Phryne had been condemned to death for establishing a *thiasos* for the Thracian goddess Isodaites.[263] In the name of *asebeia* the same sentence of death was passed on the priestess of Sabazius called Ninos.[264] In Hellenistic times, philosophers were still accused of *asebeia* the meaning of which varied from case to case. Probably the most important of them was Theophrastus, who as a result of a successful accusation presented before the Areiopagus by Democharas, a bitter anti-Macedonian, had to pay fines.[265] Other philosophers worth mentioning in this connection are the Cynic Stilpon, exiled after the year 230 BC,[266] and Theodorus of Cyrene, who was exiled between the years 317–303 BC because he denied all the gods and thus got the nickname *Atheos*, the godless.[267] Thus during this period *asebeia* was used for political purposes, and its use was only occasional, not systematic.[268] These *asebeia* accusations were linked to politics; for example, in the case of Theodorus *asebeia* was used because the Macedonian ruler Demetrius Poliorcetes wished to show himself as a liberator of Athens, and, thus, it was useful for him to express favour to some traditional practices of the city, but, at the same time, to support intellectuals who were favourable to the Macedonians and supporters of the monarchy. Furthermore, Demetrius Poliorcetes' predecessor Demetrius of Phalerum, who had ties and was symphatetic to Peripatetics, had protected also the other philosophers acting in Athens.[269] This makes Demetrius Poliorcetes' *asebeia* accusation against Theodorus, representative of 'the old ideas', more understandable.[270]

By these means *asebeia* legislation was also a symbol of the older conservatism, in practice its use was not systematic at all. There was a political and economic need for loyalty towards the ever-increasing number of foreigners and their religions at the beginning of the Hellenistic era.[271] The existence of *asebeia* legislation was forgotten in

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asks for an official star cult. Stars are regarded as upper gods who are eternal, permanent and in an important place of the hierarchy of the cosmos; see also Morgan 1990, 14–21.

263 Harpocration I, 163, ll. 3–4. See also Foucart 1873, 81; Ferguson 1911, 88; Nilsson 1946 (1984), 98; Simms 1985, 282; Versnel 1990, 126.

264 Demosthenes, Con. Boeot. I 1.1.2. Plutarch says that Demosthenes himself sentenced the unknown priestess Theoris; Plut., Dem. 14.4 for the same. According to Plutarch Theoris was accused of exiling slaves for fraudulence among other things.

265 This happened during the reign of Demetrius of Phalerum (317–315 BC); see Derenne 1930, 201. Diogenes Laertius, Stilpon 101. E. Derenne 1930, 198–199 calls Democharas "the new Demosthenes"; see also Korhonen, unpublished manuscript.

266 Diogenes Laertius, Stilpon 116–117. Stilpon is said to have denied the divinity of the goddess Athena.

267 *Ibid.*, 116.

268 Derenne 1930, 267; Korhonen, unpublished manuscript.

269 Korhonen, unpublished manuscript.

270 *Ibid.*, 213–214.

271 Day 1942, 16–20. Trade brought foreigners to the city. Their increased number is seen in inscriptions 1) bearing foreign names, 2) concerning foreign religious cults, 3) of foreign funerary-type, and 4) concerning the laws limiting proprietary rights (for land, for example) of the foreigners.

practice, but not forgotten in principle. Many cult associations of foreign gods were established, but very few official permits for their establishment have been found.[272]

Later, during the early Roman era *asebeia* legislation was still remembered; we have, for example, a decree of the Athenian *boule* from the last half of the first century BC concerning the regulation of the cult of the Egyptian gods in the Attic village Pikermi (SEG XXII 167)[273] dedicated to Isis and Sarapis (l.1). The first section of the inscription deals with the punishment to be imposed upon those who violate the sacral regulations which are, unfortunately, mutilated in the text, but the words ἔνοχοι ἔστωσαν τῇ ἀσεβήᾳ in line 6 are clear. We could conclude that conservatism in Athens was nominal, and an open attitude was a political and economic necessity behind which lay the cosmopolitanism of the time. The acceptance of foreigners and support of their new cults had economically positive effects. This evolved into a new attitude towards religious matters.[274]

[272] Simms 1985, 282–285; Clerk 1969, 126–135. About the appearance of the foreign cults in Athens see Chapter III.3.

[273] SEG XXII 167 = SIRIS 33a. J.J. Pollitt first published it in Hesperia 34 (1965), 125–130.

[274] Simms 1985, 198–205 stresses highly secular motives in the acceptance of the foreign religious cults in Athens. Her example is the cult of Isis. Compare Festugière 1972, 134–135.

Table 3.

In the following table the studied concepts are presented as a summary:

CONCEPT	CONTENTS AND INTERPRETATION	EXAMPLE
SYNCRETISM	– theoretical term	
	1. Separate religious systems adapted functionally into surrounding culture	– Greek Demeter – Egyptian Isis
	→	
	2. Parallelization – traits of separate deities recognizable but deities are parallelized because of their analogical elements	– Isis connected with Astarte–Aphrodite and Eros–Harpocrates–Apollo – Sarapis and Isis with Agathos Daimon and Agathe Tyche
	→	
	3. Identification – deities amalgamated into a new unity, but their attributes may still be seen	– Demeter–Isis/ Isis–Demeter
	→	
	4. Syncretistic religion	– the cult of Sarapis
MONOTHEISTIC TREND	– theoretical concept	
	– presupposes syncretism which may lead to henotheism	
	– rulers and intellectuals used in order to support autocracy	– Demetrius of Phalerum: *Peri Tyches*
	– omnipotence seen in certain deities	– Isidorus' hymn to Isis

INDIVIDUALISM	– in Hellenistic Athens "inworldly individualism" – possibility of choice – personal faith: submissive attitude towards deity	– religious associations: *thiasoi* and *eranoi* – anatomical votives – devotee as *therapeutes* and *latris*
COSMOPOLITANISM	– philosophical attitude – openness towards new cults – caused pragmatic oblivion of the *asebeia* legislation	– the Cynics: Teles – emergence of religious associations

VI. Conclusion

Two religious cults of Hellenistic Greece, and especially of Athens and Delos, as related to the city of Athens from the third till the first centuries BC, have been examined in this study on the basis of inscriptions, ancient literature, archaeological material and research literature. These cults are the Great Mysteries of Demeter, and the cult of Isis. They function as examples characterizing the features of the religious life of early Hellenistic Athens. The third and second centuries BC saw a change in religious life of the city. The first cult mentioned, the cult of Demeter, represents the old religion of the city-state also incorporating new elements typical of the Hellenistic era, and the latter, the cult of Isis, the new ways of religious life. They were both very popular cults, both holding places of significance among the inhabitants of Athens and, thus, illustrate how the old and the new came together.

1. Method

The methodological point of view departs from combining the methods used in the history of religions and in the phenomenology of religion. Thus certain phenomena of Hellenistic religion have been examined on the premises of the historical study of religion. The description of the cults is given on the first level in order to function as a basis for interpretation on the second level. The religions have been studied within their locally and temporally defined context and their important aspects are analysed. In this procedure there is no *a priori* definition of religion. Human religiosity functions as a basis for

approaching religions of antiquity relying on the so-called relative *a priori*, which means that religion is, in a Wittgensteinian sense, a family-resembling concept: there is a network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing in all of the religions, and one characteristic that they all share is religiosity, which is to be understood as something having deep importance for those to whom it counts as 'ultimate concern'. The method is hermeneutical because the subject and the whole method of research function reciprocally, in the sense that the method progressively shapes and collates its evidence, which in turn refines the method. This culminates mainly in an interest in terminology: four scientifically important terms and concepts in current use are interpreted by relating them to the life and contexts from which they have been derived. The difference between their original use and content and the scientific terminological use has been explained. In studying religious change, an important theme in Hellenistic religion, the meaning of different groups has been considered, since moving from one group to another means not only change in social structure, but also in the individual's life; it presupposes choice. Openness and conscious choice were one of the important new aspects of religious life in Hellenistic times, observable in the cults studied.

2. The Cult of Demeter

There was a remarkable continuity in the cult of the Eleusinian Great Mysteries of Demeter from early Classical times throughout the Hellenistic era. The cult of Eleusis had been absorbed into the official cults of Athens for political reasons. Thus it was a symbol for the city and as a Panhellenic festival it marked the importance of the *polis*. As such it stressed Athenian identity and gave the rulers and civil servants an opportunity to make a public appearance. The Great Mysteries were also a popular cult because of their individualistic appeal through the ritual's emotional aspect. This accounts for its mystery character; it was different from every-day life, giving the possibility of being individually purified, and being in touch with the ultimate questions concerning life and death.

The priesthoods of the gentile-type had faded away by the third century BC and the democratic system of appointing officials spread to the sacred institutions of Athens including the cult of Demeter. It was open to all with "clean hands and intelligible speech". Thus all cities were invited to take part in the festival, women and slaves were not excluded. This openness gave Athens an opportunity to show its grace, and also to acknowledge the city's power which was important to it during its periods of political and economic difficulties.

The Great Mysteries were financed in various ways, starting from offerings devoted to the deities and by individual, as well as public sacrifices. Eleusinian functionaries, mainly *hierophantai, dadouchoi* and *hieropoioi*, took care of the handling these charges. The cities invited to take part in the festival paid so-called *aparchai*, the offering of the first fruits of the harvest, as official taxes paid to Athens for the festival. Private financing seems to have been an important practice as well, because there are inscriptions honouring individual supporters, the *philotimoi*, for the financial support intended for the benefit of the cult.

3. The Cult of Isis

Isis was a newcomer to Athens arriving in the late fourth century BC, first to Piraeus and thence to Athens. She was worshipped by one of the religious associations, a new phenomenon in the religious life of the early third century BC. During the Macedonian period the number of religious associations grew considerably. *Thiasoi* were clearly 'religious' in character being dedicated to a particular god and practising religious activities alongside *eranoi*; finally came the more secular *synodoi* which were mainly trade guilds. These associations gave individuals an opportunity to choose their religious affiliation, and create a group identity free from the existing supra-individual distinctions which had previously been given to everyone, together with the name and social status of one's *oikos*, *phratria*, *phyle*, *demos*. Associations now grouped them in a new way according to their own choices.

The goddess Isis was brought to Piraeus before the year 333/2 BC by foreigners, and at the beginning she was worshipped by foreigners and metics in an unofficial *thiasos*. In Athens she was worshipped in the *thiasos* of Sarapiastai which was established in the first part of the third century BC. The cult gained official status at the end of the same century. Isis was the most popular of the Egyptian gods, and even claimed as the most popular of the foreign gods of Athens in Hellenistic times. It is obvious that Athenian citizens behaved in a politically and economically sound way by accepting the new cult; the attitude to the Ptolemies was favourable during the third century BC and there was pressure to accept a foreign cult because of the increased number of metics in the city.

The *thiasos* of *Sarapiastai* was organized administratively according to the practices of the city-state's organizations. These formed a new life inside the associations on a smaller scale, thereby providing a nominal openness for individuals to find new ways for constructing their group-identity. In the inscriptions of the associations, the same formulas are frequently used as in the *polis*: they, like the *Sarapiastai*, honoured their benefactors, mostly economic supporters as *philotimoi*, giving them honorary crowns and inscribing their names on *stelai*.

In the official cult of Isis the members and the officials were mainly citizens. Even the priest, the *hiereus* chosen yearly by lot, came from the upper classes. The *tamias*, who took care of the finances, was an important official of the association. The *grammateus* worked as a secretary. The annual *epimeletai* performed sacred priestly duties being equivalents of the city-state's *hieropoioi*. The *zakoros*, a lower official was always a metic in the Athenian association of the *Sarapiastai*. Of lower officials the *kleidoukhos* and *oneirokrites* may be mentioned, but they do not appear in the Athenian association of the Egyptian gods until the year 116/5–95/4 BC. In Delos we meet them more often, because there *Sarapieion* A kept up the traditions of the Egyptian-based rites, while *Sarapieion* C was clearly 'Athenian' representing that city's authority and organizations on the island.

The cult of Isis was financed in various ways: The associations collected money and sacrificial goods from their members for entering into the festivals organized by it. The associations also seem to have expected financial support from their officials. Thus private financing was of foremost importance in the associations. *Thiasoi* honoured their *philotimoi* for *eusebeia*, *arete*, *euergesia* and so on in the same manner as individual supporters of the city-state's religious festivals had been honoured on marble.

4. The Problem of the Mysteries

The mysteries of antiquity, and especially those of Hellenistic times, have been treated as a separate type of religion which flourished among people seeking new and more satisfying religious experiences; nevertheless, it is worth defining the concept more properly. Ancient authors discuss the mysteries in various contexts and use varying terminology: μυεῖν, μυστήρια, τελεῖν, τελετή and ὄργια illustrate the mysteries or their rites. They regarded mysteries as an individual group of religious practices, however. The modern use of the term 'mystery religions' as a pervasive and exclusive name for a closed system is inappropriate. The word *mysteria* designates festivals including initiation ceremonies. *Mysteria* must be distinguished from 'mystic', because it was only through the development of Neo-Platonic and Christian metaphors that *mystikos* acquired this meaning. Historians of religion have defined the mysteries largely on the model of the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter, but there are still some aspects of the mysteries that do not fit the Eleusinian picture. I have listed the aspects of the mysteries in general, and then considered how suitable they are as adapted to the Eleusinian mysteries and the cult of Isis, which has also been called a mystery cult. The mysteries always include a shared secrecy which had much to do with questions concerning death and after-life, but which also created a supra-individual social coherence offering cognitive and emotional-affective effects. A fertility aspect is present in the mysteries linking birth and death together. Ritualized purification adds to the picture as well, because it included situations with a possibility for psychological and social purification. There seems always to be some foreign element belonging to the mythico-religious system of the mysteries, usually a non-Greek deity. The myths of the mysteries are aetiological to the cult practices, because the myths provided the explanatory contents for the rites and thus made the cultic practices understandable. In the mysteries the vegetation duality is expressed in an active divine couple which represents a dualistic dichotomy of the basic polarities of human life. The dimension of death and after-life belongs to the mysteries in one form or another, but it always dealt with an individual's personal questions, thus bringing the individualistic dimension into the mysteries. There were mysteries demanding a life-long devotion to the cult, but the Eleusinian mysteries, for example, were not one of these. This demand seems rather to have become the norm in Roman times.

If we suppose that the mysteries should contain the above-mentioned aspects, the cult of Isis in early Hellenistic Athens was not a mystery cult. Only the foreign element in its mythology, as well as the divine couple who create a vegetative duality, and the aetiological function of the myths are to be found in the system of the religious cult of the Athenian *thiasos*. But, on the other hand, the cult of Isis in Rome in the third century AD as described by Apuleius of Madauros in his *Metamorphoses* was clearly a mystery cult with all the aspects of the mysteries. It even had sacred writings, *hieroi logoi*. Apuleius calls the mysteries *religionis secreta* and the rites of the mysteries are for him *teletae* or *ritus*. The cult stressed its exclusive character by symbolism which was expressed in the special vestments, habits and requirements for the adherents to have a special life-style.

From what date may the cult of Isis be called a Mystery cult in Greece? The development of the Mystery festival of Isis in Greece was due both to earlier Egyptian cult practices and the Greek practices of the mystery cults. Thus there was syncretism on the

cultic level presupposing parallelism and identification of the deities and their cults. The epigraphical material supports the view that the mysteries of Isis came into existence in Greece at the end of the last century BC and had an established position in the first century AD. The Aretalogy of Maronea from the early first century AD gives a *terminus ante quem*, because in it the mysteries of Isis may be observed. Isis and her festival is identified with Demeter and her Mysteries, so that the cult of Isis seems to be dependent of the cult of Demeter. The hypothesis is further supported by an Athenian inscription from the end of the first century AD which regulates that in the month of the Mysteries, the *Boedromion*, sacrifices typical to the Eleusinian deities had to be made in honour of the Egyptian gods. The two deities are identified totally, and Isis is said to have revealed the fruits of the earth in Eleusis. The Demetrian mysteries provided a structural model for the mysteries of Isis in Greece.

5. Syncretism

Syncretism has often been treated as the most obvious characteristic of Hellenistic religion. Yet it has rarely been studied on the basis of actual material remains. Syncretism is a theoretical term which usually has negative connotations in the literature. The term must be released from these overtones. The authors of antiquity did not use the term. Syncretism starts with an evolutionary process which leads to a syncretism of a stable stage. Thus it involves progressive syncretism which is a category of its own. Therefore, I have constructed a chronology which includes a typology of syncretism: 1) first separate religious systems adapted functionally into surrounding culture may be 2) parallelized because of cultural and religious contacts which may further become 3) assimilated, causing a new religious entity still open to changes; finally there may be found 4) a stable syncretistic religion which may be created consciously. This religion is a complete and separate system again. Examples of separate religious systems are the Greek Demeter with her own roles and epithets and the Egyptian Isis, whose roles were quite different from those of Demeter: Demeter was a Mother goddess of earth and fertility and Isis the patroness of civilization. When they became parallelized the interaction between these cultural systems is presupposed, but the old individual elements of the goddesses are still kept alive so that some equivalents, analogical elements between them, are noted and considered side by side. The analogies in the case of the two goddesses are, for example, their shared role as Mothers and the equivalence of their myths. In the case of identification, the identities of deities or their cults merge into each other to such a degree that it is difficult to distinguish their previously characteristic elements. This is to be seen in Demeter–Isis and in the cult of the Greek mysteries of Isis from the first century BC onwards. The cult of Sarapis represents a fully syncretistic religion, because it was a consciously created complete religious system in which the elements of both Greek and Egyptian religion were amalgamated and which functioned independently.

6. Monotheistic Trend

Monotheism is also an abstract formation of researchers and intimately connected with a Christian-centred point of view. When studying the religions of antiquity it seems more appropriate to speak about a monotheistic trend rather than monotheism, because as a term monotheism excludes even the potential existence of other gods. The Greeks only knew, on the one hand, synthesis of all or most of the gods, or, on the other hand, philosophical or theological principle. Thus the term henotheism, an attitude which includes monotheistic content without involving rejection or neglect of other gods, must be remembered in this connection. The monotheistic tendency may be chronologized in the following way: 1) syncretism which is followed by 2) henotheism finally evolving into 3) the monotheistic trend.

In Greek religion the monotheistic trend often means that one divine power is seen as supreme over the other gods, so that it unifies the essences of these others in itself and represents them all. Gods now become manifestations of power. This was expressed vaguely among the people, and more precisely among the philosophers and intellectuals. One such case in the thinking of the political elite is the theory of self-sufficient control, which was coloured with the idea of an over-ruling Fate with its transcendental aspects. Demetrius of Phalerum's text *Peri Tyches* serves as an example. For those who criticized religion, the transcendental theories of religion were consequences of their search for authority outside the institutionalized offices and structures of the society.

Among more concrete religious thought, the wide range of names of the different gods were put one after another, and one deity was elevated over the others by using prefixes such as *poly-* and *pan-* in his/her epithets. The Isidorus' hymn to Isis serves as an example of this. Sometimes the gods were grouped together in the inscriptions by calling them *synnaoi theoi* and later as *theoi megaloi* in order to underline their special powerful nature.

7. Individualism

Individualism is one of the most often repeated generalizations about Hellenistic religion. The emergence of individualism has often been claimed to have arisen in the Hellenistic world, and the Hellenistic era has been regarded as an age of the discovery of the individual. Individualism in Hellenistic times was caused by more heterogeneous populations mixing together, travelling (which even though not a new phenomenon was perhaps more common than before), diffusion of foreign cults and political instability. Hellenistic individualism represents individualism which may be called 'inworldly individualism' according to L. Dumont's terminology, because an individual of that time was social and was defined by society's presuppositions; he did not leave the society behind him like the so-called 'outworldly individual'. This is shown in the individualism manifesting itself as the possibility of choice which culminates in a man's liberty to choose his own religious reference group. Together with this it became possible for a person to form his own group-identity free from predeterminated kinship and ethnic restrictions, such as gender, family and social position. Religious associations preserved their social character, and so individualism was also social in character. The individualism

of Hellenistic religion is also interpreted as personal faith which was expressed in seeking liberation from troubles such as serious illness. These cases form contexts in which individual kinds of religiosity were expressed by the practice of giving votives, prayer (the indicator of which is kneeling down before a deity), using terms like *therapeutes* or *latris* about a believer, or expressing a submissive attitude towards the *dynamis* of a god.

Both Demeter and Isis were the objects of individual religiosity expressed in these ways. But complete devotion to a deity was a phenomenon which belongs to later Hellenism, more precisely to the Roman world. This is seen in the cult of Isis' mysteries as described by Apuleius of Madauros in his *Metamorphoses*, the Isis-Book (book XI). It also expresses the cult's development into the mysteries proper. In the Mysteries of Demeter, life-long devotion was at no time required.

8. Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism is an implicit phenomenon in all of the above concepts of syncretism, the monotheistic tendency and individualism, because there was a movement towards the internationalization of values and conceptualization of structures larger than the *polis* continuing in early Hellenistic times. Independence and cosmopolitical attitudes are seen in the orientation and life-style of the intellectuals, for example in the Cynics and other philosophers of Hellenistic Athens. Cosmopolitanism may be interpreted as an openness of attitude towards new forms of religious life. It was a readiness to accept new cults and incorporate them into a social and political context so that they became integral parts of the culture and society. In Athens the need to obtain permission from the city-*boule* to build a sanctuary for a new religious association still prevailed, but permission was easily granted; the number of religious associations increased considerably, especially during the third and second centuries BC.

The tension between old conservative attitudes and openness in religious matters in Athens is seen in the *asebeia* legislation. *Asebeia* was sanctioned by the Athenian law against foreign gods and against offences concerning official religion. The philosophers Theophrastus, Theodorus of Cyrene and Stilpon, among others, were condemned because of *asebeia* legislation. They had refused to acknowledge the gods recognized by the *polis*, or tried to introduce new gods or beliefs into the city. These kinds of *asebeia* accusations were linked to politics, because *asebeia*-legislation was also a symbol of the old conservatism. But its use in the cases of accepting foreign gods was not at all systematic; political and economic needs made it reasonable to respect loyalty towards the ever-increasing number of foreigners and their religious cults in early Hellenistic Athens. Thus the existence of *asebeia* was practically 'forgotten', but not in principle. Cosmopolitanism caused also more open attitudes towards religious matters.

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Appendix

Concordance of used inscriptions

In the concordance are shown only those correspondances of the inscriptions that have been consulted. Next to the numbers of IG I^3 (Lewis) and II/III (Kirchner) are the numbers of the older editions IG I (Kirchhoff), I^2 (Hiller van Gaertringen), II and III (Koehler).

After IG, ID and SEG the following collections of inscriptions are in alphabetical order in their own columns, and abbreviated as following (compare the list of the edited inscriptions and of literature above):

Clinton	Clinton, K. 1974: *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries.*
M&T	Meritt, B.D. & Traill, J.S. 1974: *The Athenian Agora Inscriptions* 15.
Mora	Mora, F. 1990: *Prosopografia Isiaca* I: *Corpus Prosopographicum Religionis Isiacae.*
Pol.	Poland, F. 1967: *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens.*
P&Z	Prott de, I. & Ziehen, L. 1896: *Leges Graecorum sacrae.* I: Fasti sacri (de Prott). 1906: *Leges Graecorum sacrae.* Pars altera fasciculus I: Leges Graeciae et insularum (Ziehen). Exact Reprint of the Edition: Leipzig 1896–1906 by Ares Publishers, with a Prefatory Note by A. N. Oikonomides. Chicago, Illinois. 1988.
Rous.	Roussel, P. 1916: *Les cultes égyptiens à Délos du III^e^ au I^er^ siècle av J-C.*
SIG	Dittenberger, D. (ed.) 1915–1920: *Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum* I^3–III^3.
SIRIS	Vidman, L. 1969: *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapicae.*
Sokol.	Sokolowski, F. 1955: *Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure.* 1962: *Lois sacrées de cités grecques.* Supplément. 1969: *Lois sacrées de cités grecques.*
Totti	Totti, M. 1985: *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion.*

In the researches of K. Clinton, F. Mora and F. Poland all the inscriptions numbered are not written completely in edited form, but the synopsis and commentaries of them are given. The same concerns the numbers of Delos inscriptions (CE) in L. Vidman's *Sylloge.*

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